Sharing Security Information

Georgia Tech helps provide foundation for new justice information-sharing initiative.

BY JOHN TOON

Georgia Institute of Technology researchers have played a key role in developing the software foundations for a new U.S. Department of Justice initiative designed to facilitate sharing of criminal justice information among local, tribal, state, national and international agencies.

Based on the popular extensible markup language (XML), the Global Justice XML Data Model (GJXDM) was recently released in Version 3.0 for use by software developers and won an Intergovernmental Solutions Award from the American Council for Technology (ACT).

“Incompatible databases and computer systems for many years have limited the ability of federal, state, tribal and local agencies to rapidly and efficiently share justice information,” says John Wandelt, senior research scientist with the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI). “The Global Justice XML Data Model initiative is sponsored by the Office of Justice Programs, the agency within the Department of Justice that administers federal funding designed to support justice information-sharing between local, state and tribal jurisdictions. The initiative is designed to provide a way to translate information between different systems, allowing a more efficient flow of data among agencies that need to share information about potential criminal and terrorist activity.”

Wandelt and other researchers in GTRI’s Information Technology and Telecommunications Laboratory provided engineering support and technical guidance for the new system as part of a broad-based collaboration involving dozens of agencies and industry partners. Two partners that have played a crucial role in supporting this effort are the XML Structure

“The G8 Summit was a good test, and it confirmed the system's geographic-planning and information-sharing capabilities.”

— Kirk Pennywitt, Georgia Tech Research Institute senior research engineer, on the deployment of the Geographic Tool for Visualization and Collaboration
Georgia Institute of Technology researchers played a key role in developing the software foundations for the Global Justice XML Data Model (GJXDM), a U.S. Department of Justice initiative to enhance sharing of criminal justice information among various agencies. It has already helped public safety and criminal justice agencies, officials say. Two examples are:

- Pennsylvania authorities were able to quickly capture a bank robbery suspect by matching his bank surveillance photo with an image on that state’s XML-enabled justice information sharing network.

- Minnesota’s Department of Public Safety reported saving more than a million dollars over three years by using the XML Data Model rather than developing its own statewide standard for information systems.