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Police Research Databases

By: **Sgt. W.R. Papple**
Canadian Police Research Centre

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Submitted by
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NOTE: Further information
about this report can be
obtained by calling the
CPRC information number
(613) 998-6343

SUMMARY

The features of two electronic information systems: **Search-BBS** and the **IACP-Net** were examined to determine if either would be valuable information sources on police research and development. Both systems have a far wider focus than just police R & D information. Both provide a direct line of electronic communication between criminal justice professionals and have several information databases that can be queried. At the present time, research citations on both systems primarily center on management and social sciences research but the amount of technical research information is growing. Each of these information resources would be of value to Canadian law enforcement agencies.

Search-BBS The service is provided by SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics with funding support from the U.S. Department of Justice.. Access to this Bulletin Board System is offered free of cost (other than telephone toll charges) to those employed in the criminal justice community. The Search-BBS can be reached at (916) 392-4640.

IACP-Net is managed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. An annual subscription fee must be paid to access the system. Local dial-up is available for some Canadian regions for an additional fee. For information, you can phone IACP-Net at (800) 227-9640 to speak to a customer service representative.

RÉSUMÉ

Les fonctions de deux systemes d'information electroniques, Search-BBS et IACP-Net, ont été étudiées pour determiner si l'un ou l'autre système pourrait constituer une source d'information utile sur la recherche-developpement policiere; toutefois, les deux systèmes peuvent avoir bien d'autres applications. Grace à Search-BBS et *IACP-Net,* les intervenants en justice pénale peuvent communiquer entre eux ou interroger plusieurs bases de donnees. Pour l'instant, les termes entrés renvoient surtout à la recherche en gestion et en sciences sociales, mais la quantité d'information sur la recherche technique augmente. Chacune de ces sources d'information pourrait servir aux organismes canadiens de maintien de l'ordre.

Search-BBS : ce service est fourni par SEARCH, *The National Consortium for Justice information and Statistics,* qui reçoit une aide financière du ministère americain de la Justice. L'accès à ce bulletin d'affichage est gratuit (il faut toutefois payer la communication téléphonique) pour les intervenants en justice pénale. On peut communiquer avec *Search-BBS* en composant le (916) 392-4640.

IACP-Net : ce service est géré par l'Association internationale des chefs de police. Des frais d'abonnement annuels sont exigés. Toutefois, les residents de certaines regions du Canada peuvent avoir accès au réseau en composant un numéro local moyennant certains frais. Vous pouvez vous informer sur *IACP-Net* auprès d'un representant du service à la clientele, en composant le (800) 227-9640.

Operational Requirement:

Electronic storage and exchange of criminal and case data (eg. criminal records, stolen property, outstanding warrants etc.) has been available for many years. Law enforcement and police research agencies, however, do not have a centralized repository of information that describes their individual research and development endeavors. Such an electronic information source would be of considerable value towards advancing the quality and cost effectiveness of services that are delivered by all law enforcement agencies.

Project Objective:

The purpose of this project was to identify and examine electronic information resources that might be used by Canadian law enforcement agencies for meeting the above operational requirement.

Detail:

The system selection criteria were:
>   (1) any Canadian law enforcement or police research agency could, upon application, receive access privileges to the system
>   (2) the system would be accessible at all times (other than for periodic shutdowns for system maintenance or repair)
>   (3) the system contains brief descriptions of research projects and programs of interest to law enforcement agencies
>   (4) the system must have a mechanism to permit user agencies to add information on their R & D activities to the information repository
>   (5) the system by nature does not contain confidential investigational or personal information.

Two systems were identified for further evaluation -- the **Search-BBS** (which is provided by SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics) and **IACP-Net** (which is provided by the International Association of Chiefs of Police).

One other system, CompuServe, was identified. This information system has a "Safetynet" forum serves the law enforcement and firefighter community. It appears to be a useful tool for transmitting information between user agencies but was not selected for further evaluation as it does not contain searchable databases of research information.

Both the Search-BBS and the IACP-Net offer several features other than a database on R & D information. In fact, the focus for both is not the database feature. A brief

feature summary for both is found in Appendix A (SEARCH BBS) and Appendix B (IACP NET).

Costs to Use Each System:

The use of the SEARCH-BBS is offered free (other than possible telephone toll charges) to law enforcement professionals. The system can be accessed directly via your telephone system or indirectly via Internet.

Access to the IACP-Net requires a yearly subscription fee. The specific cost depends on the number of users in your agency. For several Canadian cities a local dial up number is available for an additional fee.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Both the SEARCH-BBS and the IACP-Net have a far wider focus than just police R & D information. Both also provide a direct line of electronic communication between criminal justice professionals and both have several information databases that can be queried. At the present time, research citations on both systems primarily center on management and social sciences research but the amount of technical research information is growing.   Each have common features however both have distinctly unique features. The selection of one system over the other would be based on the value of the total system to each user agency.

For further information on the SEARCH-BBS, you can log on the BBS at 916-392-4640. (the system parameters are 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity). You can also contact SEARCH at 916-392-2550 or write to.

        SEARCH
        7311 Greenhaven Drive, Suite 145
        Sacramento, California
        95831

For further information on IACP-Net, you can call a customer service representative at I-800-227-9640 or write to:

        IACP NET
        245 East 6th. Street, Suite 809
        Saint Paul, Minnesota
        55101-9006

SUMMARY OF SEARCH BBS FEATURES

The SEARCH-BBS is an electronic bulletin board that focuses on items of interest to criminal justice professionals. It serves as a network for information exchange and has the following features:

On Line Databases **-** National Employment Listing Service
- Automated Index of Criminal Justice Information
    Systems
- Planning Abstract Listing Service
- BBS List Manager (list of other similar BBS's)
- Calendar of Events
- Training Facilities

Downloadable Software **-** public domain and shareware software of interest to the
    criminal justice community

Message Areas - on line communication (e-mail) with specialized forums:
    general, law & policy, research & statistics,
    technology, training and vendors
- the BBS has a linkage with Internet
- the BBS carries Usenet Newsgroups

Publications on-line copies of:
    FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,
    Law Enforcement Management & Administrative Statistics
    and others

<u>SUMMARY OF IACP-NET</u>

IACP NET is a communications network of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). It provides on-line information on:

IACP News and current affairs   **-** including on-line copies of Police Chief magazine and the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin

IACP Law Enforcement and Legislative Information

IACP Briefing Papers   **-** on a wide variety of topics

Law Enforcement Department Profiles

IACP Programs and Services   **-** including training and publications

Personnel Listings   **-** of IACP staff and committee members

**Law Enforcement
Quest-Response Service**   **-** a service where users can post questions which other users can post responses/answers

Communications   **-** e-mail and conferencing services

Law Enforcement Data Bases

Special Information Groups   - including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the State and Provincial Police Planning Officers. Law Enforcement Information Management is proposed.