



# 2002 Digital State Survey

## Social Services and Law Enforcement and the Courts **BEST OF BREED PROGRAMS**

*Presented By*

CENTER FOR

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GOVERNMENT

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*Building Electronic Government for the 21st Century*

**2002 Digital State Survey  
Social Services  
Law Enforcement  
And  
The Courts**

**Best of Breed Programs**

**Presented by**



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**Produced by**

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# Introduction

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Welcome to the 2002 Best of Breed Programs report, Pt. 1 Social Services, Law Enforcement and The Courts. We are pleased to present some of the best state-level technology applications and best practices in the nation.

The winning programs you will find in this report were nominated from the responses given to the Center for Digital Government during the Digital State Survey. Center experts read the 50 state summaries and reviewed over 1,500 projects. Nominees were selected from programs based on the following criteria: enterprise-wide applications, innovation, standardization and integration. Nominees and descriptions of programs were then submitted to the Best of Breed selection team for evaluation.

After selecting the winners, we then contacted the jurisdictions to write the profiles you will read in the pages to follow. This year the projects in each category revealed some common threads in successful IT projects.

First, whether in social services or law enforcement, enterprise-wide projects needed a “champion” – someone to go out and personally promote its benefits to the agencies and jurisdictions that were either mandated or persuaded to participate. This champion would personally visit or (when necessary) revisit affected parties to discuss the project. The champion would also give presentations to user groups, councils or committee. In most cases, it was this champion’s personal commitment that actually created the project’s success.

Another common thread was the standardization of information that would be utilized across the enterprise. Almost every enterprise-wide project had to confront issues of standardization – whether it was related to technical or policy issues. While some lead agencies had to establish standard data nomenclature, other agencies had to convene groups to put together common policies for information sharing. In some cases, standard data usage was important because of sensitivity toward the project’s information (see the New York Adoption Photo Listing program), as well as its overall success.

In the area of law enforcement, the events of 9/11 and the increased attention on homeland security became significant forces in the continued support of security-related applications. For example, Florida’s enterprise-wide information security effort was already well established before the events of 9/11, but in its aftermath officials found the pursuit of political and financial support was more forthcoming and actually gave officials broader authority over the agencies involved. Additionally, the willingness on the part of the agencies to break down their silos and give up turf was much easier to overcome than at any other time.

Above all, the Best of Breed Programs showed the best of the best, especially when it came to building cross-jurisdictional, enterprise-wide projects. Time and time again, government officials shared stories of surprise and satisfaction when they built systems or implemented programs and people readily used them without hesitation. A common response to the question, “What surprised you about this project?” was, “I couldn’t believe how quickly everyone used it.” That is a testament for the leaders and staff who worked hard to bring these innovative systems to fruition.

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## Social Services

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**State: Arizona**

**Project: Arizona Early Intervention Program**

Website: <http://www.de.state.az.us/azeip/>

Contact: Susan Patrick

Tel: 602/340-9698 ext. 200

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Consistent practices among five participating agencies were defined through an interagency coordinating council.*

Collaboration is the central success factor in the development of the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP), a statewide system of supports and services for families and children, birth to three years old, with developmental delays. The program offers solutions for early intervention, which is defined as professionals working in partnership with parents and families of children with special needs, to support their children's growth, development and learning. AzEIP is a coordinated effort of related activities by several state agencies, including the Department of Health Services, State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Department of Education, and Health Care Cost Containment System.

Gathering information and making the entire system work required the management team to break down silos and develop a single planning process and legal document for each family enrolled in the program. AzEIP also had to develop a single training system for personnel, which required the contractors to establish a common knowledge base from which to work. "We had to identify an evaluation policy and resources to identify mechanisms and then replicate them and build upon established programs," said Molly Dries, executive director of AzEIP at the Department of Economic Security.

Individual agencies' approaches were melded through a single system by emphasizing continuity and consistency across interagency services, which established consistent practices among the five agencies. "We worked with an interagency coordinating council to plan, design, implement and evaluate all aspects of AzEIP," said Dries. "These forums were composed of agency members, contractors, higher education, community members and local representatives to ensure rural and under-represented populations were incorporated into all aspects of planning."

Fleshing out the program also required leaders to confront and resolve policy issues. According to Dries, it was an interesting "adventure," confronting the identification of state and federal governing regulations and reviewing funding sources. "We had to align funding and strategies under one program and work toward identifying resources to mobilize under a consistent program. We did this through conversations with agency representatives, directors and constituents.

"We ended up devising methods to gather standard data for federal reporting requirements, and we also started to use information we would gather in a standard format to deliver management information," continued Dries. "It was a struggle at times to devise standard file formatting. We met with each agency and

continued Dries. “It was a struggle at times to devise standard file formatting. We met with each agency and began using IBM guidelines and working through our problems in terms of translating data for federal reports.”

The end result of this collaborative, cooperative effort is a coordinated effort that is better able to respond to family priority and child development needs. “Now we’re better able to disseminate information, gather input and have an improved ongoing discussion about the initiative,” added Dries. “Also, our use of technology to support service delivery through integration makes us more efficient in how we use funding and our personnel resources.”

Also, a single system provides several benefits. “We are able to better document our practice and improve the family experience,” added Dries. “We can also move forward in planning, make better policy decisions and have ongoing discussions so our efforts better reflect the needs of the state and community.”

**Project: NYS Adoption System**

**State: New York**

Website: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/adopt/default.htm>

Contact: Bill Van Slake

Tel: 518/402-3130

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Regional meetings with local jurisdictions allayed fears of publishing children's photos on the Internet.*
- *An advisory group met to resolve political, policy and legal issues.*

Who would imagine that adopting a child could be as easy as going online, selecting a potential candidate and talking to a person on a helpline to find out more details? In the state of New York, the adoption process has been made just this straightforward with the introduction of the NYS Adoption System, a Web-based application managed by the Office of Children and Family Services that is comprised of three components: children, families and help line.

Over 221,000 visitors (which is 24 percent of the overall traffic to the Office of Children and Family Services website) each month are viewing the online adoption photo album. The application was developed to improve the placement rate for children in the NYS Adoption System while integrating this process with the worker's present automated work process. Only caseworkers have online access to children and family records for initiating, editing and renewing child referrals. Local caseworkers and authorized third-party providers can access the legacy welfare and child welfare case management systems by using either terminals or PCs connected to a secure wide area network.

"Families can now contact us for more information by sending e-mail or calling the help line," said Stephanie Woodard, adoption specialist. "When an adult calls the help line the operator can go directly into a child's record for contact information and access a central database that provides information in one location. Information is available to local jurisdictions, but isn't maintained at the local level."

The system is also very secure, which is important when working with sensitive documentation about children. The state's security system requires workers to authenticate through the mainframe and access can be limited to programs, functions and transactions, giving the Office of Children and Family Services the ability to restrict access to specific types of information while allowing access needed by the worker. Extensive transaction logging allows identification of inappropriate uses. Now browser-based systems that are being developed to provide enhanced functionality to the workers and integration with these legacy systems to provide the same legacy security protocols.

"The security was very important to getting people in the associated agencies to be open to using and understanding the theory and concept behind it," said Woodard. "We had to make people understand that posting photos on the Internet was no different than placing photos in the books at libraries for people to browse – which was not easily accepted at first either. The issues really mirrored that paper process. So we had to make people feel better about placing the photos online. We went region by region (and even visited some regions twice) to get people to accept it. We also had an internal advisory group consisting of IT, policy, legal and adoption services staff who gave information out and helped promote the system."

“We also had to bring this diverse group of people together to build ways of expressing information in the data fields – and it had to make sense,” said Bruce Bushart, assistant director of adoption. “We had to develop policies that were consistent with laws and regulations. We also had to ensure the attorneys were happy with it and it was successful.”

Points of policy were important to protecting the interests of children. Bushart explained how critical it was to protect information because many agencies have more information about families than is approved for use on the system. They learned that they had to keep that information in their own databases without sharing it. “We had to pilot the program and create an understanding that any information that we used was purely for training,” he said. “Ninety percent of the information was already collected and now it was going to be shared, but shared very carefully. We went out and trained users with the emphasis on the importance of providing accurate, updated information. Workers then were able to go back and immediately use the system without delay.”

Now Bushart says that kids are finding families faster than ever before – and all of this is being done across county lines. “The program is really unique,” he said. “It crosses jurisdictions and matches children faster. It’s also community friendly for people who are looking to adopt children. Kids now have a lot more attention than they ever did.”

“It’s really great,” said Woodard. “We have central data in one place and no more hodgepodge of information. Photos are listed and information is updated much quicker. It’s really a win-win system.”

**State: Wisconsin**

**Project: Employment Portal**

Website:

<http://www.wisconsin.gov/state/app/employment?COMMAND=gov.wi.state.cpp.job.command.LoadSeekerHome>

Contact: Brian Solomon

Tel: 608/267-7514

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *The formation of a work group helped agencies learn about each other's needs and ways to effectively develop an enterprise-wide project.*
- *A personal commitment on the behalf of individual staff members helped mitigate resource deficiencies.*

Job seekers in the state of Wisconsin no longer have to sit down with a newspaper and circle classified ads to find a job. Now with the Employment Portal job seekers can get up the morning, open their e-mails and find a wealth of jobs tailored to their qualifications waiting for them in their mailboxes.

The new Employment Portal application allows job seekers to search for job listings and post their resumes for employers to search online. It provides a feature where job seekers can establish a "career agent" that will monitor all new job postings and send the seeker an e-mail notification regarding a match to their search criteria. It also provides a feature for job seekers to apply for a specific job online if the employer enables that process.

"The career agent feature is like having someone else circle jobs you might find interesting for you," said Brian Solomon, section chief in the Department of Workforce Development. "The jobs are then waiting for you to respond."

The portal itself is the result of a multi-agency consortium to meet the needs of both clients and agencies alike. "It's a pretty unique effort," said Solomon. "Most of the time each agency does its own thing. Working together as a group, we've really been able to improve the functionality of our site and add a lot to the bare bones."

In launching the project, the management team first had to bring all parties to one table. "We had to meet regularly to figure out how we could create a single site to meet everyone's needs," explained Solomon. "It really took a lot of effort, but we stuck with it. We formed a group, kept meeting and working together. The personalities didn't change, so we had to get to know each other and understand each other's lingo, the client's needs and the agencies' missions. Over time, we saw similarities, and we made commitments to transcend any barriers."

Smoothing out differences wasn't the only problem they resolved. In this time of economic downturn, they've had to overcome fiscal constraints and resource limitations. "It's been mainly difficult getting enough staff time and server space," said Solomon. "This past year, we had a programmer working on it nearly full time and several other programmers making suggestions, recommendations and changes. We would go back and make the changes and send them back; however, this was not part of our regular job duties. We've just made the commitment to get it done."

Solomon has also increased marketing efforts to bring in other agency involvement and expand the program. “If we have multiple agencies working on the job portal then they will also commit more resources to it and over time put it in their budgets.”

The next step for the portal is to get more job listings made available through the state’s other online service, called Job.Net. “Adding Job.Net information will take the site to the next step so that there are a large number of jobs advertised and there’s another tool in the toolbox,” added Solomon. “Users can expect the new features to be added by early summer. There’s a lot things you can get done when you work together and commit yourselves to a common goal.”

## Law Enforcement

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**State: Arizona**

**Project: Criminal Justice Information System**

Website: <http://www.dps.state.az.us/welcome2.htm>

Contact: Craig Stender

Tel: 602/340-9698 ext. 203

### **BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Policies and procedures for the system were discussed at a regular governance meeting.*
- *Information sharing standards had to be resolved.*

Enterprise-wide projects make sense when there are multiple agencies performing similar functions. In the state of Arizona, it made perfect sense to bring law enforcement services under one umbrella since so many of the affected parties needed to share the information anyway. As a result, the state invested in and created the Arizona Criminal Justice Information System, which is shared between agencies, including the Department of Public Safety (DPS), Attorney General's Office, the Supreme Court, and many other state and local entities.

This single service offers a wealth of integrated features. It automates the interstate exchange of criminal history, warrants, adult probation, orders of protection, sex offender registration, drivers' license and vehicle registration information, and the national exchange of wanted persons, stolen vehicles, boats, weapons and security between criminal justice agencies within Arizona, other states and the FBI. Millions of computer transactions are processed and recorded each month. DPS provides the 24-hour, 365-day services for these interfaces to criminal justice agencies statewide and for over 80 applications for the department's day-to-day operations.

Under the common umbrella of the system, it incorporates a number of elements including: a pawn shop information file; COPLINK, a common access system for local police departments; a Process Control Number system; an automated site to allow law enforcement to check lab analysis of evidence; a Juvenile Online Tracking system to gain access to case dispositions; an adult probation information system; correctional status information regarding incarceration, community supervision, probation and more.

All of these capabilities offered through a single service were tremendous undertakings and the result of an overall vision of what an integrated project should be. "Our state has set up a way to bring good governance to a system and break up multiple efforts by putting them together..." said Craig Stender, state chief information officer with the Government Information Technology Agency. "The system itself is really a combination of systems that integrate criminal justice information."

Policies and procedures for the system were discussed at a regular governance meeting composed of 19 members, including the director of the Department of Corrections, the State Attorney General, the director of the Department of Public Safety, the director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, sheriff's

offices, director of the Board of Executive Clemency, and local officials. “They all participated and took ownership over the project,” said Stender. “This active participation really resolved turf wars and enhanced communication.”

Aside from meshing business processes and systems, project leaders also had to resolve records-sharing issues. “We had to figure out what level of public records could be made electronically available for internal use vs. external uses,” he said. “We really had to work that through – and we’re still working on it.”

Stender noted that the whole process has been a “mammoth effort where we had to break up the puzzle into individual pieces and build momentum, keep the energy going and reach the goal, which is a combined system.”

Now the state has an accurate, efficient record of criminal justice information that is shared among various entities. “An integrated system allows us to cut some processes down from days to hours,” he said. “Now when someone is arrested we have accurate criminal history information, which provides better data for decision makers and ensures the public’s safety – and public safety is a high priority of Gov. Jane Dee Hull.”

**State: Colorado**

**Project: Colorado Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (CICJIS)**

Website: [http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/cicjis/](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cicjis/)

Contact: Theresa Brandorff

Tel: 303/234-8422

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *A task force was formed to coordinate policy and planning across the five participating agencies.*
- *Meetings were held to define terms and develop standards to create a functional integrated system.*
- *Personal meetings to educate users were scheduled on a county-by-county basis.*

Is the Colorado Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (CICJIS) a project or a program? Officials associated with it want to make it clear – it’s a program. CICJIS links five state-level criminal justice agencies – Colorado Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Investigation (local law enforcement); District Attorney’s Council; Judicial Branch; Department of Corrections; and Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Corrections – to create one “virtual” criminal justice information system. This program enables all criminal justice agencies to track offenders through the criminal justice system, from arrest and prosecution to adjudication and incarceration.

“Colorado’s program is among the top three CICJIS programs across the nation,” said Theresa Brandorff, chief information officer with CICJIS. “The evidence of its success can be seen at conferences we’ve attended. We’ve looked at what comprises other CICJIS programs, and what makes Colorado’s among the best and it’s the value we provide to the people who use it. We have a direct, visible impact on the citizens and customers from the five agencies we support.”

That impact comes from its virtual database that provides access to information contained on each of the five systems without unnecessary data duplication between the agencies’ legacy systems. Through the use of a three-tier, middleware architecture, a user on any of the five systems can view information contained on another system as if it were stored locally. Transparent, real-time access to criminal justice information is the ultimate goal of CICJIS.

Information is provided through queries, which enable users on any system to view information stored on another system. Each system presents these queries to their users as if they were an extension of their own system. This provides the end users with an interface to this information that reflects the look and feel of their own system. The system also provides a central name index that consolidates information from all five agencies. The index contains basic identification information and serves as a pointer to information contained on the five legacy systems. Each agency has its own unique identifiers, and the central index provides the keys necessary to find data throughout the system.

Although this data sharing is the foundation of the CICJIS program, it was not easy to get all five agencies to cooperate. First, a task force was formed to meet weekly to discuss policies and funding, which made it easier to develop rapid prototypes of the project and demonstrate its potential value.

Initially, the group had to confront how to work with five different agencies that had five different business models that essentially had little to do with each other. “We were dealing with five legacy systems structured or modeled after their own business practices,” said Brandorff. “Each business had its own terms that meant different things. So, we had to standardize the data and work together without impacting their business model and practices. We’ve had to solve this by putting every CICJIS program under continual review and working with practices that change over time.”

This standardization has facilitated data sharing and eliminated redundancy. “In the past, people had to re-key common information (such as demographic data),” said Brandorff. “Now we have an information system where we’ve set up data rules and people don’t have to re-key common data elements; however, over time we’ve had to enforce and ensure accurate and timely data entry.”

Once the issue of standardization was resolved, Brandorff’s next goal was to get everyone in the state to use it. “We had to go county by county and sit down with the users to show them how things needed to be entered on a statewide basis – that effort was a huge deal,” she said. “We had to show them the importance of getting it right and what that meant in terms of the program’s overall success.”

Today that effort has paid off, with an increased capability to keep track of people moving through the system. “It shocked and scared me – the disposition matching rate – before we implemented the project, which was at 40 percent on a good day. Prior to our program that number was at or below the national average,” said Brandorff. “In the past, there was such a lag between information moving through the system that a twin brother of a defendant could show up at the courthouse in his place and we wouldn’t always have the matching criteria to tell the difference. Now with the electronic transfer of the information we have that information in minutes.”

Mark Perbix, project director, noted that the speed at which data moved through the system also helped to allay skepticism shared by law enforcement officers who were first presented with the concept. “We ran into a lot skepticism from users who didn’t want to lose their paper-based systems; but once they realized how fast they were receiving the data, it sold the project. They realized it’s important to get a warrant issued and just as important to get it canceled as soon as possible. For example, a man was arrested in front of his family at his kids’ school even though he had paid his fines. A false arrest causes needless humiliation – and now this system minimizes that problem.”

One of the best parts of the program is that while it offers a wealth of capabilities and features it was created on a small budget of \$2.5 million (pulled together from state funds and federal grant money), with an ongoing budget of about \$1 million. Although project leaders did note that they are seeking additional funds – they consider that budget inadequate. What it actually shows is how the passion and commitment of a few can make just about any project a great success. “The project has been a huge accomplishment for the folks responsible for doing it,” added Perbix.

**State: Florida**

**Project: Enterprise-Wide Information Security**

Website: <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/>

Contact: Scott McPherson

Tel: 850/488-7241

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Meetings with agency heads created an esprit de corps among those involved in the project.*
- *Personal meetings with cabinet-level members brought them into the process.*
- *Active recruitment efforts attracted competent personnel to the project.*

While many law enforcement agencies across the country scrambled to secure the homeland, the state of Florida had already moved in 2000 to secure all of its IT systems by establishing an enterprise-wide information security program and an Office of Information Security within the State Technology Office. In 2002, the Legislature transferred primary responsibility for information security from individual agencies to the State Technology Office, which was given sweeping authority and jurisdiction to implement enterprise-wide standards, policies and procedures to compel agency compliance.

In 2001, the state of Florida contracted with TruSecure Corp. to provide alerts and warnings for all state agencies, and to conduct third-party information security audits of all state agencies. These audits were reaffirmed, expanded and funded by the Legislature in special session following the events of 9/11. The chief information security compliance officer at the State Technology Office then works on a remediation and compliance plan that the agency must follow. These audits also take Health Information Portable Accountability Act and Department of Justice security requirements into account for maximum efficiency.

“The Legislature just doubled the money we’re going to receive to do these audits,” said Scott McPherson, chief information officer with the Department of Corrections. “It is also going to continue funding the Office of Information Security and the Florida Infrastructure Protection Center, which is going to be the first functional infrastructure defense center.”

The audits are just a part of the office’s mandated authority to oversee security for all agencies. “The change in the law in 2001 gave us the authority to compel activity when it comes to information security,” said McPherson. “It also allows us to partner with agencies and work with them to write and exercise disaster recovery and information plans, which is critical since 9/11. We’re working with agency heads to own this project and work with us to develop an enterprise-wide approach to disaster recovery as well. We’ve also been given broad authority to get the agencies to shape up and share information. They weren’t doing this amongst themselves, but now they must. We’re really trying to create an esprit de corps.”

Additionally, the office is charged with sending out security alerts to mandate agencies to respond to computer attacks as quickly as possible. “These security alerts kept us from getting hit hard by fast moving viruses and worms, like Code Red or Nimba,” he said. “We immediately sent out patches and our Compliance Office monitored the speed with which ... agencies reported patching their systems. So, we’re not just blasting out alerts that get disregarded.”

According to McPherson, the quick responses from the agencies have come from an active desire to create an esprit de corps among the agencies involved. McPherson and his associates meet regularly with agency heads. Each month, all information security managers gather collegially, share best practices and hear from world-renowned computer security experts. The office works with Florida State University's NSA-certified Computer Security Institute.

Additionally, McPherson has had to seek policy support to bring in agencies that haven't necessarily had to comply with the effort. "Florida has a collegial form of government where the governor has the most power, and that power is centered within Florida's cabinets," said McPherson. "The governor controls 14 agencies and elected cabinet members. Establishing authority over elected cabinet members meant we had to go in and talk with them. We had to let them know we're from government and we're here to help with money, alerts and audits. It took some effort, but it's all working out. I've actually been surprised how quickly everyone did in fact buy into this idea."

Another challenge McPherson has faced in rolling out this effort has come from a lack of personnel resources. "Finding qualified people to work with us on this project has been difficult," he explained. "We've had to aggressively go out and persuade them to join our team. So far, we've been pretty successful and assembled a pretty competent group of people who are finding the Florida program exciting to be affiliated with."

Overall, it's really in everyone's best interest to ensure our systems are tightened up. "No one (meaning the agencies) wants to read about themselves in the news," added McPherson. "We've really come a long ways in making Florida a much more secure state."

**State: North Carolina**  
**Project: Comprehensive Mobile Data Network**  
Website: <http://www.ncshp.org/>  
Contact: Woody Sandy  
Tel: 919/662-4440

### **BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Partnerships with local jurisdictions resolved resource and funding issues.*
- *A personal commitment and visits to counties increased adoption rate.*

North Carolina has one of the most-used government mobile data networks in the country, with 7,050 users currently taking advantage of its services. Law enforcement officers from across the entire state can utilize it to query for information on vehicle registration, driver's license data and criminal histories. Additionally, an increasing number of law enforcement units are running dispatch systems and GIS applications over the network.

“One of the cool things about the network is that it's available for everyone in North Carolina,” said Woody Sandy, a lieutenant with the Highway Patrol. “It was the perfect project for the Highway Patrol to manage. We already supported a data network and microwave system. In the early 1990s we began exploring building a new infrastructure, but we found it would cost \$100 million. So, we began looking for local agencies to partner with and build a statewide network. We were finally able to build it for \$15 million by sharing resources (we avoided building new towers by leveraging existing ones in local jurisdictions) and opening the entire system so everyone could use it.”

Now the system allows officers who have computers and printers installed in their patrol cars to transmit citations and arrest information electronically to the state court system. This process has eliminated the need to re-key data and has increased the accuracy rate by eliminating handwriting recognition problems, transposing of numbers and more. “We're going to be doing the same thing with crash data very soon,” said Sandy. “We're going to use grant money for vehicle crash data and transmission of it to the Division of Motor Vehicles. We're entering the pilot phase of that project.”

In establishing the network one of the first difficulties Sandy had to resolve was actually a basic reality of the state he lives in – the rocky terrain. “We have the Blue Ridge mountain range, with some 6,000-foot peaks and a lot of rough terrain,” he said. “We found we could not get away with only one or two transmitters in these areas. We had to add more resources and transmitters to solve the problem.”

Adding more resources also meant confronting a related problem – funding. “Finding funding sources is always a challenge when you're building a network,” explained Sandy. “We were very fortunate and received state appropriations and about \$500,000 in grant money from the Crime Commission, because the project served the entire state. We also got bi-partisan support from the Legislature for the same reason.”

While the project's statewide nature helped earn funds, it wasn't as beneficial when it came to actually implementing it. “We had to ensure we developed a relationship with locals and won their support – and we have,” he said. “I literally drove around from county to county and gave them demonstrations where

I emphasized we would not be taking over their operations, but in fact, we would be partners, not dictators – and that approach worked very well.”

The creation of the network and wide acceptance is helping to achieve its ultimate goal – to provide increased officer safety. “Now an officer can run a plate on a car and in 12 seconds know it it’s stolen and call for backup before he or she turns on the blue light and pulls the person over,” added Sandy. “It also keeps more officers on the streets, because they no longer have to spend so much time writing reports since the information is inputted electronically in the field. In these times of lean budgets it’s even more important that we do things more efficiently.”

For Sandy the high adoption rate did something else – it proved the *Field of Dreams* theory of “build it and they will come.” “I never expected that we would get the amazing amount of participation,” he said. “It’s been very rewarding to see how well the system has been accepted, especially when historically law enforcement has been reluctant to sign onto technology things.”

## The Courts

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**State: Indiana**

**Project: Courts in the Classroom**

Department: Indiana Supreme Court

Website: <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/education/>

Contact: Kurt Snyder

Tel: 317/232-2542

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Funding and attention to detail overcame concerns about spoiling old-style courthouse design.*
- *A marketing campaign aimed at educating teachers about the program spread the word about its existence.*

In grade school most students learn only the basics about our judiciary system, but the state of Indiana aims to change that with the launch of an innovative project, called Courts in the Classroom. Launched in 2001, the project offers Web-based information about the state's court system to teachers from all levels of education. The site features education activities and information created by people within the judicial branch. The centerpiece of the venture is the live webcast that provides all oral arguments before the Indiana Supreme Court as well as selected oral arguments from the court of appeals and tax courts.

In addition, the Court currently selects a "Case of the Month" where teachers and students are provided detailed case summaries, briefs and curriculum units written for these particular cases. The selected lesson plans also cover topic identified in the new state social studies standards.

"Our main goal in creating this project is public education," said Elizabeth Osborn, assistant to the chief justice for court history and education. "We feel it's an excellent way to bring the court to Indiana school children in a way that everybody can use it. Most people in the public don't know about the details of the court system. We're helping them to understand concepts, such as 'due process.' "

Also, since the project brings information right to teachers' desktops, it cuts down on the amount of research it would normally require to develop this kind of curriculum. "Teachers don't have time to find and use new curriculum, because they're overwhelmed with other things during a typical school day," continued Osborn. "We're working hard to get the word out that we've developed this program."

In managing the project, one of the first things Osborn and her staff had to figure out was how to blend 21<sup>st</sup> century technology into 19<sup>th</sup> century building architecture without losing the ambiance of the structure. "Our courts have been meeting in the same place since 1888," said David J. Remondini, counsel to the Chief Justice for the Indiana Supreme Court. "Also, our chief justice, Randall T. Shepard, is an aficionado of court preservation and he didn't want us to damage the structure or its decorations."

In order to achieve this objective, it was decided to spend a little extra money and remind contractors of the importance of avoiding any potential damages. "We emphasized making the equipment as

unobtrusive as possible,” said Remondini. “There are now four cameras in the courtroom for webcasts, and the associated cables were run up two stories and across the ceiling. We went out of our way to hide the wires so you can’t see them.”

Equipment installation was only a fraction of the overall challenges the staff faced. Once the system was running, it was important to get the targeted users to actually integrate it into their curricula. “In the beginning, we mailed out individualized letters to teachers to alert them of its existence,” said Osborn. “We also have a lot of teachers who come to our state Capitol to take tours. We took advantage of that and contacted them to meet with us so we could show them the new process. We also went out to professional meetings and gave presentations. Also, everything is available for free, so that really helps.”

Overall, the project has provided a lot of extra benefits – most of them educational. “The courts are generally systems that people don’t know much about,” said Osborn. “Teachers don’t know much about it either and don’t teach it. And since they don’t know they’re kind of afraid of it. This project has opened up the court system and people can see it in action – they no longer see it as a negative black hole. Public education is our number one goal with this project, and I think we’re achieving it.”

“It’s also hard to criticize the courts as being closed when we’re willing to broadcast to virtually the whole planet what we’re doing,” said Remondini. “We’re saying to people, ‘Hey, these are our courts.’ We want to encourage an open atmosphere as much as we can.”

The project has also done something else – it proved that the courts are willing to pave the way for new technology applications. “Historically courts have not been known as innovative, and it’s great that projects like this one make us look like leaders in technology,” added Kurt Snyder, director and counsel for technology.

**State: Nebraska**

**Project: The JUSTICE System**

Website: <http://court.nol.org/AOC/>

Contact: John Cariotto

Tel: 402/471-3049

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Project leaders held meetings and made presentations to persuade other agencies to participate.*
- *During meetings leaders listened and allowed participants to be heard and effect change.*

Courts have traditionally been charged with similar activities so it only makes sense that a common application be developed to automate court processes across the enterprise. Officials in the state of Nebraska certainly recognized the value of such an application and developed the JUSTICE system, a program that introduced common procedures thereby improving the accuracy of information exchanged among law enforcement entities and the courts.

Using this statewide application for all courts in the state has made it possible to develop interfaces with other critical systems, including the drivers' records database, the criminal history repository, and systems for law enforcement and prosecution. JUSTICE has also made it feasible to develop other statewide systems, such as the protection order central registry. Overall, the system has incorporated four aspects: enhanced Internet access, information distribution, centralized data and improved case processing.

"We want to use technology, such as the Internet, to bring services to folks," said John Cariotto, associate state court administrator with the Administrative Office of the Courts at the Nebraska Supreme Court. "We also want to meet many objectives, including improved productivity of judges in processing cases in the courtroom. We plan to introduce e-filing so attorneys can file documents electronically and avoid having to come see us."

Building a statewide system meant bringing many different agencies together on a single project and collaborating to make it work. "These groups all developed their own systems," said Cariotto. "We wanted a single, stand-alone system that would work with their formats. There was a lot of turf to define and people were reluctant to give up their systems. Essentially, they didn't like sharing information. So, we got everybody together and listened to them, which enabled us to get a lot done."

Cariotto also carried the project along through the process by making a personal commitment to make it work. He gave presentations to various law enforcement groups and made inroads by visiting the annual Crime Commission meeting. "I've been actively working with many counties and individuals to get them to join us," he said. "We have one large county that has held out, but we're hoping to get them onboard very soon."

Cariotto also acknowledged his pleasant surprise in the number of counties and associates who willingly participated in the project. "I thought we would experience more resistant to change than we did," he said. "Any resistance we did have evaporated sooner than I thought."

The results of such a major coordinated effort have been great. Enhanced record sharing now allows information to be linked to multiple agencies, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles. “Now when someone gets, say, a traffic citation, the information is logged electronically and eliminated the need for people to manually re-enter it into disparate systems that, in turn, send the forms out in the mail. Now it’s automatic, and when there’s a conviction the criminal history is also available to officers on patrol.”

While the project is still evolving, its current benefits are already making good use of its potential. “We are now able to provide Department of Motor Vehicle, child support and law enforcement officials, information that is current and accurate,” he said. “This way information is current about the status of cases, and we can produce documents and reports electronically for judges. It’s much easier when we’re all using the same system – especially when it comes to training people and sharing information. Now if an employee moves positions in the government, he or she will already know how to use the system.”

**State: Missouri**

**Project: Case.Net**

Website: <http://www.osca.state.mo.us/sup/index.nsf>

Contact: Jim Roggero

Tel: 573/526-8318

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *User groups helped develop statewide standards that drive the system.*
- *A lag in technology was overcome with patience and the help of suppliers.*

Now Missouri residents don't have to call their lawyers when they want the most up-to-date information about their court cases. All they have to do is access Case.Net, a statewide case management system that displays public case information by name, case number, filing date and more. And the best part is they can do it right from home.

Thirty-three courts are utilizing Case.Net, and the statewide Fine Collection Center now posts their public information on the system. Citizens can also view Appellate Court Opinions, Missouri Court Rules, Missouri Bar results, job postings and general court information.

The case management software that drives the system is distributed to half of the state's courts and allows users to conduct statewide searches for information. The nature of the system required the establishment of statewide standards that operate under similar conventions for files, file structure and numbering to track cases. "We had to develop a mechanism to identify the standards," said Jim Roggero, director of Information Technology at the Supreme Court. "We put together user groups in the various agencies to identify needs and standard rules. We had the full support from the Supreme Court, Legislature and the governor to draw upon court personnel, judges, clerks, etc."

While working to launch the system, Roggero encountered a lag in the technology and resources to make it work. "In the early stages we were looking for the right mix of hardware and software in order to get the kinds of system response times we needed," he said. "We found that the technology wasn't quite there yet, so we waited it out. About a year ago, the technology enhancements we would need became available. We then moved rapidly to get the courts' case management systems configured to utilize Case.Net operations."

Roggero also added that partnerships developed with suppliers, like Cisco, Lotus and Microsoft helped things along. These corporations stepped forward to assist and provide resources to develop the system without adding additional costs. "These companies came in and worked with us to develop a system that is very unique to the court system," said Roggero. "They partnered with us because they realized we were laying the groundwork for later use in other states."

The end result of all of this work is a system that is getting incredible recognition from users who are coming in the millions to take advantage of its capabilities. "We're getting about two million requests a month from people utilizing the system," said Roggero. "Users make about 20 transactions while attached to Case.Net, and we now believe about 60 percent of actions are being done over the system. We think we've

created a user friendly system that people are definitely using. We've also received a lot of positive feedback on its capabilities.”

Roggero also noted that this amazing response came as a nice surprise to him. “I had no idea how quickly the users of court information would start utilizing the system,” he said. “I thought it would be more of a slow migration, instead it was almost instantaneous.”

Additionally, the broad acceptance has helped to bring the benefits of this system to fruition quicker than anticipated. “It has reduced the amount of traffic of people coming in to have interaction with clerks – and clerks no longer have to draw files and make copies,” he said. “And it opens up the entire judicial process.”

**State: New Jersey**

**Project: Domestic Violence Central Repository**

Website: <http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/admin.htm>

Contact: Judy Teller

Tel: 609/777-2245

**BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *Project leaders personally met with police chiefs to get them involved in the training efforts.*
- *The Criminal Justice Information System committee met monthly to discuss the new system.*

A problem that has long plagued law enforcement is lack of timely information when it comes to restraining orders. In New Jersey that problem was eliminated with the implementation of a new system, called the Domestic Violence Central Repository, which is being managed by the [Administrative Office of the Courts](#).

The repository includes information on all Family Court-issued restraining orders that are provided to law enforcement, with real-time online accessibility to restraining-order verification and details available in the field before intervention. The timeliness of this information not only improves public safety for victims of domestic violence, but also improves security for law enforcement by enhancing their knowledge of the scene upon which they are about to intervene.

The system was supported through grant funding from the Violence Against Women Act, as well as other sources. It began in 1998 when the courts launched a domestic violence inquiry screen that was upgraded and extended on a statewide basis in 2000, with over 600 agencies using it. The statewide rollout gave access to local law enforcement, the State Police, sheriffs, jail wardens, prosecutors, personnel who work in the criminal courts, probation officers, the New Jersey Department of Corrections, and anyone authorized to access it for law enforcement activities.

The system itself has expanded beyond information regarding restraining orders. "In 2001 legislation was passed that required every defendant with a final restraining order to be fingerprinted and assigned an identification number by the State Bureau of Investigation, which in turn, assigned them an FBI number," said Judy Teller, chief information officer. "Once we've got the number, it's entered into our system and we're able to connect to our central repository and to our criminal court and prosecutor systems. This effort allows the law enforcement officer to connect from the domestic violence registry to the criminal history record – that is, if the person has one."

The FBI number also allows law enforcement access to firearm applications. "The FBI number does a lot for us," said Nick DeLuca, a representative from the New Jersey Attorney General's Office. "Now our officers, before they even enter a house, can check to see if the suspect has any handguns and how many. And they can remove all firearms from the house – and I mean all of them. We had one case where a fellow had five registered guns and gave up four of them, refusing to give up the fifth. The judge gave him jail time until he gave up the fifth one."

The ability to spot such discrepancies is what makes the system so effective in providing not just officer safety, but also citizen safety. "An officer can now look at the criminal system and become more aware of the

situation he or she is in, which is in everyone's best interest," said Jim Mannion, chief of the Automated Trail System.

In order to set up such a comprehensive system that involved so many agencies, managers had to persuade everyone to use it, which wasn't easy given the usual apprehension people typically feel toward trying something new. "We conducted personal training sessions to teach people how it works," said DeLuca. "I personally contacted prosecutors and offices in the criminal system to go in and do training sessions. I also invited police chiefs to meetings and I listened to their requests and ideas for enhancements. After I would meet with them we would have an influx of requests to use the system, so we knew our efforts were paying off."

Also, during the development phase the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) committee took up the topic during their usual monthly meetings. They discussed cross-jurisdictional issues and began working together to achieve consensus in helping to roll out the project.

"Our overall goal was not only to create a statewide automated system, but also to participate in a national system to pass information electronically to a national system and do it without redundant data entry," said DeLuca.

## BEST OF BREED RESOURCES

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Following is a list of the programs that were nominated for a Best of Breed of award. Although the programs didn't win, we believe you will find them interesting and beneficial to read about.

### SOCIAL SERVICES

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#### **Arkansas**

##### **Arkansas Shared Component Enterprise Technology**

- Allows agencies to exchange information about clients.
- Agencies use common data elements (social security, address fields, etc.).

#### **California**

##### **CalJOBS**

- Public and private jobs posted.
- Internet-based resume postings, e-mail, etc.

#### **Illinois**

##### **Health Alert Network**

- HAN is a statewide network connecting all state, county and city public health departments to a common data network and provides for statewide satellite downlink facilities.
- Its purpose is to coordinate disease and/or bio-terrorism outbreak responses.
- It also increases everyday communications between all entities.

#### **Indiana**

##### **Online Claim Voucher for Unemployment Insurance Benefits**

- Password-protected system allows claimants for unemployment insurance benefits to report status online.

##### **Child Support Payments Online**

- The Indiana Child Support website, which allows employers to submit payments online on behalf of employees.

#### **Michigan**

##### **The Talent Bank**

- Employers can directly search database of resumes.
- Employers can post their own job openings.
- Job seekers post own resumes.
- Job seekers automatically search openings.
- Job seekers can compose cover letters online and e-mail resumes.

#### **Missouri**

##### **Substance Abuse Traffic Offender Program (SATOP)**

- Web-based system is deployed to all SATOP providers.

#### **Mississippi**

##### **Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS)**

- MACWIS includes unique features such as case tracking and electronic submission of court documents.
- Workers can also track case plans and child placement histories.

#### **Nevada**

##### **All Kids Count Project**

- It is a fully integrated statewide immunization-tracking registry that gives access to a number of agencies and related organizations.

### **TRACS (Reporting and Control System)**

- The Web-based system collects county and project information necessary for federal reporting and local and state management of over 600 projects and project budgets funded with the TANF Block Grant.

### **Pennsylvania**

#### **Medical Eligibility Determination Automation (MEDA)**

- MEDA software will automatically select the correct category, program status and participation status for all household members.

### **Tennessee**

#### **TennCare**

- TennCare is the state's managed health care program.
- It features an online verification service.
- Doctors and hospitals can go online and review the most current information about enrollees.

### **Texas**

#### **Hire Texas and Job Express**

- Applicants can submit a resume and search against a listing of jobs to find openings.
- It includes automated job searches.

### **Washington**

#### **Interactive Foster Parent Training**

- The system provides interactive foster parent training online to provide child support information in multiple languages and to maintain an online caregiver support forum.
- Information to apply for benefits is also available.

#### **Interactive Video Conferencing**

- Washington is using interactive videoconferencing to improve the process of meeting with caseworkers. When an applicant (food stamps, child support, etc.) seeks a benefit that will require a determination of eligibility, the person can "meet" via interactive videoconferencing.

#### **Child Support Payment Internet Service**

- The interactive site provides a secure and convenient way to make child support payments online via Electronic Funds Transfer.

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## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

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### **California**

#### **Video Conferencing**

- The system support video arraignment, training and administrative needs.

### **Iowa**

#### **ICON Mercury System**

- The new system allows the Department of Corrections to provide services at the appropriate level, share data with other agencies to avoid duplication of efforts, provide for public safety through knowledge of the offenders actions, provide public information for offenses such as sexual assault, and improve the work process.

### **Maine**

#### **MCJUSTIS**

- MCJUSTIS standardized what offender data there is to be collected through the criminal justice business functions, including law enforcement, adjudication, incarceration and probation/parole.

### **Michigan**

#### **Law Enforcement Information Network**

- A statewide-computerized system established as a service to Michigan criminal justice agencies.
- Computerized filing system of accurate and timely criminal justice information readily available to all criminal justice agencies.

**Ohio**

**WebCheck**

- Web-based system to lessen the chance that convicted felons and sexual offenders would be able to gain employment working with children.

**Virginia**

**MCT Upgrade Project**

- Mobile messaging allows car-to-car exchange.
- Troopers can query the Virginia Criminal Information Network and access the Department of Motor Vehicles database, the National Crime Information Center and the National Law Enforcement Telecommunication System.

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**THE COURTS**

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**Alabama**

**Demographic Look-Ups**

- Court personnel can now do demographic lookups of Public Safety data, ensuring the validity of key points of information. A central repository of jail information is also available to court personnel.

**Colorado**

**Court of Appeals and Supreme Court Online Services**

- The Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court each publish both case announcements and oral argument schedules on their websites.

**New Jersey**

**Judiciary Electronic Filing and Imaging System**

- This system provides attorneys the ability to electronically file documents statewide. The project currently involves tort and contract actions for less than \$10,000, which are filed in the Special Civil Part of the Superior Court, Law Division.