How NIEM Got Started Video Transcript

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NIEM got its start in something that we at Justice called the Law Enforcement Information Sharing Program.

Not long after I got to DOJ, what I found was our law enforcement components, which are the FBI, DEA, ATF, US Marshals all had their own stovepipes in which they shared data.

They had their own people they shared with, they had specific law enforcement organizations they shared with, they didn't necessarily share with each other and they didn't share broadly across the law enforcement community and there was a lot of redundancy going on. A lot of things that made it difficult to share.

Obviously 9/11 pointed out that that was not the way we should operate in terms of putting our best foot forward, in terms of preventing bad things from happening.

So one of the first things I undertook was starting this new program called the Law Enforcement Information Sharing Program.

That was really to normalize the different systems that were within the Department of Justice and to help figure out how we can make them work together, to share information and how we can share much more broadly across the entire law enforcement community where appropriate to do so.

And that means the state and local government, with other federal agencies and so forth. So we had to look at the policies. We had to look at the culture and its very much so the technology.

So we set out on how to make this happen technically and pretty soon I came upon, we need to develop some standards. We need to figure out how we're going to communicate from system to system.

We already had many systems within the department that if they could have it would have been good information sharing but they weren't configured so that they could.

How would we modify them to make them work together? So we had to develop some standards.

I found that there had been some pretty much seminal work, but very early work done by our Office of Justice Programs with a group called Global who had represented it across state and local law enforcement in terms of trying to define kind of like data standards. So I figured well they're already hooked into law enforcement.

They're already hooked into state and local. We need to kind of begin working with them as opposed to starting from scratch. But we need much more than data standards.

We need the messaging standards in terms of making this thing a success. So that was really the genesis of the idea of NIEM.

It's taking what the work that had been done by Global and it was state and local government and the Department of Justice and turning that into something where we could share information interoperably across systems all across the country and NIEM was the vision of how that was going to happen.