

The North Florida Pawn Network (NFPN) was implemented, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Leon County Board of County Commissioners and the Leon County Sheriff's Office, to provide law enforcement agencies a multi-jurisdictional pawned property management system within Florida. The system uniquely blends new and existing technologies to assist investigative agencies with crime and homeland security investigations. It also greatly increases functionality and productivity throughout the northern region of Florida.

The pawn data systems used in law enforcement have been and are very important systems but are usually last on the budget and priority list, so very little effort has been placed on these systems, especially on a large multi-jurisdictional scale. This was a big challenge and has been over the past 20 years. The NFPN was able to overcome the hurdles by taking a simple yet innovative approach. The big picture and end user needs were always in sight, the broad need was to have a system that was "automatic" in the management from beginning to end, seems lofty if not impossible, yet it was accomplished. A simple approach was taken and proved to be very successful in connecting multiple counties, cities and the state and national systems.

The NFPN was designed to eliminate the need for transportation of the paper tickets and to reduce the hands on management of the pawn system. It was also designed to be easy to use with clearly marked fields and easy navigation thus cutting down training and implementation time across boundaries.

The NFPN was spawned from an existing single jurisdiction web based application which was very successful but limited to obviously one jurisdiction. The major focus was to expand this to other cities/counties and keep the cost to other agencies at zero. The existing system is very robust and was developed in house; this keeps cost to a minimum by simply modifying the single jurisdiction system to a multiple jurisdiction system. The needs of security and delivery over a network were met by using the existing Florida Department of Law Enforcement criminal justice network (CJNet) at no cost to any local, state or federal law enforcement agency. A no cost VPN access is also available. So a formal ROI was not used but an example of some of the cost saving are listed below. This system is currently used by over 15 counties and 22 cities in the northern part of Florida and the southern section of Georgia. Some facts on the system are listed below.

1. The biggest "ROI" of this system is simply now a system is available to agencies at no cost and is almost "hands free".
2. No transportation cost or greatly reduced cost. Normally the law enforcement officer drives to the shop and picks up the tickets. **1-7 days depends on other demands.**
3. Near elimination of agencies data entry. Using the old system, the tickets were then brought to the local agency and either filled away or under the best of circumstances they are hand entered into a single jurisdiction system. **This can be quick if they are just placed in boxes (little or no use) or up to 30 days if hand entered in the local computer system.**
4. To get any value the investigator would hand search through boxes of tickets or call multiple jurisdictions to check for stolen property matches. This could take countless hours and was very rarely done, usually only in

high profile cases. Now the detective/investigator gets an e-mail in their car, desktop, laptop, or PDA with a suspect's name and the stolen property match. This can even be in an agency that does not participate directly. Matches and automatic notifications have been made in over 33 counties in Florida.

5. The system offers the data back from the data warehouse in any format requested by other agencies, flat files, XML, and even direct connections.
6. The return is really "priceless" because the system is so easy to use and the benefits are so tangible. Just add yourself to an e-mail list and you get notified of a suspect and property in a stolen property case anywhere in Florida. Truly the closest to paperless as you can get...

Some of the needs which were met during this project;

1. **The end users needed a very low cost and low maintenance web deliverable system which delivers the data in a secure manner to many different ways to many different devices.**
 - a. This system was developed at a one time cost and is now offered to all Florida law enforcement agencies at **no cost**.
 - b. The pawned property data and application can be viewed from any device on Florida's (FDLE) secure criminal justice network (CJNet).
 - c. The pawned property data and application can also be used over a secure VPN network on desktops, laptops, and PDAs anywhere an internet connection can be established.
2. **They also needed a system which would automatically check and notify the appropriate agency of a stolen item which had been pawned at a local shop anywhere in the network.**
 - a. The matching of stolen property against pawned property was accomplished by accessing the state FDLE (Florida Department of Law Enforcement) and national FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations) stolen article data and performing automatic cross checks daily against pawned property.
 - b. If a match is found an e-mail notification is sent out to the appropriate agency and detective/investigator. This can also be confirmed by application screens and reports.
3. **They needed a multi-jurisdictional system which eliminated the "stove pipe" barriers to information sharing.**
 - a. The system can be accessed anywhere through one of two secure methods, FDLE's CJNet or VPN. The system also allows any user from any jurisdiction to view all network/system wide data, but only users who own the data can upload or edit data. This overcomes two previous barriers, accessibility to multi-jurisdiction boundaries and ownership.

4. **They also needed an automated method of getting the data from the local pawn business into the North Florida Pawn Network without officer's physically picking up the slips by hand.**
 - a. Most private shops have small business applications which produce some type of output file so an "upload" procedure was developed for each of these and now the shops e-mail the files daily to an e-mail address at the appropriate agency and the staff person "uploads" the file vs. hand entering. This seems pretty simple but was never taken to the level of the current system. **This almost eliminated the need for data entry by law enforcement staff.**

5. **The need to manage suspects was also identified.**
 - a. The system also provides the functionality for a detective or investigator to enter suspect information into the system and then if the suspect pawns anything anywhere in the network an e-mail or text message can be sent to the detective/investigator in near real time.

The North Florida Pawn Network application exceeded all performance expectations. One of the ways this has proven to be true is demonstrated by the incredible demand for the application. Most applications have to be marketed and sold, but this application has grown by only word of mouth within the law enforcement community at very surprising rate. This is due in part because of its functionality, efficiency and ease of use. The success has also been demonstrated in cases which would have never been solved or closed with the old paper single jurisdiction system. This ranges from digital cameras to yellow cake uranium.

The target launch date was early 2007 to have the fully functionally system and this date was met. The development time was minimal, less than 8 months for Leon County Florida and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to add the upload routines for the local business pawn shop applications develop the interfaces with the state and national systems, test and implement the automatic notification system and implement the suspect management module.

The cost savings are demonstrated in two ways, one is the increase in the use of the system and the decrease in the required human recourses. These processes have continued to diverge since the systems inception. Estimates range from a reduction of 35 person hours per week for data entry per agency to 20 hours and in many situations no person was available to hand enters the pawn tickets. This can be multiplied by the number of agencies who are entering data/tickets. Now with automated loading of the pawn shop's ticket data agencies can now monitor and manage their own data in the NFPN system. This is yet strength of the system; each agency shares the management and is responsible for their data.

Another cost savings is in the reduction of investigative time, this time could not be calculated and in many situations the pawn tickets were never reviewed due to the insurmountable task searching the tickets would have been. The system now basically e-

mails the investigator the information they need or is easy to search for in the NFPN application. Although the NFPN was developed by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Leon County Florida Board of County Commissioners, and Sheriff's Office, the functional owners are each agency which uses the system. The system has increased use by 75% since January 2007 when it became fully functional. The system has 126 pawnshops throughout the north and north central portion of Florida, who now are the data collection and entry staff for the law enforcement agencies. The system currently houses over 160,000 pawn customers and 1,000,000 pawned items which includes jewelry, firearms and other general property (note data has been collected from other system and over a longer period of time). This system has truly met or exceeded expectations, detectives and investigators have made some of the following comments, "this is magic", "wow this is great" and "the detectives here are doing back flips". It is about as close to paperless, hands off system that the law enforcement community has ever had. The cross boundary hurdles were solved by technology and just simple person to person and agency to agency cooperation.