Judicial Information System - Criminal

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Since September, 1971, the Justice Information System has been publishing reports for the Court of Common Pleas, reporting on the criminal docket. Revised over the period of its existence to better serve the court, the J.I.S. now provides the following printouts:

1) Personal Docket Report, containing a listing of all criminal cases presently assigned to each judge. This report was modified to account for the changeover to the individual docket system. It now provides a special marking for those cases which are six months or older; whether the defendant is on bail or in jail, and if counsel has been appointed. The personal docket report is distributed to each judge, the clerk of courts, the Central Scheduling Office and the prosecutor's and sheriff's offices. The report also indicates the number of days since an arraignment and what the next stage of the prosecution is and when it is scheduled.

2) Attorney caseload report, listing all criminal cases for each attorney. In addition to listing each defendant represented by an attorney and whether the defendant is free on bail or in jail, the report indicates the age of each case and the total number of cases involving the particular attorney.

3) Alphabetical listing of defendants, indicating, as well, the judge assigned to the case and the attorney retained by the defendant or appointed by the court. The report provides all of the relevant information about each case including charges and counts, bail/jail status, arraignment date, time elapsed since last stage and the next scheduled stage.

4) A listing of the oldest cases by each type of charge.

5) A listing by surety company and agent of all defendants presently on bail, including the amount of bail and bail forfeitures.

6) Finally, J.I.S. is now producing a Criminal Case Index Report listing all active criminal cases in the Court of Common Pleas. The most significant fact about J.I.S. is not that the Court of Common Pleas is computerized but the effect that its computerization can have upon the court and the administration of justice. Only if the courts have control over their dockets can those procedures which make our American system for administering justice unique become capable of being applied.

Computerization, itself, is not however the cureall for all the ills that presently plague the administration of justice. It will, however, enable the courts and administrators to more easily pinpoint bottlenecks and develop procedures to ease the flow of cases through the system. Computerization will also permit the public to keep tabs on all participants in the system, to determine who is responsible for the bottlenecks, and then to use the franchise to either replace the bottlenecks or to pressure the legislature for more courts or altered procedures which can better serve the community interest.

J.I.S. and all other technological advances are only...
a means to achieving more perfect justice. While the ultimate goal of perfect justice will never be attained, the introduction of J.I.S. and like innovations does bring the courts of Cuyahoga County more closer to that goal. If nothing else, J.I.S. has insured that the Court of Common Pleas has not reached that state of chaos which sister courts throughout the country are presently experiencing. Far too many court systems in the United States today are wallowing in chaos, totally incapable of either protecting the community’s needs or the due process ideal. Cleveland is not in that number and a great deal of credit can be attributed to the leadership of the Court of Common Pleas and the willingness of the court to strive for something better which it did when it adopted the innovations offered by J.I.S.