

# Federal Agency Streamlines Data Verification & Exception Review Process with Custom IDEAScript

## About

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A federal agency with a staff of approximately 100 people tasked with processing detailed information about seized assets into the division's investigative database system and keeping information accurate throughout the entire forfeiture lifecycle. The agency's forfeiture financial specialists are dedicated to evaluating and improving internal controls, and ensuring processes are being followed.

## Highlights

- 34 staff involved in data quality and exception review process
- Up to 25,000 assets processed each year
- Hundreds of hours saved and less staff required
- Enabled comparison between two disparate systems for accuracy

## Challenge

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Detailed information about each asset must be recorded and maintained in two systems, which are not integrated and are managed by separate agencies. Information was being entered into the systems manually, which was time-consuming and prone to human error. There was also no efficient way to compare information between the two systems, nor analyze 100% of the data to search for errors and exceptions. The review process required more than 30 staff at two review levels to examine up to 25,000 asset entry records each year.

The agency had never attempted to obtain raw data out of the two disparate systems. To do so required close collaboration between the two federal agencies involved. The agency was also the first to utilize a raw data extraction to solve the challenges of manually entering and analyzing information between the two systems. This helped to identify potential errors, duplicates, and anomalies.

## Solution

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The federal agency evaluated various data analysis tools to help them bridge the two inventory systems and search for exceptions. They chose CaseWare IDEA® data analysis software for its ease of use and Window's-based user interface. Due to the complexity of both systems and their need to create an automated process, they solicited the help of the Audimation Services.



We struggled with the current process for so long that we didn't think streamlining it would be possible. The IDEAScript Audimation Services developed for us exceeded our expectations and has saved us hundreds of man-hours, plus increased the accuracy of our asset entry, processing and tracking. We now spend the majority of our efforts focusing on just the exceptions we find, which has improved the quality of our work.

— Senior Forfeiture  
Financial Specialist  
Contractor

One of the challenges associated with the project was security related, which prevented Audimation Services from working with live data. To overcome this issue, Audimation Services relied on “fake” data provided by the client for script development and testing – resulting scripts were sent to the client to test against live data sets to ensure the programming logic was functioning correctly.

After reviewing the complex requirements, Audimation Services delivered a custom IDEAScript capable of importing raw data from the asset tracking system and comparing it to data stored within the agency's investigative database. The script compares data from 74 fields to produce exceptions within minutes.

## Results

The IDEAScript eliminated the need to analyze 100% of all manually entered data and allowed the team to focus only on exceptions. By improving the process, the agency was able to reallocate three quality control staff members who were once responsible for second-level reviews and have them focus on more value-added work. Additionally, the need for first-line review of the data entry by 25 field personnel was eliminated. More importantly, it significantly increased the accuracy of both systems and allowed the team to quickly identify and correct errors.

The agency currently uses IDEA for reporting, and for the first time, the team was able to pull data out of both systems to search for anomalies. It is imperative that the two disparate systems stay in sync and retain accurate records. IDEA allows the agency to easily convert PDFs into analytical documents for analysis, and produce detailed reports to compare data between both systems. With the IDEAScript in place, the team is now focused on improving the asset tracking process from start to finish and will rely on IDEA's streamlining capabilities to help them accomplish their goals.