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## Information Sharing: Powered by NLETS

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**T**he International Justice and Public Safety Information Sharing Network (NLETS) has been in the business of connecting law enforcement and the justice community for nearly 40 years. Today, NLETS is a state-of-the-art secure sharing system dedicated to the entire justice community. Its sole purpose is to provide for the international, interstate, and interagency exchange of criminal justice information. It uses leading-edge technology such as Web services and service-oriented architecture to serve its customers.

NLETS is also an international leader in the implementation of the Global Justice XML Data Model, GJXDM 3.0, recently adopted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and renamed the National Information Exchange Model, or NIEM.

### NLETS by the Numbers

NLETS processes more than 40 million transactions a month through 500,000 devices to more than 30,000 agencies throughout the United States and Canada. At each one of these 30,000 agencies are men and women committed to serving and protecting lives and property.

Each one of these 500,000 devices is an instantaneous connection that serves as a conduit for critical data. Each of the monthly 40 million transactions contains valuable information law enforcement needs in an increasingly complex maze of information.

### Access to Federal Information

Some of the important uses of NLETS are critical to everyday policing. For example, NLETS is the method that DHS has instituted for law enforcement officers flying armed to validate themselves before going to the airport.

U.S. justice professionals can check parole, probation, corrections, and sex offender information across state lines using NLETS. They can also check Federal Aviation Administration-related information and receive critical homeland security alert messages through NLETS. Law enforcement can access the National Virtual Pointer System (NVPS)/National Drug Pointer Index System (NDPIX) using NLETS, while confirming FBI wants and warrants via the NLETS Hit Confirmation function.

### The Search for Missing Children

At the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has relied on NLETS daily for the past 20 years to communicate with law enforcement agencies.

Using NLETS allows NCMEC to send information to the appropriate audience of the 30,000 agencies with NLETS access sending targeted information to specific agencies. Because NCMEC can tap into the power of NLETS, a missing child abducted in Beaumont, Mississippi, can be recovered in Topeka, Kansas. A missing boy abducted in Mechanicsburg, Ohio, can be recovered by locating the abductor's vehicle in Lexington, South Carolina. These are just two of the more than 100,000 missing child cases NCMEC has assisted law enforcement with since founding in 1984.

Analysts in the Case Analysis and Support Division (CASD) of NCMEC use NLETS information to help track leads, identify patterns among cases, and coordinate investigations through data analysis. NCMEC can send out general messages across NLETS to alert the nation's law enforcement agencies to their services. After receiving information about missing juvenile cases, they often send out unsolicited offers of assistance over NLETS. By responding directly to the agency handling the case, analysts are able to let law enforcement officers know when NCMEC's resources might be helpful in an investigation.

### **Public Safety Emergency Notification**

In the realm of public safety, seconds can mean the difference between life and death. NLETS has been working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Services (NWS) on the Weather Wire Project. The efficient exchange of information between the NWS and law enforcement agencies via NLETS provides the public with important weather warnings. The NWS/NLETS connection allows public safety officials and others who need the latest weather information to perform their critical task of protecting life and property. In addition, the efficiency of receiving NWS information over an existing NLETS connection allows the state to eliminate the dedicated satellite receivers, thus streamlining the inflow of all critical data and information.

### **Out of Sight but Indispensable**

"Most people don't realize justice professionals use NLETS every day for interstate criminal histories," said Steven Correll, NLETS executive director. "Since June of 2004, through the NLETS and FBI Rapsheet project, every criminal history done in America is now delivered to the inquirer via NLETS. . . . NLETS is used extensively by law enforcement for investigations and by the courts for presentencing investigations. The FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) uses NLETS thousands of times every day for each gun sale made in the United States. . . . NLETS is critical infrastructure—impossible to live without, but easy to forget it is there—because it has always been there for forty years."

NLETS is a nonprofit corporation chartered by the states and funded by user fees. The members are all 50 states, territories, all federal agencies with a justice component, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In the post-September 11 world, information is the cornerstone of protecting citizens and property. Whether it's the officer on patrol, a probation officer working her caseload, a court administrator preparing for tomorrow's court docket, or an agent at an international border, the 21st-century law enforcement and criminal justice professional faces a daunting task. NLETS is here to serve them.

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