

Huge law enforcement database created

by UPI

WASHINGTON - A huge database allowing federal, state and local law enforcement officials in the United States access to hoards of records is in the offing, officials said. The National Data Exchange within the U.S. Justice Department system hooks up millions of criminal investigative records from thousands of law enforcement agencies stored in data warehouses, giving investigators and analysts a powerful tool to combat crime and seek out terrorist plots, The Washington Post reported Thursday. "It's going from the horse-and-buggy days to the space age, that's what it's like," said Sgt. Chuck Violette of the Tucson police department, one of almost 1,600 law enforcement agencies using a commercial data-mining system called Coplink, one of several commercial information-sharing systems. The N-DEx system is set to phase in as early as this month. When operational, N-DEx, developed by Raytheon for \$85 million, will permit 200,000 state and local investigators and federal counter-terrorism investigators to search millions of police reports in some 15,000 state and local agencies, with a few clicks of a computer mouse, the newspaper account said. "The goal is to create a one-stop shop for criminal justice information," Thomas E. Bush III, the FBI's assistant director of the criminal justice information services division, told the Post.

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