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# FBI Told to Reorganize Criminal Files

Washington

The FBI was ordered yesterday to seek new methods of preventing its 21.4 million criminal files from being unfairly used to damage the reputations of people with police records.

U.S. District Judge Lewis Smith Jr. stopped short, however, of directing the agency to erase all out-of-date or incorrect entries from its files.

The FBI serves as a clearing house for criminal records submitted by police departments and courts all over the nation. Many of the FBI files, including fingerprints, are computerized.

John Tarlton of Texas sued the FBI, seeking basic reforms in its system of keeping records. Court records showed Tarlton's file carried arrest records more than 20 years old.

Smith ordered the agency to find new ways "to keep the disposition entries in its criminal records reasonably current," especially for arrest records more than a year old.

Besides that, the judge said, any challenge to the accuracy of an FBI file must be sent to a local police force or court for possible correction.

*Associated Press*