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Transferability

PROMIS
PROSECUTOR'S MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION SYSTEM
An Exemplary Project of LEAA

INSTITUTE FOR
LAW AND
SOCIAL RESEARCH
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PROMIS (Prosecutor's Management Information System) is a management informa-
tion system (computerized or manual) for public prosecution agencies and the courts.
Developed under a grant from the United States Department of Justice, Law Enforce-
ment Assistance Administration (LEAA), PROMIS has been in operation in Washington,
D.C., since January 1971 and is in various implementation stages in more than 30 other
jurisdictions.

LEAA has designated PROMIS an Exemplary Project. Such designation is reserved
for criminal justice programs judged outstanding, worthy of national attention, and
suitable for adoption by other communities.

The Institute for Law and Social Research (INSLAW) has prepared a series of 21
briefing papers to explain to nontechnical audiences of prosecutors, court administra-
tors, criminal justice planners, and members of the bar the underlying concepts of
management and organization inherent in PROMIS. It is expected that these briefings
will assist other jurisdictions to evaluate and when appropriate, implement PROMIS
in part or in its entirety. The implementation can range from adoption of the concepts
of management and organization, to the use of PROMIS forms and paperwork proce-
dures, to the application of the manual or semiautomated version of PROMIS, and,
finally, to the installation of the computer software.

Other PROMIS documentation produced by INSLAW under grants from LEAA
includes a handbook on *PROMIS For The Nonautomated or Semiautomated Office*,
research designs for using PROMIS data bases in statistical studies of criminal justice
policies, a six-volume set of computer software documentation, and a 20-minute color
documentary of PROMIS (16mm film or video cassette) for nontechnical audiences.
The 21 briefings are as follows:

1. Management Overview of PROMIS
2. Case Screening
3. Uniform Case Evaluation and Rating
4. Special Litigation (Major Violators) Unit
5. Witness Notification Unit
6. Paralegals
7. Comprehensive Training
8. Reasons for Discretionary and Other Actions
9. Counting by Crime, Case and Defendant
10. Research Uses of PROMIS Data
11. Uniform Crime Charging Manual
12. Police Prosecution Report
13. Crime Analysis Worksheet
14. Processing and Trial Preparation Worksheet
15. Police Intake Worksheet
16. Standardized Case Jacket
17. Interface with Other CJIS
18. Privacy and Security
19. Analysis of Costs and Benefits
20. Transferability
21. Optional On-Line Inquiry and Data Input Capability

PROMIS
BRIEFING SERIES *

The National Advisory Commission observed, "There is no question that change and adaptability have become require- ments for organizational viability in the criminal justice field. . . . Agencies must develop an ability to recognize needs for change and to plan solutions for these needs."[1]

In implementing required changes, jurisdictions often expend time, labor, and money independently reinventing the wheel. Such uneconomical and unproductive duplication of effort can be avoided insofar as the installation of a prosecutor-oriented management information system is con- cerned.

As the other publications in this Briefing Series have detailed, one such system--PROMIS--has demonstrated its value in the prosecutor's office in Washington, D.C., over a period of several years.[2] It has a proven track record. Indeed, by designating PROMIS as an Exemplary Project, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration has judged the system outstanding, worthy of national attention, and suitable for adoption by other communities.

But how adaptable is PROMIS? Is it suitable only for the larger jurisdictions? Must it be used in conjunction with a computer? And what assistance is available to local prose- cutors' offices to facilitate the transfer of PROMIS from Washington to their respective jurisdictions and to tailor its operation to local needs? The following pages address those and other questions, as well as indicate how such po- tential roadblocks as the following may be overcome:

- Obtaining funds to support the transfer effort.

- Planning an unfamiliar, technical project involving strict time schedules and procurement of services and hard- ware.

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- Employing new categories of personnel, such as system analysts, to implement and monitor PROMIS.

- Using contractors and consultants for the first time.

- Justifying costs and benefits of PROMIS to local legislatures.

Obviously, attempts to revamp concepts, strategies, and methods of operation are not accepted with equal enthusiasm by all. As noted a few years ago by a then chief prosecutor:

"There are some who decry these new approaches and insist that the only solution to the problems at hand is to have enough skilled, experienced prosecutors to handle each case carefully and methodically in the style of the idealized small town prosecutor.

"We are quick to agree that there is no substitute for skilled, experienced prosecutors. . . . What we are saying, however, is that in major urban centers it is unlikely that there will ever be enough skilled, experienced prosecutors and thus we must provide supplementary tools such as PROMIS to assure the proper level of performance."[3]

HOW ADAPTABLE IS PROMIS?

When referring to the adaptability or transferability of PROMIS, one must understand that what is adapted or transferred is not hardware but technology--that is, the thinking, logic, and knowledge ("software") which is applied to a wide range of prosecutory problems. Frequently, the most efficient way to apply PROMIS technology is through a computer and related equipment. In other cases, the technology is sufficiently flexible so that it can be applied manually. The manual (nonautomated) version of PROMIS[4] offers valuable procedures and approaches for prosecutors' offices whose size may not warrant computerization.

When utilized in conjunction with computer hardware, PROMIS has proved highly adaptable because:

1. It may be used with equipment of all major computer manufacturers inasmuch as its programs are written in ANSI/COBOL.[5]

2. It is the subject of ongoing research[6] aimed at modifying PROMIS to operate on minicomputers that are compatible

with ANSI/COBOL. This would permit users to select from
an even wider range of hardware. Such research is feasible
due, in large part, to the recent streamlining of PROMIS,
which now requires only 100K of core storage, maximum, a
requirement which could be further reduced by deleting cer-
tain features, decreasing table sizes, and overlaying program
segments.

    3. It is designed to permit the use of either disk or
tape storage devices. [7]

    4. It is compatible with all data collection and data
entry devices.

    5. It can accommodate on-line inquiries.[8]

    PROMIS adaptability was recognized recently by a consor-
tium of criminal justice agencies serving Milwaukee County
when they selected PROMIS to serve the court and the prose-
cutor. Their evaluation of alternative automated information
systems convinced them that PROMIS could also serve the in-
formational needs of their trial courts with but minor modi-
fication. Milwaukee also plans on using PROMIS for computer
assistance in scheduling of court hearings and tracking mo-
tions. Longer range plans call for including all the crim-
inal justice agencies under the PROMIS umbrella.

    The adaptability and transferability of PROMIS are also
evidenced by the wide disparity in the characteristics of
the prosecutors' offices implementing or planning to imple-
ment the system. The characteristics of some of those
jurisdictions are noted in the accompanying chart, which
highlights differences in the size of the offices, popula-
tions served, hardware, etc. Despite wide variations in the
nature of those jurisdictions, PROMIS has proved sufficiently
flexible to warrant implementation.

PROMIS AND THE BROKERAGE PROCESS

    PROMIS, of course, was not always available as a transfer-
able technology. It was originally developed for operation
in the Washington, D.C., prosecutor's office and contained
certain features that restricted its use to the equipment of
a very limited number of manufacturers. As noted above, un-
der an LEAA grant the Institute for Law and Social Research
(INSLAW) modified those features so that the system is no
longer dependent on a particular make of hardware.

Characteristics of Jurisdictions Transferring PROMIS

JURISDICTION	Population (000's)	Annual Criminal Case Load (000's)	Number of Prosecutors	Data Collection Centralized/Decentralized	On-Line Applications	Batch Applications	Computer Hardware	Cases Included in PROMIS - Felony, Misd.	System Serves Grand Jury	System Serves Court	System Serves Police	Status: C = Complete, IP = In Proc., P = Planning
NORTHCENTRAL												
Cook County, Illinois	6,000	13/	435	C	X	X	IBM	F&M	X	X		P
Marion County, Indiana	850	3/35	74	C	X	X	IBM	F& some M	X			C
Polk County, Iowa	286	2.4/4.8	18	C		X	IBM	F				P
Kalamazoo Co., Michigan	205	1.7/2.6	16	C		X	IBM	F&M				IP
Wayne County, Michigan	2,700	10/10	120	C		X	Burroughs	F				C
St. Louis Cir., Missouri	650	5.7/0	39	C	X	X	IBM	F	X			IP
St. Louis Co., Missouri	1,000	11	33	C		X	IBM	F&M				IP
Summit County, Ohio	550	1.5	17	C		X	Unk.	F				P
Milwaukee Co., Wisconsin	1,050	3.2/8.6	54	C	X	X	IBM	F&M	X	X		C
WEST												
Los Angeles Co., California	7,000	25/230	507	D	X	X	IBM	F				C
San Diego City, California	1,000	/20	27	C		X		M				IP
San Diego Co., California	1,591		115	D	X	X	IBM	F&M				IP

Characteristics of Jurisdictions Transferring PROMIS (Con't.)

JURISDICTION	Population (000's)	Annual Criminal Case Load (000's)	Number of Prosecutors	Data Collection Centralized/Decentralized	On-Line Applications	Batch Applications	Computer Hardware	Cases Included in PROMIS - Felony, Misd.	System Serves Grand Jury	System Serves Court	System Serves Police	Status: C = Complete, IP = In Proc., P = Planning
WEST (cont.)												
Jefferson Co., Colorado	233	2/	24			X	Honey-well	F&M				IP
Clark County, Nevada	350	4/3	40	C	X	X	IBM	F&M	X			IP
Bernalillo Co., New Mexico	350	2/	20	C		X	IBM	F				P
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	367		3	C		X	Honey-well	M				P
Oklahoma Co., Oklahoma	527	5.0/15.3	26	C		X	IBM	F&M		X		P
Tulsa, Oklahoma	401	/14	6	C		X	Unk.					P
Multnomah Co., Oregon	556	3.3/7.3	60	C	X	X	IBM	F		X		P
Salt Lake Co., Utah	500	8	28	C	X	X	IBM	F	X			C
Seattle, WA Public Defender	462	8*	33**	D	X	X	DEC	FMJ				P
NORTHEAST												
Plymouth Co., Massachusetts	330	1/.75	8 pt	D	X	X	IBM	F&M	X	X	X	P
Union County, New Jersey	550	6/0	35	C	X	X	Bur-roughs	F	X		X	IP
Suffolk County, New York	404	1.6/17.5	92	D	X	X	IBM	F&M				P

* Includes 2,100 Juvenile
** Assistant Public Defenders

Characteristics of Jurisdictions Transferring PROMIS (Con't.)

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JURISDICTION	Population (000's)	Annual Criminal Case Load (000's)	Number of Prosecutors	Data Collection Centralized/Decentralized	On-Line Applications	Batch Applications	Computer Hardware	Cases Included in PROMIS - Felony, Misd.	System Serves Grand Jury	System Serves Court	System Serves Police	Status: C = Complete, IP = In Proc., P = Planning/During
NORTHEAST (cont)												
New York Co., New York	1,700	30/30	199	C	X	X	IBM	F&M	X		X	IP
Richmond Co., New York	295	3.9	13	D	X	X	IBM	F&M	X		X	P
Bronx, New York	1,472	46	170	D	X	X	IBM	F&M	X		X	P
Kings County, New York	2,602	68	265	D	X	X	IBM	F&M	X		X	P
Queens County, New York	1,987	27.6	101	D	X	X	IBM	F&M	X		X	P
Nassau County, New York	1,500	5/20	100	C	X	X	IBM	F&M	X			P
Allegheny Co., Pennsylvania	1,605	7/8	64	C		X	Unk.	F&M				P
Erie County, New York	444	29	70	D	X	X	DEC	F&M	X	X	X	P
Essex County Court, NJ	393	12/	70	C	X	X	IBM	F		X		P
State of Rhode Island	950	4	24	D		X	IBM	F&M		X	X	C
SOUTH												
State of Alabama	3,444		181	D	X	X	Univac	F	X			IP
Pulaski Co., Arkansas	330	1.5/10	18	C	X	X	Varian	F&M	X		X	C

Characteristics of Jurisdictions Transferring PROMIS (Con't.)

JURISDICTION	Population (000's)	Annual Criminal Case Load (000's)	Number of Prosecutors	Data Collection Centralized/Decentralized	On-Line Applications	Batch Applications	Computer Hardware	Cases Included in PROMIS - Felony, Misd.	System Serves Grand Jury	System Serves Court	System Serves Police	Status: C = Complete, IP = In Proc., P = Planning
SOUTH (cont.)												
Leon County, Florida	135		17	D	X	X	IBM	F&M	X	X		IP
Palm Beach Co., Florida	450	4.12	28	C	X	X	IBM	F&M	X		X	P
Cobb County, Georgia	250	1.0	7	C	X	X	Bur-roughs	F		X	X	C
Jefferson Co., Kentucky	700	Unk	14	C	X	X	IBM	F	X			IP
Orleans Parish, Louisiana	600	3.7/3.0	69	C	X	X	Bur-roughs	F&M	X	X	X	C
Polk County, Florida	227	5	18	D		X	IBM	F&M		X	X	P
US District Ct. Washington, DC	750	1.2	75	C	X	X	IBM	F&M (Fed)	X	X		C
Superior Court Washington, DC	750	8.50/10	75	C	X	X	IBM	F&M	X		X	C
OTHER												
Puerto Rico	2,800	24/50	200	D	X	X	UNIVAC	F&M				IP

Once this was achieved, INSLAW was awarded an LEAA grant to initiate efforts to facilitate the transfer of PROMIS to other jurisdictions. During the first year of the transfer effort, PROMIS was implemented or was in various preimplementation stages in 16 jurisdictions, which serve a population of about 20 million. Subsequently, over a dozen other jurisdictions have committed themselves to PROMIS.

The role of INSLAW in working toward the goal of transferring PROMIS is to perform what a recent National Academy of Engineering report terms "a complex brokerage process" which serves as "the catalyst to help match the needs to the technologies."[9]

The PROMIS transfer plan executed by INSLAW embodies substantial assistance at no cost to implementing jurisdictions and conforms to a major recommendation of the National Academy of Engineering report, which calls for "shifting the focus of Federal concern from simply telling commercial users and local governments about promising technologies to actually transforming technical information into ultimate uses. . . ." (Emphasis added.)

In its role as middleman-broker, INSLAW strives to bridge the communications/expertise gap that often exists between the technology and the potential user, the prosecuting attorney.

This is not to say that INSLAW takes charge and implements PROMIS. Implementation is accomplished by local contractors under the control of the local jurisdiction. Implementation-related costs[10] are often funded by LEAA through block or discretionary grants. As noted earlier, INSLAW assistance to local prosecutors is funded independently by LEAA. This overall arrangement is designed to remove any doubt about the objectivity or arm's-length nature of INSLAW's involvement, especially INSLAW assistance to local jurisdictions in evaluating installation proposals.

THE PROMIS TRANSFER PACKAGE

As designed and administered by INSLAW, the PROMIS transfer package provides ongoing support and technical guidance on an as-needed basis to jurisdictions before, during, and after implementation. The transfer package offers eight major types of assistance:

- PROMIS Briefing Papers.

- A color videocassette or 16mm film presentation.

- Extensive software documentation (<u>System Overview</u>, <u>System and Program Descriptions</u>, <u>Data Preparation Guide</u>, <u>Software Implementation Guide</u>, <u>Office Paperwork Procedures</u>, and <u>System Options</u>).

- Computer software and test data.

- A handbook, <u>PROMIS For The Nonautomated or Semiautomated Office</u>.

- Research designs for using PROMIS data in statistical analyses of criminal justice policies.

- Technical assistance.

- Users group.

Just how these components of the transfer package come into play can be best illustrated by relating them to the chronological sequence of questions that a chief prosecutor might raise.

<u>1. In nontechnical language, what is PROMIS and what can it do for the office?</u>

There is a 21-part PROMIS Briefing Series (of which this publication is number 20) prepared for the benefit of non-technical audiences--such as prosecutors, court administrators, criminal justice planners, and members of the bar--to explain the underlying concepts of management and organization inherent in PROMIS and the related benefits. These briefings are designed to help jurisdictions evaluate the potential benefits of PROMIS and provide guidance on its implementation, in whole or in part. (Topics covered are listed on the inside front cover of this briefing paper.)

An effective way to rapidly obtain a bird's-eye view of PROMIS is to view either the videotape or 16mm film presentation on PROMIS. In color and 20-minutes-long, the documentary presentation is nontechnical.

Additionally, the technical assistance component of the transfer package provides for briefings and PROMIS demonstrations at regional and national meetings of prosecuting attorneys and other groups, as well as on-site visits to advise interested potential users on the feasibility of transfer. Understandably, local prosecutors' offices frequently believe

that their problems are unique, at least in the sense that available technology does not apply to their special situation. Through on-site feasibility studies, INSLAW staff can evaluate whether various prerequisites to PROMIS implementation, such as the local use of fingerprint-based identifications of arrested persons, are present or could be installed in the jurisdiction.

2. **Assuming implementation of PROMIS appears feasible, how can one develop an initial ball park estimate of the related costs and what are the funding sources and procedures?**

Another Briefing Paper (Number 19, Analysis of Costs and Benefits) outlines a do-it-yourself method for estimating PROMIS costs. If necessary, INSLAW staff can assist in refining that estimate, and in preparing grant applications, including specifying the type of personnel and hardware required for implementation.

The analysis of costs and benefits for PROMIS now includes a computerized cost model, which utilizes either local cost elements or INSLAW-supplied average cost figures. Results are printed out for one-time transfer costs and for ongoing annual maintenance costs. Benefits are tangible (and quantified) and intangible.

3. **How is PROMIS tailored to the operations and prevailing conditions of the local jurisdiction?**

The court and prosecution environment of a jurisdiction contemplating the installation of PROMIS need not precisely match that of the jurisdiction which first utilized the system (Washington, D.C.). Of course, the closer their resemblance, the less expense and effort will be required for computer system design, programming changes, and forms design and paperflow changes.

A priority item in the process of fitting PROMIS to the operations of a given prosecutor's office is to determine whether three key identification numbers are utilized:

- Fingerprint-based identification number. Aliases, misspellings, and similar or identical names are among the reasons why storing and retrieving information about defendants on the basis of names alone is impractical.

- Court docket or case numbers with designators for each charge or count. This enables PROMIS to keep track of the final disposition of each charge and count in a case against a defendant.

- Criminal event or incident number. It is used to link those defendants who, although given different court docket numbers, will probably be tried together.[11]

If one or more of those numbers are not currently utilized, alternative methods can be adopted.

Because forms design and paperflow necessary to support the data input needs of PROMIS sometimes pose a problem to local jurisdictions, INSLAW is also prepared to help in this aspect of the implementation. The entering and automation of data in PROMIS is based on the use of a specific set of source documents and a specific flow of paperwork from the police to the prosecution and from the prosecution to the court, which may require some modification to suit local needs.[12] Especially important in this regard is the information acquired at case intake.[13]

(Jurisdictions where computerization is not considered appropriate will benefit from the INSLAW handbook PROMIS For The Nonautomated or Semiautomated Office. This handbook permits the smaller office to benefit from many of the PROMIS concepts and to be compatible with automated PROMIS offices insofar as statistical reports are concerned.)

To the extent that the paperflow and forms of potential users of the system differ from what prevails in the jurisdiction for which PROMIS was originally designed, PROMIS software modifications will be required. Knowledge of how other jurisdictions have made these and other modifications is one of the many benefits from participation in the PROMIS Users Group, an essential component of the PROMIS transfer package. Administered by INSLAW and comprised of representatives from jurisdictions either operating, implementing, or planning to implement PROMIS, the Users Group is the central repository of all documentation on changes and modifications in PROMIS software.

Related to a study of the forms and paperflow of the implementing jurisdiction is an analysis of the underlying office operations in support of--and to be supported by-- PROMIS. Two volumes of the transfer package's six-volume set of software documentation are particularly useful in the area of meshing PROMIS with office operations, paperflow, and forms:

- System Overview. Written in layman's terms for prosecutors, court administrators, and other potential PROMIS users, this volume reviews the overall capabilities of

PROMIS; describes prerequisites for its implementation; explains the flow of defendants and cases from arrest through sentencing; and discusses PROMIS data collection, automation, and report generation. Several charts depict each point in the prosecutive process where source documents capture data for PROMIS and where major PROMIS output reports are utilized.

- Office Paperwork Procedures. This volume details the various functions required to support PROMIS. These functions pertain to such areas as initial case screening, arraignment, preliminary hearing, misdemeanor and felony trials, grand jury proceedings, systems operation, and administrative tasks. For each function or task, the publication describes the materials (publications, forms, etc.) required, details the procedures to follow, and notes special circumstances to take into account.

The case screening process warrants particular attention in any effort to tailor PROMIS to local prosecutive practices. This is so because about 80 percent of the approximately 170 informational items stored in PROMIS on each case are captured during the screening stage. Of value in structuring the screening operation in a way compatible with PROMIS is INSLAW experience gained through preparing a screening manual (which itself can be transferred) for the prosecutor's office in Washington, D.C.[14]

4. **What types of personnel are required to operate PROMIS and where do you find them?**

INSLAW can assist local jurisdictions in specifying and locating the type of staff required by PROMIS. For example, guidance in the preparation of job descriptions can be supplied. And the aforementioned manual, Office Paperwork Procedures, should prove helpful.

5. **What is involved in securing and working with a contractor to implement PROMIS?**

In the context of the technical assistance component of the transfer package, INSLAW is prepared to provide contractor-related guidance in a number of areas. INSLAW can help the local prosecutor in such areas as:

- Preparing requests for proposals to attract bids from private industry to install PROMIS.

- Creating the ground rules and procedures for the conduct of bidders conferences.

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- Establishing criteria by which proposals submitted by contractors are evaluated.

- Answering technical questions of contractors (through on-site visits or telephone conferences).

- Reviewing contractor's progress.

6. How difficult and time-consuming is the task of preparing flowcharts and other documentation that will explain to technical personnel the operation of the system, program logic and coding, software implementation considerations, etc?

This task is greatly facilitated by two of the six volumes of software documentation available to local jurisdictions.

System and Program Descriptions provides the computer systems analysts and programmers who will install, adapt, and maintain PROMIS with an in-depth technical description of how the system functions. It is the basic system reference manual for PROMIS systems personnel. All technical aspects of the system are described in both graphic and narrative form.

For example, each major program is described by name, number, purpose, input required by the program, output generated by it, and applicable flowcharts. Files and sorts are discussed in detail, and every printed output report is illustrated and explained in terms of its purpose, frequency, sort order (whether cases are listed according to defendant's name, case number, etc.), and users (management, prosecutors, clerical personnel). Throughout the publication, charts show the relationship between programs and files, files and sorts, and reports and programs.

Data Preparation Guide was prepared for personnel responsible for the collection, coding, entry, verification, and correction of data. It contains transaction descriptions which include purposes, coding conventions, source documents, and transaction formats. It also details procedures for editing and error correction, daily system execution, and system maintenance. System analysts and programmers who will install, adapt, and maintain PROMIS must familiarize themselves with the materials in this volume.

7. What is the availability of the computer-generated
tape containing the PROMIS software?

This tape is available without cost as part of the trans-
fer package. Designed to accompany the tape, Software Im-
plementation Guide (part of the software documentation
series) describes the tape, indicating its characteristics
and contents, including source programs, copy library, test
data, job control language, and index file. One of the
chapters describes the procedures for loading and testing
the software tape; another outlines typical implementation
tasks and schedules.

8. What if problems or special needs develop during the
postimplementation period? How can one keep informed about
improvements or new developments in PROMIS technology?

Referred to earlier, the PROMIS Users Group,[15] which
each implementing jurisdiction may join, meets periodically
so that participants can exchange experiences, failures,
successes, problems, and solutions.

Also the System Options volume of the software documenta-
tion series periodically updates PROMIS users on new develop-
ments, such as the on-line inquiry and data entry enhancements.[16]

Of major potential benefit to jurisdictions implementing
PROMIS are the technology's "product spin-offs," such as
classification schemes for crimes, analytical methods, and
statistical analysis techniques--all disseminated through
the Users Group. Another by-product, developed after PROMIS
pinpointed prosecutory performance problems, is a comprehen-
sive training program for prosecutors prepared by INSLAW and
successfully adapted to various jurisdictions.[17]

Also disseminated through the Users Group are the results
of INSLAW criminal justice research utilizing the PROMIS data
base in Washington and, just as important, the research meth-
odology.[18] The latter permits other jurisdictions to repli-
cate the Washington-based research projects in their own
locales and, consequently, enhance the leadership role of the
prosecutor's office within the local community and among the
components of the criminal justice system. For example, par-
ticipants at a recent meeting of the Users Group heard pre-
liminary reports on various studies completed during the
first year of INSLAW's three-year, LEAA-funded PROMIS Re-
search Project.

One such report pertained to analyses of prosecutor and police operations, which involved questions such as these:

- What is the effect of changes in case-processing time on case outcomes?

- What are the principal causes of delays in case processing?

- What is the best experience mix for prosecutors at the screening stage? postscreening? trial? felonies and misdemeanors?

- What effect, if any, do such police officer characteristics as experience, education, residence, and sex have on the likelihood that an arrest will be accepted for prosecution? that it will leave the court as a conviction?

Another study discussed by the Users Group was the identification of recidivists with PROMIS data for Washington, D.C. Using a file of all arrests made between January 1, 1971, and August 31, 1975, it was found that a small proportion of defendants accounted for a large share of the arrests. More specifically:

- Although there were 72,610 arrests during this period, the arrests involved only 45,575 defendants.

- Seven percent of the defendants, who each had at least four arrests, accounted for 24 percent of the total arrests during the 56-month period.

A smaller sample of the Washington, D.C., data base of 72,610 arrests is being analyzed in more detail in order to determine the characteristics of the defendants most likely to recidivate. Preliminary findings indicate that criminal history variables are important predictors of future criminality. The type of offense seems to be important; persons arrested for robbery, burglary, larceny, consensual sex offenses (mainly prostitution), and bail violations were the most likely to be rearrested again.

These and other types of research reported to the Users Group can generate findings with obvious policy and operational implications for prosecutors and other components of the criminal justice system.

TRANSFERRING PROMIS: CASE STUDIES

The chief prosecutor of a hypothetical city (City A) wanted an automated information system to help him and his 60 assistants monitor an annual case load of 16,000 generated by the city's 500,000 citizens.

A set of briefing papers was forwarded for review. Shortly thereafter, representatives of the prosecutor's office visited Washington, D.C. A briefing and a tour of the U.S. Attorney's Office, where PROMIS is operating, was conducted. In addition, a member of the prosecutor's staff was invited to attend PROMIS Users Group meetings.

Technical assistance visits were made to City A for the purpose of conducting a preliminary feasibility study. Discussions with the prosecuting attorney led to the decision that PROMIS could be transferred to City A, would meet the needs of the prosecutor's office, and would involve a cost (about $45,000) appropriate for Federal funding.

The prosecutor's office was given copies of several PROMIS grant applications from other jurisdictions that had received funds to implement PROMIS, and assistance in drafting a grant application.

INSLAW then met with the Federal funding agency (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) and with the prosecutor's office to resolve informally matters pertaining to cost projections and time schedules for the PROMIS implementation. (This review process has benefited the funding agency and several PROMIS transfers because users had, in some instances, been quoted excessive costs. In those cases, the cost reduction finally negotiated was as much as 50 percent of the original estimate.)

Also provided was assistance in conducting a bidders conference and in helping evaluate the bids from private contractors. Once a contractor was selected by the office, the software tape and related system documentation were forwarded to the prosecutor. At the request of the prosecutor, INSLAW also helped evaluate two prospective computer centers in City A and made recommendations regarding which to select.

At this writing, INSLAW continues to monitor this implementation and provides technical assistance both to the contractor and to the prosecuting attorney.

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In another jurisdiction with only a handful of prosecutors and a yearly case load of about 1800 felonies and misdemeanors, PROMIS software was operative within two weeks of its receipt. This involved a transfer where the implementing jurisdiction operated Burroughs equipment whereas the PROMIS programs in Washington, D.C., operated on IBM hardware.

Program modifications were effected to compensate for aspects of the court environment that differed from that in Washington, D.C. This included changing report headings, gathering and entering input from several police departments, and modifying the court case number concept to handle pre-indictment felonies.

Firsthand comments about PROMIS' transferability were made at a recent Users Group meeting. For example:

- In a decentralized jurisdiction with several hundred prosecutors, three prototype PROMIS installations were operational in branch offices within about six months.

- One jurisdiction received its software from another PROMIS user having identical hardware; within one week, the software was operational. One experienced systems analyst employed by a major prosecution office stated that this was the first time he had seen a software package work correctly the first time it was run.

- Representatives from several jurisdictions believed that the PROMIS-related forms were extremely valuable even in the absence of office automation.[19] One prosecutor noted that the forms required for PROMIS enabled a net reduction in the number of forms utilized and were easier to complete.

- The prosecutors office in a jurisdiction serving over 200,000 people facilitated local acceptance of PROMIS by tailoring presentations (including the PROMIS film) to each of several groups, such as judges, police, and labor unions.

- More recently, a study of a PROMIS jurisdiction by a leading management consulting firm reported that the implementation of PROMIS through the transfer process—in contrast to doing so independently—saved the prosecutor's office well in excess of $600,000 in development and installation costs.

IN CONCLUSION . . .

Transfer of PROMIS technology has achieved remarkable momentum in a relatively short period of time. Acting as a "technology broker" and catalyst, INSLAW has contributed to that momentum through its LEAA-funded PROMIS transfer package.

In this period of national concern over productivity, prosecutors are increasingly regarded as having a major responsibility and opportunity for spearheading a drive toward more effective criminal justice administration by implementing modern management and administrative methods within their office.

As President Ford emphasized in his June 1975 crime message to Congress, "A logical place to begin discussion of [improvement of the criminal justice system] is the prosecutor's office, for it is there that important decisions are made. . . . If improved management techniques could be made available to prosecutors, the likelihood of swift and sure punishment for crime would be substantially increased."

That is what PROMIS transferability is all about.

FOOTNOTES

[1] National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, _Criminal Justice System_ (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 207.

[2] In the District of Columbia, the U.S. Attorney serves as the local prosecutor. About 75 lawyers are assigned to the D.C. Superior Court (equivalent to a state court of general jurisdiction), where prosecution of local "street crime" cases is conducted. About 16,000 allegations of such crimes are considered for prosecution annually.

[3] Statement of Charles R. Work on PROMIS before the House Select Committee on Crime, May 3, 1973.

[4] The manual version of PROMIS was developed by the Institute for Law and Social Research (INSLAW) under a contract with the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA).

[5] American National Standards Institute/Common Business-Oriented Language. Originally, PROMIS programs were written in PL/1 (Programming Language Number 1), which was compatible with the equipment of only a limited number of manufacturers. Under an LEAA grant, INSLAW reprogrammed PROMIS in ANSI/COBOL.

[6] Performed by INSLAW, with LEAA funding.

[7] Disk capability is recommended because of the large number of intermediate files created during system execution.

[8] See Briefing No. 21, _Optional On-Line Inquiry and Data Input Capability._

[9] National Academy of Engineering, _Technology Transfer and Utilization_ (Washington: National Science Foundation, 1974), p. 9.

[10] See Briefing No. 19, _Analysis of Costs and Benefits._

[11] The significance of these three numbers is more fully explored in Briefing No. 9, _Counting by Crime, Case, and Defendant._

[12] In this regard, see Briefing No. 12, _Police Prosecution Report;_ Briefing No. 13, _Crime Analysis Worksheet;_ Briefing No. 14, _Processing and Trial Preparation Worksheet;_ Briefing

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No. 15, Police Intake Worksheet; Briefing No. 16, Standardized Case Jacket.

[13]See Briefing No. 2, Case Screening.

[14]See Briefing No. 11, Uniform Crime Charging Manual.
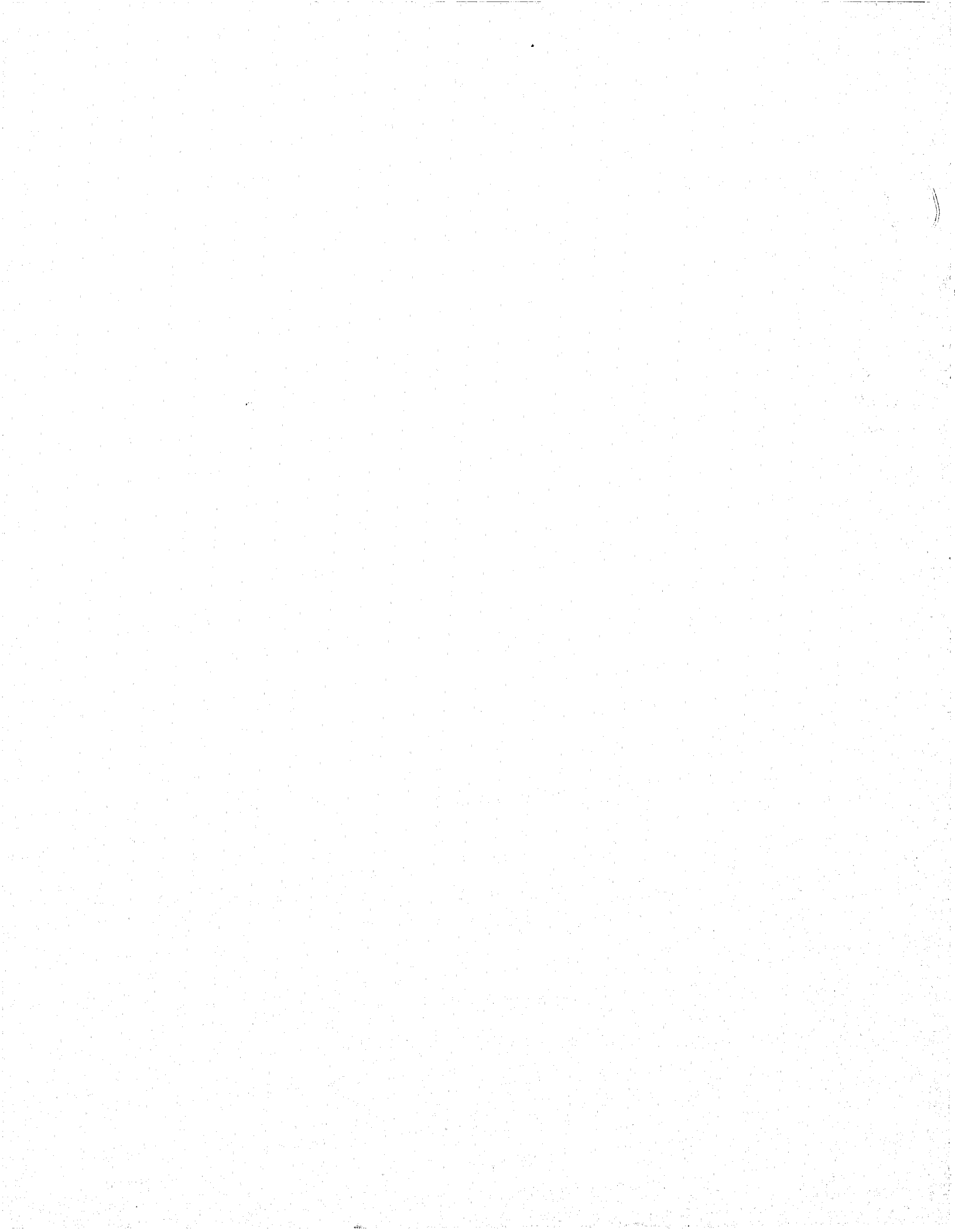
[15]See the standard on users groups in National Advisory Commission, op. cit., p. 150.

[16]See Briefing No. 21, Optional On-Line Inquiry and Data Input Capability.

[17]See Briefing No. 7, Comprehensive Training.

[18]See Briefing No. 10, Research Uses of PROMIS.

[19]See footnote 12.

END