language barriers between public safety personnel and the communities they serve are a natural consequence of America’s growing multicultural population. In 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 21.3 million Americans were classified as “limited English proficient,” a 52 percent increase from 1990 and more than double the 1980 total. Additionally, 1 in 25 households were deemed linguistically isolated, meaning that no one in the household older than 14 could speak English.1


For law enforcement and corrections personnel, first responders, and others who work with the public, overcoming language barriers is vital to doing their jobs effectively. Until now, the only way to bridge the communication gap was through the use of human translators. But translators can be costly and sometimes unavailable.

At the request of corrections officials in San Diego County, California, the Border Research and Technology Center (BRTC), part of the National Institute of Justice’s (NIJ’s) National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center system, conducted a workshop on language translation technologies. Representatives from State and Federal correctional agencies, the U.S. Navy, and the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection attended. The workshop offered them an opportunity to learn about a variety of on-the-market—or soon to be—language translation devices and technologies that could reduce their dependence on human translators.

Voice Response Translator

Developed by Integrated Wave Technologies, Inc., and Eagan, McAllister Associates, Inc. (EMA), with funding from NIJ, the Voice Response Translator (VRT) is a portable electronic translation device that emits short, prerecorded phrases in several languages. The user selects a language and speaks a trigger phrase in English into the VRT. The VRT uses voice recognition technology to determine which phrase to emit in response to the spoken command.

These phrases are intended to help a police officer obtain basic information from a victim or suspect and to elicit gestures such as head nods and hand motions. Sample phrases include, “Show me where you are hurt,” and “Put your hands on your head.” Phrases are recorded by speakers fluent in a language instead of machine-synthesized voices. The officer, however, must record the trigger phrase into the unit’s memory before use.

Versions of the VRT have been field tested by a number of law enforcement agencies, including the Oakland, California, Police Department; the Nashville, Tennessee, Metropolitan Police Department; the Pinellas County, Florida, Sheriff’s Department; and the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. The latest version of the VRT supports up to 50 languages with 1,000 phrases per language, and can recognize up to 8 users. Available languages include Arabic, Farsi, Italian, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Cantonese, and Vietnamese.

According to Tim McCune of EMA, the VRT meets the requirements set out by police officers surveyed by NIJ, including being hands free and eyes free.

The U.S. Department of Defense’s Special Operations Command and the Coast Guard have placed orders for the VRT, which costs $3,000 per unit and includes a 5-year warranty, training, and technical support. McCune says his company plans to train prison personnel to use the device and obtain feedback on how well it works in a corrections environment.

CopTrans® and SpeechTrans™

With NIJ funding, Language Systems Inc. (LSI), has developed CopTrans, a two-way translation software that allows two users to speak, each in his or her own language, and then translates into the other language. The software can be installed on any computer that runs Windows®, or it can be used on a rugged, belt-mounted computer with a hands-free interface option. CopTrans can be run using a keyboard, or hands free using spoken commands. It also can be used with a loudspeaker.

(See Nothing Lost, page 2)
from a patrol car. Depending on the setting, it requires one or two microphones for translation.

CopTrans presents a menu of dialogues for particular situations, such as booking prisoners into the jail, issuing jail clothing, or stating charges and court dates. The user selects a dialogue and speaks a phrase. The system then generates the appropriate spoken translation. The current release includes more than half a million words and phrases in Spanish and English. LSI 10 words in length. Displaced language pairs will soon be available.

"CopTrans translates from English into Spanish and then back from Spanish into English," says LSI's Christine Montgomery. It also uses speaker-independent continuous speech recognition technology, which, she says, "means that it doesn't have to be trained to your voice."

Most of the typical phrases used in a jail or police station are already loaded on the system, but the software allows agencies to add phrases. The software can be customized, and the company can provide onsite training. Under a current NIH grant, LSI will work with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to assess the product.

The initial license will sell for $2,999, which includes installation and training. The company is planning to offer discounts for subsequent systems and leasing agreements.

In addition to CopTrans, LSI is developing SpeechTrans, a speech-to-forms translation software that uses input from spoken interviews to fill out electronic forms automatically. SpeechTrans, which also provides for two-way translation, is expected to be commercially available within the next year.

**Phraselator™**

Phraselator is a handheld, one-way, voice-to-voice translation system that translates English into one or more target languages. Using speech-recognition technology, it matches the spoken English phrase with a pre-recorded phrase in the target language that is played through a speaker on the device.

Developed by VoxTec, a division of Marine Acoustics, with funding from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Phraselator can support multiple languages and store 30,000 phrases averaging 5 to 12 words each. Users can choose from more than 20 modules in 40 languages. In addition to several medical modules and a tourist module, modules are available for law enforcement, the military, force protection, basic maritime intercepts, and displaced language barriers is vital to doing their jobs effectively.

**For law enforcement and corrections officers, first responders, and others who work with the public, overcoming language barriers is vital to doing their jobs effectively.**
correctional agencies and vendors, and he led the committee’s organization. For the past 3 years, NTPAC’s quarterly meetings have brought together representatives of its member organizations to watch vendor demonstrations of products in development and listen to educational presentations on the latest technological advances. On the first day of a 2-day meeting, vendors give 30-minute presentations on their products, including a Q-and-A session. After each vendor finishes and leaves the room, committee members discuss the product and assess its potential benefits and drawbacks. These demonstrations give committee members a chance to learn about new products and to provide feedback to vendors to use in developing or modifying their products to meet correctional needs.

Although at first NTPAC had to recruit vendors to give demonstrations, manufacturers now recognize that being on the agenda creates an opportunity to extend their markets and improve their products. Committee Chair Alex Fox, director of security technologies for Massachusetts correctional facilities, says he now receives vendor presentation requests almost daily. When selecting vendors to present, Fox says, “I look for innovative technologies. What the group is interested in is new and creative technological solutions for problems that have existed forever.”

On the second day, guest experts provide informal training on specific technologies. These speakers come to educate, not to sell products. Recent topics have included advances in radio technology and biometrics. At the end of the day, participants suggest topics and products for the next meeting.

“We look for emerging technology, for things that are not quite ready for purchase,” Fox says. “These vendors want feedback, and they will try to adapt their products to meet our needs.” For that reason, vendor presentations usually do not address products already on the market; NTPAC members want to hear about technology that can still be modified to meet correctional needs. One such product is a portable evidence recovery unit—a stainless steel toilet designed to capture, disinfect, and store contraband objects swallowed and passed by inmates.

“This was just an individual who had this idea and was working on it in his garage,” Fox says. “He came out with the prototype and we gave him feedback. He has returned three times, each time after making modifications requested by the committee. This is a great way of illustrating what the group can do for a vendor and what the vendor can do for us.”

This impressed Clair Bee, assistant commissioner for correctional facilities and NTPAC representative from New York State. Although New York has had a technology testing and evaluation program for 25 years, Bee says he benefits from NTPAC membership because the meetings let him see products—such as the portable evidence recovery unit—that he might not hear about otherwise.

“It’s given me some new ideas,” Bee says. “You can get a little stale working on your own.” He adds that vendors sometimes do not want to make a presentation to just one State, even one as large as New York, but are eager to present to NTPAC. “That gives NTPAC a lot of clout as far as vendors are concerned.”

New York State repays NTPAC for that clout by offering to test some of the products presented to the committee. We’re really able to help the smaller States that just can’t do a testing program,” Bee says. “New York, Pennsylvania, or BOP [Federal Bureau of Prisons] will say ‘sure, we’ll take that back and test it.”

Correctional departments are not NTPAC’s only members. The U.S. Army Natick Soldier Center (NSC) and its National Protection Center (NPC) also attend the quarterly meetings. NSC performs research and development on protective gear—clothing, body armor, bomb suits, boots, gloves, and duty uniforms—for the U.S. Army and the Marines. Approximately 4 years ago, NSC set up NPC to develop partnerships with the emergency response community. As part of NSC’s outreach efforts for NPC, Bill Haskell, NPC senior systems integrator, met with Maloney, who invited Haskell’s organization to join NTPAC.

“We had established a number of strong partnerships with the law enforcement community, but this was our first partnership with the corrections community,” Haskell says. NSC technologists understood the needs of military corrections officers, but working with NTPAC has taught the organization about the needs of the civilian corrections community.

“We’re finding—as well as we know the military and what it does—that there are products and vendors who work with the civilian community that we’ve never heard about,” Haskell says. “We give the other NTPAC members information on products that we’ve tested. They give us leads on new ideas and new manufacturers we didn’t know, and we introduce them to military vendors they didn’t know.”

In turn, Fox says, “NSC has been a great resource for NTPAC to use. They’ve opened a door for us with regard to how the military looks at things.”

(See Going Beyond, page 10)
A gencies have a new source for equipment—the Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse (HDER) program. Jointly sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security’s Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) and the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Assets Utilization, National Center of Excellence for Materials Recycle, the program provides surplus radiological detection instrumentation and other equipment and needed training and technical support. All excess Federal Government equipment available through the program has been rehabilitated and is available to first-responder agencies across the Nation at no charge.

Mobile teams from ODP’s Domestic Preparedness Equipment Technical Assistance Program (DPETAP) will offer onsite equipment and maintenance training and provide technical information. (Training covers the classes of available equipment, not specific makes and models.) Also, volunteers from local chapters of the Health Physics Society, a nonprofit scientific professional organization whose mission is to promote the practice of radiation safety, can perform field checks and basic maintenance, provide hands-on refresher training, and answer questions. The volunteers also will check the equipment when agencies receive it. Available items include—

- Handheld dose rate meters (ionization chambers).
- Electronic pulisers.
- Microrem meters.
- Count rate meters for contamination surveys.
- Pocket ionization chambers (self-reading pocket dosimeters).

Actual items available at any particular point in time will vary; quarterly inventory lists will be provided. Agencies may request items every quarter, but HDER reserves the right to limit the items given to a particular agency or agencies to ensure equality in distribution.

For more information about the HDER program, call the ODP Helpline, 800–368–6498. For more information about DPETAP training, visit www.nlectc.org/equipment/hder.html.
In Charleston, South Carolina, a group of first responders is testing the usefulness of small wearable computers during critical response incidents. The results from this demonstration project may eventually lead to first responders commonly having access to building schematics, aerial photographs, digitized maps, and other information—no matter where their feet take them.

The National Institute of Justice has awarded a grant to the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC)-Southeast’s technology partner, the South Carolina Research Authority, which in turn funded the Xybernaut Corporation and the Tactical Survey Group (TSG), Inc., to evaluate the Critical Incident Response Toolset (CIRT) as a national model for first-responder technology. This test product combines a Xybernaut wearable computer with TSG site-specific tactical survey software. The three sponsoring agencies chose Charleston because it is the second busiest container shipping port on the East Coast, it is the site of several military installations, and, perhaps most important, the city’s public safety agencies have strong relationships with one another.

Twelve Charleston police, fire, and public safety agencies provided two participants each to test computer units (a tactical end user and an information technology specialist). The participating agencies include the Aviation Authority Police; the Charleston City fire and police departments; the Charleston County emergency medical services, emergency preparedness department, fire department, and sheriff's office; the Mt. Pleasant fire and police departments; the North Charleston fire and police departments; and the State Port Authority Police Department.

According to Coleman Knight, law enforcement specialist at NLECTC-Southeast, each participating agency received two wearable computer units to keep, maintain, and use in future phases of the demonstration project. The project’s objective is to test the units in the field and produce a spring 2004 report that will detail lessons learned and potential uses for the wearable computers.

Knight explains that a working group consisting of representatives from the participating public safety agencies selected three demonstration sites for computer tests and agreed not to publicize the specific locations. “We will run a functionality test at one location this summer, probably a school, which will include an actual functional response and a tabletop exercise using the tactical surveys available at that time,” he says. “Also, the Charleston County Emergency Preparedness Division holds a multijurisdictional disaster response called a Med-X each fall. We may use one of the Med-X sites and integrate the wearable computer and the site surveys into the exercise.”

The portable unit to be tested at those sites can be worn on a belt around the waist, but Xybernaut is researching other, more practical options for law enforcement officers who already wear other equipment on their belts, Knight says.

The unit consists of a brick-sized processor that runs at 500 MHz and supports a 10-gigabyte hard drive, and a touch screen that works well in indirect sunlight. The unit will run on either Windows or Linux operating systems and appears to work well in less-than-ideal environments such as areas that are prone to sand, dirt, or dust.

During the demonstration project, each unit will work independently. According to Knight, in future applications, wireless communications could link the units together. The wearable computers also can connect to a network via a docking station and perform operations similar to those performed by comparably configured laptops.

At the close of the testing phase, NLECTC-Southeast plans to issue a lessons-learned report for distribution to public safety agencies.

For more information about the wearable computer demonstration project, contact Coleman Knight at 800-292-4305 or knight@nlectc-se.org.

As public safety agencies moved into the Information Age, first responders gained access to detailed tactical response information via personal computers—access that was limited to their desks.

In the field, first responders continued to rely on information relayed to them via telephone or radio. As technology developed, computer access was extended beyond the desk or office as laptops and small computers became standard issue for patrol cars and other response vehicles. Unfortunately, emergency personnel often must leave their vehicles—and their information—behind as they move out on foot.
New Publications

The following publications are available through the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center—National:

**NLECTC Tests Walk-Through Metal Detectors for Public Safety Applications.** This bulletin summarizes the results of testing performed on five models of walk-through metal detectors. The models were tested for compliance with the National Institute of Justice’s walk-through metal detector standard. (This document is law enforcement sensitive. Requests for copies must be made on agency letterhead.)

**Equipment Performance Report: Walk-Through Metal Detectors.** This report presents detailed results of testing performed on five models of walk-through metal detectors. The models were tested for compliance with the National Institute of Justice’s walk-through metal detector standard. (This document is law enforcement sensitive. Requests for copies must be made on agency letterhead.)

**Michigan State Police Tests 2004 Patrol Vehicles.** This bulletin summarizes the test results from the Michigan State Police 2004 model year patrol vehicle evaluations.

**2004 Model Year Vehicle Evaluation.** This report contains the complete results of comprehensive tests conducted by the Michigan State Police on 2004 model year police patrol vehicles. Vehicles were subjected to major tests and evaluations, including vehicle dynamics testing, acceleration and top-speed testing, brake testing, ergonomics and communications evaluations, and fuel economy evaluations.

To obtain the above publications, write NLECTC, 2277 Research Boulevard, Mail Stop 8J, Rockville, MD 20830; telephone 800–248–2742; or e-mail asknlectc@nlectc.org. Publications also can be downloaded from JUSTNET at www.justnet.org.

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National Criminal Justice Reference Service

In addition to funding the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and other Federal agencies support the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), assisting a global community of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and the general public with justice-related research, policies, and programs. NCJRS offers reference and referral services, publications, online and offsite conference support, and other technical assistance. The easiest way to access NCJRS is online.

Start at http://www.ncjrs.org. The NCJRS website showcases the latest criminal and juvenile justice and drug policy information. Take advantage of—

- Topic-specific resources.
- Online registration and ordering.
- Searchable abstracts and calendar of events databases.

Stay informed. Register at http://puborder.ncjrs.org/register to receive—

- NCJRS Catalog. A bimonthly periodical that highlights recent publications and products and contains a convenient online order form.
- JUSTINFO. A biweekly electronic newsletter that includes links to full-text versions of printed publications.
- E-mail notifications. Periodic messages about new publications and resources that match your specific interests.

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Mail: NCJRS, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849–5000.
**Uncovering evidence of computer crime. Managing and preserving electronic records from the National Archives. Seemingly unrelated? Not really.**

When a computer is seized from a crime scene, chances are it contains valuable evidence. Until recently, searching for such evidence by reviewing and analyzing the thousands of electronic files on a computer was tedious and time consuming. Now, investigators can employ the National Software Reference Library (NSRL) to automate their investigations.

According to Doug White, a computer scientist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the lead scientist on the NSRL project, NSRL collects software from various sources and incorporates file profiles—including file name, byte size, and location—from the software into a reference data set (RDS). Law enforcement agencies, the Federal Government, and industry organizations can match seized files with profiles in the RDS. This allows them to determine more quickly and easily which files are evidence and which can be disregarded.

The NSRL project is supported by the National Institute of Justice, NIST's Information Technology Laboratory, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and State and local law enforcement agencies. Its goal is to "promote the efficient and effective use of computer technology in the investigation of crimes involving computers," White says. The technology behind the NSRL involves digital signatures, or "hash sets," Says White. "The concept of having a unique string that can be identified with a particular data file is similar to unique fingerprints identifying a person. The contents of every file can be manipulated mathematically to give you a unique value or number." The value or number he says, can uniquely identify the file.

When a computer is seized, investigators use computer forensic tools to create hash values of the files on the computer and compare those values with the reference hash set. White says this comparison allows automatic elimination of files that investigators do not need to investigate further and thereby saves a significant amount of time.

Using such hash sets can often eliminate 75 percent of the files on a computer. "An example we like to give is, if an investigator is looking for a bomb schematic or a facility map on a computer that is running Windows 2000, Windows 2000 software has nearly 6,000 images as part of its operating system," White says. "By applying our hash set, the investigator won't even have to look at any of those files right off the bat."

White estimates that, since the project began 2 years ago, NIST has hashed just more than 4,000 software applications. Once the software is collected, it is shelved in a locked room in case the project team members need to recalculate hashes. "This actually results in court-admissible data, and that is the primary focus of the hash set, to be court admissible," he says.

Although other hash sets are available to law enforcement agencies, NIST was chosen for this project primarily because "we could keep the information traceable and repeatable," White says. "We collect enough information about every file in every piece of software on every disk or CD to uniquely identify it on our shelves. The information is stored in a massive database. The RDS is extracted from the database and put on CD-ROMs, which are published quarterly for a yearly subscription fee of $90. White says the RDS has a free redistribution policy, meaning that a subscriber agency can copy its CD and give it to other agencies for free. The NSRL website (www.nsrl.nist.gov) has sample data that agencies can download to evaluate and decide if they want to subscribe.

For agencies that for security or other reasons cannot send files to NIST to hash, White says that the goal is "to provide them with the cookbook to build a duplicate environment so that they could hash these files on their own." He says the project hopes to have an open-source version of the code used to generate the hashes available by late summer 2003.

**The National Archives and NSRL**

NSRL's applications extend beyond investigating computer crimes. According to White, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is collaborating with NIST to research the use of NSRL to manage and preserve Federal electronic records collections, including those of former President George Bush.

White is looking at using NSRL to identify duplicate and application files in the backlog of presidential library material and separate those from the presidential records.

According to Robert Chadduck, Research Director for NARA's Electronic Records Archive (ERA) Program, the project "builds on the great ideas and technology previously developed among NIST and NIJ but extends them to the new problem of managing and processing electronic records collections." In addition to the NSRL project, NARA is planning to build a state-of-the-art ERA to preserve the electronic records of the Federal Government for future generations. ERA is envisioned to be a comprehensive, systematic, and dynamic means of preserving electronic records, free from dependence on any specific hardware or software.

The NSRL project began in late summer 2002 and is ongoing. So far, NARA has provided NSRL with a small set of electronic records from the computer systems of former President Bush for processing. Says White, "This is at a very early stage." Once NIST has finished processing the files, NARA will release the results.

For more information on the National Software Reference Library, visit the NSRL website, www.nsrl.nist.gov; call Doug White, 301–975–4781; or email douglas.white@nist.gov. For more information on the National Archives' NSRL/ERA project, call ERA, 301–837–0740, or e-mail ERA.Program@nara.gov.
The National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) system, a program of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), offers no-cost assistance in helping agencies large and small implement current and emerging technologies.

The NLECTC system was established in 1994 by NIJ’s Office of Science and Technology to deliver information and technology assistance to more than 18,000 police departments; 50 State correctional systems; thousands of prisons, jails, and parole and probation departments; and other public safety organizations.

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Contact NLECTC for:

- parole and probation departments; and other public safety agencies.
- research organizations.
- information and technology assistance.
- justice and public safety systems.
- public safety agencies.
- divided into five regional centers.
- and other information resources that are available to the public.
- and the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, and The Aerospace Corporation. Through these partnerships, NLECTC staff have access to the latest innovations in research and development.

With a network of regional centers and specialty offices located across the country, the NLECTC system has been able to deliver expertise in a number of technologies by forming partnerships with such host organizations as the Air Force Research Laboratory, the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, and The Aerospace Corporation. Through these partnerships, NLECTC staff have access to the latest innovations in research and development.

The NLECTC system serves as an “honest broker” resource for technology information, assistance, and expertise.

Technology Identification
The NLECTC system provides information and assistance to help agencies determine the most appropriate and cost-effective technology to solve an administrative or operational problem. We deliver information relating to technology availability, performance, durability, reliability, safety, ease of use, customization capabilities, and interoperability.

Technology Assistance
Our staff serve as proxy scientists and engineers. Areas of assistance include unique evidence analysis (e.g., audio, video, computer, trace, and explosives), systems engineering, and communications and information systems support (e.g., interoperability, propagation studies, and vulnerability assessments).

Technology Implementation
We develop technology guides, best practices, and other information resources that are frequently leveraged from hands-on assistance projects and made available to other agencies.

Property Acquisition
We help departments take advantage of surplus property programs that make Federal excess and surplus property available to law enforcement and corrections personnel at little or no cost.

Equipment Testing
In cooperation with the Office of Law Enforcement Standards (OLES), we oversee the development of standards and a standards-based testing program in which equipment such as ballistic- and stab-resistant body armor, double-locking metallic handcuffs, and semi-automatic pistols is tested on a pass/fail basis. NLECTC also conducts comparative evaluations—testing equipment under field conditions—on patrol vehicles, patrol vehicle tires and replacement brake pads, cut , puncture-, and pathogen-resistant gloves. NLECTC also has evaluated emerging products to verify manufacturers’ claims. The primary focus of OLES is the development of performance standards and testing methods to ensure that public safety equipment is safe, dependable, and effective.

Technology Demonstration
We introduce and demonstrate new and emerging technologies through such special events, conferences, and practical demonstrations as the Mock Prison Riot (technologies for corrections), Operation America (bomb detection technologies), and an annual public safety technology conference. On a limited basis, NLECTC facilitates deployment of new technologies to agencies for operational testing and evaluation.

Capacity Building
We provide hands-on demonstrations of the latest technologies to address such operational issues as crime and intelligence analysis, geographic information systems, explosives detection and disassembly, in-mate disturbances and riots, and computer crime investigation.

Technology Information
NLECTC disseminates information to the criminal justice community at no cost through educational bulletins, equipment performance reports, guides, consumer product lists, news summaries, meeting conference reports, videotapes, and CD-ROMs. NLECTC also publishes TechBeat, an award-winning quarterly newsmagazine. Most publications are available in electronic form through the Justice Technology Information Network (JUSTNET).

Corrections Technology Advisory Council (LECTAC)—ensures that we are focusing on the real-world needs of public safety agencies.

Because most of the country’s law enforcement and corrections services are provided at the local level, the NLECTC system is composed of five regional centers and is complemented by several specialty offices and a national center. Most centers and offices are co-located with or supported by federally funded technology partners so they can leverage unique science and engineering expertise.
The bureau says that between September 2001 and September 2002, 7.2 million shipping containers, 1.1 million trucks, 2.4 million rail-road cars, 768,000 commercial airline flights, and 128,000 private flights entered the United States. Agents use radiation detectors, fiber-optic cameras, vapor tracers, radiation-detection portals, and other devices, as well as dogs, to check cargo entering the country. Federal officials say that new technologies are essential even though they are expensive.

Low-Cost Technology for Public Safety

American City & County

Affordable information sharing and mapping systems are of interest to law enforcement agencies interested in upgrading their capabilities. The transition to paperless documents and computerized data continues to lag behind in the public safety sector, but agencies can deploy some cost-effective solutions, such as Internet-based intranet geographic information systems (GIS), Extensible Markup Language (XML), and Net programming. Agencies can purchase inexpensive GIS software to map crime scenes and allow officers to access crime maps via mobile devices. Agencies can use validated IP addressing across a secure network to give other agencies access to map data and other information. XML standards can standardize Web-based GIS and electronic documents for access from any type of wired or wireless applications. Net programming helps agencies avoid hiring costly outside consultants. (For more information, visit www.it.digit.gov)

New Entry-Exit System To Rely on Biometrics

Associated Press

Despite strict border restrictions, overseas tourists, students, and business travelers can still enter the United States, but law enforcement agencies at seaports and international airports will use fingerprints, iris scans, or digital photos to validate identities starting the end of this year when the U.S. Visitor Immigrant Status Indication Technology (U.S. VISIT) system is installed. The system will extend to include Mexican and Canadian border crossings by 2005. The travel industry, as well as Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, assert that security is important, but the ability of people to enter and leave the United States is still vital. The system will treat all U.S. visitors the same despite ethnicity, which is approved by the American Civil Liberties Union. U.S. VISIT is designed to replace visitor tracking efforts that currently include registration of males 16 and older from 25 nations. The system will enable U.S. authorities to learn whether visitors are still residing in the United States even after their visas have expired.
NELCTC—Northeast’s McAleavey has found that his work with NTPAC has afforded him an opportunity to learn more about the correctional community. “To support corrections as a NLECTC program manager, I need to understand their needs,” he says. “By participating in the committee, I not only learn about their requirements firsthand, I see the challenges they face.” He recalls that one State had a problem with inmates using their steel bedframes to smash and break handcuffs; that State looked at nearly 20 types of handcuffs before finding a model that met its needs. McAleavey, for his part, brings to the committee the knowledge and expertise of NIJ and the NLECTC system.

In addition to the quarterly meetings, members stay current through NTPAC’s limited-access website, which provides information on products States have purchased and contacts for more information. As part of the effort to replicate NTPAC in other regions, Fox says he would like to open the website to all commissioners of corrections nationwide. Maloney also says he would like to see NTPAC link with other groups and State technology committees, perhaps by giving them advance notice of meeting agendas and an open invitation to attend sessions that present topics they find interesting. The committee already has invited representatives from States outside the Northeast region to observe meetings to promote the NTPAC model. McAleavey says that NIJ and the NLECT system are working to facilitate these efforts.

To learn more about NTPAC and the possibility of starting similar committees in other areas, contact Alex Fox, 508–856–7730, e-mail axon@doc.state.ma.us; or Chris McAleavey, 888–338–0584, e-mail chris.mcaleavey@L3com.com.