Bridging the gap and giving power to the single-query to connect, identify, and know.

IIU MISSION… to enhance public safety and national security by facilitating collaborative efforts with local, state, tribal, federal, and international partners to implement and expand interoperability efforts to share information among systems used by the FBI and its partners through coordination, outreach, reporting, and best practice development.

The FBI's Interoperability Initiatives Unit (IIU) facilitates information sharing among separate repositories of biometric and biographic information. By collaborating with partners to find technical solutions to automate searches of various systems, the IIU generates true interoperability and widens the range of information sharing, eliminating blind spots due to incomplete records about individuals. The goal of interoperability is to allow the real-time search and exchange of information from all partner repositories via a single query.

While the IIU works toward information sharing both domestically and internationally, much of the focus has been to connect the nation's major biometric repositories and make them available for authorized users and uses. These systems include the following:

- **Department of Justice (DOJ) Next Generation Identification (NGI) System**
- **Department of Defense (DoD) Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS)**
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT)**

HISTORY

For more than a decade, the FBI's IIU and its partners have made considerable strides to eliminate gaps in sharing biometric and biographic information through interoperability. In the past, serious missteps in handling dangerous criminals have occurred because agencies did not have complete information. Such incidents, as well as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, demonstrated the need for real-time, reciprocal exchange of information in the effort to defend our borders and nation. Subsequently, legislation has mandated that specific government agency systems become interoperable.

DELIVERING INTEROPERABILITY

The IIU conducts liaison, outreach, and problem solving to produce high-quality solutions that meet the needs of stakeholders who use biometric and biographic data in identity history summaries. IIU delivers interoperable functionalities and quality assurance measures such as:

- **Enabling searches of IDENT and ABIS via the NGI.**
- **Linking of information contained in multiple repositories.**
- **Monitoring of improvements to system availability.**
- **Ensuring the accuracy of responses meets stakeholders' specifications.**
- **Identifying, evaluating, and mitigating risks to improve data security and information management.**

INTEROPERABILITY IN ACTION

Three suspects were arrested on charges of first-degree rape, first-degree kidnapping, and robbery with a dangerous weapon. During booking, their fingerprints, through interoperability, were automatically checked against immigration identity information in the DHS IDENT revealing that all three suspects were illegally present in the United States. Within hours, DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) placed detainers on all three individuals, enabling ICE to assume custody after the judicial process was completed.

BENEFITS OF INTEROPERABILITY

Interoperability provides definitive, real-time identity management enhancements, which increase chances of preventing and solving crimes. The benefits are observable and measurable. For instance, interoperability:

- **Facilitates the return of more information from a single query, increasing the completeness of data with each additional contributing repository.**
- **Allows participating agencies to "know the person" with whom they are interacting, which may impact the safety of the agencies' staff, law enforcement officers, and the public.**
- **Improves decision making regarding eligibility for a person's admission into the country, as well as the detention and prosecution of individuals.**
- **Enables end users of partner systems to experience an increased level of mission independence while ensuring data security.**
- **Augments results of noncriminal justice background checks for applicants for public trust and/or national security positions.**
- **Enhances border security between nations as more repositories share information globally.**

STAKEHOLDERS OF INTEROPERABILITY

The IIU serves users of biometric and criminal history information including:

- **Local, state, tribal, federal, and international criminal justice users**
- **Authorized noncriminal justice users**
- **The intelligence community**

Contact information: **FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Division**
Interoperability Initiatives Unit
1000 Custer Hollow Road
Clarksburg, WV 26306

Find us on: LEO.GOV Interoperability Initiatives Unit