

Automated Kiosk Reporting For Offenders

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Abstract

Automated Kiosk Reporting (AKR) for offenders, essentially are a type of Automated Teller Machine (ATM) that probationers utilize to report, submit monetary obligations, answer a series of questions related to their conditions of supervision and more importantly, have their identifications confirmed without actually talking to a probation officer. This idea has proved to provide numerous benefits for officers supervising low risk offenders who are required to report and pay fees, a description that fits many offenders under the supervision of the Florida Department of Corrections. In order for this system to be effective, there must be a screening process in place that would identify appropriate offenders based on a risk assessment system. This process must further have a system evaluation in place that would validate the effectiveness of the risk assessment instrument. The criminal justice agencies currently using AKR for offender reporting have realized numerous benefits including freeing officers from time consuming in-office interviews and paperwork which provides more time to focus on the duties relating to critical and high risk offenders. Information was gathered to determine the viability of this technology in Florida.

Introduction

The Florida Department of Corrections supervises more than 146,000 offenders under community supervision by a staff of more than 2,600 Correctional Probation Officers and Supervisors. All offenders are required to report to an office to see their officer minimally every month. As a result of this reporting frequency there are numerous issues which impact the officers, supervisors and support staff. (FDOC Annual Report, 2005-2006).

Issues include crowded waiting rooms, parking obstacles and complaints by offenders that they must wait a long time to see their officer. The issues can be attributed to circumstances such as unscheduled drug testing, and offender arrests while reporting which create these unforeseen delays. This compounded by the requirement that officers are required to see all offenders minimally every month who are complying with the conditions of their supervision as well as offenders who are not complying with the conditions of their supervision. Additionally, some segments of the supervised population are required to report weekly to their probation officer.

What are the benefits and issues associated with Automated Kiosk Reporting (AKR) for low risk offenders who would report every month to an interactive ATM like machine?

Information is needed from probation officers, supervisors, support staff, offenders, other state agencies currently utilizing an automated kiosk reporting system, and from vendors to determine what the research results will indicate from this system. Will it augment the officer by saving time on routine office visits for offenders selected to use automated kiosk reporting? Will it benefit the officer by redirecting the officer's time toward seeing high risk offenders and non-complying offenders? Will it give relief to crowded parking lots? Will it give relief to crowded waiting rooms? Will it reduce offender complaints of waiting a long time to see their officer?

Literature Review

There are a number of publications produced by AKR vendors that examine the usefulness of their systems that will be incorporated into this report. These vendors not only claim success with supervised offenders but also with customer service without a face to face visit.

Other publications include excerpts from the Policy Directive for the State of Washington Department of Corrections, from the 2003 report entitled, Genie/Kiosk Use in Offender Supervision: "The Department of Corrections will allocate supervision resources based upon the degree of risk presented by the offender. In order to manage workloads and prioritize supervision resources, Washington State Community Correction Officers (**CCO**) are expected to use Genie/Kiosk as an adjunct to offender supervision".

According to the State of Washington, Department of Corrections (DOC), "Genie" is the largest fully implemented kiosk system of its kind. Approximately 45,000 offenders in the Washington State system either report on a regular schedule or when they change address or employment. All five DOC regions have at least one location that receives more than 1,000 reports per month. In total, the system receives more than 26,000 monthly reports. Moreover, it is estimated that each kiosk report saves an officer approximately 10 to 15 minutes of time in processing paperwork and computer entries. Statewide, the Hand Key Kiosk System reduces officer's processing time by an estimated 50,000 hours a month.

Further, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services have implemented its "Kiosk Pilot Project". The kiosk project is designed to allow low-risk offenders to use the kiosk as their primary form of reporting and to enable the Division to assign more agents to handle offenders who pose a greater risk to public safety. Understandably, offenders under supervision for a violent offense are not eligible for the project. The offenders selected for the project must comply with certain special conditions, including supervision-related financial obligations; have no pending charges or violations of probation, and having at least 90 days or more remaining under supervision. Further, the offender's home and employment status must still be verified by an officer. Sexual offenders assigned to the kiosk report system are still required to

continue to meet with an officer on a regular basis, and do supplemental reporting, thus increasing the frequency of their contacts with the Division.

The automated kiosk for low-risk offenders can free up staff to supervise high risk/high need cases. If low-risk offenders can be supervised through a more automated, less labor intensive means, then more resources will be available for those offenders who need frequent personal interaction.

The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services found that kiosk reporting system significantly enhanced the Division's capacity to reduce caseloads by redirecting low-risk offenders to kiosk reporting. It also improved service delivery by freeing officers to focus more on high-risk/high need offenders who are more likely to re-offend and be subjected to re-arrest, thereby threatening public safety. During the initial phase of the pilot, the re-arrest rate for these offenders reporting via the kiosk was two percent, which is significantly lower than the average national rate of 10 percent.

The New York City Department of Probation developed its Adult Supervision Restructuring (ARS) program that was not an overnight task. The development of this system required input from all personnel. With technology aside, agency administrators become aware early that they needed to involve all personnel. They asked staff to detail what did not work in the old system and create a list of requirements for a new system. In addition, clerks, supervisors, managers and probation officers were asked to provide feedback on pilot programs, a process that the New York City Department of Probation continues today. Agency administrators realized they also needed to work with the probation officers' union. An agreement was struck under which money saved as a result of using technology was returned to union members in the form of productivity bonuses. The kiosk system of Adult Supervision Restructuring (ASR) has saved approximately 3.5 million each year. Thirty percent of this amount has been returned as bonuses.

New York City probationers who present minimal risk for violent recidivism along with violence-prone offenders who have graduated from the enforcement track are allowed to report to an automated kiosk machine. The ARS program currently uses fourteen kiosk machines which services five probation offices. This has freed officers to focus on higher risk clients as well as freed probationers from the tedium of regular visits with their probation officers. New York City offenders report to a kiosk machine which resembles an ATM machine to check in and update their records, a process that takes less than three minutes. (Tech Beat, 2001).

On May 1, 1996 through July 31, 1996, The Florida Department of Corrections piloted a kiosk project called Probation Automated Monitoring, (PAM) in Seminole County's Casselberry probation office. (FDOC, Annual Report 1995-1996). It was the first in the state and the fifth in the nation to try a cutting-edge technology that lets criminal offenders make routine check-ins with an ATM-type machine instead of with probation officers. The idea is to free up probation officers so they can keep closer tabs on more dangerous or less obedient offenders. About 125 offenders were a part of this pilot project. Each had an identification card assigned along with a check of their fingerprint to assess the

kiosk machine. The offender was asked tailored made questions such as, are you still working? Have you paid your child support? When did you last attend drug counseling? The ATM kiosk machine was found to be quick and efficient, and there was less time spent waiting. The system in Casselberry cost about \$30,000 by Auto-Mon Corporation. This system was not funded after the pilot project stage.

Method

The purpose of this research was to examine the various tasks that are placed on probation officers, and determine if there were potential instruments available that would reduce the amount of time officers spend with offenders that presented a low risk of re-offending. To determine if probation officers felt that low-risk offenders could report monthly to an automated kiosk machine. The data was collected by a voluntary survey that was distributed to 665 certified officers and supervisors from the Florida Department of Corrections, Office of Community Corrections Region IV. A random selection of offender's reporting to see their probation officers were surveyed. Automated kiosk vendors were contacted.

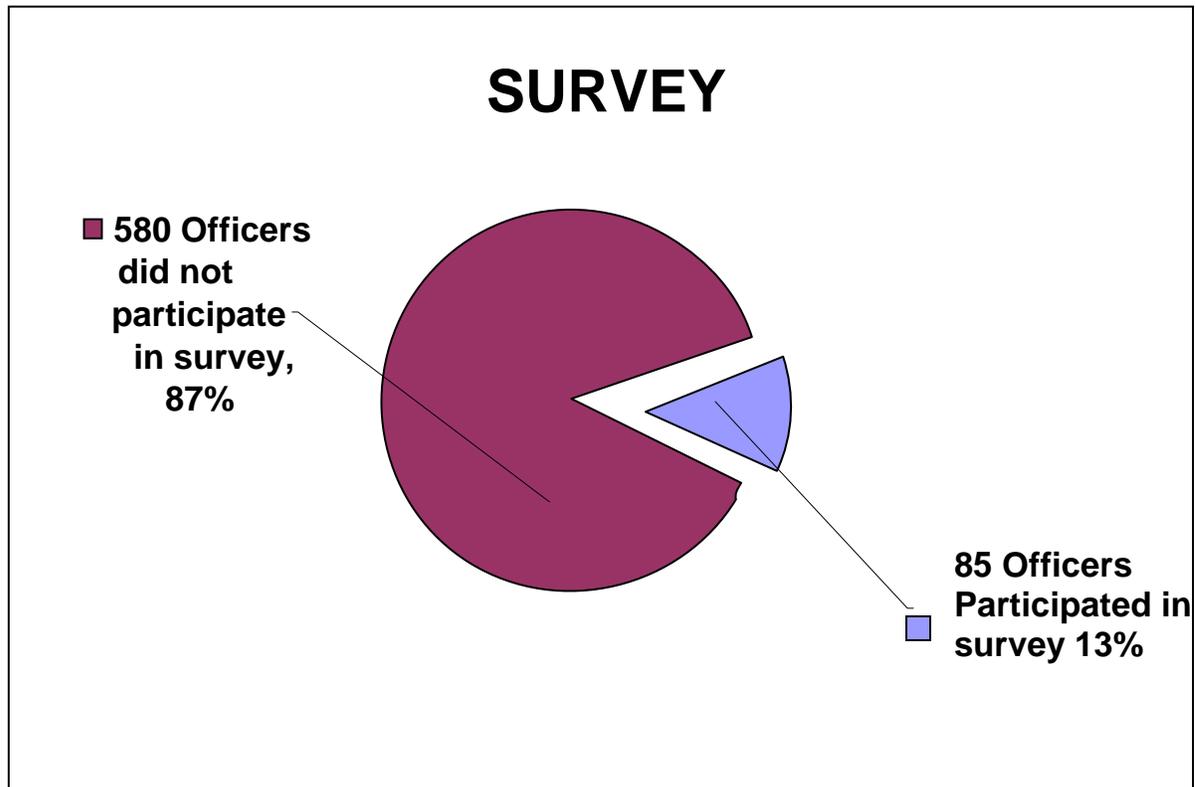
It should be noted that some respondents did not answer every question in the survey, therefore a category of N/A, or no answer is provided. A copy of the survey instruments is attached at the end of this report.

Results

There are four judicial circuits that comprise the Office of Community Corrections, Region IV as shown below were surveyed.

- Circuit 11 – Miami-Dade County
- Circuit 17 – Ft. Lauderdale, Broward County
- Circuit 15 – West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County
- Circuit 16 – Key West, Monroe County

The voluntary survey was sent to approximately 665 certified probation officers and supervisors who are employed within Region IV. The instrument received a 13% response rate, or 85 probation officers that participated in this survey.

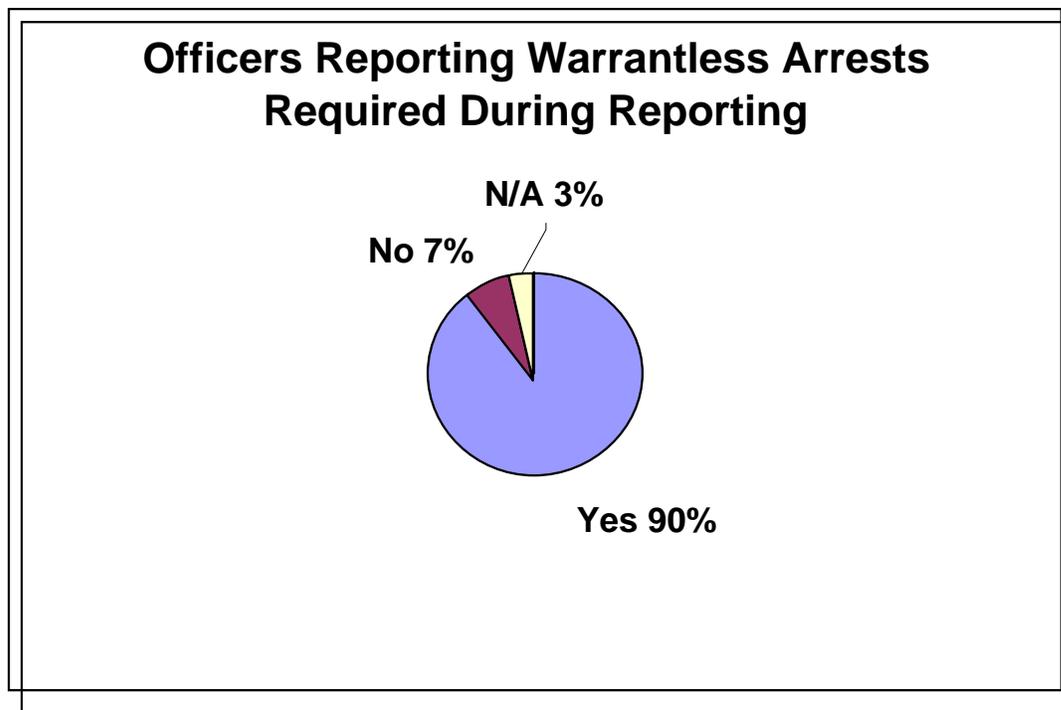


When asked if the officers currently supervise offenders who are complying with their conditions of supervision and report to the office every month, the total responding yes was (93%) or 79 officers. 2 or (2%) responded no; and 4 or (5%) did not answer. It is noted, when asked if the officers currently supervise offenders who are not complying with their conditions of supervision and do not report to the office every month as instructed, the total responding was 83. Sixty, (60) responded yes or (71%), twenty (20) or (24%) responded no and five (5) or 5% did not answer.

When asked about the reporting periods, times during the month when offenders report to the office, “Would you consider your reporting period to be very hectic with the number of required offenders that must be seen”? Twenty-three officers, (27%) rated reporting period very smooth, twenty-nine officers (29) or (34%) rated reporting period intense or stressful and 25 officers or (29%) rated the reporting period as other. Listed comments included, “can be intense when conducting an arrest”, “stressful during a positive drug test”, “intense when dealing with mental health issues” and “either response could apply depending on the month”.

When asked, “If the officers would be interested in a system that would reduce the number of complying and non-violent offenders reporting into the office every month”? 64 or (76%) of respondents answered yes, 16 or (19%) answered no and 5 or (5%) did not answer.

Two questions in the survey asked officers to respond to statements regarding tasks that they perform as part of the offender reporting, one on random drug testing and the other on conducting warrantless arrest. When asked “are you required to conduct random drug testing during offender reporting period”? 48 or (57%) of the officers responded yes. 34 or (40%) responded no and 3 or (3%) did not respond. When asked “are you required to conduct warrantless arrest during the offender reporting period if he/she is found to be in violation of his/her conditions of supervision and meet the set criteria”? 76 or (90%) responded yes, 6 or (7%) responded no and 3 or (3%) did not answer. Sixty-nine officers (81%) that answered yes to the aforementioned questions regarding random drug testing and warrantless arrest indicated those tasks to be time consuming.



When asked if the officers have offenders that they need to spend more time with in the office? 74 officer or (88%) said yes and 8 or (9%) said no, while 3 or (3%) did not answer.

The survey then addressed environmental issues dealing with parking and lobby room. When asked if parking at their office for offender during reporting period a problem? 50 officers or (59%) said yes, 31 or (37%) said no, while 4 or (4%) did not answer.

When asked if there was enough room in the lobby of their office during reporting period, 31 officer or (36%) said yes, 50 officer or (61%) said no there was not enough room and 4 officers or (5%) did not respond.

Questions were posed to officers regarding their perception of the level of stress reporting places on support staff, supervisors and officers. When asked if they felt the number of offenders reporting at the same time was stressful to support staff. 67 officers or (79%) said yes that it was perceived to be stressful, 13 officers or (15%) said no and 5 officers or (6%) did not answer.

When asked if they felt the number of offenders reporting at the same time was stressful to supervisors. 45 officers or (53%) said yes that it was perceived to be stressful, 37 officers or (44%) said no and 3 officers or (3%) did not answer. When asked if that felt the number of offenders reporting at the same time was stressful to officers. 68 officers or (80%) said yes that it was perceived to be stressful, 13 officers or (15%) said no and 4 officers or (5%) did not answer.

When asked if an automated kiosk machine that was capable of identifying an offender, asking programmed questions supplied by the officer, accepting monetary payments and giving the offender specific instructions would be something they would use, 62 officers or (73%) answered yes, 19 officers or (22%) said no, while 4 officers or (5%) did not answer.

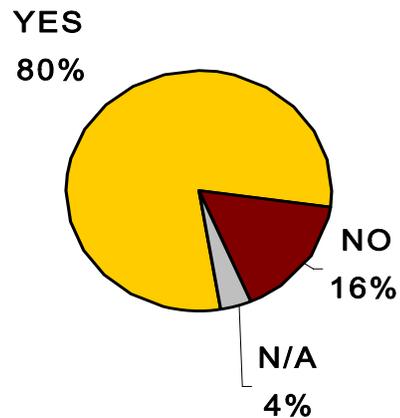
Officers then were polled as to the offenders' complaints regarding waiting times to see their probation officer. When asked if offenders complained about long waiting times in the lobby, 47 officers or (55%) said yes complaints were received. 34 officer or (40%) said no and 4 officers or (5%) did not answer.

When asked if officers felt that non-violent, compliant offenders could be directed to a kiosk at various locations instead of reporting to the office, 59 officers or (69%) said yes offender could be redirected to kiosks, 22 officers or (26%) said no and 4 officers or (5%) did not answer.

When asked if they ever used kiosk type machines before, 50 officers or (59%) said yes, 32 officers or (38%) said no and 3 officers or (3%) did not answer. The 50 officers that had indicated they had previously utilized kiosk type machines were then asked if they found the experience user friendly. 46 officers or (92%) said yes, 3 officers or (6%) said no and 1 officer or (2%) did not answer.

Officers were asked if they felt the automated kiosk machines for low risk offenders could free staff up to supervise non-complying offenders, if they would find this helpful. 68 officers or (80%) said yes, 14 officers or (17%) said no and 3 officers or (3%) did not answer.

Officers Would Find Use of Automated Kiosks Helpful



Finally, officers were asked if they would like to receive more information about automated kiosk reporting for offenders. 64 officers or (76%) said yes, 17 officers or (20%) said no and 4 officers or (4%) did not answer.

Ten pre-trial probation offenders who are low risk, non-violent were randomly surveyed during a reporting period and asked the following questions:

1. Is reporting into the office each month to see your probation officer time consuming?
 - Seven offenders said yes or 70% and three offenders or 30% said no.
2. How long is the wait to see your probation officer?
 - One offender reported 10 minutes; four offenders reported 15 minutes; 1 report 20 minutes; three offenders reported 30 minutes and one offender reported 1 hour.
3. Would you be willing to report at a kiosk machine every month instead of your probation officer?
 - Eight offenders said yes or 80% and two offenders said no or 20%.
4. Do you have additional comments regarding reporting.
 - All 10 offenders had no additional comments.

Contact was made with three vendors of automated kiosk machines regarding their products user friendliness, maintenance, set-up and installation and options for multiple languages. Tom Jones, President and CEO of AutoMon Corporation, located in Arizona, has his product located in 16 states, AutoMon is the leader in case management and kiosk solutions for probation, parole, corrections. Their reports show that kiosk reporting for offenders has reduced the number of reporting periods, increased timely reporting by offenders and reduced recidivism.

Brian Chamberlain, Senior Sales/North America of King Products and Solutions Incorporation, located in Ontario, Canada reports that since 1994 King has been the leader in the signage and kiosk market. King offers variety of kiosk hardware and enclosure solutions with options to suit every need. They currently have their kiosk product in several jails within the State of Florida. They report that their product is durable, virtually unbreakable touch screens; your software is designed for your needs and expandable.

Tim Barttrum, Regional Director of Sales and Business Solutions Sentinel Offender Services, reported that their Centurion kiosk allows program participants to perform monthly check-ins and submit court ordered fees. All transactions are processed real-time and are updated in their Sen Trak database. More importantly, kiosk machines can be strategically placed in courts, probation or parole offices, Sentinel field offices and sheriff stations. Advantages are easy to use, touch screen driven application, audio step-by-step instructions in multiple languages, low maintenance and simple set up and installation, can be credit card driven and a receipt provided to the offender. The cost varies depending on the product chosen which can be covered by the offenders assigned to report.

Discussion

Research indicates that kiosk reporting primarily for low risk, non violent offenders may be able to serve public safety goals and redirect officer's time and focus on more high risk need offenders who are more likely to re-offend and be subject to re-arrest, thereby threatening public safety. Officers indicated that the reporting period could be stressful and time consuming when unavoidable interruptions occurred. They reported unforeseen interruptions such as conducting a warrantless arrest or a positive drug test while other offenders were waiting to see them. Research confirmed that officers overwhelmingly would be interested in a system that would reduce the number of complying and non-violent offenders reporting in the office every month. The tasks that officers are required to conduct monthly with reporting offenders are time consuming.

Research on environmental issues was not a major concern for officers such as offender parking and the lobby crowded with offenders. These issues posed a greater concern to the supervisors and support staff. These complaints would be directed to the supervisor to address more often than the officer.

Research shows that officers and supervisors would like to have more information on automated kiosk reporting for offenders with the understanding that this system would not replace human contact.

Offenders responding expressed an overall interest in reporting to another system rather than coming in the office to see a probation officer every month.

Vendors who were contacted can produce a product that is user friendly, software installed that we need and secure. Their machines are durable with low maintenance.

Recommendations

This research suggests automated kiosk can potentially free up human resources for supervision of high-risk-need cases. To achieve this goal, an effective risk assessment instrument would be needed to select offenders. If low-risk offenders can be supervised through automated less labor-intensive means, then more resources will be available for those offenders who need personal and frequent attention.

There are numerous kiosk vendors available who are able to design the software to fit your needs. The technology can be designed to identify the offender by fingerprint or eye scanner. The kiosk can communicate with the offender in different languages and use of symbols if the clientele is semi-literate. The software can be designed to ask a series of questions, collect money and give instructions to the probationer. The kiosks can be placed at centrally secured located places and unlike humans; these machines do not require vacation or sick leave. On environmental issues, kiosks reporting for offenders could possible reduce parking issues and crowded lobbies. Data does not show if it will have an effect on the amount of time offenders wait to see their probation officer.

The data suggest there is a need to further examine this technology as a tool to assist the probation officer with offender reporting and enhance public safety by allowing the officer to spend additional time with high risk need offenders who are more likely to re-offend.

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Appendix A

Survey Automated Kiosk Reporting For Offenders

1. Do you currently supervise offenders who are complying with their conditions of supervision and report into the office every month?
Yes ___ No ___
2. Do you currently supervise offenders who are not complying with their conditions of supervision and do not report into the office every month as instructed?
Yes ___ No ___
3. How would you rate your reporting period? Circle your answer
A. Very smooth no problems
B. Intense, stressful
C. If other please
explain. _____

4. Would you be interested in a system that would reduce the number of complying offenders and non-violent offenders reporting into the office every month?
Yes ___ No ___
5. Are you required to conduct random drug testing on every offender during offender reporting period?
Yes ___ No ___
6. Are you required to conduct warrantless arrest during the offender reporting period if your offender is found to be in violation of his/her conditions of supervision and meet the set criteria?
Yes ___ No ___
7. If you answered yes to questions 5 and 6 do you find these items time consuming during the offenders reporting period?
Yes ___ No ___ If yes please explain _____

8. Do you have offenders who you have offenders who you need to spend more time with when they report into the office?
Yes ___ No ___

- 9 Is parking at your office during reporting period ever a problem?
Yes___No___
10. Is their enough room in the lobby of your office during reporting period?
Yes___No___
11. Do you feel that the large number of offenders reporting at the same time each week or month is stressful for support staff?
Yes___No___
12. Do you feel that the large number of offenders reporting at the same time each week or month is stressful for supervisors?
Yes___No___
13. Do you feel that the large number of offenders reporting at the same time each week or month is stressful for officers?
Yes___No___
14. If an automated kiosk machine was capable of identifying your offender, asking programmed questions supplied by you, accepting monetary payments and giving the offenders instructions including reporting to the office for drug testing, would you use this alternative system for pre selected offenders?
Yes___No___
15. Do your offenders complaint about long waiting time in the lobby?
Yes___No___
16. Do you feel non-violent, complying offenders can be directed to report to an automated kiosk machines at various locations every month instead of reporting into the office?
Yes___No___
17. Have you used automated (ATM) kiosk type machine in any function before?
Yes___No___ If yes please explain_____
- _____
- _____
18. If yes to question 17, did you find it user friendly?
Yes___No___ If no please explain_____
- _____
- _____
19. If the automated kiosk machines for low risk offenders can free up staff to supervise non-complying offenders would you find this helpful?
Yes___No___
20. Would you like to know more information about automated kiosk reporting for offenders?
Yes___No___