
DEVELOPMENT OF CRIMINALS RECORD INFORMATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

National security has been a source of concern to all and sundry in Nigeria. There is the issue of religious crisis in some states of the Northern part of Nigeria, ritual killings and kidnappings in some states of the South-East and South-South, sectarian clashes in some states of the South-West, bombings in Abuja and some states of the federation. In order to reinforce Security and Justice in Nigeria, and to ensure the security of citizens, it is important to establish at all levels a concrete and user-friendly system which will enable an efficient exchange of information on previous convictions of criminals. Information about previous convictions shall circulate between judges and prosecutors as well as police authorities. This is essential in order to provide adequate responses to crime and also to prevent new crimes from being committed.

Keywords: *Crime, Criminal, Criminal Record, Information, Police, Record, Suspect.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The challenges to National security in Nigeria are enormous. There is the issue of religious crisis in some states of the northern part of Nigeria, ritual killings and kidnappings in some states of the South east and south south, sectarian clashes in some states of the south west, bombings in Abuja and some states of the federation.

The police in the Nigerian state is an organization set up by the government and saddled with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the society, and are also responsible for preventing and solving crimes. The aforementioned issues constitute a threat to national security, and if not curtailed, it might escalate to a greater proportion that might plunge the country into confusion. A system of providing the Nigerian Police with information regarding criminals and the various activities they had carried out in the (recent) past, will go along way in helping to checkmate crimes and criminals; and this will also help in identifying new cases of crimes and criminals within a given locality. A

Criminal Records Information System (CRIS) will assist the police with useful information that will help in controlling (apprehend, prosecute, and sanction) criminals. The system will provide information on criminals such as:

- Names and Aliases used
- Type of Crimes carried out
- Mode of operation
- Jail terms served
- Date of last crime
- Mental Status, etc.

It has been acknowledged that the nearest we can get to the criminal happenings or events is the record kept by the Police, of crimes reported to them (James N., 2010a).

The Nigerian Police Force “have a very small number of communication devices” (News Agency of Nigeria, 1992). The use of Computers and other communication devices that will help in keeping tracks of criminals and the various activities they engaged in, is very minimal.

All crime rates are computed from the police reports, using Nigeria's 1991

population census report as its base (total population = 88,569,226). Generally, the definitions of the crimes are similar to those of England. In 1989, there were 928 cases of murder reported to the police, at a rate of 1.07 per 100,000 populations. Attempts are not included. (The number and rate of reported murders per 100,000 population for previous years, are as follows: 984, rate=1.23 (1986); 849, rate=1.04 (1987); and 838, rate=1.00 (1988)).

In 1989, there were 69,454 cases of theft reported to the police, at a rate of 80.82 per 100,000 populations. Attempts are not included. (The number and rate of reported thefts per 100,000 population for previous years are as follows: 68,322, rate=85.57 (1986); 69,767, rate=86.09 (1987); and 72,368, rate=86.73 (1988)).

In 1989, there were 1,032 cases of rape reported to the police, at a rate of 1.20 per 100,000 populations. Attempts are not included. Date rape or the rape of a wife by her husband is not a crime. (The number and rate of reported rapes per 100,000 population for previous years are as follows: 1,238, rate=1.55 (1986); 1,116, rate=1.37 (1987); and 963, rate=1.15 (1988)).

In 1989, there were 588 cases involving drug offenses reported to the police, at a rate of .68 per 100,000 populations.

The Nigerian police annual reports have no records of crimes according to regions, states or cities. However, it is generally known in Nigeria that property crimes are perpetrated more in the Southern states than in the Northern states. This may be due to greater business activity in the South (Nigeria Annual Police Report, 1986 – 1989).

Although the police record of crime is generally acclaimed as being closest to the criminal happenings, it is plagued by the following problems:

The victim may not be aware that an offence has been committed. This frequently happens when employees are dishonest over deliveries of goods, receiving money and thefts by employees within the store or

business. Such losses are often written off during stock taking as shortages or breakages. There is an enormous amount of internal dishonesty which is never discovered or which is condoned.

The 'victim' may have been a willing partner to the crime and so it is unlikely to be discovered unless a third reports it. This is the case for many sexual offences against children, and criminal abortion and homosexual offences.

Even where the victim knows an offence has been committed and has not consented to it or partaken in it, he or she may decide not to report the offence to the police for a variety of reasons. It may be regarded as too trivial to warrant such a report. The victim may not wish to become involved in the consequence which may flow from the report, such as interrogation by the police or being called as a witness. He may not wish to see proceedings brought against the offender because he is a child, relative, friend, or because he otherwise deems the bringing of such proceeding inappropriate for the conduct in question. He may wish to avoid publicity. He may be too frightened to come forward. He may prefer to administer a more homely or less drastic remedy (a beating or the sack). The offender may simply be asked to pay for the goods or make restitution and be given a stern warning. This frequently happens in cases of shoplifting.

There may be no victims, since in some crimes, such as those connected with drugs, alcohol and obscene publications, society condemns behaviours which involve no victim, unless the offender himself is so regarded (James N., 2010b).

The police themselves are involved in defining what is criminal in many ways and the result is distortion in the crime figures as reflected in their reports. For instance, there are several reasons why the police may decide that a matter reported to them as a crime should not be dealt with as such:

They may decide that it is not a crime, but should be regarded in some other way and dealt with accordingly. Thus, a reported

theft may be treated as lost property if the circumstances suggest that theft is unlikely. An event such as a motor vehicle collision maybe regarded as an accident. Way ward behaviour may be treated as evidence of a mental or social problem.

The police may decide that an offence is not serious enough to warrant recording. It is important to observe that in Nigeria with, the high level of illiteracy amongst both the public and the police and the high level of corruption, it is not unlikely that it is only very few cases that will ever get recorded. In recent times, with the economic hardship the country is going through it is not uncommon for the police to complain about lack of stationeries in cases which they may wish to record (James N., 2010c).

For crimes to be effectively controlled, police stations, which presently lack a records management system (RMS) to aid their data capturing ability, should have a RMS where reported crimes, where they were committed, and involving who, amongst other information, will be recorded and stored regularly in a data base. "The police don't have any crime records management system. They keep their records on paper and this doesn't help their efficiency. The RMS will enable the police to have accurate statistics to draw analysis from, on information of a case, the year a crime was committed, who investigated it, etc." (Peter N., 2010).

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the decade, a lot of research work had been carried out and many computer programs had been written in order to assist the police with information on criminals and crimes. One of such development is the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (www.drc.state.oh.us) where the system (database) enables you to search for people who have been convicted in Ohio, and the information is usually about when a person is convicted, when the person was sentenced or fined, and when the person was released. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

protects and supports Ohioans by ensuring that adult felony offenders are effectively supervised in environments that are safe, humane, and appropriately secure. In partnership with communities, it aims to promote citizen safety and victim reparation. Through rehabilitative and restorative programming, it seeks to instill in offenders an improved sense of responsibility and the capacity to become law-abiding members of society.

On September 18, 2008, the European Union (EU) Data Protection Supervisor (EUDPS) adopted an opinion that agrees on the EU Council's proposal to establish an electronic European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS). ECRIS would be a criminal record database available to Member States, and include citizens' criminal convictions. Yet, the EUDPS warns on the importance on adopting the appropriate privacy and supervisory measures to protect the EU citizens' rights.

The ECRIS will be based on a decentralized information technology system and consisting on three elements: (1) a criminal records database in the Member States; (2) a common communication infrastructure; and (3) interconnection software.

In addition to these elements, other issues are addressed by the ECRIS proposal approved by the EUDPS. First, an operational manual will set the rules for the exchange of information, including how the offenders will be identified, plus biometric information. Second, collection of statistical data will be required to assess the efficiency of the system and to supervise compliance with data protection laws. This statistical data includes information such as number of requests for access, length of the requests, updating process, quality of persons having access to the databases, and security breaches cases. Third, "coordination of supervision of data processing" is required. Data protection authorities must have available appropriate mechanisms to coordinate data collection. The final point addressed by ECRIS refers to the use of

automatic translations. Automatic translation systems will be carefully reviewed and codified to assure accuracy.

National Crime Information Center (NCIC) of Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division, located at Clarksburg, West Virginia USA, is a computerized index of criminal justice information (i.e. criminal record history information, fugitives, stolen properties and missing persons). It is available to Federal, state, and local law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies and is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Purpose: The purpose for maintaining the NCIC system is to provide a computerized database for ready access by a criminal justice agency making an inquiry and for prompt disclosure of information in the system from other criminal justice agencies about crimes and criminals. This information assists authorized agencies in criminal justice and related law enforcement objectives, such as apprehending fugitives, locating missing persons, locating and returning stolen property, as well as in the protection of the law enforcement officers encountering the individuals described in the system.

Access Constraints: All records in NCIC are protected from unauthorized access through appropriate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards. These safeguards include restricting access to those with a need to know to perform their official duties, and using locks, alarm devices, passwords, and/or encrypting data communications.

Use Constraints: Users of the NCIC system will be restricted to only those privileges necessary to perform an authorized task(s).

Agency Program: The FBI is authorized to acquire, collect, classify and preserve identification, criminal identification, crime, and other records and to exchange such information with authorized entities.

Sources of Data: Data contained in NCIC is provided by the FBI, federal, state, local and foreign criminal justice agencies, and authorized courts.

2.1 Categories of individuals covered by the system:

- A. Wanted Persons
- B. Individuals who have been charged with serious and/or significant offenses:
- C. Missing Persons
- D. Individuals designated by the U.S. Secret Service as posing a potential danger to the President and/or other authorized protectees.
- E. Members of Violent Criminal Gangs
- F. Members of Terrorist Organizations
- G. Unidentified Persons

2.2 Categories of records in the system

- A. Stolen Vehicle File
- B. Stolen License Plate File.
- C. Stolen Boat File.
- D. Stolen Gun File
- E. Stolen Article File.
- F. Securities File
- G. Wanted Person File
- H. Foreign Fugitive File: Identification data regarding persons who are fugitives from foreign countries.

Uses: Data in NCIC files is exchanged with and for the official use of authorized officials of the Federal Government, the States, cities, penal and other institutions, and certain foreign governments. The data is exchanged through NCIC lines to Federal criminal justice agencies, criminal justice agencies in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Possessions and U.S. Territories. Additionally, data contained in the various "want files," i.e., the stolen vehicle file, stolen license plate file, stolen gun file, stolen article file, wanted person file, securities file, boat file, and missing person data may be accessed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

3.0 MATERIALS/METHODS

The data used in the construction of the database were obtained from the

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Nigeria Police at Gabasawa Division in Kaduna State. No mention of names were made of criminals either dead or live in the discussions, except the use references such as a certain Mr. X, or a certain Mr. Y, to describe the activities and mode of operations of some criminals that have records. Also no photographs or finger prints were shown to me, but the manual mode of capturing the finger prints on paper was described to me. Therefore, provisions were made in designing the CRIS to capture photographs and finger prints in the records of the criminals.

3.1 Methodology

The methodology used is the Structured System and Design Methodology, since it is an acceptable software engineering principle for the design of software. A feasibility study of the manual method of accessing criminals' record was taken. Analysis was made to discover areas of weaknesses and the objectives of the proposed system and its design was implemented. The manual method consisted of:

- asking the criminal if he/she had ever committed a crime before
- if yes, he/she is asked by the police, about the police he/she was taken to
 - the criminal is then asked if he/she was prosecuted in court, or was released on bail at the police station
 - if the criminal was once booked in the same police station, then a search is made for the file, otherwise a new case is opened for the criminal.

3.3 Objectives

The main objective of CRIS is to assist the Nigeria police in their bid to solve crimes with timely and useful information about criminals and/or their mode of operations so as to nib in the bud criminal activities in a given locality.

3.4 System design

The system is a Database Management System (DBMS) that will contain available records of criminals, and a procedure that contains some query to the database so as to access some specific records. It is imperative to state, only the system administrator has the right to modify (add, edit) records. He/She must also receive a high level clearance before he/she can modify any record.

A DBMS is a system software package that helps the use of integrated collection of data records and files known as databases. It allows different user application programs to easily access the same database (wikipedia).

Queries allow the user to describe desired data, leaving the DBMS responsible for planning, optimizing, and performing the physical operations necessary to produce that result as it chooses.

A query includes a list of columns to be included in the final result immediately following the SELECT keyword. An asterisk ("*") can also be used to specify that the query should return all columns of the queried tables. SELECT is the most complex statement in Structured Query Language (SQL), with optional keywords and clauses that include:

- The **FROM** clause which indicates the table(s) from which data is to be retrieved. The FROM clause can include optional **JOIN** sub-clauses to specify the rules for joining tables.
- The **WHERE** clause includes a comparison predicate, which restricts the rows returned by the query. The WHERE clause eliminates all rows from the result set for which the comparison predicate does not evaluate to True.
- The **GROUP BY** clause is used to project rows having common values into a smaller set of rows. GROUP BY is often used in conjunction with SQL aggregation functions or to eliminate duplicate rows from a result set. The WHERE clause is applied before the GROUP BY clause.
- The **HAVING** clause includes a

predicate used to filter rows resulting from the GROUP BY clause. Because it acts on the results of the GROUP BY clause, aggregation functions can be used in the HAVING clause predicate.

- The **ORDER BY** clause identifies which columns are used to sort the resulting data, and in which direction they should be sorted (options are ascending or descending). Without an ORDER BY clause, the order of rows returned by an SQL query is undefined. (wikipedia)

4.0 OPERATING SYSTEM AND PROGRAMMING PLATFORM

Windows Vista, Microsoft SQL Server and VB.NET programming languages were used to implement the database and the application package respectively.

4.1 Implementation

This refers to the development, deployment (installation and testing) of all the system components. This involves the transformation of ideas such as algorithms, flowcharts, computer run chart, programming language used, etc. into real process flow of information. The system operates as follows:

1. A welcome screen
2. Login screen (used to enter username and password)
3. Select an option
 - (a) Criminals in a locality (location has to be specified)
 - (b) Crime Type (e.g. burglary, car snatching, rape, etc.)
 - (c) Criminal's Record Search (suspect's Identification number must be specified)
 - (d) Criminal's Search by description (gender, height, eye color, skin color, etc.)
4. Click OK after the selection
5. The search procedure executes and display the results found.
6. The police can now use the information as is applicable.

4.2 Results

The results showed that the process was automated and the sample forms showed the input and output for the CRIS.

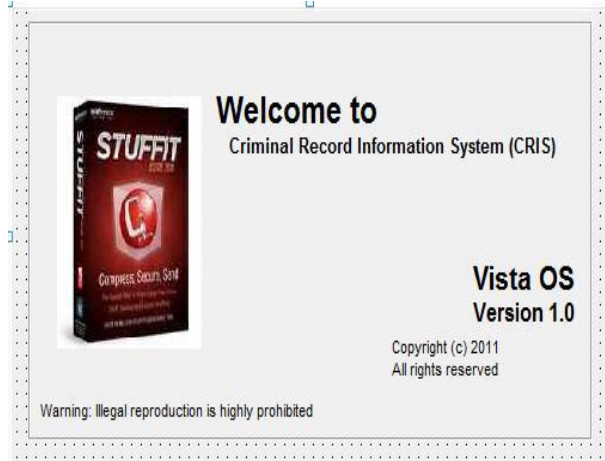


Fig 1. Welcome Screen

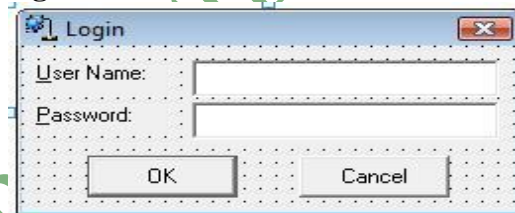


Fig 2. Login Screen

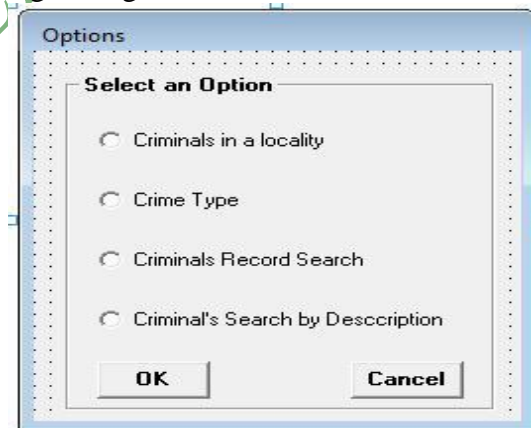
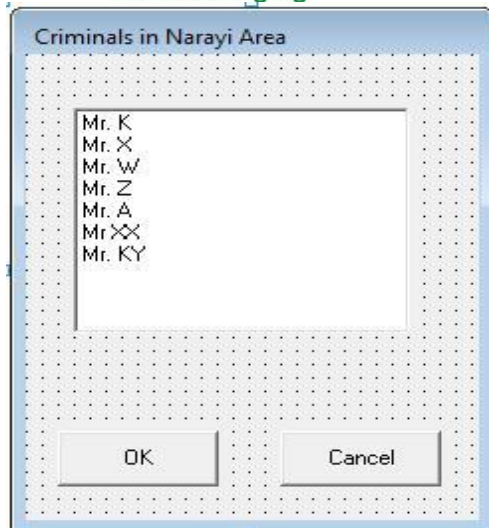


Fig 3. Options Dialog

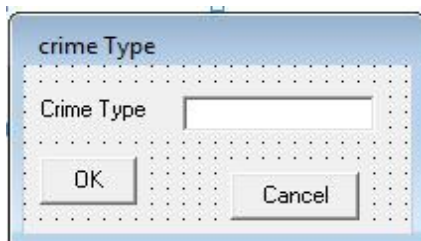


Criminals in Narayi Area

Mr. K
Mr. X
Mr. W
Mr. Z
Mr. A
Mr. XX
Mr. KY

OK Cancel

Fig 4. List of Criminals in an area

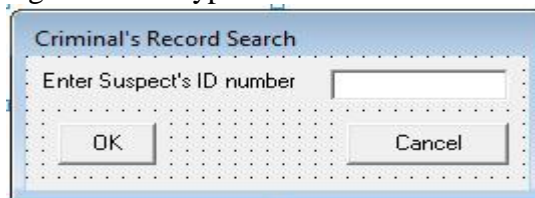


crime Type

Crime Type

OK Cancel

Fig 5. Crime Type



Criminal's Record Search

Enter Suspect's ID number

OK Cancel

Fig 6. Criminal's Record Search



Criminal Search by Description

Select gender
 Male Female

Enter height

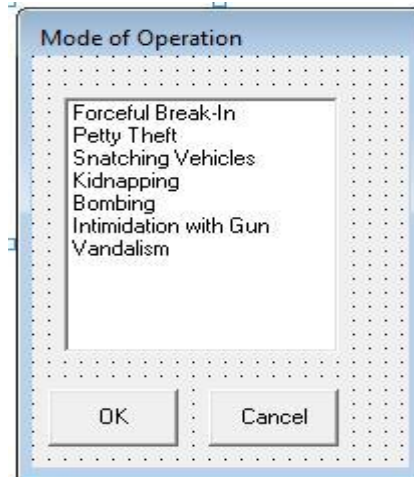
Enter Eye colour

Enter Skin colour

Tribal marks?
 Yes No

OK Cancel

Fig 7. Criminal Search by Description

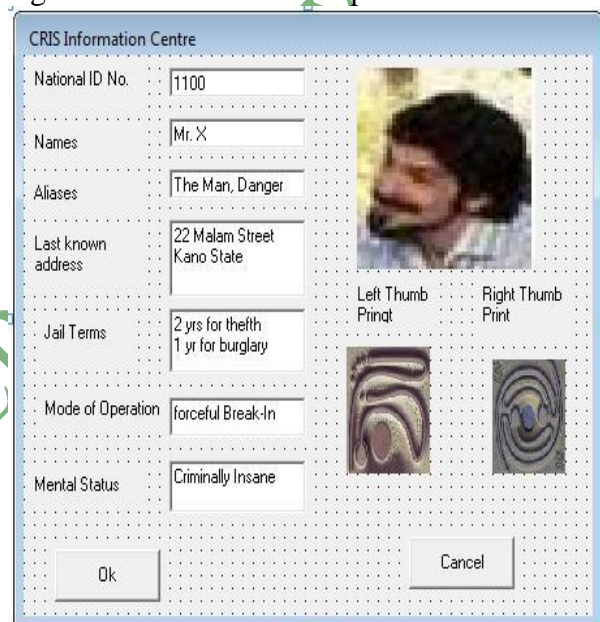


Mode of Operation

Forceful Break-In
Petty Theft
Snatching Vehicles
Kidnapping
Bombing
Intimidation with Gun
Vandalism

OK Cancel

Fig 8. Criminals mode of operation



CRIS Information Centre

National ID No.

Names


Aliases


Last known address


Jail Terms

Mode of Operation

Mental Status

Left Thumb Print 

Right Thumb Print 



OK Cancel

Fig 9. Information Form about a Criminal

5.0 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion

A database and a query embedded in a procedure in VB.NET was used to develop a CRIS that will help in issues relevant to tackling National Security Challenges. The results obtained from CRIS compares favorably and efficiently with searches for criminal records carried out by human under similar conditions. From the sample output shown, this system can be used by the Nigeria Police to handle problems of investigation and crime control. A verdict can be arrived at in good time if this information is readily available.

5.2 Conclusion

The automated system that has been developed will facilitate the keeping of records of criminals for future references. If adopted, it will be difficult for criminals to elude the authorities. And it will be easier for the authorities to apprehend and convict criminals. This system if hosted on the Internet and linked to PDA's (Personal Digital Assistants) or mobile phones of the Nigeria Police personals, it will help in addressing the challenges facing our National Security as a nation.

5.3 Recommendations

The government should adopt the system and implement it for all the other government security agencies in Nigeria (i.e. Military, Para-Military, and the Judiciary). This will go a long way in helping to combat crime in Nigeria.

Where necessary, the government should mandate the Nigeria Police to issue from time to time alerts and warnings regarding the movements or presence of some notorious criminals in the society.

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