

LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (LEAA)

POLICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Police Management Information System

REPORT NUMBER: 76-073-050

FOR: North Central Texas Council of Governments - Arlington, Texas

CONTRACTOR: Public Administration Service
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FORWARD

In early 1976 the North Central Texas Council of Governments embarked on a pilot project for local law enforcement agencies in the Dallas-Ft. Worth metropolitan area. The project was to utilize the computational capacity of intelligent computer terminals currently in use on the Texas Law Enforcement Teletype Network to develop an integrated medium scale police management information system.

After the normal request and bidding process, the hardware and software vendors were selected to implement the project. Subsequently, the Council of Governments determined that additional technical expertise was desirable to assist them in monitoring and evaluating the development of the project; therefore, in March of 1976, Mr. Fred W. Keithly -- Director of Criminal Justice for the North Central Texas Council of Governments requested technical assistance from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). LEAA reviewed and approved the technical assistance request, and an expert consultant was assigned to handle the project.

Since the project was scheduled to extend over a 12 to 13 month period, it was determined that consultanting assistance would be needed periodically throughout the project. The first phase of the project was completed on or about the first week of July, 1976. Thus, the North Central Texas Council of Governments requested the consultant to make the first of his on-site visits on July 14-15, 1976. This report documents the technical assistance provided during that visit.

It should be noted however, that this report only addresses the first phase of the project (Microfilm Arrest/Identification Record portion). While on site, the consultant also reviewed all other anticipated phases of the project to facilitate future evaluations concerning the project.

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

This particular task assignment, as defined by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, was to review and evaluate the hardware and software systems of the microfilm arrest/identification record portion of the project. The Council of Governments also requested the consultant to make an oral presentation of his findings to the project technical sub-committee, and to forward a subsequent written report.

To complete this task a comprehensive examination of the hardware and software systems was conducted, including several interviews with the following key project personnel:

Mr. Fred W. Keithly
North Central Texas Council of Governments
Director of Criminal Justice

Mr. Robert C. Hill
LEAA, Region 6

Mr. Byron Harrison
Grand Prairie Police Department

Mr. Seth Stevens
Joe M. Nall and Associates

Mr. Charles Vogel
Joe M. Nall and Associates

Mr. G. D. Bellamy
Multi-Information Systems, Inc.

SECTION II. UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

With the general task defined by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, and with the supplemental information (from Mr. Keithly) that the project hardware had been installed, the consultant determined that the following general steps must be completed:

1. Review the hardware and software specifications.
2. Review all minutes, correspondence, and supportive material of the project technical subcommittee.
3. Review all existing documentation on the system approach of the software vendors (File design, record layouts, source listings, etc.).
4. Interview the Council of Governments' Representative.
5. Attend a scheduled system demonstration.
6. Get "hands on" time to further evaluate the system.
7. Interview one or more users.
8. Interview the software vendors.
9. Make a presentation to the project technical subcommittee.

SECTION III. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

Upon arrival at the North Central Texas Council of Governments' offices the consultant interviewed Mr. Fred W. Keithly in order to identify specific tasks to be undertaken during the site visit, and to obtain historical background for the project. Mr. Keithly supplied the most current project documentation and was most helpful in providing background information for the project. After this initial interview, the consultant conducted a detailed review of all the documentation supplied, and also reviewed all minutes and proceedings of the project technical subcommittee.

At the suggestion of Mr. Keithly, a subsequent interview was held with Mr. Byron Harrison of the Grand Prairie Police Department. Mr. Harrison was selected because he had been instrumental in the project from inception, and had worked very closely with the software vendors in the project design and approach. Additionally, he was the most knowledgeable of the project users.

The interview with Mr. Harrison covered most of the technical and practical applications of the project, and was helpful in obtaining the "users viewpoint." Other users were contacted during the site visit, but all those questioned gave support to Mr. Harrison's viewpoint. Therefore, only Mr. Harrison was specifically named.

On the same day, the software vendors, in coordination with the Council of Governments, scheduled a demonstration of the microfilm arrest/identification record portion of the project at one of the user sites. (The Grapevine Police Department was selected because of its close proximity.) After about a 30 minute demonstration, the consultant was allowed "hands on" time to further test the software.

Following this testing, an in-depth interview and question period was held with the software vendors. Representing the software vendors (Joe M. Nall and Associates) were Mr. Seth Stevens, Mr. Charles Vogel and Mr. G.D. Bellamy (a subcontractor). Also present at the session were Mr. Robert C. Hall from LEAA Regional office, Mr. Keithly and Mr. Harrison. During this session the software vendor explained in detail the system design, approach, and the particular software application being reviewed. In addition, the vendors were questioned extensively about the existing documentation, the operational approach, and the remaining portions of the project. The remaining time of the first day was used to review the documentation, history, and progress of the project to date.

The first portion of the second day was used to review all major parts of the task with Mr. Keithly, and to prepare an oral presentation of

the consultant's findings and conclusions to the subcommittee.

SECTION IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following findings and conclusions were presented to the technical subcommittee.

1. The method the North Central Texas Council of Governments has chosen (project technical subcommittee with users as active members) to monitor the project has been very effective. The Council's approach has enabled the users to have significant input in the project, which is invaluable in guiding the software vendors in producing a viable end product. It also facilitates the exchange of ideas and experiences between user agencies, and allows mutual problems to be voiced and a mutual solution to be obtained.
2. The hardware selected for this project is cost effective and is adequate to allow project goals and designs to be accomplished.
3. The software vendors have successfully completed the micro-film arrest/identification record portion of the project as outlined by the software specifications.
4. Although the software vendors have written documentation to assist in day-to-day operation of the equipment, and the vendors are voicing recommendations as to the policies needed for the entire system function, there is a general lack of system documentation to ensure that users can maintain the system on an operational basis after the vendors have completed their contract.

SECTION V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are presented to the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the project technical subcommittee for their consideration.

1. The next phase of the project should be initiated, as soon as possible, to ensure the project will be completed as scheduled.
2. The North Central Texas Council of Governments, and the project technical subcommittee, should place additional emphasis on obtaining comprehensive system documentation in order to ensure the final product will be acceptable and responsive to user needs.

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