

# United States Trustees Program



## **Privacy Impact Assessment** for the **Criminal Enforcement Tracking System (CETS)**

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## **Introduction**

The United States Trustee Program (USTP) is a component of the Department of Justice (DOJ) that seeks to promote the efficiency and protect the integrity of the Federal bankruptcy system. The USTP monitors the conduct of bankruptcy debtors, parties in interest, and private estate trustees, oversees related administrative functions, and acts to ensure compliance with applicable laws and procedures. It also identifies and helps investigate bankruptcy fraud and abuse in coordination with United States Attorneys, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other law enforcement agencies.

The Criminal Enforcement Tracking System (CETS) was developed to facilitate the accurate and real-time tracking of criminal enforcement efforts within the USTP, such as preliminary investigations by USTP staff, referrals to DOJ components or other law enforcement agencies, and providing assistance with investigative efforts to other DOJ components or outside agencies. Basic bankruptcy case information, including case number, debtor name and chapter, where applicable, is shared from the USTP's Automated Case Management System (ACMS) with CETS. ACMS is the main system that manages all bankruptcy cases and CETS tracks the cases that have criminal implications.

CETS is analogous to opening and managing a physical file folder for recording information about a pre-referral investigation, criminal referral or any assistance with an investigation or prosecution not associated with a referral by the USTP. CETS allows a user to initiate a file on a preliminary allegation or assistance with an investigation; enter basic information concerning the allegation or assistance; enter actions and events such as referral, assignment of case number, indictment, disposition, and sentencing; and record comments. CETS helps the USTP track criminal enforcement efforts and provides more accurate and timely information to the DOJ, Congress, and other agencies concerned about the investigation and prosecution of bankruptcy fraud.

## **Section 1.0 The System and the Information Collected and Stored within the System.**

The following questions are intended to define the scope of the information in the system, specifically the nature of the information and the sources from which it is obtained.

### **1.1 What information is to be collected?**

CETS stores relevant case information including case numbers, criminal case numbers (if any), debtor names, bankruptcy chapters, judicial districts, file open dates, file status, subject names, names of individuals who initially contacted the USTP (if a non-USTP employee), names of referring USTP employees, and names of contact personnel at recipient agency. A system

user creates or initiates a file, enters the basic information concerning the investigation, and then enters actions and events (referral, assistance, etc.). A user is also able to record extensive comments concerning each action or event. Occasionally, a Social Security Number (SSN) may be entered into the comments field, if relevant to identify a bankruptcy filer. Otherwise, SSNs are not maintained in CETS.

## **1.2 From whom is the information collected?**

Information is obtained from a number of sources. Typically, the case information is received from ACMS, which receives information directly from the bankruptcy courts as explained in the ACMS Privacy Impact Assessment. Additionally, data may be collected from the referring party (private trustee, court, private individual) or the law enforcement office processing the referral.

## **Section 2.0**

### **The Purpose of the System and the Information Collected and Stored within the System.**

The following questions are intended to delineate the purpose for which information is collected in the system.

#### **2.1 Why is the information being collected?**

The information in CETS is collected to identify debtors and to link them to their bankruptcy cases, which need to be tracked because of possible indications of criminal activity. A SSN would be collected when necessary to identify a debtor. Additional information in the system is collected to provide a record of events relating to any assistance with cases already under a criminal investigation.

#### **2.2 What specific legal authorities, arrangements, and/or agreements authorize the collection of information?**

The USTP was established by the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978 (11 U.S.C. § 101, et seq.) as a pilot effort encompassing 18 districts. It was expanded to 21 Regions nationwide, covering all Federal judicial districts except Alabama and North Carolina, by enactment of the Bankruptcy Judges, U.S. Trustees, & Family Farmer Bankruptcy Act of 1986 (Pub. L. 99-554, 100 Stat. 3088, reprinted in part at 28 U.S.C. § 581, note).

The primary role of the USTP is to serve as the "watchdog over the bankruptcy process."<sup>1</sup> As stated in the USTP Mission Statement:

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<sup>1</sup> House Report No. 989, 95<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d. Sess., at 88 (reprinted in 1978 U.S.C.C.A.N. at 5787, 5963, 6049)

The USTP Mission is to promote integrity and efficiency in the nation's bankruptcy system by enforcing bankruptcy laws, providing oversight of private trustees, and maintaining operational excellence.

[www.justice.gov/ust/eo/ust\\_org/mission.htm](http://www.justice.gov/ust/eo/ust_org/mission.htm).

The Bankruptcy Code grants to the USTP the authority to supervise the administration of bankruptcy cases. The USTP's Systems of Records Notice (SORN), 71 Fed. Reg. 59,818, (Oct.11, 2006) specifies the information that will be collected by the USTP, including personally identifiable information (PII). Specific to the collection of information in CETS, 18 USC § 3057(a), requires the USTP to refer case information to the appropriate U.S. Attorney when crime is suspected.

The Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AOUSC) provided the USTP with daily data files of bankruptcy case opening and closing information for many years without a formal agreement. In 2003, the AOUSC enhanced the Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) Program to include a Data Exchange module (DXTR) specifically to provide daily data files of case opening, closing, and docket events, and in 2005, the AOUSC turned on the feature to provide Portable Document Formats (PDFs) daily. In 2009, the AOUSC and the Executive Office for United States Trustees entered into a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing the terms and conditions concerning this transfer of information.

### **2.3 Privacy Impact Analysis: Given the amount and type of information collected, as well as the purpose, discuss what privacy risks were identified and how they were mitigated.**

Potential privacy risks include unauthorized access to and use of the data, inadvertent disclosure of the data, and inaccurate data. The risk of inaccurate data is minimized, in part, by the fact that much of the bankruptcy case information collected in CETS is received directly from the court via ACMS and the DXTR download. Also, CETS collects the minimum amount of personally identifiable information (PII) necessary to achieve the purposes of the system. To mitigate the privacy risks, CETS contains safeguards against disclosure of information by limiting access to CETS to role-based access and periodically auditing such access. (See discussion in Section 8.9.) In addition, the USTP has provided guidance to all staff on how to safeguard CETS data, both internally and when transferring such data outside of the USTP. As discussed below in Section 3.3, safeguards are in place to ensure that data is accurate and no action is taken against an individual based solely on information in CETS.

## **Section 3.0**

### **Uses of the System and the Information.**

The following questions are intended to clearly delineate the intended uses of the information in the system.

#### **3.1 Describe all uses of the information.**

CETS facilitates the accurate tracking of criminal enforcement efforts within the USTP such as preliminary investigations by USTP staff, referrals to United States Attorneys' offices and other law enforcement agencies, final dispositions and any assistance provided to investigative efforts initiated by other DOJ components or outside law enforcement agencies. The system also provides a variety of report modules that allow the aggregation and analysis of the data. The user can limit the data reported by region, office, a date range and, depending on the type of report, various aggregation options.

Information that is received directly from the AOUSC via ACMS and the DXTR download will generally not be shared with other entities, unless the information qualifies as a necessary report as described in the MOU. Other case information that is not derived from the DXTR download may be shared, as appropriate, with law enforcement agencies. This information will only be shared with another DOJ component or law enforcement entity that has a demonstrated need for the information in the performance of its official duties. The routine uses that delineate the uses of this information are specifically covered under the USTP's SORN as published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 at 71 Fed. Reg. 59,818.

#### **3.2 Does the system analyze data to assist users in identifying previously unknown areas of note, concern, or pattern? (Sometimes referred to as data mining.)**

CETS provides a variety of report modules that allow the aggregation and analysis of the data. The user can limit the data reported by region, office, a date range and, depending on the type of report, various aggregation options. However, CETS is not engaged in data mining as defined in Section 804 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-53.

#### **3.3 How will the information collected from individuals or derived from the system, including the system itself be checked for accuracy?**

The bankruptcy case information in CETS comes from ACMS. The USTP established internal minimum ACMS standards in 1992 and updated them in 2006. ACMS data is reviewed daily and compared against the courts systems, as appropriate. Various quality control reports

are run routinely to ensure all requisite case data has been received from the courts and entered into ACMS. The USTP conducts semi-annual reviews of the data entered into CETS for the current fiscal year. Additional data quality checks are performed using the AOUSC's official data to review for any anomalies with regard to filing statistics. This review is performed prior to the publication of the USTP Annual Report of Significant Accomplishments and the Annual Report to Congress on Criminal Referrals.

### **3.4 What is the retention period for the data in the system? Has the applicable retention schedule been approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)?**

A records retention schedule for CETS has been reviewed and approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The retention period for data in the system is 20 years.

### **3.5 Privacy Impact Analysis: Describe any types of controls that may be in place to ensure that information is handled in accordance with the above described uses.**

Access to the system is role-based. Based on the user's role in case review, a comparable role is granted to the end user at the application and database level. A user is granted access after the user has received the requisite security clearance and the proper request form has been approved by the appropriate management and submitted for processing. In addition, guidance is provided on how to safeguard Limited Official Use data.

## **Section 4.0 Internal Sharing and Disclosure of Information within the System.**

The following questions are intended to define the scope of sharing both within the Department of Justice and with other recipients.

### **4.1 With which internal components of the Department is the information shared?**

Information that is received directly from the AOUSC via ACMS and the DXTR download will generally not be shared with other components, unless the information qualifies as a necessary report as described in the MOU. Other case information that is not derived from the

DXTR download may be shared, as appropriate, with the United States Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Civil Division Appellate Section or Criminal Division. This information will only be shared with another DOJ component that has a demonstrated need for the information in the performance of its official duties.

#### **4.2 For each recipient component or office, what information is shared and for what purpose?**

CETS files and case information described in Section 1.1 may be shared if needed for a bankruptcy fraud investigation. The purpose of the sharing would be for official law enforcement purposes, such as referring a case to the appropriate United States Attorney's Office for further investigation. The purpose for sharing information is identified in the USTP's SORN at 71 Fed. Reg. 59,818 (Oct. 11, 2006).

#### **4.3 How is the information transmitted or disclosed?**

This information is relayed via email, facsimile, hard copy, or, in limited cases, verbally. If sent via hard copy, the package would be double-sealed and hand-delivered, where possible, or sent via Federal Express and tracked. Information would be sent to established contacts within investigative offices.

#### **4.4 Privacy Impact Analysis: Given the internal sharing, discuss what privacy risks were identified and how they were mitigated.**

The potential privacy risk associated with sharing information internally is the increased risk of unauthorized use or disclosure of the data. To reduce the risk of disclosure when transmitting data, the USTP has provided guidance to all staff on how to safeguard the transfer of Limited Official Use data.

The USTP Security Features User's Guide provides details on how to handle and safeguard sensitive information. PII stored on any removable media (CD/DVD, USB drive, floppy disk, etc.) that leaves DOJ facilities requires additional protection and must be encrypted with USTP-approved encryption software.

The risk of unauthorized use is minimized by not allowing other DOJ components direct access to the information and only sharing information when there is a legitimate need-to-know.

## **Section 5.0**

### **External Sharing and Disclosure**

The following questions are intended to define the content, scope, and authority for information sharing external to DOJ which includes foreign, Federal, state and local government, and the private sector.

#### **5.1 With which external (non-DOJ) recipient(s) is the information shared?**

Information that is received directly from the AOUSC via ACMS and the DXTR download will generally not be shared with external recipients, other than trustees, unless the information qualifies as a necessary report as described in the MOU. The sharing of information is accomplished through the routine uses specified under the USTP SORN as published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 at 71 Fed. Reg. 59,818.

#### **5.2 What information is shared and for what purpose?**

See answer to 4.2.

#### **5.3 How is the information transmitted or disclosed?**

See answer to 4.3.

#### **5.4 Are there any agreements concerning the security and privacy of the data once it is shared?**

Any data that is part of an investigative file is treated as Limited Official Use by the USTP and recipients are informed of this before they receive any data. Contractors are required to sign non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements for access to USTP data.

#### **5.5 What type of training is required for users from agencies outside DOJ prior to receiving access to the information?**

External users (non-USTP) are not given system access. Therefore, no specific training is provided.

#### **5.6 Are there any provisions in place for auditing the recipients' use of the information?**

No, audits are not performed on the recipients' use of the data.

## **5.7 Privacy Impact Analysis: Given the external sharing, what privacy risks were identified and describe how they were mitigated.**

The privacy risk with sharing information externally is the increased risk of unauthorized use or disclosure of CETS data. Other entities are not given direct access to the CETS system, and information is only shared when there is a legitimate need-to-know when such sharing is covered by a routine use or other provision of the Privacy Act permitting disclosure. To reduce the risk of inadvertent disclosure when transmitting data, the USTP staff has been provided guidance on how to safeguard the transfer of Limited Official Use data. External users are also notified if the data being provided contains Limited Office Use data.

## **Section 6.0 Notice**

The following questions are directed at notice to the individual of the scope of information collected, the opportunity to consent to uses of said information, and the opportunity to decline to provide information.

### **6.1 Was any form of notice provided to the individual prior to collection of information? If yes, please provide a copy of the notice as an appendix. (A notice may include a posted privacy policy, a Privacy Act notice on forms, or a system of records notice published in the Federal Register Notice.) If notice was not provided, why not?**

A USTP SORN that covers the collection of information contained in the system was published in the Federal Register, 71 Fed. Reg. 58, 818, (Oct. 11, 2006),. Because the information collected in this system is originally collected by the bankruptcy court, no notice other than the SORN is given to individuals before their information is entered into CETS. The bankruptcy court, in its instructions on how to complete a bankruptcy petition, notifies every individual filing for bankruptcy that “the filing of a bankruptcy case is a public transaction. The information on file with the court, with the exception of an individual’s social-security number and tax returns, will remain open to review by any entity, including any person, estate, trust, governmental unit, and the United States trustee (an official of the United States Department of Justice).”

### **6.2 Do individuals have an opportunity and/or right to decline to provide information?**

No.

**6.3 Do individuals have an opportunity to consent to particular uses of the information, and if so, what is the procedure by which an individual would provide such consent?**

No.

**6.4 Privacy Impact Analysis: Given the notice provided to individuals above, describe what privacy risks were identified and how you mitigated them.**

Because a Privacy Act SORN that covers the collection of information has been published in the Federal Register, and because the bankruptcy court in its instructions discloses that most of the information submitted in a petition will be public, the risk that an individual would provide information without knowledgeable consent is mitigated. The SORN provides the individual with transparency concerning the USTP's collection, use, and maintenance of the data.

## **Section 7.0 Individual Access and Redress**

The following questions concern an individual's ability to ensure the accuracy of the information collected about him/her.

**7.1 What are the procedures which allow individuals the opportunity to seek access to or redress of their own information?**

Individuals can make a request for access to or amendment of their records under the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C § 552a. However, information maintained in CETS is exempted from the access and amendment provisions of the Privacy Act pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552a(j)(2) and (k)(2). See 28 C.F.R. § 16.77.

**7.2 How are individuals notified of the procedures for seeking access to or amendment of their information?**

Notice of individuals' rights under the Privacy Act is given through publication in the Federal Register of a SORN (71 Fed. Reg. 59,818 (Oct. 11, 2006)), and in DOJ regulations describing the procedures for making access/amendment requests. 28 C.F.R. § 16.40 et seq.

**7.3 If no opportunity to seek amendment is provided, are any other redress alternatives available to the individual?**

No, not under the Privacy Act; however, an individual may challenge the information in the course of any criminal proceedings.

**7.4 Privacy Impact Analysis: Discuss any opportunities or procedures by which an individual can contest information contained in this system or actions taken as a result of agency reliance on information in the system.**

See the procedures discussed in Section 7.1. Additionally, if an individual exhausts his administrative remedies under the procedures in Section 7.1, the individual can file a lawsuit under the Privacy Act. No actions are taken against an individual solely in reliance on information in CETS.

## **Section 8.0**

### **Technical Access and Security**

The following questions are intended to describe technical safeguards and security measures.

**8.1 Which user group(s) will have access to the system?**

A subset of the USTP staff has access to CETS. The system is available to designated users at all 21 USTP Regions; however, access to information maintained by the system is restricted by system permission controls to only allow users to see information that they are authorized to see.

**8.2 Will contractors to the Department have access to the system? If so, please submit a copy of the contract describing their role with this PIA.**

Yes. Contractors provide development and database support.

**8.3 Does the system use “roles” to assign privileges to users of the system?**

Yes.

#### **8.4 What procedures are in place to determine which users may access the system and are they documented?**

Please refer to Section 3.5. The CETS system is certified and accredited per DOJ requirements which include parameters on password expirations, account locking after a set amount of failed access attempts, and the auditing of event logs.

#### **8.5 How are the actual assignments of roles and rules verified according to established security and auditing procedures?**

Individuals have specific role-based access that limits them to the data they enter or have specific rights to access, as defined in the procedures. Actual assignments of roles and rules are established as defined in Section 3.5 for obtaining an account. The procedures for creating and maintaining system access are audited regularly and are part of the annual Federal Information Security and Management Act (FISMA) audit review process. Auditing and system log review are ongoing activities. Additionally, database and system audits are conducted regularly to check for vulnerabilities, weak passwords, undocumented system changes, and policy deviations. Account activity is monitored for inactivity and other anomalies.

#### **8.6 What auditing measures and technical safeguards are in place to prevent misuse of data?**

There are roles and views defined to limit data access. Changes to these roles and permissions are captured in the system audit log and maintained on a separate logging server. These events are reviewed weekly by the Security Team. A database administrator runs a regular report of locked accounts and provides the report to the System Owner and to the Security Team for review. All logins and access are tracked within the database. From a management control perspective, annual security training and the Rules of Behavior Certifications that have to be signed reinforce the rights and restrictions of system access.

#### **8.7 Describe what privacy training is provided to users either generally or specifically relevant to the functionality of the program or system?**

All employees are required to complete online DOJ Computer Security Awareness training as part of annual training for DOJ employees. This training covers safeguarding PII and privacy data. A certificate of completion is logged for employees after successful completion of the training. Also, new employees receive training on the use of this particular system.

**8.8 Is the data secured in accordance with FISMA requirements? If yes, when was Certification & Accreditation last completed?**

Yes. The last Certification & Accreditation was completed in March 2009.

**8.9 Privacy Impact Analysis: Given access and security controls, what privacy risks were identified and describe how they were mitigated.**

Because the data contains personal information and information relating to criminal investigations, ensuring adequate security is critical. There is a clear separation of duties to prevent any one person from having sufficient access to allow inappropriate access or to work around the controls in place. The possibility of users or administrators being able to access information inappropriately has been addressed by having forced system and audit logs copied in real time to a secured logging server where the data is reviewed daily for anomalies. If logs do not arrive as expected, alerts are generated. The intrusion detection systems are monitored for unusual traffic, especially traffic going to the Internet. There is always the possibility that authorized users can retrieve their own data and use it in irresponsible ways. However, training and reminding employees of their responsibilities, and the ability to track system usage in the event wrongdoing is discovered, helps mitigate this risk.

## **Section 9.0 Technology**

The following questions are directed at critically analyzing the selection process for any technologies utilized by the system, including system hardware, RFID, biometrics and other technology.

### **9.1 Were competing technologies evaluated to assess and compare their ability to effectively achieve system goals?**

Yes. The CETS system was developed in accordance with the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 and the “best practices” prescribed by General Accounting Office and Office of Management and Budget. As part of the process, the USTP engaged in the gathering of functional requirements and then reviewing technologies in order to identify solutions that best incorporate the latest information system security controls required by FISMA.

### **9.2 Describe how data integrity, privacy, and security were analyzed as part of the decisions made for your system.**

The USTP IT Staff has a well-developed Configuration Management and Data Management process in support of the System Development Life Cycle. Every stage requires a security review, as well as configuration and data management validation. Data integrity is partially covered by legal processes for collecting data and also largely controlled by actual field parameters and data integrity checks. Since the data is Sensitive But Unclassified, privacy is protected by many system access limits and controls. Security is reviewed at all stages of the systems development life cycle in terms of security checklists and scans to ensure any design is FISMA-compliant and documented. These requirements are part of the system design documentation and the system cannot be promoted during development if these steps are not addressed.

### **9.3 What design choices were made to enhance privacy?**

Due to the sensitive nature of the information captured, a number of design choices were made to protect the data. The data libraries and programs are accessed by special purpose limited applications to ensure that users only have access to data on a need-to-know basis. A number of roles were designed to ensure that only the certain subsets of data could be viewed. Logs of user activity are in place as well as careful consideration of the client’s interaction with the application further limiting potential user threat to the system.

## **Conclusion**

In order for the USTP to fulfill its mission, it is critical that the USTP continue to receive the relevant bankruptcy case information, including personal identifiers, in a timely and expeditious manner to accomplish its mission. Without this information, the USTP would be unable to fulfill its statutory requirements. USTP will monitor the conduct of parties and take action to ensure compliance with applicable laws and procedures; identify and investigate bankruptcy fraud and abuse; and oversee administrative functions in bankruptcy cases. The USTP reviewing officials conclude that substantial measures are in place to protect the personally identifiable information collected and proper education has been and will continue to

be provided to ensure this data is treated as “Limited Official Use” by all USTP staff, contractor staff, and private trustees.