Abstract

The NIJ's National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) was launched in 2007 with the intent to improve the cross-jurisdictional collaboration amongst law enforcement, forensic odontologists, medical examiners, and DNA analysts, among others. NamUs comprises two databases containing unique identifying information for and where data is entered into one database, the system can be used to assist with comparisons of possible matches.

Photographs may be introduced into NamUs by investigators to visually renderings of unidentified persons to identify potential matches. Photographic renderings are compared to NamUs via the matching system in order to determine potential matches. When comparing photographs, the system is able to determine if the photographs are of a similar person or if they are of a different person. By entering images with unique features, the system is able to assist in the identification of possible matches.

Comparing Forensic Identifiers

Fingerprints

DNA

Implications For Practice

The NamUs system is continuously improving as the system continues to develop and respond to the needs of the forensic community.

System Growth and Resolutions

Case Resolution Timelines

NamUs has reached 15,000 published cases in May 2011. The system continues to expand in terms of number of cases and the quality of the data submitted. NamUs researchers have identified 21,000 new cases and 200,000 new deaths through the years.

Funding for NamUs is provided through Award No. 2007-ij-0002. The views, opinions, and/or findings expressed in this publication/program/project do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication/program/project are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view(s) of the Department of Justice.