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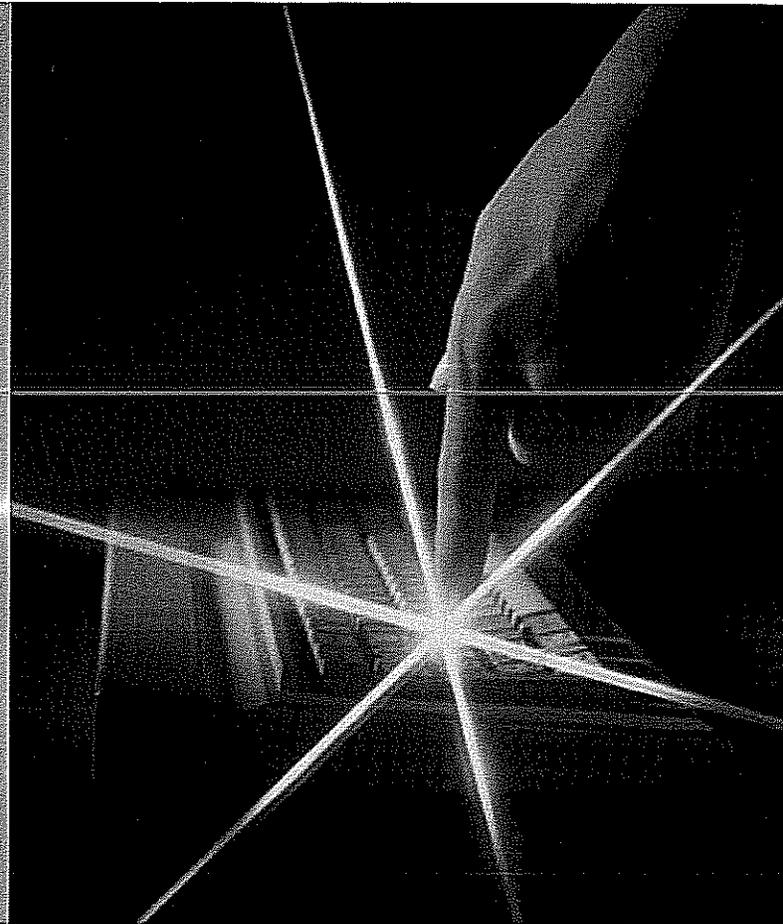
CT FEATURE

THE INTERNET

as a

TECHNOLOGY
&
INFORMATION
*Resource*The Corrections
Practitioner's Guide to
'Surfing the 'Net'

By Dave Hart and Garry Pate



The boss has just asked you to research information on a certain technology your facility wants to purchase. Conventional wisdom tells you to use the resources with which you are most comfortable, such as contacting a colleague or another facility to see exactly what they've been using or which product they recommend. Next, you might try looking in the phone book or an old ACA conference program for a listing of manufacturers. You might also rely on word-of-mouth or a company's reputation. In the past, all of these resources would have given you a starting point, but times have changed. Today, corrections practitioners have a faster, and more reliable, resource — the Internet.

The same Internet that is helping your children learn more efficiently and providing you with up-to-the-minute sports scores, weather and news also can help corrections practitioners learn about technology. On the Internet, criminal justice practitioners have access to government and business Web sites addressing new products, services and technologies. However, pinpointing the information you need can be either a pleasant journey or a trying experience. One of the secrets of traveling this tangled and extensive information highway is knowing where to begin.

Government Agencies

Your starting point on the Internet might be those federal agencies with Web sites. The federal government

maintains a number of Web sites that offer a variety of information about correctional programs, products and technologies.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) maintains a Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/>. As you scroll through the introduction, you are offered two choices: to search the Justice Department's Web servers, or to search the DOJ

and all federal government servers. Choose the second option; then, at the next prompt, type in "corrections technology." This search will result in more than 7,000 documents relating to grant information, technology, jobs and studies. From this Web site, you also will find links to:

- The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) at <http://www.bop.gov/>; and
- The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) at <http://www.bop.gov/nicpg/nicmain.html>.

Both of these sites offer a variety of information concerning programs and services provided by the BOP.

Another excellent resource is the Web site of the DOJ's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/>. The Office of Justice Programs' mission is to provide federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist crime victims. From OJP's main page, you can link to:

- The Bureau of Justice Assistance at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/>, which provides compre-

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hensive information on funding, evaluation, training, technical assistance and information about state and community criminal justice programs; and

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>, which provides criminal justice statistics.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/>, is the research and development branch of the DOJ and provides many links to programs and services. Two popular NIJ programs are its National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) and its National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC).

- NCJRS, at <http://www.ncjrs.org/>, has one of the most comprehensive online sources of criminal and juvenile justice information in the world. NCJRS provides full text and abstracts of thousands of criminal justice-related publications on its Web site.
- NLECTC, at <http://www.nlectc.org/>, is a program of the NIJ's Office of Science and Technology and offers an online gateway to law enforcement and corrections technology through its Web site — JUSTNET. JUSTNET provides information on new technologies, equipment and other products and services available to the law enforcement, corrections and criminal justice communities, including access to a searchable database of more than 4,000 available products and technologies.

Specific Technologies

JUSTNET also provides information on NIJ-funded projects, including:

- *Radar-Based, Through-the-Wall Surveillance Systems:* NIJ, through a Joint (DOJ/DOD) Program Steering Group (JPSG), is sponsoring the development of a portable, through-the-wall surveillance device developed by the Raytheon Co. It employs radar that can locate and track an individual through concrete or brick walls, and also measures and displays the distance to that individual. NIJ plans to package the device to make it suitable for operational evaluation by law enforcement and correctional agencies nationwide in 1998-99.
- *Voice Response Translator (VRT) Device:* A voice response translator device has been developed for NIJ by Integrated Wave Technologies Inc. Belt-mounted, it will permit English-speaking law enforcement and correctional officers to communicate orally with persons who have difficulty with or cannot comprehend English. It is designed to emit an audible phrase, in another language such as Spanish or Korean, in response to a spoken prompt made by an English-speaking officer. By using the device, officers may more effectively query, inform and direct the actions of non-English-speaking persons.
- *Pepper Spray Projectile/Dispenser:* NIJ, through Delta Defense, is finalizing the design, analysis and

testing of an improved, less-than-lethal projectile capable of dispersing the incapacitating agent oleoresin capsicum (pepper spray) launched from a standoff position. It can be used in hostage, barricade and tactical assault situations. Specifications include a 100-foot minimum launch range, nonlethal at the minimum operational range of 50 feet, and deliverance of a fine/atomized spray of liquid pepper spray sufficient to fill a 900-cubic-foot room.

- *Lazer Dazzler:* NIJ and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, through JPSG, has funded LE Systems Inc. to develop a handheld device that uses a random-flashing green laser light to disorient and distract a subject. The aperture currently is being evaluated for eye safety certification. Design configuration is like a flashlight.
- *Telemedicine:* NIJ and JPSG, in collaboration with the BOP and the Department of Veterans Affairs, is sponsoring a project to demonstrate and evaluate the use of telecommunications technology in the provision of medical care in a correctional environment. Telemedicine enables remote diagnosis of inmates by enabling them to be seen by medical specialists without having to be transported out of the correctional facility. It offers the potential to reduce costs and improve public safety, while providing inmates with effective health care.

State Agencies

Almost all of the 50 states have Web sites sponsored by their correctional services departments. You could look up each one on the Internet using a common search engine such as AltaVista or Yahoo. Or, you could visit a corrections-related Web site and look for "links," which are the Internet addresses for those Web sites. JUSTNET maintains a current list of links to many corrections-related Web sites. Exploring these sites provides excellent insight into programs and initiatives at the state level.



- The New York State Commission of Correction at <http://crisny.org/government/ny/nysscoc/index.html>. The Commission of Correction oversees the operation of all state and local correctional facilities. Its site includes information on its organization and history, its New Institutions Transition Assistance Program, inmate population statistics and other related sites such as the one initiated by the New York Department of Correctional Services, at <http://www.docs.state.ny.us>.
- The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, at <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/>, includes information on the DRC's parole and community services, business, victim services and publications.
- The Web site for the Florida Department of Corrections, at <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/>, provides information on frequently asked questions, misconceptions, its offender network, statistics and the latest news.
- The California Department of Corrections, at <http://www.cdc.state.ca.us/>, offers information on recent news releases, programs, issues and insight, as well as technology evaluation, testing and review.

Business-Related Sites

It is increasingly common to find manufacturers who use Web sites to showcase their products and services. Some business concerns also provide excellent resources for the corrections practitioner.

- Jail.Net, at <http://www.jail.net/>, provides information and resources on correctional products and services.
- The Corrections Connection – commonly known as [corrections.com](http://www.corrections.com/) — at <http://www.corrections.com/>, is a resource that each practitioner should have bookmarked in his or her Web browser. The Corrections Connection bills itself as the largest online resource for new information in corrections. This site provides links to state and federal agencies, maintains a corrections “yellow pages,” contains a bid center and keeps an updated technology page.
- The American Correctional Association, at <http://www.corrections.com/aca/index.html>, provides another excellent source of information, as well as links for corrections practitioners.
- The American Jail Association at <http://www.corrections.com/aja/index.html>, offers information on conferences, training and publications for jail practitioners.

As you can see, there are many resources for corrections practitioners on the Internet. The key is finding them. It is sometimes easy to get lost, but don't get frustrated. Just keep looking and exploring. The Internet is one of your best resources for information on technology and a host of other topics.

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