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MATRIX Security Vulnerabilities

Upon reviewing information received from Seisint on the impending MARTIX project, several questions regarding their approach to protect the State's data while residing on their systems came to mind.

Authentication to access data – A username and password scheme is currently in place for remote end users to authenticate into the central database from the MATRIX application. During a conference call with Seisint on September 2nd, passwords are statically assigned when each account is established, and there are no provisions for the end-user to change when desired. Seisint claims they will overcome this flaw during the near future.

Physical connectivity is reported as only being through a private RISSNET (Regional Information Sharing System Network) connection, which is required to adhere to the CIJS (Criminal Information Justice System) guidelines. Restricting data communication to a privately controlled network, such as RISSNET, reduces some of the authentication risks but stronger authentication measures are recommended.

Transporting the State's data to the Seisint processing facility in Florida is of particular concern. Seisint's preferred method for receiving data is by physical media (i.e. tape, CD, or DVD). The media would be transported via a carrier such as the U.S. Postal Service, Federal Express, or others. The wealth of information contained on a single shipment could make it a lucrative target, and unauthorized use of its contents would devastate the State of Georgia's credibility and result in immeasurable damages. Measures to protect the confidentiality of the State's data while in transport must be implemented and adhered to. Various forms of encryption could be undertaken to minimize this risk. Additional analysis in selecting the most appropriate method is needed.

There is also an outstanding question of liability, should the State's data be compromised by un-authorized entities or inadvertently used for purposes not approved by Georgia law. There was not definitive answer from Seisint when this subject was discussed on September 2nd.