

# Reports of Automated Data Applied to Reintegration (RADAR)

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During the 1990s the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), required a means to quickly identify the current offender-related operational issues at a variety of levels, the obstacles to improvement and the ability to view the effectiveness of results of actions taken. CSC was becoming more process and information oriented, and needed a means to identify key process areas. This included issues such as the timeliness of initial offender intake assessment or the time required to identify offender needs and timely placement into appropriate correctional programs. Information and analysis were key to succeeding in this goal. In part to meet this demand, CSC developed a comprehensive database to capture information on offenders and their reintegration processes — the Offender Management System (OMS). There remained, however, a clear requirement to sift through this data, then analyze and organize the information to enable managers and staff to quickly obtain information on specific offender-related issues. Furthermore, OMS held information that had the potential to assist in the planning and decision-making process. The key was to provide specifically designed extracts of OMS data in an informative manner to management and staff to help them better manage their work and to have staff participation in all aspects of this endeavour — needs identification, design, development, testing and release. As part of the response to these demands, Reports of Automated Data Applied to Reintegration (RADAR), was developed.

## Background

RADAR is best described as a suite of reports that provide management and staff with information focused on offenders and milestones within the correctional planning process. It was originally conceived by Messrs. Surette and McMillan in response to a strong desire by management and staff to have ready access to operational decision making and offender profile information that was stored in the OMS database. To ensure that these needs were fully addressed, the RADAR team adopted a grassroots approach of creating reports “by staff for staff”. Report needs were identified and created by the co-operative effort of a team with solid representation from each of the five regions. Several team members had very significant operational backgrounds, and thus had a deep interest and

ownership in the development of the reports. Consensus among this team was mandatory prior to release of any report. This resulted in sound decisions of what information was critical nationally and what issues had specific regional importance.

The key to making the RADAR approach work was to have staff members who were fully adept at:

- corporate data relationships — what is contained in OMS and how the input fields relate to each other;
- the associated business rules — policies and legislation; and
- understanding how the rules are applied in the field — our processes and how we carry out our duties.

Communicating with clients and with each other — RADAR team teleconferences were held bi-weekly, and RADAR used innovative tools such as Microsoft Netmeeting to share ideas and reports on-line.

This approach was coupled with inexpensive and easy to use tools developed by technical experts. Staff was trained to utilize these tools to expedite more efficient in-house production and cost-effective delivery of the most relevant information.

A key success factor for RADAR was the ‘ease of use, ease of navigation’ and the ‘utility’ of information that was incorporated into the design of the reports. These two factors were in turn driven by RADAR clients who demanded Internet-like reports, which contained the information required for effective decision making.

As a result, since the initial release, new information requests continually arrive, and clients also submit numerous requests for enhancements to existing reports. It has often been the case that the simple addition of a few data elements to existing reports can significantly increase the utility of those reports. Each regional RADAR representative continues to have a voice in accepting or rejecting proposed changes as RADAR continues to operate under the tenet that the decision for change to reports must be unanimous. All changes, once processed through this vetting process, are then designed, built, tested and placed in the RADAR suite of reports.

In essence, the process is much the same today as it was when RADAR was first envisioned; requested changes and enhancements to RADAR are submitted as tickets by one or more regional RADAR representatives, they are then discussed and decisions made on action to be taken during the biweekly conference calls.

Today, RADAR provides over 100 reports to Correctional Services of Canada staff. Access is also available to clients in the Office of the Correctional Investigator and the National Parole Board. During a typical month, over 5,000 clients access RADAR to obtain information on a wide variety of topics.

RADAR currently provides four main areas of information:

1. Action Indicators and 'look ahead' views
2. Profiles or overviews and snapshots of Offenders
3. Profiles of Regions and Sites
4. Working Lists — Performance Enhancement lists

Action Indicators are designed to identify tasks within the reintegration process that could be tardy or otherwise require attention. In essence, if these steps are not completed in a timely manner, it could affect the reintegration timetable.

It was clear from the initial use of the Action Indicators that there were several different target audiences for this information. It was important for regional management to know their current status — particularly areas that appeared to require action. However, in order to better manage issues, site management and staff also required a system to predict the items and concerns that they could be facing in the upcoming days and weeks. Thus, RADAR created the Work Planning and Personal Planning views to provide a 'look ahead' capability to assist in forecasting this information. This in turn led to the reduction in need to maintain manual Bring Forward (BF) systems for several key reintegration indicators.

The Profiles of Offenders section was designed to provide a quick overview of an offender's file, and includes offence history and correctional programming history. This is a typical example of a RADAR report that is used by a wide range of staff from parole officers to correctional officers to program delivery officers to quickly obtain specific offender information for decision-making purposes. While most of this information is available in OMS, it can be more readily accessed using Internet-like RADAR reports. As an added feature, these reports also contain an electronic version of offenders' photographs.

Profiles of sites are designed to help management assess issues and needs of each site and region by providing a variety of views of the composition of their population. The user is able to view the population profile using one or two criteria from a large selection of options. This, in turn allows for appropriate planning in response to those needs or issues raised by staff.

Working Lists enhance performance by providing information on specific topics that are used by staff to manage their day-to-day tasks. Working lists are provided on a wide variety of topics ranging from reintegration to correctional programming. Managers are also able to use the working lists or rollups to increase the accuracy of planning and prepare responses to initiatives.

As the information contained in RADAR sources are protected B documents, security of information is always a consideration in publishing information on RADAR. The assistance of the Information Management Services (IMS) group is of paramount importance to RADAR to ensure appropriate measures are in place and information technology security standards are met. This is why requirements such as client "sign off" must be obtained prior to gaining access to RADAR. Most of the data used in RADAR is obtained in nightly snapshots of data that are downloaded from the OMS. This means that RADAR consistently provides up-to-date information that is usually less than 24 hours old.

However, because RADAR uses a snapshot download, it does not usually provide data from an historical perspective as other tools are available to address this information need. RADAR is but one of a set of report suites in the Performance Management tool kit designed to provide information to management and staff on the performance of the reintegration process. Wherever possible, RADAR aligns business logic used to extract information in a manner consistent with the logic used for the reports found on other data sites. RADAR also provides direct links to other suites of reports, including the Corporate Monitoring Tool (CMT), the Corporate Reporting System (CRS) and the Community Management Information System (CMIS). RADAR staff is also actively involved as team participants in the development of the Portal on Results, Information, Measurement and Evaluation (PRIME). The purpose of PRIME is to provide the highest level of performance data and links to all other performance information sites available to CSC, thereby becoming a central point of distribution for all Performance Management related information, including RADAR.

RADAR continues to enjoy strong support for continued development. As a result, RADAR is constantly evolving to best meet CSC's changing needs. Its strength stems from the devotion and capability of its team members to identify and respond to needs in a constantly changing environment, and to the strong working relationships with the OMS, CJIL (Criminal Justice Information Library) and IMS groups. RADAR's success is very closely linked to its responsiveness to clients and the demonstrated ability to "fast track" necessary changes and additions to reports. This is particularly important during periods of policy change, when reports become obsolete and must be either scrapped or rebuilt quickly.

Currently, development is underway to enhance the "look and feel" of RADAR. The design future for RADAR holds an increased level of flexibility and options for viewing information, coupled with a search engine to assist users in finding all reports related to any given subject matter. In the future, the design of RADAR will also adopt a portal approach that will allow for the development of default menus for user groups (e.g. Parole Officers, Correctional Officers, Program Officers, management, etc.) or for menus to be personalized based on individual needs. These enhancements should make the RADAR of the future an even more powerful, efficient and user-friendly tool.

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## Let's Talk

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