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United States
Department of Justice

9 ELEMENTS
OF AN
INFORMATION
QUALITY
PROGRAM

JANUARY 2010

9 ELEMENTS OF AN INFORMATION QUALITY PROGRAM

Establish Information Quality as a Program

Information about suspects, crime scenes, and other related justice data is often rapidly created and shared. This rapid creation of information and its quickly changing nature necessitate ongoing attention to improve the quality of justice entity information. Achieving high-quality information is the result of a strategic and intentional process—an information quality (IQ) program. Establishing an IQ program helps to ensure on a continuous basis that information is accurate, timely, complete, and secure.

The *Information Quality Program Guide* is designed to help managers of justice information establish an IQ program for their organization, to support the analysis of justice agency information, and to determine what is needed to ensure good quality information. This primer summarizes the nine program elements of an ongoing agency-wide IQ program. Though these elements are considered steps in a comprehensive IQ program, each requiring completion prior to proceeding to the next, it should be noted that all of these elements must be acknowledged and incorporated into the planning strategy at the formation of the IQ program.

1. The Program Champion: Sponsoring the Creation of an IQ Program

There must be a champion for information quality in the organization. Managers of justice information must endorse and treat IQ as a program.

2. Governance Structure

A governance structure lays out the responsibility and authority for IQ decisions. Common elements for a successful governance structure include Inclusive Membership, Purpose and Goals, Authority, and a Governance Charter.

3. Strategic Planning

Strategic planning includes the development of guidance statements (vision, mission, and values statements) and the identification of clear goals and objectives—what needs to be accomplished and the steps needed to get there.

4. Identify Justice Events and Information Products

Prior to performing an assessment of the quality of the information the agency collects, receives, stores, accesses, shares, and destroys, the agency must first identify what justice events or products it manages or produces. The entity must also research and determine what laws, regulations, and rules dictate information quality protections and procedures for the agency.

5. Perform the Analysis—IQ Dimensions and the Information Life Cycle

Once the task of identifying justice agency events and information products has been completed, the next step is to individually break down each justice event into the life cycle of that event to illustrate the flow of information from creation and receipt to maintenance, use, and disposition and destruction phases and, furthermore, to acknowledge the roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, and information technology components of each of those phases. The information life cycle is a

simple framework for illustrating the flow of information through a justice event and helps to organize the information, making it easier to apply core dimensions and to determine which contextual dimensions may apply to the justice event information.

Using standard core IQ dimensions (accuracy—free of error, timeliness—available when needed, completeness—appropriate amount of information, and security—access limitations in place and information integrity maintained) along with agency-defined contextual IQ dimensions (IQ dimensions that may not apply to all justice information at all stages of the information life cycle) will result in a foundation of business rules that will solidify agency IQ objectives and improve the quality of decisions that are based on that information.

6. Complete the IQ Assessment

Using the *Information Quality Self-Assessment Tool* contained in the *Information Quality Program Guide*, the entity will perform an IQ assessment, applying standard core dimensions and the agency-identified contextual dimensions to reveal any gaps in roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, and information technology that may threaten the quality of the information. Assessing the quality of the information in each agency justice event will result in an IQ baseline for that information which the entity can use as a benchmark or a starting point for improvement.

7. Evaluate IQ Assessment Findings

The IQ assessment may expose gaps or areas that require improvement in information quality. Since the assessment will determine the baseline level of quality for each justice event, the entity will need to then establish or revise policies, procedures, and technologies to ensure the agency meets or improves upon that

level of quality. Implementation may include integration of IQ requirements into information technology (IT) processes, business systems and processes, or information sharing policies.

8. Education and Training

Fostering agency-wide IQ awareness and ensuring that IQ practices are embedded into the organizational culture will require education and training.

9. Systematic Monitoring, Evaluation, Review, and Validation

An IQ program is an ongoing activity that will require evaluation, monitoring, and enhancement to ensure that business rules are up to date and actively implemented throughout the organization and that program goals are being met.

Though these last three elements (7 through 9) may appear, chronologically, as final tasks in an IQ program, it is important to realize that these will need to be considered a priority from the beginning—before the program is implemented.

About Global

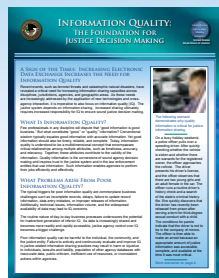
DOJ's Global serves as a Federal Advisory Committee to the U.S. Attorney General on critical justice information sharing initiatives. Global promotes standards-based electronic information exchange to provide justice and public safety communities with timely, accurate, complete, and accessible information in a secure and trusted environment. Global is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

For More Information

Go to www.it.ojp.gov/IQ_Resources or contact the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global) at (850) 385-0600.

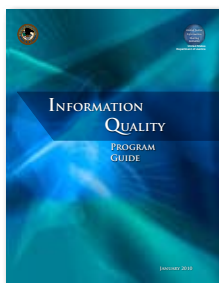
OTHER RESOURCES FROM THE GLOBAL INFORMATION QUALITY SERIES

Information Quality: The Foundation for Justice Decision Making



With the rapid proliferation and evolution of new technologies, increased data sharing requires increased responsibility for information quality to ensure sound justice decision making. This fact sheet explores information quality as a multidimensional concept encompassing critical relationships among multiple attributes, such as timeliness, accuracy, and relevancy. Hypothetical scenarios are presented depicting situations of good and poor information quality, as well as suggestions on what you can do to improve the quality of your own information systems. Research and resource references are provided for further reading.

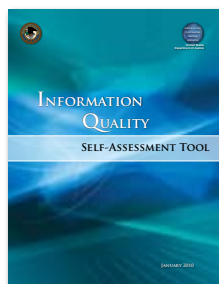
Information Quality Program Guide



The *Information Quality Program Guide* is intended to help managers of justice information develop an information quality program for their organizations and is designed to support managers who must analyze their justice entity's information and determine what is needed to ensure good quality information. In support of that effort, the Guide features a step approach to the development and implementation of an agency-wide IQ program and includes a variety of resources and tools, as well as a framework for analyzing a justice entity's business rules for information quality. The information contained within this Guide will lead practitioners through the:

- Establishment of IQ as an agency-wide program.
- Identification and analysis of agency justice events and products.
- Application of standard and customized IQ dimensions.
- Completion of an IQ assessment (using the *Information Quality Self-Assessment Tool*).
- Implementation and follow-up (policies and procedures, education and training, and systematic monitoring, evaluation, review, and validation).

Information Quality Self-Assessment Tool



A mandatory step for any agency in developing an IQ program is the completion of an information quality self-assessment—the evaluation of agency information and reports associated with justice events. The *Information Quality Self-Assessment Tool* will allow practitioners to:

- Break down the flow of information in a justice event into the multiple phases of an information life cycle.
- Apply standard and customized information quality dimensions to each point along this information continuum.
- Uncover gaps in roles, responsibilities, policies, procedures, and technology that beget information quality problems.
- Implement information quality in practice.
- Enhance overall understanding of the effects that a justice agency's business processes—related to information collection, maintenance, management, dissemination, and disposition—have on information quality.

This tool is composed of a matrix of self-assessment questions within a process framework that can be tailored to agency-specific processes. The series of questions will help an agency determine its relative level of information quality and benchmarks for evaluation, improvement, and accountability. Questions are generic and can be customized to a broad range of justice events and associated information components.