Oregon Department Of Corrections

Scars, Marks and Tattoos (SMarT)
'Safety, Security, & CORE Measures Transformation'

Project by:
Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC)
for
ODOC Security Threat Management team,
Special Investigations Unit, and Corrections Institutions

Category:
Data Management, Analytics & Visualization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are currently 14 institutions under the management of the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC). As of November 1st, 2019, within those institutions there were approximately 14,632 Adults In Custody (AIC), and outside of those institutions 13,355 Offenders on Parole and Post-Prison Supervision. These numbers are significant on several levels. For the purpose of this document, we'll be touching on the high number of unknown, underutilized, and unmanaged photographs accumulated over time for each Offender, and how the Scars, Marks and Tattoos (SMarT) system has reshaped how business is done at the Oregon Department of Corrections.

Initially, when an Offender arrived at the Coffee Creek Intake Center (CCIC) in Wilsonville, Oregon they begin the Receiving and Discharge (R&D) process. During this process, Offenders go through both mental and medical evaluations. They're, fingerprinted; issued an ODOC identification card; and are photographed for any identifying scars, marks or tattoos. The first photo taken of an Offender includes holding a white placard at chest level, with last name, (SID) State Id number and processing date. Once all of the images are captured, they're uploaded as a file, on the network.

A separate mainframe AS400 system is then accessed by the Intake staff, and the Offender's information

Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, Wilsonville Oregon

is entered. The older AS400 system limits the number of characters that could be entered, and thereby *limited the information* that could be entered. This limitation, and intermittent lack of data entry, created a difficult barrier between the Offender data and the photographs that were isolated in a network folder.

In May 2018, the Information Technology Services staff started working with the Security Threat Management team (STM) and the Special Investigation Unit (SIU), to develop a module within the current Offender Management System (OMS) that allows users to manage the large number of Offender photographs. OMS, an in-house monolithic (very large) system, is used by almost every ODOC employee working with Adults In Custody (AIC) information. The new system module created through this collaboration is called SMart – Scars, Marks, and Tattoos.

The SMartT project was initiated by the Security Threat Management team (STM) to achieve the following: 1) simplify the data and information management process, 2) optimize access to, and use of data and photographic information, and 3) enhance security for all Offenders and ODOC employees.

CONCEPT

With nearly half a million Offender photographs on the ODOC network that had missing or limited information stored on a separate system, something needed to be done to enhance user access, management, and use of both the data and photographic images. Being able to quickly and easily add to or edit information associated with a photographic image, and then readily search for and access that information when the time arises, was a goal and foundational cornerstone of SMarT.

The *design concept* seemed obvious. Move the photographs off the network and into a database; create a simple yet effective user interface; and add the ability to search the database, and create reports based on the photographs and Offender information. To achieve this design, the software development process followed an *agile methodology* and focused on iterations of incremental product development.
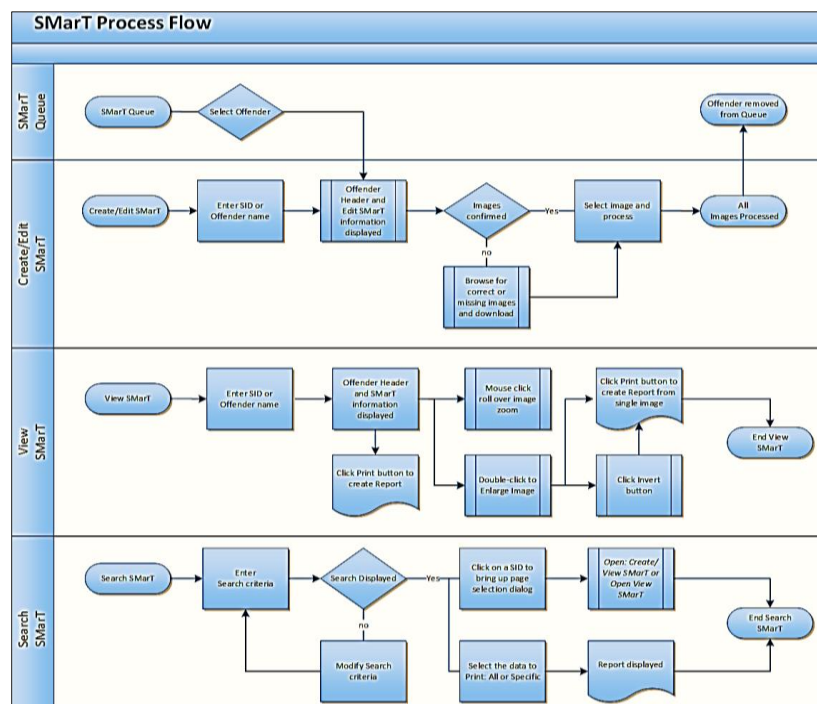
The users of the SMarT system are primarily those individuals actively involved in: the Receiving and Discharge (R&D) process at the Intake Center; the Security Threat Management team - involved in any prison gang related activities; employee compromise and any suspected security threat. In addition, the Special Investigations Unit that handles any incidents and grievances that are reported, are also included.

Challenges & Hurdles

The *first hurdles* were the photographic images. How could we get them from the network folder and into the database? Analysis of the folders revealed that some contained the folders of other Offenders (folders within folders), while others contained photographs of other Offenders, or invalid SID numbers.

A decision was made to create a script, written with user intervention, to identify & address issues (examples below).

- Invalid SID numbers, Process Date used instead of a SID number, Offender name instead of a SID number

- Folders within folders

- Import the photographs from *valid* SID number folders into the database table, specifically created for the photographs
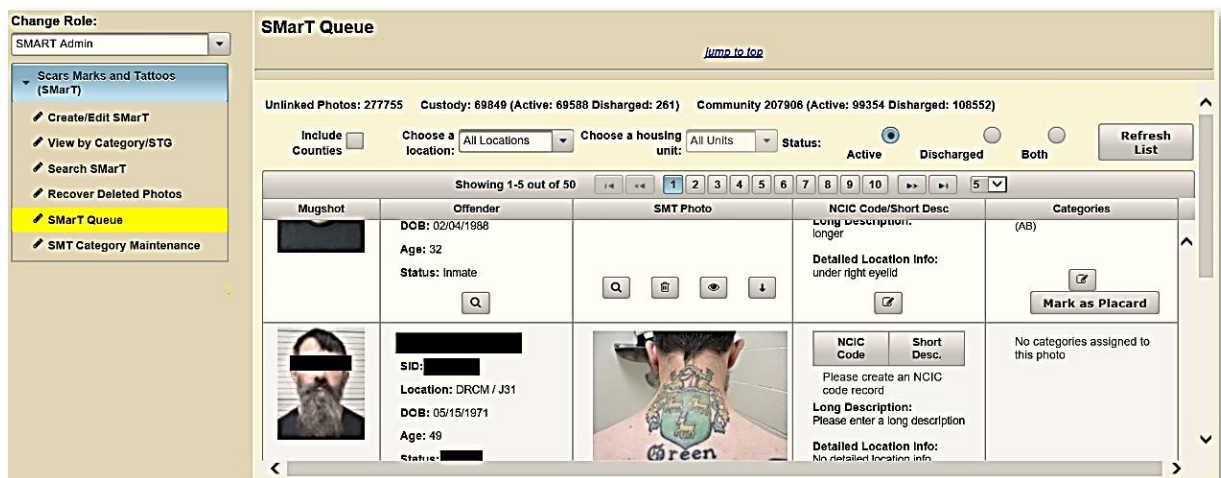

SMarT Process Flow

- Continue validating and importing new photographs from network nightly using a script.

User Interface

Once the task of identifying, validating, and exporting the photographs was resolved, designing the User Interface was next. The overall design concept needed to include details to manage, and accurately describe the photographic images, as seen below.

- Create, Edit, and Print the Offender information and Photographs
  - The Create/Edit SMarT page is an offender centric page. This means that all photos on this page are all associated with one specific offender.

- View by Category and STG (Security Threat Group)
  - This page allows users to view photos; filter by Category *or* Security Threat Group; Select a Category or STG; Click a corresponding button.

- Search, Delete, and Recover Deleted photographs

- Uploading photographs to the database
  - If there are photos on a local Hard Drive, USB drive, or File Explorer users can Upload Photograph feature and select up to 10 images to upload.

- A Queue for all unprocessed photographs imported from the network folder

SMarT Queue for processing new Photographs that are uploaded at night from R&D

- Adult in Custody's (AIC) - First, Middle, and Last name
  - SID number: State Identification number
  - Location: Facility, Discharge location (County)
  - Security Threat Group: Gang affiliation
  - Short and Long description of scar, mark or tattoo

- NCIC Codes: The FBI National Crime Information Center
  A list of codes that represent scars (surgery, accident etc.), marks (birthmarks, moles, etc.), tattoos, dental appliances, walkers, prosthetics, etc.

- Category or Theme to help further define the tattoos: Animal, Sport, Military, Mythology, Art, Music, Nature etc.

Communications & Training Plan

The administration, communications, and training for this project were handled by the ODOC Business unit. They promoted and informed ODOC employees about the new SMarT system module using email messages/memos, and during administrative and employee meetings. In addition, to assist in a successful roll-out and provide some technical communications and training, the Information Technology Services (ITS) department created a detailed User's Guide for SMartT.

Testing

Various types of testing were used throughout this agile SMartT system project and included:

Functional and Non-Functional Testing
- Both were implemented throughout the design/build process.

User Acceptance Testing
– Feedback requested from various ODOC user groups was addressed.

All ideas and suggestions from ODOC user groups were reviewed and considered, when completing the final project design. Upon completion of the project and associated testing, Business Owners and Sponsors signed-off with approval, and SMartT was officially launched!

In addition, this project aligns with the NASCIO – 2020 Top 10 Priorities of: Data Management & Analytics; Consolidation/Optimization; and Innovation & Transformation through Technology.

SIGNIFICANCE

The number of hours saved since the deployment of the SMarT application can't be understated. Having the ability to quickly and easily enter\attach accurate data to an AIC's photographs, and then actively search on that information when needed, has increased productivity and decreased time wasted going through unmanaged photographs with limited data. Allowing users to easily and readily edit, update, and correct data and information throughout the process, provides better and faster results when needed during an investigation. When an outside agency such as the Oregon State Police contact ODOC about a tattoo, the SMarT users at ODOC can now quickly and easily search for the tattoo using the information provided to them with greater speed and efficiency.

SMarT has transformed the way ODOC Does business by introducing an easy And complete system that allows users To enter detailed information about the Offender photographs

The STM and SIU members are not the only ones that benefit from SMarT. Being able to identify tattoos as gang related, and to label them as such, also helps the Correction Officers in the Corrections Institutions identify new gang members, and members that may have switched affiliations. Observing new scars on an Adult In Custody (AIC), and photographing them allows Correction Officers to keep track of old and new scars. During a cell extraction when it's believed illegal contraband is being stored, the Officer in charge can take photographs of any new or altered tattoos, as well as any new scars showing unreported abuse or fighting.

The safety and well-being of both the Institution staff and the AICs is paramount; Part of that safety not only involves the ability to accurately document, identify, and manage the thousands of photographic images of the AICs, but to also identify those individuals that may be a higher threat, due to their affiliation with known gangs.

The Irish Pride gang uses various tattoo designs to identify gang affiliation.

Distinguishing between a true gang tattoo and a tatto that respresents national pride can be difficult.

Prison gangs, Street gangs, and gangs that that are a mix of both; such as the Crips and Bloods, are prevalent in the Prison system. Keeping a watchful eye on such threats is a daunting task that requires experienced ODOC employees. With SMarT, employees are now proactively enabled to track and document numerous affiliations and changes.

IMPACT

Overall Prison Security

As previously mentioned, keeping track of the many Prison gangs can be a daunting task, and having experienced, and proactive ODOC employees is vitally important. Knowing an Offender's gang affiliation, and if a gang member has switched affiliations, albeit rare, is important information that needs to be known and documented by the Corrections Officer (CO). Keeping tabs on the various gangs with SMarT, and using other modules within the Offender Management System (OMS) for analysis, allows the CO, SMT, and SIU groups within the Oregon Department of Corrections to balance the Institution and the AIC Housing, so that no one gang has dominance over another. (*It can't be stressed enough how important this is to overall prison security.*)

Communications & Training

The administration, communications, and training for SMarT is in the hands of the Primary project stakeholders; members of the STM and SIU teams. By giving them full control, they manage and grant access to ODOC employees who need access to Offender's photographic data and information. In addition, to assist with training and technical communications, the Information Technology Services (ITS) department created a detailed SMartT User's Guide.

Cultural Acceptance & Use

One of the more obvious areas of change has been the increase in the number of ODOC employees accessing and using SMarT. Previously, many employees were unable to easily access Offender's photographic data and information. With this increase in use, more data and information is being added, edited, and corrected, and new photographs are being uploaded.

The successful implementation of SMarT and its proactive use by employees, has assisted in decreasing the number of research hours used on investigations, and outside agency requests. SMarT's readily available access to photographic data and information has increased its use and importance throughout the ODOC. Overall, SMarT has been accepted within the ODOC culture.

SMarT has proactively improved the ODOC - Offender Management System (OMS), enhanced security for both Offenders and ODOC staff, and placed control back into the hands of the Corrections Department employees.