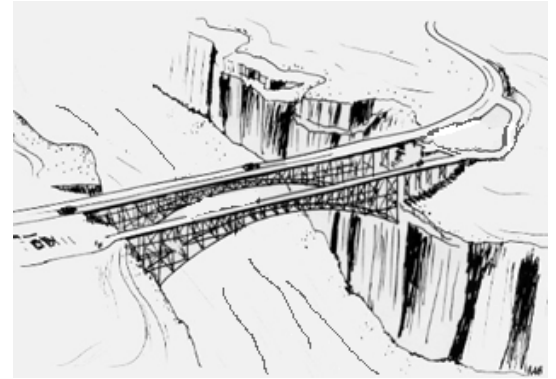


API: The Data Bridge

CISS provides the technical capability to Connecticut criminal justice agencies to improve the management and sharing of data on crime and criminal offenders. This technical capability includes a mechanism to translate and organize data that travels to and from agency source databases called an application programming interface (API). During this process, CISS uses a few methods to collect, organize, and translate the data into complete packages.

A considerable challenge when sharing data between one criminal justice organization and another is that each one often has different names, meanings, and formats for their data elements. Before data can be exchanged between agencies, it needs to have a common language. Essentially, the criminal justice systems speak different languages. While they may be saying the same thing, they are using different words or using different formats to represent the same data. For example, local law enforcement officers may call a person who was arrested as an “arrestee” while a member of the Judicial Branch would label that person a “defendant.”



To solve this dilemma and support information exchanges within the CT criminal justice community and create a standards-based approach, CJIS has adopted a conceptual framework based on constrained versions of National Criminal Justice Reference IEPDs. An Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD) is a collection of documents that typically includes required items such as schemas (cognitive frameworks that help organize and interpret information), XML artifacts, samples, documentation of various kinds, and rendering instructions. This collection of documents is based on the agreement that is made with the participating agencies on the specific information that they wish to share.

The IEPDs include Logical Entity Exchange Specification (LEXS), The National

Data Exchange (N-DEx) and elements from National Information Exchange Model (NIEM). LEXS allows interoperability and flexibility by separating documents methodically and providing a structured

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A Lifelong Commitment for Human Rights

Standing up for human rights is nothing new. Our founding fathers included text in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence proclaiming the rights of Americans. All through American history, the basic rights of liberty, social justice and equality have been tested in and outside of the court system.

Most Americans take it for granted that we all have basic human rights and equal treatment under the law—not State Victim Advocate Natasha Pierre. As a child, Natasha’s parents encouraged her to be strong and challenge authority. She was never afraid to speak up for her rights and for the rights of others. She grew up believing that everyone is entitled to basic rights, including liberty and justice. As a child, she refused to pledge allegiance to the flag because she felt that the words “liberty and justice for all” was not true for all Americans. As an African American woman, Natasha grew up experiencing the racial and

gender prejudices that fueled the civil rights and women’s rights demonstrations of the 60s and more recently ignite the tensions and challenge human rights between African Americans and local law enforcement today. Pierre decided early in life that she wanted to do something about it.



Figure 1. Natasha Pierre.

She began her path to advocacy with a BA in Women’s Studies, and then went on to obtain a dual degree in law and social work all at the University of Connecticut. After graduating

from UCONN, she worked in legal services for a few years, but she never lost sight of her desire to protect and stand up for others. Realizing that she needed more than what a traditional law practice offered, Natasha looked for ways of combining her love for law and for social justice. With her Masters of Social Work, she focused on Community Organizing and Policy planning. This naturally led to a career as the Policy and Legislative Director for the state’s Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) where she could combine her knowledge of social work and the law.

A dedicated feminist, her work initially focused on women’s equality, though she believes in equality for everyone. During this time, Pierre served on the Trafficking in Persons Council, the Taskforce on Domestic Violence on Immi-

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CJIS Governing Board
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~

Comments, corrections, and inquiries
 about this newsletter should be directed to:
 Patty Meglio, *Technical Writer,*
 Patricia.Meglio@ct.gov

CJIS Project Management Updates

The CJIS Project Management team and Xerox worked diligently in May on the upcoming CISS Releases. Progress was made on requirements gathering and sign-off, with the applications in Release 1 entering the Development phases.

CJIS and Xerox collaborated with stakeholders and completed the Design for OBIS and PRAWN and the Portal for Release 1. The teams also continued the requirements review for UAR Misdemeanor Summons Notices for Release 2.

The new SharePoint Community site and SharePoint agency sites are now active and access for agencies is forthcoming. The Community site provides a way for each agency to view the progress of the CISS project as milestones are completed. They will be able to download and review the latest documentation on concerns and risks and keep up with the latest developments on the project releases. The site also contains a calendar that is populated with scheduled meetings. Agency sites will provide agency-specific project timelines, and information on agency and CJIS resources, tasks, and documentation.

The CJIS Project Management team completed require-

ments gathering for CRMVS and POR and received signoff from stakeholders. Xerox began Design of both applications. A Design review is scheduled for June. Also in June, both PRAWN and OBIS will enter the Development phase.

The CJIS Technical team is working on the development of the application programming interface (API) that will facilitate the transfer of information from criminal justice source systems to CISS. The API will be ready for testing by RMS vendors and agencies in June. The CJIS Technical team also finalized requirements and began Design for the Web user interface for agencies that do not have case management systems. The design will evolve as new data is introduced.

The CJIS Operations team is working on purchasing and configuring the Learning Management System (LMS) for CISS. The system will provide training, user provisioning and certification for CISS users.

To reach out and inform the greater criminal justice community, the CJIS Project Management team will give a presentation of CISS at the June 9 CPCA Regional Meeting – Capitol Region. The audience will consist of the Chiefs of Police from the Hartford region police departments. ❖

Lifelong Commitment, continued from Page-2

grant Communities, the Commission on the Standardization of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations, and the Law Revision Commission's Domestic Violence Address Confidentiality Committee.

In 2014, she joined the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA). The OVA was established in 1998 after the State of CT adopted the Victims' Rights Amendment to our state constitution in 1996. The Amendment assures that crime victims have the same protection and status of rights provided to those accused of committing crimes. The purpose was to help enforce, protect and further the rights of crime victims in the criminal justice system.

Since the OVA is a relatively new state agency, the public

may be unaware of the advantages to using its services. When an incident occurs, the victim may report a problem to the police and may expect to be informed of a case directly from law enforcement or the judicial branch. Occasionally, communication between the victim and the relevant agency breaks down. The OVA can step in and help the victim by requesting information and providing guidance.

"Victims have a constitutional right to be engaged in the criminal proceedings," said Pierre. "Often victims do not know they have this right or know how to act on this right. There is no enforcement mechanism so if they don't request notice or receive requested notices of criminal proceedings, they may lose out." For example, the victim has a right to know what the plea bargain is in writing, and can say what

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framework. N-DEx contains the main elements (reports) for the message exchange. The National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) organization, combined with several federal agencies, designed the concepts around criminal justice information including a standard terminology and structure for the data and concepts on how the information is shared nationally and globally. CISS applies these standards when it translates the data received from the various criminal justice agencies.

Much of an agency's data is organized into separate areas in their databases. The data is currently being extracted from the Uniform Arrest and the Misdemeanor Summons and

Complaint reports and is captured and stored in tables in the agency's source system. There may be a primary table containing a list of incidents, one for law enforcement officers, one for courts, and another for schedules. These tables have relationships with one another and when they are joined together they provide the complete picture.

When information is directed to be published, data from the source databases is structured with related elements into a document instance (message). In this way, it can be published in one transmission. To help to organize this data correctly, CISS uses an interface or API.

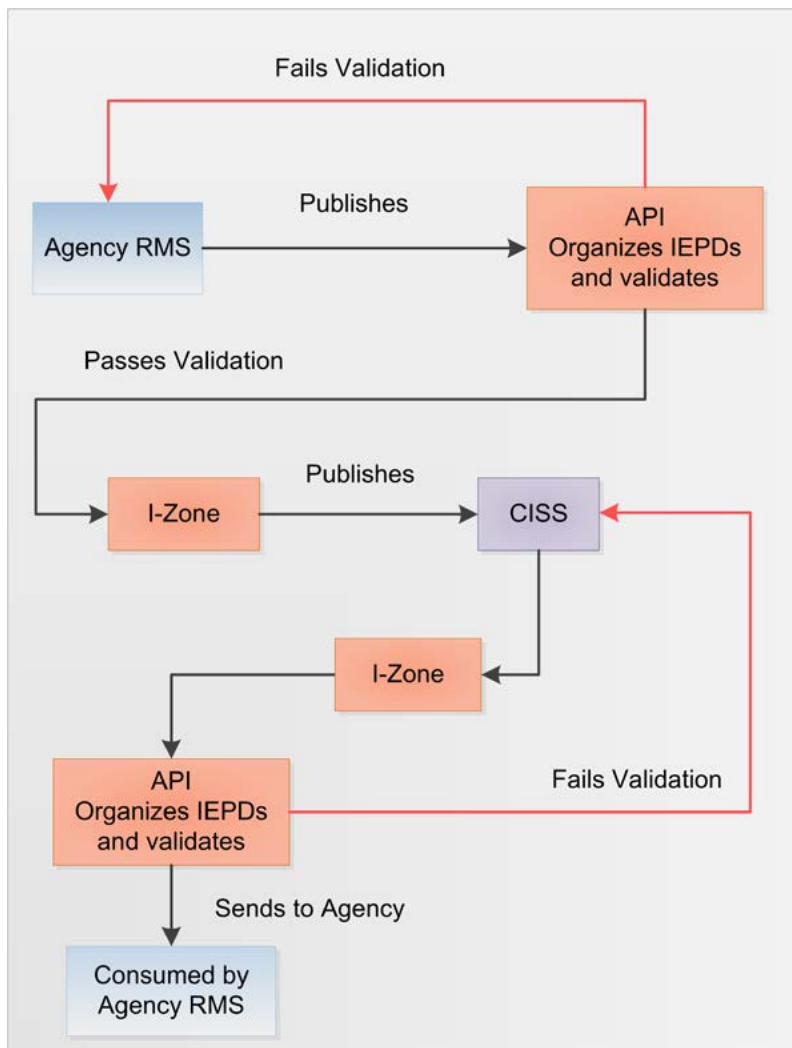


Figure 2. API role in information flow.

An API is a set of standardized requests that define the proper way for a developer to request services from another program. During an Information Exchange or Search, information is published from an Agency Record Management System (RMS) to the I-Zone. The I-Zone is a temporary staging area for data prior to being consumed by CISS. The API constructs the information collected into the proper framework using supported definitions, rules, and constraints that are contained in the specified schema and is validated according to the partnering agency agreement and the NIEM standards. The translated data is recreated in tables and indexed in CISS. During the agency consuming process, the information again passes through the I-Zone and is constructed using the API and validated using the same rules and constraints before it is consumed by an agency (see Figure 2).

The API plays a crucial role as the translator of information. During the structuring process, the API validates the information as well as packages it into a common language that can be indexed logically and shared with all criminal justice agencies. ❖

For more information on CJIS and CJIS publications, go to www.ct.gov/cjis

Lifelong Commitment, continued from Page-3

they think and make a statement during sentencing and in release proceedings. Sometimes this makes a difference in time served and prisoner release.

Pierre's experience in public policy, including sexual assault and domestic violence policies and her legal background representing domestic violence victims in family law matters and knowledge of state statutes, made her an ideal candidate for State Victim Advocate. For Pierre, it is an opportunity to grow and to continue advocacy work on a different level.

Pierre manages a staff of four who together work to raise awareness, build relationships and assist in helping crime victims. The OVA staff works to help victims of crime after an arrest is made – helping them through the judicial and law enforcement systems. They connect people with resources, inform them of their rights, and represent them in court in certain circumstances.

The ability to quickly access information that would help their clients make decisions is the main reason why Pierre is fully supportive of CISS. Although some information is available electronically, much of it is not; therefore, the OVA must write a letter to the agency and wait for a reply. To be able to quickly access information on the status of a prisoner or case in an online system would greatly save time and provide helpful safety information that may be restricted from the client.

~ Meetings ~

CJIS Governing Board Quarterly Meeting

July 16, 2015 at 1:30 pm
Office of the Chief State's Attorney
300 Corporate Place in Rocky Hill

CISS Status Meeting

July 22, 2015, 1:00 - 3:00 pm
99 East River Drive, 7th floor, Room 707
East Hartford



CJIS Academy

OBTS Classes

CJIS offers certification classes three times a year for the Offender Based Tracking System (OBTS). The two remaining classes for 2015 will be conducted at 99 East River Drive, 7th floor, East Hartford, CT 06108. For more information and to sign up, visit the [CJIS Academy Webpage](#).

CJIS Support Group:

860-622-2000

CJIS Website: www.ct.gov/cjis

OBTS Certification Class Schedule

- Tuesday, June 16, 2015
- Thursday, October 15, 2015

Another benefit that Pierre sees is the replacement of legacy systems with new technology that would provide a central point of access to information that is uniform and useful to all criminal justice agencies. It would also provide statistics that are greatly needed to assess and measure current processes. Having a complete history of a defendant would also boost decision making in the arrest and parole process.

She acknowledges that it is a huge project and that it involves a lot of different agencies with different priorities. Some challenges she sees to CISS are the diverse ways of collecting and exchanging information. If this information can be collected and made available in a uniform fashion, it would be beneficial to all criminal justice agencies. ❖

