



Case Study: Florida Courts

Problem

The Florida Courts system, challenged by the inaccessibility of critical data, was losing days to database searches. The court's lacked an efficient way to provide judges, judicial assistants, and case managers with relevant, up-to-date, federal, state, county, and local information on arrestees coming before the court. Typically, Court officials and staff spent hours searching many different databases from many agencies to gather information to complete a background check on an arrestee. This approach limited the number of background checks that could be performed and did not consistently provide a complete picture to support the judge. Case dispositions languished while judges tried to verify reams of information. With the passage of the Jessica Lunsford Act, the speed and efficacy of background checks, now required for all arrestees under the law, meant improvements were no longer merely desirable, they were mandatory.

Metatomix Solution

Metatomix, Inc. of Waltham, Massachusetts delivered the nation's first statewide criminal information system designed to support the Jessica Lunsford Act by providing real-time, automatically initiated background checks on arrestees, triggered by their booking. Now the Florida Courts Judicial Inquiry System (JIS) and the Jessica Lunsford First Appearance (JFA) application provide judges and court officials with consolidated profiles, including photos and fingerprints, of all arrestees on one dashboard in real-time. At the first court appearance, if any of the arrestees is identified as a sexual predator or sexual offender, his or her name is "flagged" on the dashboard with either a red or a yellow indicator, respectively. The judge can drill down to supporting data in real-time to gain additional context and insight. The system, which currently shares information across eleven distinct databases, leaves the respective sources intact—no central database and no interference with local operations.

“The point is to flag sex offenders. JFA has been a huge benefit to the State of Florida and users love it. The program was originally intended for judges’ use. But once implemented, it seemed logical to create a ‘first appearance calendar’ for all offenders. Now we have state attorneys, law enforcement, public defenders, and other court-related agencies benefiting from the system.” – Christina Blakeslee, Information Resource Manager Consultant, Florida Courts

Risk	Booking No.	Name	Race	Gender	DOB	SSN	Booking Src	Data Sources
INJUNCTION, SUPERVISED		JOHNS, CHERYL	B	F	1952-08-31	555-12-1276	FCIC	DC, DHSMV, FDLE, FLSUM, HOTFILES, NCIC
		HENDERSON, TIFFANY	W	F	1971-08-17		FCIC	CCIS, FDLE, FLSUM
		GEDES, ESTHER	B	F	1981-12-15		FCIC	CCIS, DHSMV, FDLE, FLSUM, NCIC
SUPERVISED		BRADY, JANICE	W	F	1959-06-14	121-25-5591	FCIC	DC, FDLE, FLSUM, NCIC
		LAWRENCE, TRISHA	B	F	1978-07-24		FCIC	DHSMV, FDLE, NCIC
		EDEN, BARBRA	B	F	1977-04-21		FCIC	FDLE, FLSUM, NCIC
		TANNER, STEPHANIE	B	F	1974-02-25		FCIC	FDLE, NCIC
WARRANT		ARNOLD, KEVIN	W	M	1985-06-16		FCIC	CCIS, DHSMV, FDLE, HOTFILES, NCIC
INJUNCTION, SUPERVISED, WARRANT		ABRAMS, JASON J	W	M	1980-10-25	251-08-8914	FCIC	CCIS, DC, DHSMV, FDLE, HOTFILES, NCIC
SEXUAL OFFENDER		MCGINTY, JOSEPH	W	M	1950-03-06		FCIC	FDLE, FLSUM, HOTFILES, NCIC
		SPREWELL, TREMAINE	B	M	1988-03-31		FCIC	CCIS, DHSMV, FDLE, NCIC
SEXUAL PREDATOR		BIGGINS, ROY	W	M	1987-12-15		FCIC	CCIS, DHSMV, FDLE, FLSUM
		DWAYNE, THOMAS	W	M	1985-05-27		FCIC	CCIS, DHSMV, FDLE, NCIC
		SNOW, RICHARD	W	M	1988-01-19		FCIC	FDLE, NCIC
		DREYFUSS, RICK	B	M	1983-05-28		FCIC	FDLE, FLSUM
		MAPOTHER, THOMAS	W	M	1982-10-13		FCIC	FDLE, FLSUM, NCIC

JFA's single, easy-to-use, easy-to-see dashboard quickly identifies sexual predators and sexual offenders with its color coding.

To Protect the Public, Florida Courts Choose Metatomix to Automate Judicial Inquiry System

The Jessica Lunsford Act (JLA) was signed into law in Florida in May 2005, after a registered sex offender sexually abused and murdered nine-year-old Jessica Lunsford. Shortly before the murder, Jessica's killer had been released from police custody following arraignment on an unrelated, minor charge. Had his full background been known to the judge at the time of first appearance, he may have been incarcerated. To prevent such future crimes, the law now requires sexual predators be tracked for life upon release and that the courts perform a complete and timely background check for past sexual offenses on all arrestees prior to their first appearance, regardless of why the individual was detained. The objective is to ensure that all arrestees receive the same, standardized background check to provide the judge with the best, most up to date information available to support an informed decision.

An informed decision. For that, the judiciary needs accurate, up-to-date facts—on arrests, on other court rooms' decisions, from law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and all agencies involved in the system. Until recently the Florida Courts, like so many others throughout the country, waited days for those critical facts. Users manually submitted up to twenty queries, wending their way through numerous systems, each with its own passwords, logons, and reports. This manual search could produce pages of data that would be complicated by defendants' aliases, changing appearances, and misrepresentations about identities.

Fast and Accurate Court Information

The Metatomix Jessica Lunsford First Appearance solution (JFA), operational in March 2006, is the first-in-the-nation statewide criminal information system to provide automatic real-time background checks based on initial booking data. JFA expedites tracking of known sexual predators and facilitates key decisions affecting public safety by quickly informing judges and law enforcement officials of an arrestee's record of sexual crimes.

Instead of submitting query after query and then having to manually consolidate data for court use, the JFA process can take as little as two minutes, saving time and money on case costs, and expediting better decisions in the courtroom. Electronically scanning an arrestee's fingerprint within the statewide fingerprinting system or entering a query prompts the Metatomix application to automatically search relevant databases and organize the results into a consolidated report (including photos) that overcomes data variations, all provided in one detailed dashboard.

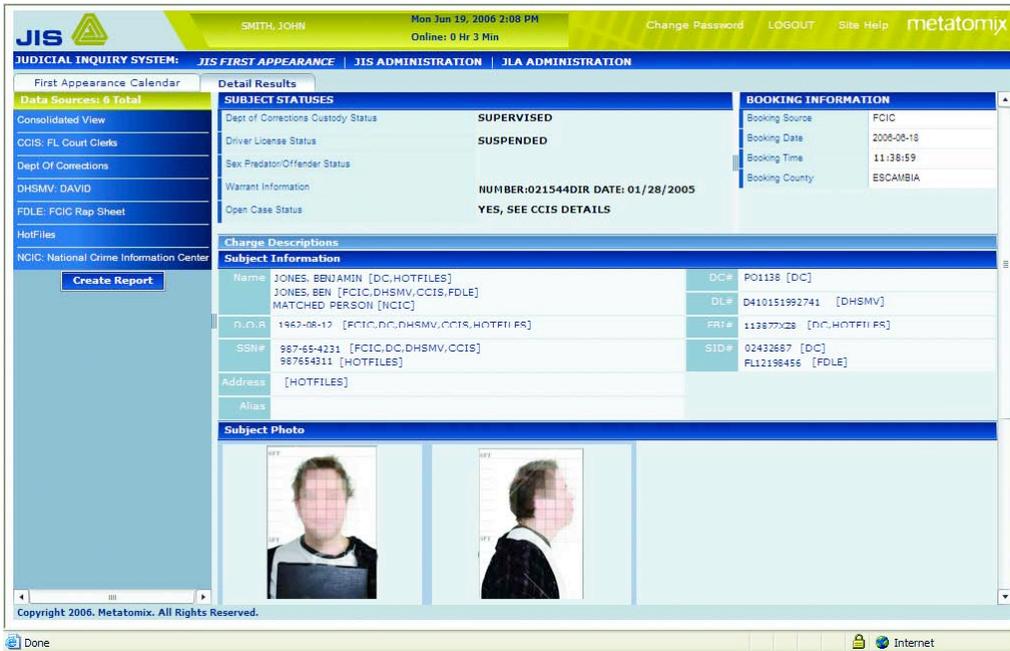
JFA's single, easy-to-use, easy-to-see dashboard is a visual representation of actions and information that lets judges view crucial data from eleven different databases, including the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and Criminal History, state "hot files", jail bookings, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and more. Metatomix makes it possible to add databases and features without disrupting operations, and the program works independently of other processes so there are no lags or delays. Over 1,500 users, including 179 judges throughout the Florida Courts, use the JFA application at the time of this writing, with another 4,000 anticipated users over the coming months.

More than 750 judges statewide will eventually use the system to search for information included in each of these data sources. As additional data sources are added, the number of users is expected to expand to over 10,000, including probation officers, investigators, highway patrol officers, case managers and family case workers. Eventually, this system will branch across local and state agencies to provide access to information at all levels. Each user is assigned a unique profile, allowing them to search databases specific to their needs and rights of access based on statute, local rules and the agency's discretion. Because the system is user friendly, minimal training is required to get employees familiar with the system and making inquiries immediately.

JFA enables the Florida Courts to access up-to-the-minute information without the financially and technically formidable tasks of maintaining a central database requiring updates from multiple sources. Metatomix, Inc.'s technology complies with the regulations and conventions governing each source. By connecting non-intrusively, without installing code at the data source or building a central database, JFA allows each agency to comply with strict laws governing its data and to maintain the configurations and access privileges that meet primary user needs.

"A fingerprint entry or single query automatically prompts the Metatomix system to search appropriate databases for all relevant information, and to create a summary report that includes a photo array, unified data, reconciled discrepancies such as different spellings or altered appearances, and flags sexual offenders and predators."

– Christina Blakeslee,
Information Resource Manager Consultant,
Florida Courts



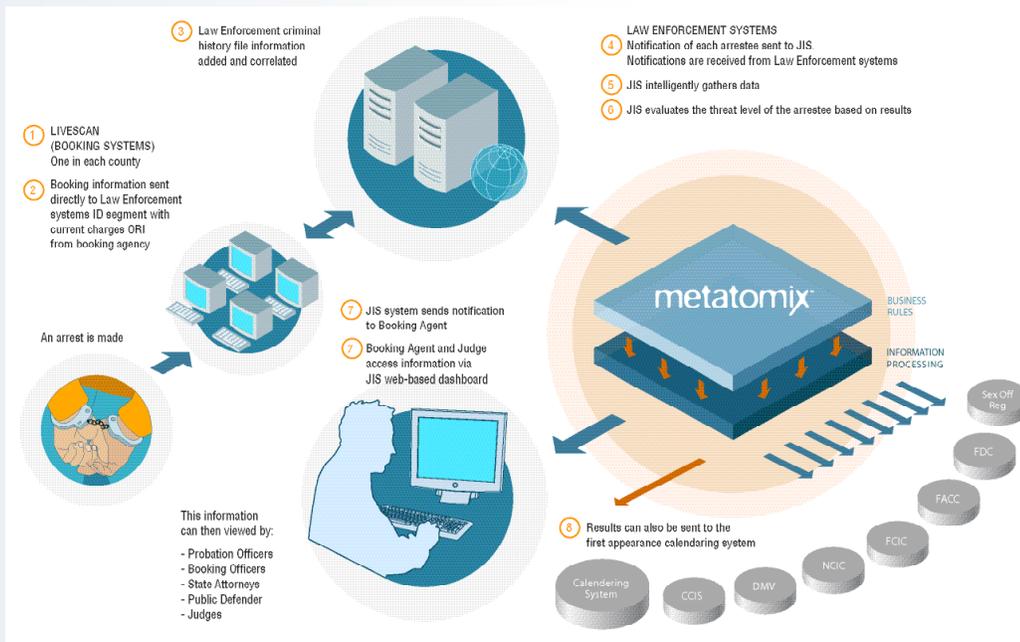
One single consolidated view of the arrestee across all participating federal, state, and local agencies with detail drill-down back to the source files, including photos.

How the Metatomix JFA Application Works

Metatomix uses semantic technology and composite integration to asynchronously navigate separate databases and process silos. JFA is based on an advanced form of extensible markup language (XML) called Resource Description Framework. These are specifications originally designed as a model for metadata—data that describes other data. Currently, semantic technology gathers information from eleven disparate databases that rely on varied information including names, addresses, phone numbers, court case ID numbers, driver/vehicle information, or categories of offense. JFA finds the data and interprets meanings and associations between them, delivering one integrated set of results.

Metatomix JFA Advantages

- One dashboard, one log-on, one password
- Summary results in two-to-three minutes for searches about arrestees based on demographics (name, D.O.B., addresses, etc.) in targeted data sources
- Detailed, automatically flagged JFA responses indicating sexual predators and sexual offenders
- Unified data and associations in a single report including records of:
 - outstanding warrants
 - domestic injunctions
 - probation
 - photos
 - sex offenses
 - fingerprints
- Scalability that grows and changes to its constituent data sources
- Adherence to regulations and conventions governing all component data sources
- Uncomplicated central dashboard for user convenience
- Asynchronous operation prevents delays in searching systems or databases
- Cost-efficient and fast implementation
- No adjustments or added code to source databases
- Run-time configurable platform enables changes to agency databases and system functionality with no disruption
- Independent operation allows fast and easy change



“The Metatomix system will play a significant role in improving case flow, as well as delivering more informed decisions in Florida courts.”

– Mike Love,
Florida State Courts
Technology Officer,
Florida State Court
System

Installation and Upgrade

The JFA architecture assures that both the system and the applications to which it links can grow and change. Metatomix technology minimizes engineering costs and red tape because implementation does not require modifications to those applications and databases.

Protecting the Public

In the wake of the Jessica Lunsford Act, the Florida Courts responded and enhanced their Judicial Inquiry System. By automating and expanding searches to include sexual registries, sexual criminal histories and providing a single report with vital information in an easy-to-understand format, Metatomix JFA makes it possible for courts to make informed decisions and protect the public in a way never before possible.

The Judicial Inquiry System plays a significant role in reducing case backlogs and improving case flow, as well as delivering more informed decisions in Florida courts. Through the use of Metatomix technology, the Florida Judicial System benefits from a solution that provides single-point access to critical information from across a variety of state agencies, enabling a more complete picture of any individual on trial, than ever before possible.

Searchable Databases:

- Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV)
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)
- State Criminal History (full rap sheet)
- FDLE Summary (summarized rap sheet)
- State “hot files”
- National Criminal History (NCIC)
- Out of State Driver’s License
- Florida’s Sexual Predator Database
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Department of Corrections
- Clerks of Court in the State of Florida