# 2006 NASCIO

*Recognition Award Submission*


*State of California*

*Office of the State CIO*

*Enterprise Architecture*

## Executive Summary

More than 34 million people live in the State of California representing 12.5 percent of the entire United States population. Under the auspices of the state Attorney General's office, the California Department of Justice (DOJ) establishes and operates projects and programs to protect Californians from fraudulent, unfair, and illegal activities that victimize consumers or threaten public safety. DOJ was tasked with developing a Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System (CSTAR).

### Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System (CSTAR)

The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System is a web-based correspondence system designed to provides the Public Inquiry Unit of the Attorney General's Office with the ability to receive, analyze, track, and respond to all inquiries from the public, elected officials, law enforcement agencies and other governmental entities on a wide variety of subjects and issues. These inquiries may result in a response to the citizen or the initiation of a formal case.

This robust web-based system provides a letter/correspondence function, a document imaging function, a publications request function and a management report function. The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System gives the Public Inquiry Unit the ability to process and track all complaints received, whether initiated by fax, phone, mail, or email. The new system also contributed to a significant reduction in manual processing and overall handling expense.

With the Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System the Public Inquiry Unit manages over 15,000 complaints monthly. DOJ team members in the Public Inquiry Unit can perform ad-hoc queries to quickly retrieve supporting documentation and gain efficiencies through a workflow process that includes saving document images, as well as responses, to electronically maintain a full case history on file.

The system interacts with the DOJ website allowing constituents to submit information electronically to the department. Submission of information using the e-government interface to the Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System eliminates the need for upfront data entry by DOJ staff. The system has enabled DOJ to handle 10 times the volume of correspondence with no increase in staff. The unit has realized significant cost savings by dramatically reducing paper storage (45,000 sheets/month). DOJ now has the ability to maintain publication inventories, receive scheduled reports, and provide external interfacing organizations (like the Consumer Law Section) with access to complaint information - all with the ease of a single web-based application.

## A. Concise description of the business problem and solution, including length of time in operation

The California Department of Justice (DOJ) establishes and operates projects and programs to protect the more than 34 million people who live in the state from fraudulent, unfair, and illegal activities that victimize consumers or threaten public safety. In the course of operating such programs, DOJ was tasked with developing a Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System.

### The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System (CSTAR)

The Public Inquiry Unit (PIU) of the Attorney General's Office currently handles more than 15,000 complaints and inquiries per month. The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System provides the PIU with the ability to receive, analyze, track, and respond to all inquiries from the public, elected officials, law enforcement agencies and other governmental entities. These inquiries may result in a response to the citizen or the initiation of a formal case. This robust web-based system provides a letter and correspondence function, a document imaging function, a publications request function and a management report function. The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System gives the Public Inquiry Unit the ability to process and track all complaints received, whether initiated by fax, phone, mail, or email and contributed to a reduction in manual processing and overall handling expense.

The DOJ utilized leading-edge product development methods and tools to build the product and established an architectural foundation for reusable components that DOJ can leverage on future projects. The system was conceptualized to explore and validate this architecture and framework for the Hawkins Data Center. Development consisted of a multi-phase project lifecycle incorporating time-boxing and iterative prototyping and development techniques. The time-boxing technique assures that each phase of the lifecycle is executed and completed within the time allotted for that phase. In a project of this nature, the technique helps the project team stays focused on the specific business needs of the project, and promotes proper time management in each phase of the project. Using an iterative development process allows review of results earlier in the project, as well as providing a framework through which the project team can verify and validate the end product sooner.

In addition to the world-class product delivered, DOJ staff members are able to leverage their enhanced knowledge of software development, Java, J2EE, Struts, Oracle 9iAS, reusable components, and iterative development lifecycle processes for future project endeavors.

The system has been fully operational since early 2006.

## B. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government

The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System provides the benefit of automation to DOJ and has many benefits including increased efficiency, enhanced cost control, and improved internal and external communications. The application provides 7 key operational improvements:

**Improved Communications**
The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System has enabled the Public Inquiry Unit to better serve its internal and external clients. The case management features are vital to the PIU function of responding to complaints in a timely and appropriate manner as a public service and to increases public trust. The system also serves as a very valuable tool for other units within DOJ, such as those tasked with enforcement, which now has accurate, reliable records of all activity within a case or all complaints against a particular source. The effort spent in building reports or chasing information used to consume several resources' time who are no longer required to do this administrative work allowing them to focus on higher-value activities. Instead of having information available in days, the turnaround is immediate.

**Increased Efficiency**
All documents and actions associated with a case are available in one place and can be pulled up electronically for reference at any time. Complainant information is connected to complaint(s) and all supporting documentation and interaction is linked to the system and accessible from one screen. Employees have access to the information they need to conduct investigations and management has access to the reports they need to measure performance. By having all the information in one place (standard letters, signature files, addresses, company names, and much more), the analyst and clerical functions can be completed in much less time.

**Reduced Paper Storage and Usage**
The document imaging function allows for all previously stored paper documents to be scanned, copied and saved into the electronic file connected to the complainant info. There is no need to maintain hard-copy case files and there is no paper to misplace.

**Reduced Manual Processing**
The integrated case management features of this system make tracking and reporting far simpler and less time-consuming than the previous manual system. Because the Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System allows PIU employees to save and track all complaint information in one place, there is no need for multiple manual systems and processes to create a response. Previous manual processes for looking-up forwarding addresses and passing notes between analysts and clerks has been eliminated through complete online processing.

**Control Costs**

The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System has helped DOJ achieve cost savings in paper purchase and storage as well as the ability to process an increasing workload without the addition of new staff costs. With the system, the Public Inquiry Unit is able to handle 8 times the volume of correspondence without increasing staff levels. Significant cost savings have been realized by dramatically reducing paper storage (45,000 sheets/monthly).

**Government to Citizen Interface**

The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System is integrated with the DOJ website allowing citizen/constituents to submit information electronically to the department. Submission of information using the e-government interface to the Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System eliminates the need for upfront data entry by DOJ staff and has increased the departments ability to respond in a timely and efficient manner. The system has enabled DOJ to conduct searches quickly using a number of fields, to quickly locate a case or record using the system screens. Previously this information was retrieved from paper records. A "Search Duplicate" feature performs a search based on the citizen/constituent's name to check existing records. This helps to ensure that duplicate records are not entered and helps the analyst provide an improved level of service to the citizen/constituent. In addition, Public Inquiry Unit administrators can select from a number of criteria such as company name or category to identify large number of citizen/constituents who may need to be updated on a particular issue or lawsuit. The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System provides the administrators with the ability to produce bulk mailings as well as single correspondence mail, or email responses. All have contributed to DOJ's ability to provide more efficient service.

**Growth Infrastructure**

DOJ has built a framework for reuse, which will advance their operations strategy by facilitating future application development. Not only will they be able to build applications with more accuracy and efficiency at a reduced cost, but they will also be able to more easily maintain them moving forward. Instead of starting from scratch every time, there is an incremental build approach solidifying their foundation for reuse in processes and applications. With reusable components and framework-based architectures, DOJ has a system in place that will grow and support future initiatives. The reuse of application functionality was demonstrated during this initiative and successfully cut time and costs in delivering this solution with increased functionality over initial specifications. Scope changes were much more easily acceptable due to the application architecture and design.

## C. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state

The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System provides the PIU with an automated means to receive, analyze, track and respond to all inquiries from the public. The system provides easy access capabilities, saves time and money, and is faster and easier to use than previously employed manual methods.

The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System makes it easier for consumers to submit complaints and also makes it easier and faster for the Public Inquiry Unit to respond to them. There are automated letter response tools built into the system that make it much faster to respond to complaints and inquiries and to also know exactly what responses have been sent and are electronically traced to a specific case.

The system provides automation for a previously manual case management workflow process for handling all correspondence needs. Citizens benefit from CSTAR by having an easy, automated mechanism to communicate complaints to DOJ. The Public Inquiry Unit at DOJ benefits by having an automated tool to use when responding to and tracking complaints.

**D. Realized return on investment, short term/long term payback (include summary calculations)**

The current state budget situation is such that hiring new staff is difficult to justify. With CSTAR, the Public Inquiry Unit is handling 8 times the volume of correspondence with no increase in staff. Given the average hiring and training costs, the automated CSTAR has provided a cost avoidance of several hundred thousand dollars.

The Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System enables the Public Inquiry Unit to electronically record and maintain its records by leveraging imaging technology. According to the California Records and Information Management Program, the cost avoidance achieved by source document imaging is $.06 per page. Current estimates from the Public Inquiry Unit indicate that 45,000 pages of images are made per month, for an annual cost avoidance of $32,400 from this efficiency alone. Further efficiencies from this system are realized in the automated workflow, which generates form letters and tracks cases.

The availability of software as an asset to the enterprise is also a new value for DOJ with which they intend to accelerate other application development efforts. The new applications will be built under the same architecture and standards as the Correspondence, Storage, Tracking and Response System in order to increase the intellectual capital available and to reduce future investment requirements.