

Governor Rockefeller's staff in 1961 as special assistant counsel for law enforcement, among the assignments he undertook was a search for possible remedies to the problems presented by the Apalachin investigation, as well as the deluge of papers and files inundating operational agencies concerned with the administration of criminal justice. Out of his inquiries into the possible application of electronic data processing techniques to criminal justice came the New York State Identification and Intelligence System project.

In the last 10 years, the development of new electronic data processing equipment—particularly the electronic computer—has stimulated revolutionary changes in information handling techniques in many fields. Computer-based information processing systems have been developed for military (e.g., air defense) and commercial (e.g., airline reservations) purposes. These computer-based systems make possible the centralized and organized storage of large amounts of data that can then be drawn upon by a network of geographically dispersed user-agencies equipped with communication devices and provide the users access to this central store of information with a speed, accuracy, and un-failing memory unrivaled by any manual methods.

People and plans

In May 1963, Governor Rockefeller, with the concurrence of the legislature authorized a study to determine the technical feasibility and potential significance of applying this new electronic technology to the information problems of the New York State agencies concerned with the administration of criminal justice.

Initial system analysis was performed by the System Development Corp. During this study phase, guidance was provided by the executive chamber and, under the direction of Donald Axelrod, the administrative management unit of the division of the budget of New York State. Throughout the feasibility study, the project derived considerable benefit from a broadly-based advisory committee that met frequently to provide information and advice. Advisory committee members were representatives of—

- The executive chamber.

- The State department of correction, including probation representatives.

- The State division of parole.

- The division of State police.

- The division of budget.

- The judicial conference (the administrative arm of the courts of New York).

- The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police.

- The New York State Sheriffs Association.

- The New York State District Attorneys Association.

- The Office of Probation for the Courts of New York City, and

- The New York City Police Department.

A feasibility report, dated November 1963, resulted from that 6-month study and concluded that a central information processing system was technically feasible and that it could provide valuable assistance to all the relevant agencies.

Governor Rockefeller, in his annual message to the New York State Legislature in January 1964, urged an appropriation to initiate the development and installation of the proposed system. "The increase in the incidence of crime, the modern techniques of organized crime syndicates, and the increased mobility of our population make it imperative that law enforcement officials use the most modern technology in collecting, storing, retrieving, and disseminating information and intelligence and engage in more effective cooperative action in the area of information sharing."

New York State, operating under the system of annual budgets, provided funds for the first year of development. Robert R. J. Gallati, formerly chief of planning of the New York City Police Department, was appointed director of the project. To assist Gallati, Paul T. Veillette, formerly director of the management analysis division of the Chicago Police Department, was appointed technical director, and Paul McCann, formerly director of the division of identification of the New York State Department of Correction, was appointed technical consultant. A growing State staff supports them. The executive chamber, the administrative management unit of the State budget division, and the advisory committee continued to provide support and guidance to the project.

System Development Corp. was selected by New York State to assist with development of the system. A group teamwork approach has been adopted by