FBI Digitizes Millions of Records to Prepare For Next Generation Identification System

By Stephen Mayhew
August 25, 2014

The FBI announced it has digitally converted millions of files stored at its Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) division's warehouse in Fairmont, West Virginia, as the Bureau prepares to transition to its new biometric system, according to the FBI website.

Over the last two decades, the agency has digitally converted more than 30 million records including criminal history folders and civil identity, and as many as 83 million fingerprint cards. This resulted in the dismantling of thousands of filing cabinets once hand-searched by Bureau staffers, which, as illustrated in this video, was a very involved undertaking.

The massive conversion is part of a FBI initiative to prepare for the activation of Next Generation Identification (NGI) system, an advanced digital platform of biometric and other types of identity information.

Incrementally replacing the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS), the new system is designed to better serve its high-profile users, including law enforcement agencies checking criminal histories and fingerprints, veterans, government employees, and the FBI's own laboratory.

In 2010, CJIS began construction on a new Biometric Technology Center – which is set to open soon — and made a more aggressive push to digitize all the files. More recently, the division set a goal of digitizing 8.8 million files in two years.

"It makes those records immediately accessible to law enforcement across the country," said Penny Harker, head of the biometric services unit at CJIS. She said fulfilling requests for fingerprint matches that once took hours now take just minutes or seconds. "It's a great benefit to them not having a delay simply because we were still storing files in a manual format."

The majority of the files being converted fell into three different categories: criminal history files from the early 1970s or earlier, civil identity files of people born before 1960 who either enlisted in the military or applied for a government position, and fingerprint index cards.

The CJIS maintains files for individuals until …

To read this article in its entirety, go to:
http://www.biometricupdate.com/201408/fbi-digitizes-millions-of-records-to-prepare-for-new-biometric-system