

NOTICE

Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by the Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1970, sets forth the following Criminal Penalties.

Part H—CRIMINAL PENALTIES

Sec. 651. Whoever embezzles, willfully misapplies, steals, or obtains by fraud any funds, assets, or property which are the subject of a grant or contract or other form of assistance pursuant to this title, whether received directly or indirectly from the Administration, shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than five years, or both.

Sec. 652. Whoever knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals, or covers up by trick, scheme, or device, any material fact in any application for assistance submitted pursuant to this title or in any records required to be maintained pursuant to this title shall be subject to prosecution under the provisions of section 1001 of title 18, United States Code.

Sec. 653. Any law enforcement program or project underwritten, in whole or in part, by any grant, or contract or other form of assistance pursuant to this title, whether received directly or indirectly from the Administration, shall be subject to the provisions of section 371 of title 18, United States Code.

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A NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE --

SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared by The George Washington University

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SUMMARY

This report concludes a study supported by the Department of Justice Grant NI 70-018 to the Program of Policy Studies in Science and Technology, The George Washington University. The prime goals of this effort were to determine if a need existed for reference information within the law enforcement and criminal justice community and if such need did exist, to develop an outline design of a responsive system. The design was to be sufficiently explicit to allow an information systems contractor working with the Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to fill the need.

The outline design addresses three main issues - 1) a general concept of user information requirements, 2) the source material relating to those requirements and 3) the processing necessary to convert the source material into the products that users want. Certain priorities were essential in order to complete this study in six months. First priority was given to identifying user needs within LEAA and for the Police. Courts and Corrections proved to be less amenable to a brief study and only very general results could be obtained.

Both interview and questionnaire methods were used to collect information from individuals representing principal management echelons at LEAA and major, metropolitan police departments. A parallel effort concentrated on a review of active information resources and the documentary materials which could become the substance of a reference information service. The means for conveying and restructuring that information became the basis for

a concept of a National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

The results of our enquiry showed that a criminal justice reference service should be established as promptly as possible. The most prominently expressed need focused on the lack of a facility for communicating reference information. The law enforcement and criminal justice professionals plus the researchers who seek to assist them are becoming more widely engaged in experiments aimed at exceedingly complex problem areas. Each effort generates some new knowledge, whether it points to successful or unsuccessful steps to resolve a recognized problem. An awareness of what is going on at national, state, and local levels is critically needed. An exchange of information must be initiated through a mechanism for collecting, processing and disseminating the recorded experience or tests conducted throughout the law enforcement community. The National Criminal Justice Reference Service will fill part of this need. The new service should be encouraged to experiment in techniques to educate users and to develop special information packages for the differing groups.

Several general conclusions can be drawn from this study. We regard them as critical to the development of a system concept and user acceptance of its capabilities:

- o An information service must address its capabilities to action-oriented users. Unless this requirement is clearly recognized, no information handling system can fulfill law enforcement and criminal justice needs.

The implications of this conclusion relate primarily to restructuring scientific and technical literature to make explicit the connection between

the original research and its application.

- The potential user community is largely unfamiliar with reference information services. Without a carefully planned and implemented user orientation and education program, any system, however well designed, will be ineffective.

Both conclusions demonstrate the critical nature of user acceptance.

Where there is no predisposition to give particular confidence to an impersonal service and little if any experience with machine-supported systems, the establishment of a sound user-system-interface is vital.

USER NEEDS

In 1967 the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice stated that: "Probably the greatest technical limitation on the system's ability to make its decisions wisely and fairly is that the people in the system often are required to decide issues without enough information." While decrying the lack of both basic research and operational knowledge in the criminal justice field, the Commission pointed out that:

The criminal justice system is faced with too urgent a need for action to stand back for a generation and engage in research. At the same time, self-education is one of the system's crucial responsibilities. Only by combining research with action can future programs be founded on knowledge rather than on informed or perceptive guesswork. Moreover, once knowledge is acquired, it is wasted if it is not shared ... The system must devote itself to acquiring and diffusing knowledge ...

The past few years have witnessed a rapid growth in the number of specialized information systems created to service specific target populations. These efforts have met with varying degrees of success. Many of these systems were developed in an enthusiastic response to new technological developments geometrically expanding existing capabilities for storing and processing large quantities of information. True, the technological capabilities seem unlimited, but it is precisely because the possibilities are so great that it is essential to begin not with the technology, but with the user population which the technology is being mobilized to serve.

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This failure to begin with user needs in establishing an information system is responsible for many of the problems found in existing systems. Three of the major faults of machine-supported information systems are in large part the result of system designers attempts to "second guess" the information requirements of their users: (1) The "technology first" approach in deciding upon the content of a system usually results in the routine collection and computerization of whatever information exists.

2) Without a systematic identification of the characteristics of the user population, the uses to which information will be put and the full array of available information resources, there can be no specific guidelines for the collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization of information.

3) Current information systems have often been so concerned with the realization of immediate technical benefits that they have not taken advantage of the opportunity presented for both the articulation of current operations and the exploration of innovative new approaches.

Consequently, the first step in the design of an information system for a specific clientele must be the assessment of the information needs of that clientele in some degree of detail. This should include an enumeration of their functions, the actions that must be taken and a general categorization of the information required to take those actions. Information needs defined in these terms will be formulated in terms of subjects, the kinds of material (publications, reports, studies, etc.) and the sources from which such information is obtained. The "crash program" approach which has frequently been substituted for careful

analysis of information needs has resulted either in the establishment of conventional libraries masquerading as information centers or in the neglect of whatever useful services are offered by the very individuals whom such centers are intended to serve. It cannot be overemphasized that the major function of the modern information system is to provide services. The actual use of an information service must be the major criterion by which the success or failure of that undertaking can be judged.

Identification of Users

With its envisaged breadth, scope and accessibility, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) will be an invaluable tool to many segments of society. It will be most valuable to the Federal and State agencies which are involved in comprehensive planning for national criminal justice programs, and to the individual, direct service agencies and departments such as police, courts and corrections. However, other segments of society will benefit from such a reference service. These groups include the educational and research communities particularly those offering programs in the administration of justice and in police science, legislators, professional groups, other governmental agencies and the general public. There is no clearinghouse of information to serve this diversified group and, in fact, no one source where one might turn for reference materials on the administration of criminal justice.

It would be a formidable task to establish a comprehensive system which would meet all the information needs of all the potential user groups in a period of one year. Therefore, it was necessary to set priorities based on:

1. The organizational level of user (the management and policy level of the target groups would have a multiplier effect):
2. The degree of urgency of the problems and decisions confronting the users who could benefit from a reference information input;
3. The ease of designing and making operational a system to fill the target group's needs.

Using these criteria, priority groups were established. The first priority group, which should receive service within the first year, includes:

- A) The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice;
 - B) The fifty-six State Planning Agencies (SPA) and appropriate area and local authorities;
 - C) Police Management;
 - D) Legislative users (Congressional and State);
 - E) Other government agencies with an enforcement responsibility, and;
 - F) Private non-profit crime prevention and control groups.
- The second priority group, which should receive partial service beginning the second year, includes: A) Correctional Personnel and Institutions, and;
- B) Courts: The third priority group, which should also receive partial service within the second year, consists of the university and research community and the training community. The fourth priority group to receive a limited type of service at the end of the second year is the general public.

Sample Selection and Identification of User Needs

While the entire law enforcement and criminal justice community will eventually be served, it encompasses such a variety of people pursuing such diverse activities that a step-timing approach is necessary and has been structured into the design. The identification of the groups most directly related to the administration of criminal justice was based on discussions with LEAA, consultation with other experts, and some field work. A sample of potential reference users was then selected from each of these groups. A combination of approaches, including mailed questionnaires, expert opinion, group interviews, individual depth interviews, and telephone surveys was used to assess the perceived needs of the target audience. After collection and analysis of user needs, the groups were assigned priorities by which they would be phased into the reference system.

A discussion of the selection of potential reference users and findings follows:

Group I Priority Users (those for whom the system will provide service within the first year):

LEAA:

This category includes the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice in Washington and the LEAA regional offices. Since LEAA and the National Institute are focal points for much of the research and planning activity in the criminal justice

field, their needs must be a first consideration in establishing the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. With their responsibility for research and development, as well as funding, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the activities of the State Planning Agencies, their information requirements span the range of needs in the criminal justice system as a whole. It is estimated that 175 potential LEAA users must receive some service in this group.

Fifteen in-depth interviews were held with the top administrators and program administrators from LEAA and the Institute. Significant information requirements indicate a need for summary, report type data and for substantive technical information:

- o Up-to-date information on "who is doing what" in the criminal justice field.
- o Substantive information on LEAA programs and field activities as well.
- o Current information on funding and the states to which funds were distributed. (A function of GMLS)
- o Referral service, promoting information exchange by referring users to individuals or organizations who might be of help on a specific problem.
- o "Translation" of reports from LEAA grants into useful, how-to-do-it information for other potential users.
- o Information about unsuccessful programs and why they failed to work as well as about successful programs and the circumstances which led to their success.

Another major perceived need was one for statistical information of various kinds. (This need is being filled through a special LEAA program). Data requirements included such areas as current information

about state and local correctional activities; demographic data by city, state, region, as well as national; crime data; and international criminal justice data.

Also mentioned were requests for management information (a function of the GMIS project), state-of-the-art technical summaries, cost-effectiveness studies, and a repository for model legislation.

Finally, many in this group stressed the importance of an educational component of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. As one participant put it: "We should make sure that the people who are eligible to use it know how to use it." Several participants pointed out that the system would have to create its own market. It will be necessary to make potential users aware of the importance of information as an operational resource. One LEAA official remarked that: "You're going to have to create the demand for information; they don't feel a need for it."

Once this need is perceived, the reference service will have to compete with other types of information sources. It will capture an audience by providing better and more economical information and reference services. An Institute member summed up this important point:

I don't think the system should be a passive system. I think it has to be an active, aggressive one. What I mean by non-passive is that the reference service should collect its own audience - it should collect the people who have a need for information.

STATE PLANNING AGENCIES:

This group includes the fifty-six State Planning Agencies and appropriate area and local authorities (for example, an area authority is the Association of Bay Area Governments in California). This user group is estimated at 112 individuals in the SPA's and 250 in regional and local planning.

With their responsibility for the distribution of funds, the State Planning Agencies are expected to be among the most intensive users of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Since they directly or indirectly support the largest portion of law enforcement projects, the importance of relevant, up-to-date and easily accessible reference information for them must not be understated. Their responsibilities for planning action programs, evaluating program grant requests, supervising the implementation of these programs, coordinating the overall plans, etc., necessitate access to extensive background information in both technical and operational terms.

Accordingly, this group was the most intensively studied to determine their perceptions of their informational needs. A group interview of seventeen directors of SPA's held at the Justice Department provided preliminary data and suggested areas to be covered by more intensive study. In-depth interviews were carried out with a number of SPA directors and other personnel in New York, Massachusetts, Maryland and California. Finally, a two-page questionnaire was mailed to the fifty-six State Planning Agencies. For each agency two questionnaires were sent; one for

the head of the organization and another for one of his staff for whom he considered it appropriate. Forty-seven questionnaires from thirty-two states were returned.

Several common needs constantly recurred in these three assessments of user needs. The findings of the group and on-site interviews will be mentioned briefly. A more detailed presentation of the questionnaire tabulations follows.

The point emphasized in the group discussion was the need to know the following:

1. What programs have been undertaken in the past, with an evaluation of their effectiveness, and;
2. What programs and projects are currently underway, with a status report as to how they seem to be working. (This will be a function of the Management Information System soon to be developed.)

In brief, the directors saw the information/reference service as a means of letting them know "what was going on in the rest of the world" now and, at the same time, of providing them with the names of people to contact to facilitate exchange of information with their peers. In addition, several directors felt that the information clearinghouse could facilitate greater coordination between various federal agencies in the criminal justice field and the states, as well as between the individual states themselves.

In the on-site interviews the same stress upon what other people are doing again took precedence over all information needs. This group expressed a desire for such things as:

- summaries of all state plans and programs with follow-up summaries and evaluations of progress to avoid "inventing the wheel fifty new

ways" ("negative information," or information on why a program did not work was especially desired); 

- statistical information about their own areas and about the criminal justice field in general;
- information on types of funding available from other agencies;
- abstracts of major criminal cases being argued in courts.

This group stated that presently used sources, such as the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) abstracting service and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) retrieval system were useful in content but were limited to research literature. The proposed reference service should have readily accessible information on a prompt feedback basis and should be able to re-package the vast amount of available information to meet specific needs of specific audiences. Other types of services envisioned in the NCJRS providing for the dissemination of both information exchange as well as the traditional literature include: abstracts, question-answering capabilities, and information about how to use the system. In other words, the system should have the capability of linking a broad category of materials. This group also suggested that, in addition to Police, courts and corrections, other types of operating agencies should be included. City managers and planners, rehabilitation and welfare welfare agencies, even employment agencies and educational systems all come into contact with the criminal justice system at various points. A two-way exchange of information would provide for a more coordinated and concerted effort at solving criminal justice problems, to the mutual benefit of all.

The mail survey of the SPA's reinforced the prevailing opinion that the reference service should go beyond providing only traditional library services, and should provide literature and program information in such a way as to facilitate user interaction with other users.

In answer to the question "from what sources did you obtain the reference information?" for their most recent specific problem there were thirty-five reports of "colleagues," thirty-three of "own files," and twenty-three reports of "department files." "Most useful" sources were, as might be expected, these same three categories, while "outside libraries" led the array of "least useful" information services. The reference information obtained from these sources was used thirty-three times directly, and thirty-five times as background information. Only one of the forty-seven respondents thought he could have completed the critical incident task just as well without it.

The quantity of information desired from reference sources was, in most instances (29) cited as a "fair sampling." Only five people would have been satisfied with one or two items, and only thirteen felt that it was necessary to get all that was available on a topic.

Once again, information about other on-going programs and projects was cited as the high priority information need. There were thirty-one request for "brief summaries of what is being done in law enforcement and criminal justice," followed by twenty-eight requests for "specific answers to specific questions."

The delay time tolerable between requesting and receiving information was indicated as being, in most instances quite short, with days or hours mentioned most frequently.

POLICE:

Ten in-depth interviews were held with police personnel. They were police chiefs, deputy police chiefs, a community relations officer, and two directors of planning and research departments. Expert advice was also obtained from LEAA, the Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. From analysis of these interviews it was concluded that an initial service must be available to: 1) Chiefs of Police of departments of more than 20 officers, 2) police management in general, and 3) directors of planning and research. It is estimated that individuals from the above categories who will find the initial services useful total about 30,000 police.

Police representatives interviewed expressed a desire for up-to-date information on what others were trying in the field. One officer emphasized his need to know about work actually in progress without having to wait for final reports on programs and projects. The police managers were interested in "what the departments with the most enlightened administration have found effective" in various program areas. They also indicated their interest in the referral function of the NCJRS which would help them make contact with knowledgeable people on specific problems when help was wanted.

A number of internal information needs were indicated. The police wanted more information on procedures and techniques which would help them in their managerial and administrative responsibilities. They also wanted information on the evaluation of any new hardware developments as these applied to the criminal justice field. The officers also mentioned

more traditional literature service, such as abstracts, reprints, state-of-the-art summaries, which they felt would be beneficial.

OTHERS:

Other groups which the system should serve will in turn increase the number of individuals actually aided by it. These include legislators and legislative committees, other governmental agencies, professional groups, and private non-profit crime prevention and control groups. By providing service to these individuals and/or groups, the system will allow a multiplier effect to develop. (Using the term "multiplier effect" in this case is to say that once an individual has received the information he requested, he will pass this information on to many other potential users.)

The estimated number (based on discussion with experts) of these individuals and/or groups to be served by the system during the first year is:

A) Legislators and legislative committees, 600; B) Other governmental agencies with an enforcement responsibility, 25; C) Professional groups, 40; and D) Private non-profit crime prevention and control groups, 30.

Group II Priority Users (those for whom the system will provide service beginning in the second year)

COURTS:

Our nation's court system is an area which lacks precise figures about the number of courts at each jurisdictional level and the number of court personnel. Moreover, the complexity of the entire court system is such that a short term study could not produce adequate data for a definitive

analysis. We were able, however, to make a rough estimate of the size of this potential user group - 10,000 judges and court personnel.

The relatively new Association of State Court Administrators was contacted and telephone interviews were arranged with four court administrators in different parts of the country. All expressed the belief that the establishment of the new institute at Denver, Colorado for the training of court administrators is an encouraging trend in their field. However, all reported great frustration in their attempts to manage the courts in which they are working. They all expressed needs that could be filled by a reference service, such as:

- o Information on how other courts are solving their problems
- o Designs for data collection
- o Budget planning and control
- o Evaluation and use of technology
- o Information on court management
- o Model court systems
- o Model docketing systems

The principal data deficiencies mentioned are indicative of the management problems that beset courts in general. Prominently expressed was the need to study these problems and for funds to perform such studies:

Data on numbers and kinds of cases handled in their own courts.

Analysis of hearing and scheduling delays in their own courts.

Analysis of offenders, offences and sentencing procedures.

Probation and Parole officers expressed a need for information on resources available in their own communities, and for suggestions on developing and using such resources. The bulk of their requests had to do with case management, especially for techniques dealing with narcotics addicts, alcoholics, violent offenders, and youthful offenders.

Others interviewed in the correctional field included classification officers with responsibility over all aspects of the offender's life within an institution. They stated their need for information on their assigned offenders, as well as external information needs for case management, case work techniques and vocational counseling. Finally, a staff psychologist indicated the following needs specific to his area:

- information on assessment of personality variables;
- results of research efforts in correctional settings;
- personality characteristics of inmates;
- information on techniques of training institutional personnel on how to work with inmates;
- aid in educating the public and the politicians.

*News Summary
9/10/1964*

Respondents in all areas of the correctional field indicated a need for abstracts, newsletters, bibliographies, book reviews, etc. They also suggested more active information exchanges through briefings, conferences, workshops, etc.

Group III Priority Users (System providing partial service within the second year):

A special discussion of the education and research community is necessary because it is believed that members of this community may

in the future play an important role as contributors as well as users of the reference information service. The education and research community was originally designated as a prominent user group because of its role in preparing manpower for the criminal justice field, and in studying and producing original research related to the field. A comprehensive sample was drawn for study. However, early in our data collection phase, we jointly determined with LEAA that this community was not to be considered a prime initial user of the service. Therefore, only a small portion of this study was devoted to a survey of the perception of user needs in the education and training area. But despite this, we feel that two basic findings are relevant.

The first relates to the informal exchange of ideas which many scientific researchers rely upon for their sources of up-to-date information but which is not well established in the area of law enforcement and criminal justice. Whereas scientific researchers attend many workshops and conferences, this is not the case with the criminal justice discipline because the opportunities for such interchange are not as well developed.

The operators of the system should consider ways of setting up some mechanisms for more direct exchange of information. The sponsorship of workshops, institutions, training laboratories (such as The National Council on Crime and Delinquency's "Institutes for Action" in which clients are given the benefit of face-to-face dialogue with information specialists in their field of interest) might not exceed the scope of the planned reference service.

The second point relates to the need for education and training for the field of criminal justice; the resources are not sufficient. New programs must be established and old ones must be expanded. With these will go research efforts related generally to the field, and efforts directed specifically to the most efficient, and effective method of educating and training personnel. The type of information and knowledge contained in an information service will be an invaluable tool for the educators and trainers.

As these programs gain more experience and knowledge, they can make a contribution to the reference service. The established disciplines which feed into the criminal justice system in most cases will use texts and materials already in book form, but relevant up-to-date materials to use as supplements to basic textual materials are needed. They need materials that are basic, relevant, easily read and to the point. Abstracts, state-of-the-art reviews, bibliographies, etc., would be extremely appropriate for training use.

It has steadily grown more apparent that not only can the academic and research community gain from the information service, but the service and the criminal justice community as a whole can greatly gain from it.

Group IV Priority Users (System providing a limited type of service at the end of the second year)

The information needs of the general public in the area of law enforcement and criminal justice are difficult to estimate both in substance and volume. It is possible that hundreds of individuals could make some use of

INPUTS TO A NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE

Reference Center Concept

The technical information requirements of the several user communities can be substantially fulfilled from an information service built upon the professional literature of law enforcement if two conditions are met:

1. Material must be collected from all potential sources.
2. The content must be analyzed in depth to permit ready and effective access.

None of the existing services in the law enforcement community meet these two conditions because their functions are limited either by the mission they are intended to serve or through constraints of inadequate funds.

In view of the more comprehensive mission of LEAA it is important to recognize that its documentary resources will need to be exhaustive and its processing should be sufficiently intensive to meet the needs of several classes of users.

If the law enforcement community is to profit from experimental and research efforts, the products of those efforts must be analyzed from the user's viewpoint. Once a set of procedures is established, the analytical processing can reflect dynamic changes through continual feedback from those who use the service. In this study we have examined the source material that seems most likely to offer the substantive basis on which the desired services can be constructed. We have also reviewed existing services that produce or process information for segments of the law enforcement community with a view to determining how those services can be utilized by NCJRS.

Kinds of Technical Information Required

The user needs which were either indicated during our study or implied by the kinds of products provided by existing services suggest that there are several types of information that should be available to the user. The list below should be refined after a more detailed analysis of the functions, decisions and actions characteristic of potential users. It does, however, broadly define both the nature of source material that NCJRS will need to collect and the modes of access that should be provided.

- Experience gained from application of methods or techniques.
- Results obtained from research of a given problem.
Example: Cost/effectiveness studies
- Specific, factual answers to inquiries.
Example: Demographic data and its correlation with crime data
- Findings, produced by tests of equipment for reliability, effectiveness, etc.
Example: Aerosol Irritant Projectors (International Association of Chiefs of Police - IACP)
- Search for literature on the initial stage of a new research project.
Example: Problems in Police-Community Relations: A Review of the Literature (National Council on Crime and Delinquency -NCCD)

Clearly, any of these kinds of inquiry can relate to a wide range of subjects. There may also be variation in the amount of detail, or considerations of dates of coverage, location and other variables which limit or expand the amount of material that is relevant to a particular inquiry. To meet those requirements, the material processed into the NCJRS system will need to be analyzed for:

Subjects

Nature of document

Source of document

Date (date of document, date of information)

Location (U.S., foreign, state, local)

Author or sponsor

Explicit or implied application

Sources of Information

There are three principal sources from which materials and information can be acquired. In its original form most of the primary literature appears in journals, project reports, transactions of meetings or in books dealing with problems of criminal justice. The volume of such material is difficult to estimate, particularly with respect to retrospective coverage. Some measure of the technical journal and research literature can be gained from data given by other organizations.

- 200 Journals on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD)
- 200 Journals with occasional articles (NCCD)
- 140 Journals abstracted for NIMH
- 75 Journals, subscriptions, U.S. Bureau of Prisons Library
- 1000 Research Projects processed annually by Science Information Exchange, Smithsonian Institution

Added to the published literature are the many research reports of universities and contractors, many of which are sponsored by LEAA, the State Planning Agencies, and other governmental agencies or private foundations.

Secondary services offer another source of information. These are index and abstract services such as the Crime and Delinquency Abstracts published by the National Clearinghouse for Mental Health Information. Other services not specifically devoted to criminal justice frequently contain references to material in this area. Among others, Psychological Abstracts, Index Medicus and U.S. Government Research and Development Reports

are of sufficient interest to be searched regularly. Their products are not substitutes for original documents, but provide a means of identifying and locating material that might otherwise remain unnoticed.

A third source of inputs is different in nature. This is the reference capability of existing services which can be called upon by NCJRS. Because of the role that these established facilities could assume in relation to the NCJRS, our initial study included a review of the following resources:

Aspen Systems Corporation

Bureau of Prisons Library

Clearinghouse for Federal Scientific and Technical Information

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Center for Law Enforcement Research and Information of the
International Association of Chiefs of Police (CLERI and IACP)

Department of Justice Library

LEAA Library

NASA Scientific and Technical Information System

National Council of Crime and Delinquency (NCCD)

National Clearinghouse for Mental Health Information

National Referral Center for Science and Technology (NRC)

Science Information Exchange (SIE)

However, the role of these other services is limited by their varied capacities and the information resources at their command. Each has been established to meet particular needs of a user community whose needs may differ from those being met by NCJRS. It will certainly be possible to capitalize on opportunities to prevent duplication of effort, but the

likelihood of direct transfer from another organization without re-processing information is problematic.

Two kinds of information services are represented in the organizations examined during this study: 1) Those maintaining machine-aided systems with stored information files, scheduled system outputs and retrospective search capabilities; 2) Conventional library type operations servicing an in-house community. Clearly there is a considerable range in the kinds of services available and in the amount of cooperative effort that could be generated in concert with NCJRS. Several of the machine-aided systems, such as ERIC and NASA encompass a broad range of subjects. Despite their large volume of materials and their computer facilities, these systems will have only a very small volume of information appropriate to NCJRS uses. Their value lies in their information handling capabilities for processing and disseminating rather than in the relevance of much of their material

Barriers to Compatibility

While the capabilities of existing services reflect overlap with the interests of NCJRS, there are certain barriers to compatibility which should be recognized. The more significant among these barriers include:

1. Different orientation based on in-house requirements.

Information is processed according to the identified needs of each organization - NCCD, NIMH, IACP, Bureau of Prisons, etc. A different slant, particularly in abstracts, may be essential

to make the same material clearly appropriate to the information needs of LEAA, Police Departments and State Planning Agencies.

2. Research emphasis versus LEAA action emphasis.

Much of the material, especially in NIMH and NCCD, is collected and disseminated to a research community. The same literature may well be essential for application to actual law enforcement problems, but will need to be analyzed from that viewpoint.

3. Levels of Processing.

There is a considerable difference between the intensive processing of NIMH, which has detailed indexing of about 50 key terms for each abstract, and other organizations such as IACP, which are limited to a single subject in the form of a catalog entry.

Dissemination

A principal function of NCJRS will be to provide users with an awareness of useful material and to provide copies of selected items to those who can use them. A number of mechanisms for performing this function have been popularized recently, under the name of Selective Dissemination. On a large scale, these techniques have often proved to be less than successful because they lack discrimination. NCJRS will be particularly vulnerable because it will be serving many users who are not only unfamiliar with technical information systems but also with the hazards of imprecise requests which result in their receiving a flow of unwanted material. A combination of user education and careful control of paper flow is critical to the development of user acceptance and confidence. Particularly at the initial stage of NCJRS development, potential users must be protected from excessive distribution.

The chief obstacle to the formulation of an effective dissemination

program is the large number of individuals who comprise the law enforcement community, and the different segments to which they belong. Given this aggregate which numbers many thousands, individual dissemination procedures would be an unmanageable task. To surmount this problem, a compromise solution is suggested: Key individuals whose actions and decisions have a great impact on major areas of law enforcement should be served by direct dissemination of significant material. Standard dissemination of certain types of material could then be established for categories of users.

problems by the application of management techniques. The role of the reference service would be stressed in these sessions.

techniques; 5) A heavy emphasis on people-to-people interaction must be available in the system, and 6) A continuing evaluation of the service must be made by the Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. Those services which do not work should be terminated and new approaches should be tried.

The need has been clearly demonstrated even from the small sample of individuals surveyed in this study. A body of reference information which can assist the law enforcement and criminal justice community is available and the technology for developing the needed services is well developed. With these resources, an effective reference information system can be implemented with an assurance of successful performance.