



DATA REPLICATION

Colorado Judicial Department


April 2012

Introduction

- Judicial Department Requested to review data replication release policy
- Task Force commissioned in August 2011
- Task Force Charge
 - Research original policy reasoning and technology
 - Review current policy; including release policies of other government agencies
 - Consider if current access meets policy objectives
- Provide Recommendations to the Public Access Committee regarding this policy area

History

- First data releases (in early 1990s) included entire trial court database
- In an effort to address concerns related to confidential and incorrect (stale) information being available on the Internet, data releases were modified
- Public Access Policy was created that more clearly defined files and fields that Judicial could release

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- ❑ Technology limitations made compiled data releases to be time consuming and difficult
 - ❑ Time and financial constraints led Judicial to obtain an agent to create more suitable data access
 - ❑ First agent provided public access to court records on case-by-case or name search basis
 - ❑ Also provided a replicated database to other vendors
 - ❑ Some data display issues continued related to outdated information remaining available on the Internet

- Contract expiration caused second agent to be selected
- Different data release requirements established
- All access was on name by name or case by case basis (data replication discontinued)
- Colorado provides aggregate and composite data releases

CO State Government Data Access

- Agencies provide limited data sets to the public
- Significant data sharing occurs among agencies governed by a Data Advisory Board
- No agencies were identified that currently provide a replicated database consisting of all of the agency's public records

Other States' Judicial Record Access

- Researched surrounding comparable states
- Some states experimented with database releases
- Most states did not find this to be a satisfactory data access solution

Current Colorado Data Access

- XML access for vendors to provide live data access to customers
- Direct case-by-case or name-by-name searches can only be done by approved government agencies
- Composite and Aggregate data requests

Replication Advantages

- Potential performance improvements
 - No down time if connectivity is interrupted (network or systemic)
 - Different search indexing may be done to facilitate quicker search result returns

Replication Disadvantages

- Once released a database is in control of the recipient
 - ▣ Data can be displayed or manipulated in any fashion
 - ▣ Data can be copied and resold
 - ▣ Inaccurate results because of complicated relational database structure
- Database would have to be replicated to all persons or entities that request it
- Financial and resource impact to Judicial (training, audits, etc.)

Technology

- Technology options were researched and considered
- Industry standards are moving away from replication and duplicative databases in favor of web services
- Technology changes constantly and is continually improving and providing new and innovative solutions

Task Force Recommendations

- Current access to electronic court data is appropriate and sufficient
- Data and information from a replicated database cannot be sufficiently protected
- Accuracy of data displays could not be sufficiently monitored
- Data replication is not a common practice with other Colorado government agencies
- It is premature to change the policy at this time but department should continue to research technology opportunities that may enhance performance of the current system