



Using Criminal History Records to Enhance Statistical Infrastructure at BJS

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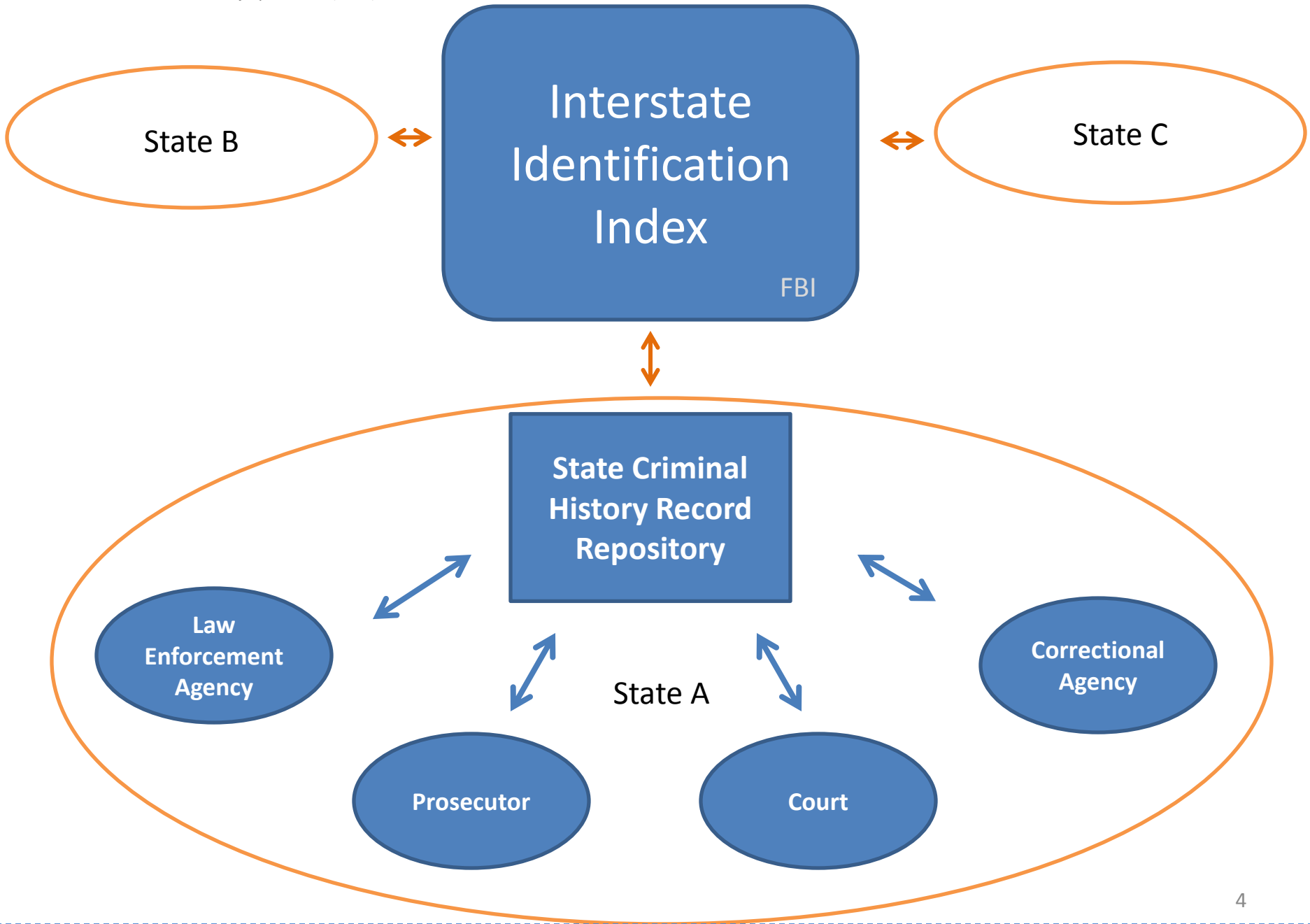
Outline

Using Criminal History Records to Enhance Statistical Infrastructure at BJS

- Introduction
- Federal and State Criminal History Records (aka “Rap Sheets”)
- BJS Experience with these Records
- Operational Uses of the Records
- Research and Statistical Uses
- How BJS Acquired Records
 - Technological solution – *determining what was technically feasible.*
 - Legal authorization and hurdles – *obtaining access.*
 - Memorandum of Understanding – *gaining agreement and cooperation.*
 - Procurement of contractual services – *acquiring needed support.*
- Technical Attributes of Routinized Acquisition and Analysis Processes
- Remaining Challenges to “Full” Integration
- Costs of the Project
- Future Research Plans
- Conclusions

Simplified Criminal History Record - aka "Rap Sheet"

Name: Smith, John Q.	Race: White	Gender: Male	DOB: 6/12/1974
Height/Weight SSN Aliases used	Scars, marks, tattoos State ID Number Photo y/n	Residence FBI Number DNA y/n	Place of employment Miscellaneous No. Fingerprint classification
Arrested	1/1/1990	First Degree Murder ICC 38-9-1(a)	Chicago Police Department CB 12345678 IR 3456789
Charged	1/8/1990	Voluntary Manslaughter ICC 38-9-2(b)	Cook County State's Attorney 1990 – CF- 123456
Convicted	2/1/1990	Disposition: Guilty Involuntary Manslaughter ICC 38-9-3(b)	Cook County Circuit Court 1990 – CF- 123456
Sentenced	2/3/1990	Sentence: Life Imprisonment	Cook County Circuit Court 1990 – CF- 123456
Received	2/4/1990	Reception & Classification	Illinois Department of Corrections 1990 – CF- 123456 C8765431
Released	1/31/2012	Mandatory Supervised Release	Illinois Department of Corrections C8765431



Administrative and Operational Uses of Criminal History Records

- Criminal Justice Uses
 - Police name checks
 - Charging decisions
 - Pre-trial release decisions – held in custody or released on recognizance
 - Sentencing
 - Correctional classification – housing assignments in jails/prisons
 - Public registries (sex offender)
 - Firearm purchases, licenses, permits, etc.
- Non-Criminal Justice Uses
 - Pre-employment screening
 - Professional/Occupational licenses
 - Permits

Research and Statistical Uses of Criminal History Records

- Studies of recidivism – pre-post event comparisons of arrests, convictions, incarcerations.
- Program evaluation.
- State-level studies:
 - Legislative impact studies/models;
 - Forecasting prison/jail populations; and
 - Other areas.

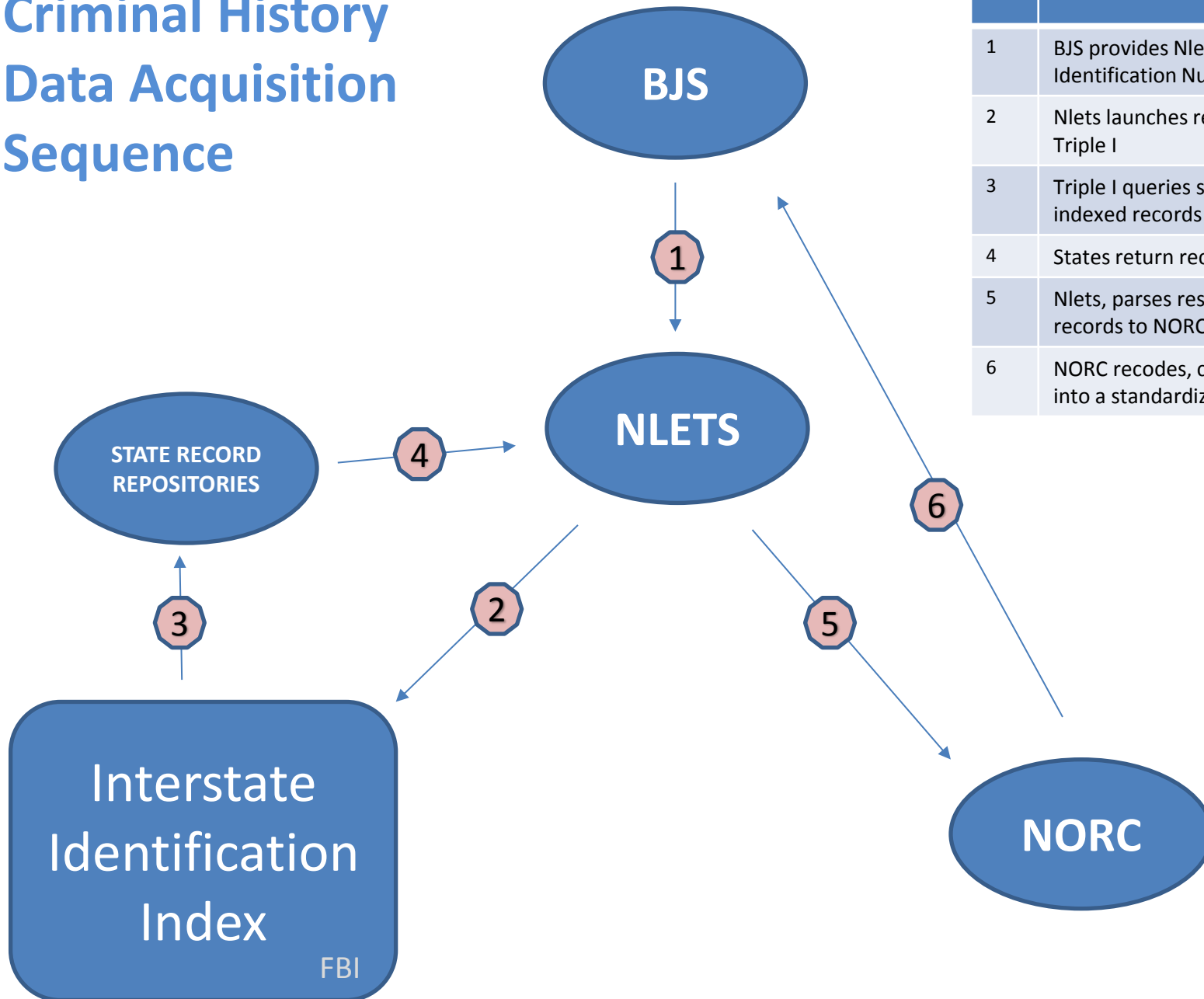
BJS Experience With Rap Sheets

- Dates to the late 1960s.
- Tied to federal assistance and support for:
 - Development of prototype system for interstate sharing of criminal records – precursor to Triple I.
 - Policy development (i.e. technology, data quality, privacy and confidentiality etc.)
 - Continued automation of state and local records.
 - Brady Act, improving record accuracy and completeness (Brady Act - NCHIP).
 - Data used in firearm checks (NICS Act – NARIP).

How BJS Obtained Access to the Rap Sheets

- Conceptual design of a technological process to acquire records from all the states.
- Pursued/received legal authorization to use FBI system to access records.
- Sought the willing participation of “record providers.”
- Executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- Procured contractual services/assistance.

Criminal History Data Acquisition Sequence



Step	Process
1	BJS provides Nlets with State Identification Numbers
2	Nlets launches record queries in Triple I
3	Triple I queries states holding indexed records
4	States return records to Nlets.
5	Nlets, parses responses; sends records to NORC.
6	NORC recodes, consolidates records into a standardized file.

The Acquisition Process

- BJS provides Nlets with State and/or FBI identification numbers (from another BJS administrative record collection).
- Nlets:
 - sends record queries into Triple I;
 - collects state responses, collates them, and creates a uniform “parsed” record; and
 - Forwards de-identified records to NORC.
- NORC:
 - Recodes data in the individual records;
 - Structures unstructured data;
 - Creates a database of single consolidated records;
 - Returns the database to BJS.
- BJS utilizes the database for its analyses.

Selected Attributes of Routinized Acquisition and Analysis Processes

- “Trickling” record requests into the live operational system.
- Parsing “raw” record responses.
- Reducing raw data in the records- recoding varied state codes and decoding unstructured data.
- Evaluating data quality.
- Returning benefits to record providers.

Remaining Challenges

- Balancing regulatory restrictions around retention of criminal history record information with need to archive data for additional/future research access.
- Addressing continued data quality improvement needs – a two-part framework:
 - Fitness for operational uses
 - Fitness for statistical uses

Costs* of Rap Sheet Infrastructure

- **Developmental costs** – about \$3.0 million.
 - \$1.1 million for initial record acquisition, collation, parsing.
 - \$1.9 million for initially standing up the data standardization software, coding crosswalks, creation of recode libraries.
- **Maintenance costs** – about \$360,000 annually
 - Acquisition, collation, etc. – about \$60,000
 - Maintenance of standardization software, recode library and crosswalks – about \$300,000 per cohort study.

*excluding OJP & BJS staff salaries and overhead.

Future Research Plans

- Technical – Methodological reports.
- Federal probationers.
- Adult criminal histories of juvenile offenders.
- New prisoner release cohort.
- Evaluation of federally-funded prisoner reentry programs.
- Risk levels of persons admitted to prison.
- Criminal careers of first-time arrestees.

Conclusions

- Use of criminal history records promises to dramatically enhance BJS's statistical infrastructure.
- Data derived from these records holds great potential to be significantly influential in a variety of policy domains.
- Ongoing statistical analyses involving these records will also improve operational usage of these records:
 - improve how the quality and completeness of the records is evaluated; and
 - help federal assistance programs better target the use of funds to make systematic and measurable improvements.



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