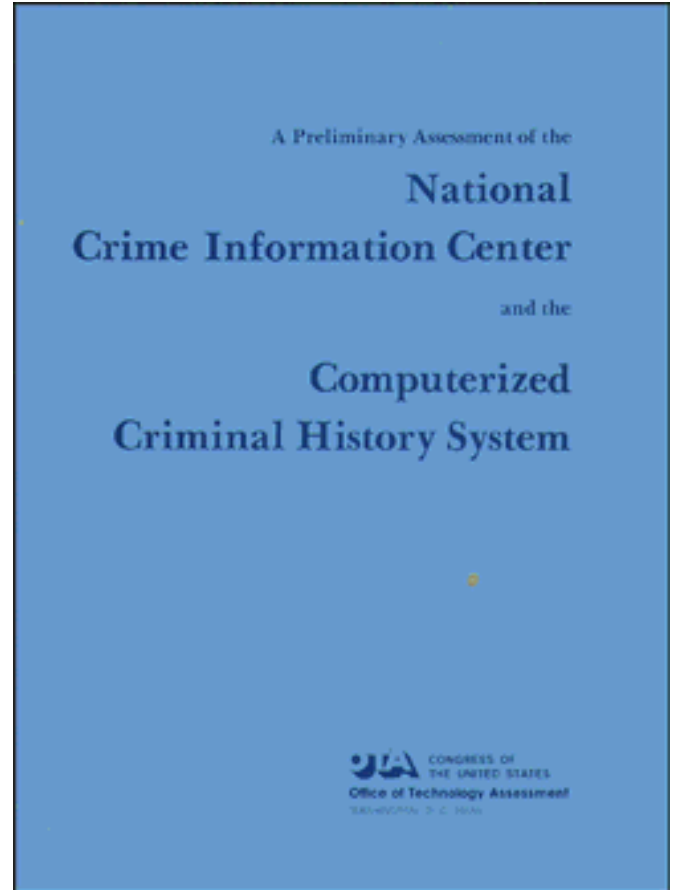


*A Preliminary Assessment of the National
Crime Information Center and the
Computerized Criminal History System*

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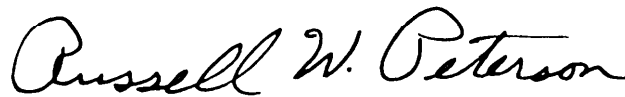
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FOREWORD

In recent years, the application of computer and communications technology to criminal justice systems has increasingly drawn the attention of Congress. Such concern is exemplified by requests from the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary that OTA undertake an assessment of the Department of Justice's National Crime Information Center and the Computerized Criminal History System.

This report, a background planning document for that assessment, identifies and analyzes some major issues in the future development of this Federal-State system. These are: the information needs for administering criminal justice programs and assuring constitutional rights; federalism, including division of authority, and cost apportionment; organization, management, and oversight; the planning process, and social impacts such as the effects on the administration of justice and the creation of a dossier society. Many of the policy and technical concerns discussed in the report are common to other major national information systems being assessed by OTA in the National Information Systems Study which addresses, in addition to the National Crime Information Center, electronic funds transfer and electronic mail.

The following background report was prepared by the Office of Technology Assessment with the assistance of an ad hoc interdisciplinary working group of experts in law, public administration, State and local criminal justice and law enforcement, computer sciences, civil liberties, and other related areas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Russell W. Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R'.

RUSSELL W. PETERSON
Director

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Note: The working group members provided advice and critique, but do not necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse the report, for which OTA assumes full responsibility.