

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH,
MANAGEMENT, AND INFORMATION
SYSTEM

EXPERIMENTAL ACTION PROGRAM

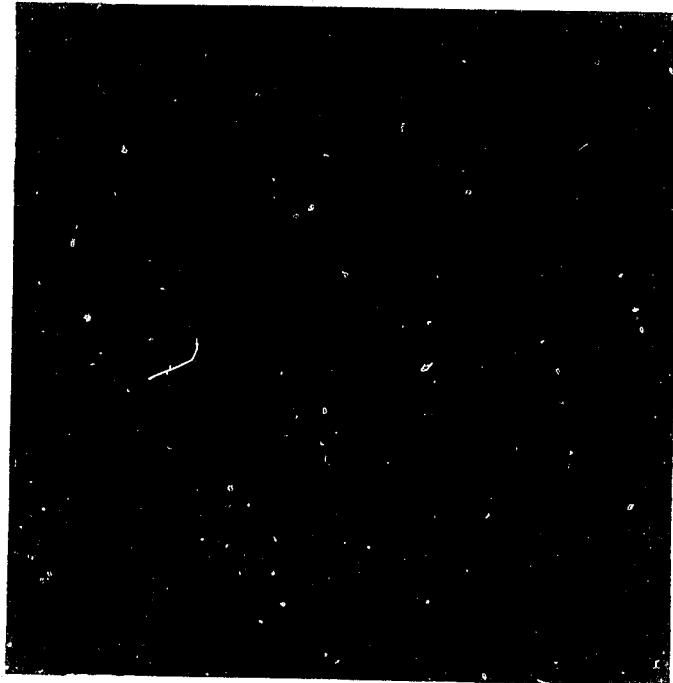
Prepared for the County of Monroe

Graduate School of Management
Rochester-Monroe County
Criminal Justice Pilot City Program

University
of
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Prepared for the County of Monroe

by the

ROCHESTER-MONROE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE PILOT CITY PROGRAM
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ABSTRACT

The Rochester-Monroe County Criminal Justice Pilot City Program is responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of innovative action projects developed for local criminal justice agencies. It is within this framework that the program on the Criminal Justice Research, Management, and Information System (CJRMIS) has been developed by the Pilot City staff in collaboration with the Departmental Coordinator of the Fourth Judicial Department and the Crime Control Coordinator of Monroe County. In June, 1973, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration awarded the County of Monroe \$314,094 in discretionary funds for CJRMIS. The 14-month project commenced in August, 1973, after approval by the Monroe County Legislature, and is currently in its initial stages.

CJRMIS is a computer information system for the courts and related agencies in Monroe County. Potential users include the City and County Courts, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, the Pre-Trial Release Program, the Adult Probation Department, the Jail, and the Commissioner of Jurors. CJRMIS will provide accurate information to users on active cases and will perform tasks such as report generation and trial scheduling support. In addition, the data captured will enable managers, agency heads, and researchers to study the criminal justice system and improve its efficiency.

The project will be completed in two parts. Phase I, which will last 4 months, consists of a system study, establishment of systems requirements and specifications, and implementation and evaluation plans. Upon approval of Phase I, Phase II will proceed with the system design, system flow charts, programming, testing, and implementation of the system. Evaluation in accordance with the plan devised in Phase I will be coordinated by the Pilot City staff.

The text that follows only describes Phase I of CJRMIS, the system's study phase. At the end of Phase I, a detailed systems specifications and an implementation plan will be submitted for approval to the necessary parties before the initiation of Phase II.

Pilot City Publication #8
Action Program #3

NOTE: SINCE THIS PUBLICATION WENT TO PRESS, THE NAME OF THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN CHANGED TO "PROSPER": PROGRAM FOR SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of the Rochester-Monroe County Criminal Justice Pilot City Program expresses its appreciation to the several individuals and agencies who assisted in developing and implementing CJRMIS. Among those who devoted their time and interest in reviewing the project are the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee of the Pilot City Program, the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board, the Regional Office of L.E.A.A., the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, and the County and Court Crime Control Coordinators serving Rochester and Monroe County.

Special appreciation is extended to those who collaborated with our staff in developing the details of the project:

Douglas C. Dodge, Esq., Departmental Coordinator, Office of Criminal Justice Projects, Appellate Division, Fourth Department

Mr. Harry Salis - Seventh District Coordinator, Office of Crime Control Projects, Appellate Division, Fourth Department

Mr. James Davies - Crime Control Coordinator, Monroe County

Mr. Frank Alan - Systems Specialist, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

Pilot City staff participants in this project were Richard Thaler, Program Associate; Lois Horwitz, Research Analyst; Charles Grady, Research Assistant; and John Robbins, Research Assistant. As a technical service of the Pilot City Program, Richard Thaler will coordinate research activities for this project. Douglas C. Dodge, Esq. is the Project Director.

INTRODUCTION

The overall objective of CJRMIS will be to utilize up-to-date information technology and methods to improve the operation and management of the court system by providing information faster, more efficiently and with greater security, as well as providing information and research techniques which have not been available previously. CJRMIS will be designed to eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort, to transfer information between criminal justice agencies, to speed the flow of clients through the court system, to gather information that will allow for the utilization of modern research and management techniques, and to provide additional information with greater accuracy to decision makers. The objectives will be met via a two-phase plan, consisting of a systems study, followed by system design and implementation.

I. PHASE I DESCRIPTION

The goal of Phase I is to study the needs of the user agencies and to establish objectives and specifications for the information system best suited to their needs within reasonable budgetary limitations. A major source for the study will be the report prepared by Stochastics Research Corporation¹ which relates directly to these problems. No

¹ Final Report: A Systems Study of the Monroe County Courts, Stochastics Research Corporation, May 15, 1972.

unnecessary duplication of their efforts will be made. A complete outline is given below, including those sections where the Stochastic study will be used frequently.²

1) The study will begin by describing the paths the individuals follow through the criminal justice system and the resulting flows of information. This path begins with an arrest so the study starts in the police department, and as it is worked through each of the succeeding agencies (Pre-Trial Release, Public Defender, District Attorney, Jail, Criminal Courts, and Probation) the information flows will be analyzed. This will include three types of information flows: intramural flows within user agencies, flows among user agencies, and flows between user agencies and those outside the CJRMIS system (such as the New York State Identification and Intelligence System, the Judicial Conference, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Corrections, Police Departments, etc.). The data elements collected at each agency, how they are collected, and how they are transferred will be documented and the results of this study will be made available to all user agencies, the Regional Office of L.E.A.A., and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

Misdemeanants in Monroe County who are arrested outside the City of Rochester are tried in a town or village justice of the peace court. There are 22 such courts in Monroe County. At this stage, it

² The tasks described in sections 1), 2), 3), 4), and 7) are analyzed, in part, in the Stochastics Study (ibid).

would be impractical to include all of the courts in CJRMIS. Information needs of these courts will be considered during the study, however, and an attempt will be made to include in the system design at least one town as a prototype.

2) A distinction must be made between information and records. The study primarily is concerned with information management rather than record management. However, the record keeping needs of the user agencies must be evaluated to determine the interface between these two functions. (For example, the information system might include library functions such as providing locations for manual or microfilm records.) The information system may also eliminate the need for some previously necessary records. A study of the legal storage requirements also will be undertaken, with the goal of reducing inter-agency overlap in record keeping, wherever legally possible.

3) An analysis of clerical functions within each agency will be made to identify services which the computer information system might provide while it collects necessary data. The goal here will be to make CJRMIS useful to the people in the criminal justice system who have to get the paperwork processed, as well as provide information to decision makers and managers. The results of this analysis will greatly affect the kind of hardware which is adopted. Particular emphasis will be placed on the study of the automation of data capture procedures.

4) Key decision points throughout the system will be studied carefully, with attention focused on such questions as: What decisions

are being made? How are these decisions made? What variables are considered to be important by the decision makers? What other data would be used if it were available? CJRMIS will then be designed to collect the data necessary to support these decisions properly, and to provide these data to the decision makers. This will allow the development of a system designed to provide to decision makers, at a later point in time, statistical analyses of these choices based on previous outcomes.

5) Another area which will be studied involves the information requirements for management in the user agencies. For each agency an attempt will be made to identify those variables which can be used by management to measure the performance of their part of the system. Variables will include such things as cases processed, time spent in the system, time spent in court by type of crime, length of queues and backlogs, etc. Once the data needed to make management decision is defined, every effort will be made to design CJRMIS to be able to produce these data.

6) Other L.E.A.A. and National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice funded court information systems or related projects such as PROMIS³, JURIS⁴, JUSSIM⁵, etc., will be studied and eva-

³ Prosecution Management Information System, United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia.

⁴ St. Louis Regional Juvenile Referral Information System, St. Louis Juvenile Court.

⁵ Jussim, an Interactive Computer Program for Analysis of Criminal Justice System, Urban Systems Institute, School of Urban and Public Affairs, Carnegie-Mellon University.

luated. Concepts which seem to have worked well will be adopted where possible. Where L.E.A.A. owns software packages, the use of those packages will be investigated for possible cost savings. The methodology used to judge whether these projects would be useful will be documented.

7) Once the initial study of needs is completed the analysis of hardware possibilities will begin. Since various hardware systems will have different capabilities and capacities, decisions regarding systems design will be made concurrently with decisions about hardware configurations.⁶ The final hardware specification decision will be based on cost effectiveness and cost benefit analyses. The cost effectiveness study will assure that the final system designed is the least cost method of providing that set of services. The cost benefit analyses will determine whether the benefits of each particular service, and the system as a whole, justify their respective cost outlays over time.

8) Any Pilot City project must have an evaluation built into the design to measure the impact of the changes brought about by the new system. In some cases, the evaluation will be as important as the project itself, in that it will help guide other cities considering similar projects. Because of the importance of an evaluation, the Phase I study period will include an examination of alternative eva-

⁶ To comply with an L.E.A.A. request, the compatibility of each potential hardware system with mobile terminals will be determined.

uation techniques. Thus, the study will not only produce a system specification for CJRMIS, but also an evaluation design. The actual evaluation will be coordinated by the Pilot City staff after CJRMIS has been implemented and has had time to impact on the system.

At this point, it is anticipated that the general evaluation technique will be that known as the post-implementation audit. This report will be prepared periodically to judge whether CJRMIS is meeting its stated objectives. CJRMIS will generate much of the information necessary for such an evaluation. While the Pilot City staff will undertake the first audit, plans will be made for the local authorities to assume responsibility for subsequent audits. Results of the audits will be used to identify problem areas or bottlenecks in the operational system and to suggest ways to deal effectively with them. Used in such a manner, the system audit can greatly improve management and control of the criminal justice system.

The audit will measure the effectiveness of the system's hardware as well as the effectiveness of its procedures. The consultant used in Phase II will be able to determine the data and methods needed for measuring the effectiveness of the hardware -- such measures of performance as machine down time, machine utilization reports, and compile and test time. Evaluation will also be made of the effect CJRMIS data has on the operation of the criminal justice system. One measure used will be the flow of people through the courts. A technique similar to the "Snap-Shot Spin Around" proposed by the National Center for

Prosecution Management might be used to measure backlogs at different points in the judicial process and to determine the average time it takes for a case to flow through the system. A sample of such data could be obtained prior to implementation of CJRMIS for comparison purposes. Post implementation audits would then reveal the impact of CJRMIS on this vital aspect of the judicial process. Similarly, the audit and police data could reveal the amount of time the police must spend in court giving testimony, the number and magnitude of delays caused by failure of witnesses to appear when requested, and similar items on which CJRMIS may have impact.

II. PHASE I RESEARCH RESOURCES

The bulk of the work will be done by a research team coordinated by members of the Pilot City staff. In addition, Professor Andrew Vazsonyi, head of the Department of Computer Information Systems in the University of Rochester's Graduate School of Management will participate as a consultant member of the research team. One of Professor Vazsonyi's roles will be to help design the study. Since he has had much experience in creating new computer information systems in many different applications, he should bring substantial expertise to the team and assure a highly competent study. The other full-time members of the research team will include: two research assistants with experience in computer information systems and with prior EDP backgrounds who will spend a substantial amount of their time in user

agencies determining needs to supplement those materials which already exist; representatives of local agencies and consultants. In addition, the County of Monroe will hire a systems specialist for the criminal justice area whose sole responsibility will be to assist with the design and implementation of CJRMIS. One of his major roles during Phase I will be liaison with the county data processing center. Once CJRMIS is implemented, he will have responsibility for maintaining the system and making any modifications which are subsequently agreed to by the user group. Qualifications for this job will include substantial experience in computer systems applications. Another similar individual is available in the courts. The Fourth Judicial Department has received a grant from the Division of Criminal Justice Services which provides for one systems specialist who will play a major role in assessing the needs of the courts. All the other user agencies will be represented on a user committee under the general guidance of the Project Director to suggest ways in which CJRMIS can help with their particular needs.

Consultants will be hired as needed for specific, well-defined parts of the study. They will be used where the lack of time, manpower, or expertise will not permit the research team to do the study itself. The greatest need for consultant help will probably be in the hardware area. Consultants will be used to assure that the hardware configuration chosen is both fully capable of running the system and yet cost-effective. This may require simulating CJRMIS to predict storage requirements, response times, etc. The consultants who help

with this hardware decision will necessarily be involved nearly from the beginning of the study to assure that all the required data are collected.

Another related problem which will require consultant help is that of communications. CJRMIS will require data from other sources such as NYSIIS and local police departments. Additionally, the towns in Monroe County may wish to utilize both the Rochester Police Department INFOSYSTEM and CJRMIS, and their needs should be considered.

Since design of the evaluation of CJRMIS is also being completed in Phase I, it is anticipated that some consultant assistance will be used for this task.

Finally, the advice of individuals or firms that have implemented court information systems elsewhere will be sought.

III. TIMETABLE

The following is an approximate schedule for the two phases of this project.

August 15 - December 15, 1973 -- Phase I. At the end of the study, a detailed systems specifications and an implementation plan will be submitted to all concerned parties for their consideration. These parties include Region II of L.E.A.A., the New York State Divi-

sion of Criminal Justice Services, the Pilot City Program Steering Committee⁷, and all the heads of the user agencies. It is hoped that all the responses, and approval by L.E.A.A. Region II and the Steering Committee can be obtained within a month.

January 15, 1974 -- The specifications for bids will be prepared by the Phase I research team. Consultants will be permitted four to six weeks to submit bids and proposals stating how they would accomplish the job and their qualifications. These proposals would be reviewed and commented upon by the research team. The choice will then be made by a four member committee consisting of representatives of the courts, the county, the city, and the Pilot City Program.

March 15, 1974 -- The software contract will be awarded. Work will then begin under the supervision of the court and county systems analysts. The Pilot City staff may provide assistance upon request. The consultant will write the programs, test the system, supervise the purchase and installation of the hardware, and finally educate the users. Expected completion date for the operational system is August 31, 1974.

⁷ The Pilot City Program Steering Committee includes the City Manager; County Manager; Presiding Judge of the Fourth Department, Appellate Division; and the Pilot Program Director.

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