

Highlights

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Global Recommendations in Action: The CONECT Project



What is CONECT?

a consortium of states
implementing a new approach to
interstate information sharing by

*leveraging Global standards, existing
state portals, and the Internet to
facilitate deep information sharing for
all criminal justice users*

There Are Challenges to Sharing Justice Information...

Most justice agencies do not have simple and secure access to rich information across multiple jurisdictions, states, and domains. **If** this information were readily available, more informed decisions could be made to protect communities and law enforcement officers alike while safeguarding the privacy and civil liberties of America's citizens. For example:

- Corrections officers are unable to access out-of-state incarceration data to make more informed, evidence-based decisions, including risk assessments, inmate classification, and probation/parole planning.
- Probation officers are unable to access out-of-state court data (misdemeanors, all warrants, citations) to assist in the supervision of their probationers.
- Court officers are unable to access interstate information (misdemeanors, warrants) when conducting presentencing investigations.

Today, comprehensive, nationwide criminal justice information is available to authorized users only if they have individual access to a multitude of systems. This means that in addition to access, a user must be proficient in all the applications and be able to manage the different access schemes, credentials, and passwords for each of the systems. Compound that with the fact that while sworn and/or approved law enforcement personnel may

be able to access nationally established systems, not all necessary staff involved in the justice process have this capability.

And CONECT Found Solutions.

In 2006, four states with existing Web portals for accessing criminal justice information came together to form the [CONNECT Consortium](#). The objective was to leverage their existing systems, combined with the technology standards created by the [U.S. DOJ's Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative \(Global\)](#), to implement a new approach to interstate information sharing. Their vision was a simple one: work together to "connect" disparate systems so that **all** authorized criminal justice users, utilizing a single sign-on to their respective **existing** portals, could obtain rich criminal justice information from across jurisdictional boundaries, thus making better decisions and improving crime fighting capabilities in their home communities.

In September 2009, Alabama, Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming—as founding members of CONECT—successfully "connected" their state portals via a secure information sharing federation and established an information sharing capability. Central to this achievement was establishing a policy framework comprising a simple governance structure, standard memorandum of understanding (MOU), and—**imperative** to any justice sharing enterprise—individual and collective state privacy policies using the Global [Privacy and Civil Liberties Policy Development Guide and Implementation Templates](#). CONECT created a technology capability using the [National Information Exchange Model \(NIEM\)](#) and the [Global Justice Reference Architecture \(JRA\)](#) and [Global Federated Identity and Privilege Management \(GFIPM\)](#) frameworks. Together, these policy and technology resources enable CONECT member agencies to:

- Manage the access rights and credentials of **only** their own users;
- Maintain ownership and control of their data;
- Specify the information to be shared with other agencies;

The Connect Solution

- Establish and manage the rules for others to access their information;
- Audit information sharing activities; and
- Fully retain their existing systems and technology investments.

CONNECT's experiences and capabilities are now available for practitioner consideration and reuse.

The Results



The  capability empowers agencies seeking a broad and deep cross-jurisdictional information sharing solution to serve *more users* and provide *more data...more affordably*.

- **More users, because...**
 - **Comprehensive data is made available for nontraditional** criminal justice users (e.g., small police departments, probation officers, domestic violence advocates, victims' service officers, reentry service providers)
 - Users gain simple access **via** their **existing** "home" criminal justice **portals**
- **More data, because...**
 - There are **no limits** to policy- and mission-driven access to more data (e.g., custody, court, citations, protection orders, crash, vehicle)
 - Users launch **federated searches** from their "home" portals **across** jurisdictions and domains nationwide **without logging into other systems**, and search results are displayed in a consistent, consolidated, meaningful way
- **More affordable, because the capability...**
 - **Builds on and extends** an agency's **existing** criminal justice **systems and policies**
 - **Reuses technology and policy resources**, such as Global standards
 - Is a **network-agnostic** solution (i.e., CONNECT can leverage the Internet, [Nlets](#), the [Regional Information Sharing Systems](#) [RISS], and other systems)

How Your Agency Can Benefit

Depending on the scale and capabilities of your agency, you may be able to reuse the CONNECT capability:

- **For agencies seeking access to more data via their current state or regional integrated justice portals...** The existing CONNECT artifacts (both policy and technical) can give you a head start and reduce the cost of achieving broader regional or interstate information sharing. If you are looking to build on your existing systems to share more information for more users, we suggest you visit www.connectconsortium.org or www.it.ojp.gov/global to learn more. Please contact Mr. Tim Galante, CONNECT Coordinator, at (616) 780-1285 or Tgalante@analysts.com to discuss leveraging CONNECT best practices and Global products to share more information more efficiently.
- **For agencies seeking to establish a state or regional CJIS portal...**
 - CONNECT's written policies, in conjunction with Global's policy recommendations, can help you establish the business foundation for information sharing more quickly. Visit www.it.ojp.gov/global or www.connectconsortium.org/policy.cfm to learn more about reusing policy or technology solutions.
 - CONNECT's technical solutions have been crafted to bolt onto an existing portal, and as such they are not an "out-of-the-box" integrated justice portal solution. If you need advice from an agency representative who has established a successful regional/state portal, please contact Mr. Gordon Lansford, Director, Kansas Criminal Justice Information System, at (785) 291-3527 or Gordon.Lansford@da.ks.gov.

Additional Resource

The [National Information Sharing Standards \(NISS\) Knowledgebase and Help Desk](#) helps you find the information you need regarding justice information sharing standards (NIEM/JRA) by searching on the topic of your interest. If you need additional support, you can reach the NISS help desk at (877) 333-5111 or (703)726-1919, or via e-mail @ NISShelp@ijis.org.