# A Digital Clean Slate

## Public records in the private sector

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We may be through with the past,

but the past ain’t through with us

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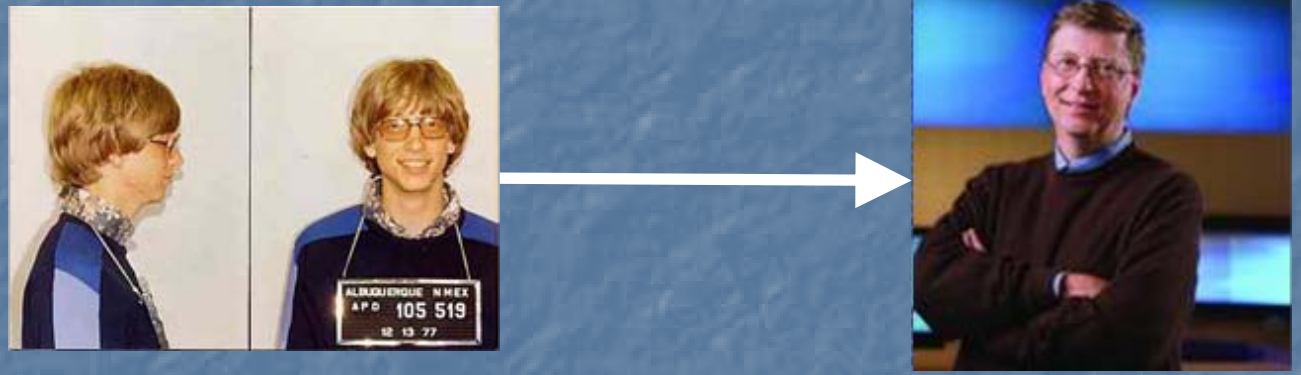
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HELP WANTED!!!

Courts –
Disposition Records

EAST BAY
COMMUNITY
LAW CENTER

Job Seekers –
Petitions for Remedy

Courts –
Disposition Records

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ChoicePoint

Job Seekers –
Petitions for Remedy

Courts –
Disposition Records

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CDBs –
Background Checks

ChoicePoint

Job Seekers –
Petitions for Remedy

Employers –
Hiring Decisions

# Questions

- How are records created?
- Once a record is created, how is it stored?
- These are public records, so how does the public access them?
- If errors are found how are they corrected?
- And are there any auditing mechanisms in place to catch errors?

# Methods

- Footwork:
  - Courthouses
  - Interviews
  - Records
- Research
  - Legislation
  - Literature Review

## East Bay Community Law Center:

"reduce barriers to employment, housing and civic participation for the homeless and people living in poverty."

-Goal statement, Clean Slate Clinic

- Barriers to employment: Convictions, Arrests
- Remedies

# Courthouses

- Generate and store records
- Allow the public to search and retrieve court records
- Instrumental to individuals wishing to clean up their records and also to Data Brokers looking to report information
- Differences between courthouses

# Alameda Courts: CORPUS

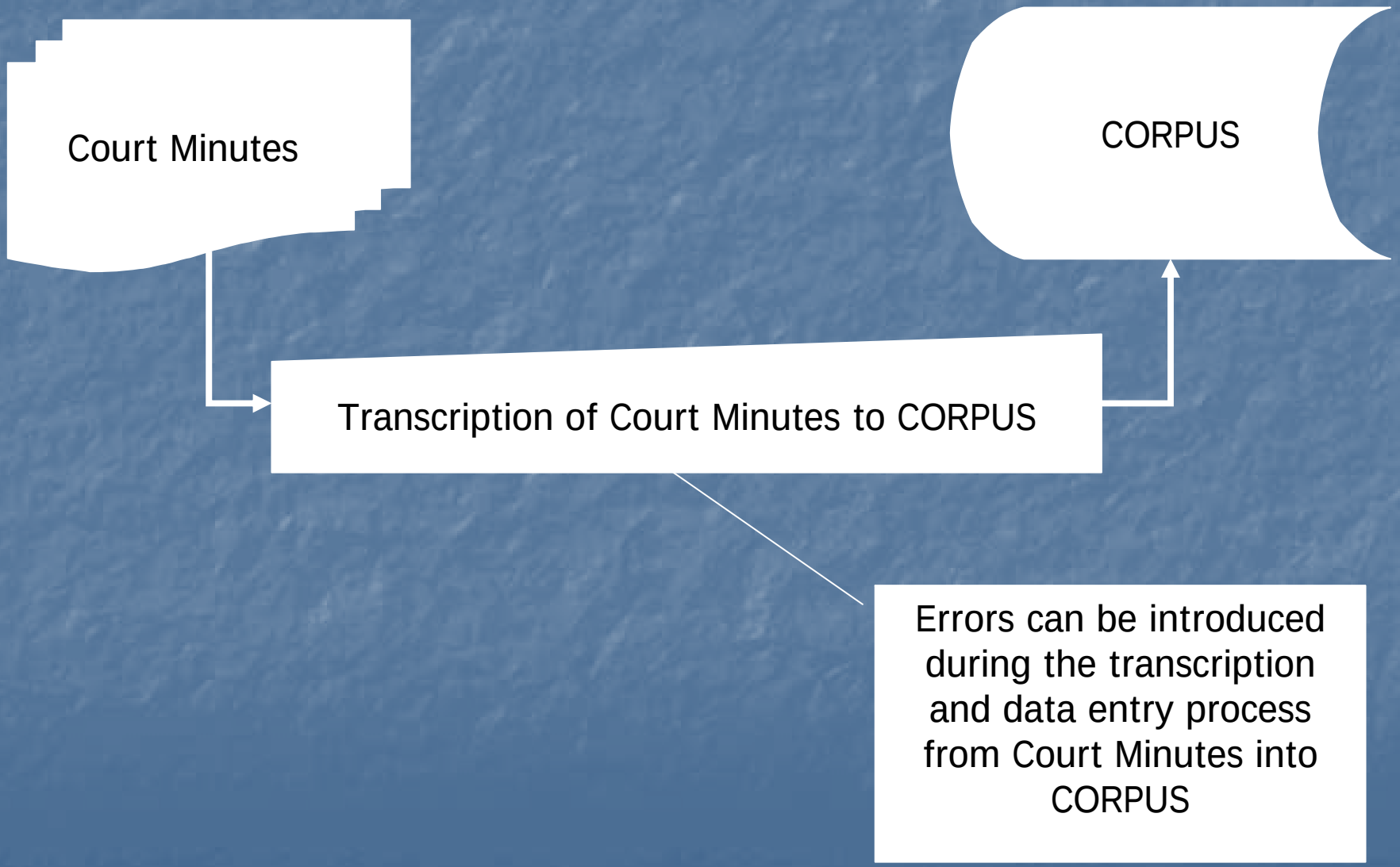
- CORPUS: Criminal records
  - Computer system created and implemented in the 70's to store criminal files electronically.
  - Public Terminals for name searches
  - Limited Error checking and auditing

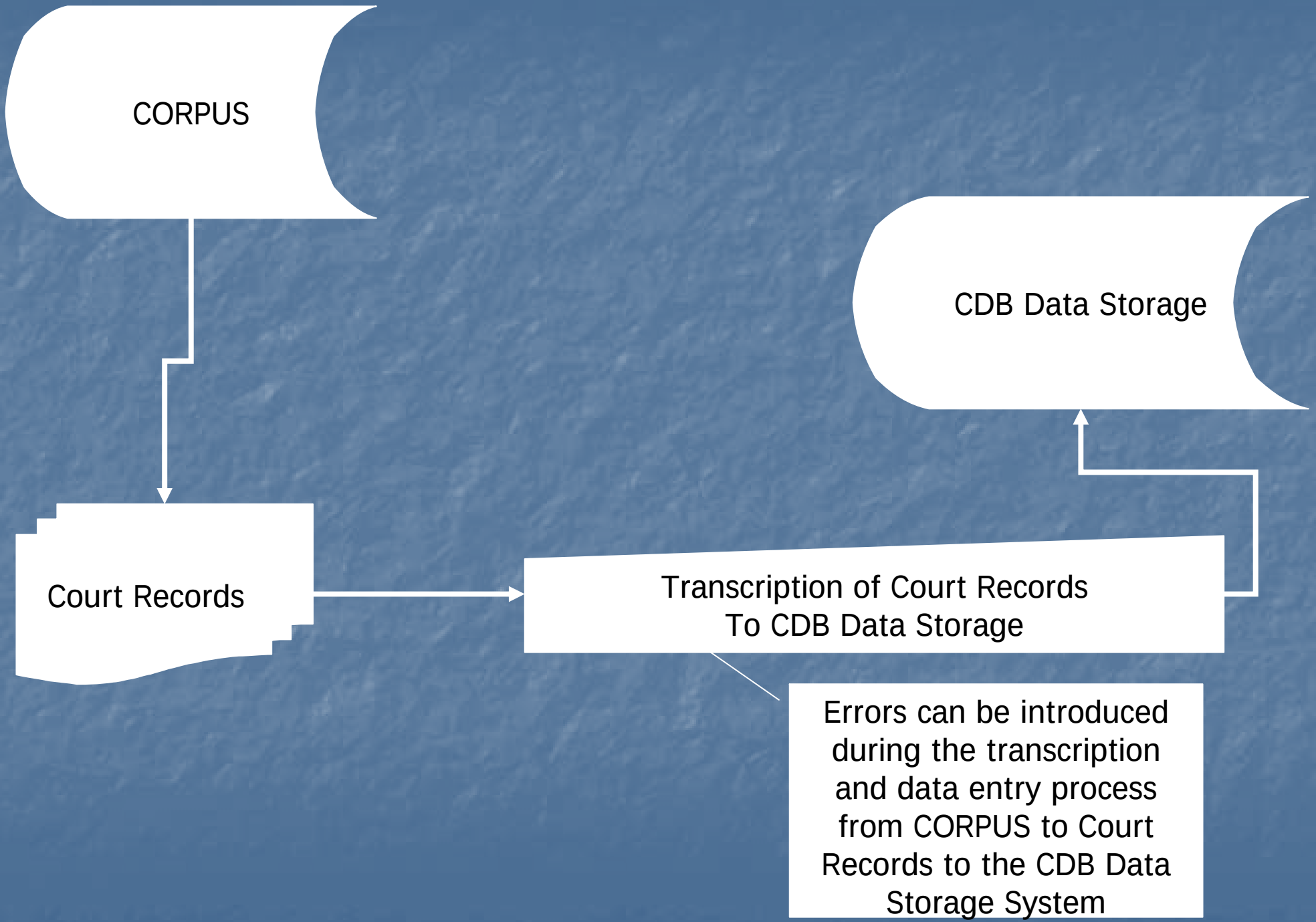
# ChoicePoint: The National Criminal File

- Customer provides data on subject, with their permission
- Two ways of getting criminal background checks:
  - Targeted county-by-county checks
  - Bulk records database for broader coverage
- Re-investigation process for disputed data
- Access to court records for Choicepoint is no different from that of the general public

# Errors

- Courts and ChoicePoint assume accuracy, errors are corrected only when they are brought to their attention
- Original court (paper) records are considered the authoritative source


Court Minutes
CORPUS
Transcription of Court Minutes to CORPUS
Errors can be introduced during the transcription and data entry process from Court Minutes into CORPUS


CORPUS
CDB Data Storage
Court Records
Transcription of Court Records
To CDB Data Storage
Errors can be introduced during the transcription and data entry process from CORPUS to Court Records to the CDB Data Storage System

# California Case Management System

- Will store all California court data
- Public online interface for searching records
- Audit trail, triggers and validation

# Recommendations

- More work to study CCMS:
  - Document and process standards
  - Policy - Privacy? Access?
  - Security measures
- Statistics on dismissals and error rates in courts
- More technical details of Alameda court systems

# Summing up

- People with prior convictions who have been granted remedies rely on accurate, timely data being available
- Many of the information management problems we discuss may be improved with new technology and uniform standards
- Need for careful analysis of the policy implications of digitization and broad public access