

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE: THE EVOLUTION OF TRACS

The Iowa Department of Transportation is leading the way with Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS) and inspiring a national consortium of users

OVERVIEW

Industry: Law Enforcement

End-User: Public Safety Officers

Application: Electronic Applications

Product Solution: Honeywell Area-Imaging Scanner

Solution Provider: L-Tron Corporation & Iowa DoT

data since its inception in 1994. From this in-depth technology-based solution, multiple other uses have emerged – these uses and the “tremendous success” of the program in Iowa have inspired a national consortium of users and a stakeholder group of thousands in various government sectors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An estimated number of 5.5 million motor vehicle collisions occur every year on highways in the United States (US Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics RITA). The typical scenario: Driver A hits Driver B (hopefully with no injuries), Driver A & Driver B exchange information, Driver A & Driver B part ways, and the information exchange stops there.

Not in Iowa, though. Thanks to the State of Iowa Department of Transportation’s Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS) system, Iowa has benefitted from rich transportation and vehicle collision

CHALLENGE

The original goal of TraCS was to create a PC-based crash reporting system that enabled officers to capture data on-scene.

This goal seems simple enough, but difficulties experienced when capturing data on the scene of a motor vehicle collision was the whole impetus for creating a new technology solution in the first place; prior to 1994, crash data went on a sometimes-lengthy journey from the time of the incident and traversed a messy landscape of illegible forms and questionable accuracy. It was clear that technology alone wouldn’t fix the issue – an entirely new system was needed that could leverage common templates; drive validated data; improve accuracy, legibility and

“Nothing goes fast when you have to hand-write”

*-David Meyers,
State of Iowa DoT*

efficiency; while promoting simplicity and seamless data exchange.

The State of Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) in partnership with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and other law enforcement agencies reached out to those who would benefit most from the solution.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SOLUTION

When asked how TraCS evolved as compared to traditional IT projects in government, David Meyers (IA DOT TraCS Program Manager) explains an air of possibility; the conversation was positioned entirely differently – ‘What do you want? Let us build it.’ This wasn’t an approach that government personnel were used to, but this is the same approach taken with TraCS today:

People first, technology second.

L-Tron Corporation provides the technology that glues the entire TraCS system together. Beyond providing cutting-edge barcode scanning solutions, L-Tron brings technical expertise, a deep knowledge base, and collaboration to the TraCS initiative – asking questions and developing understanding before suggesting solutions.

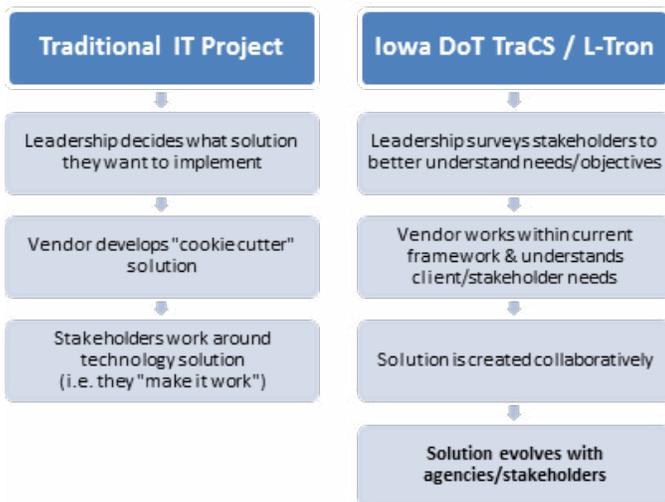
A NATIONAL MODEL

As TraCS grew in Iowa, other states and agencies took notice. Soon, the system grew to incorporate more than 240 other agencies within the State of Iowa and other states were stepping up to volunteer resources and support to enhance the program’s reach. Iowa DOT stepped up to manage the growth and development to avoid fragmented application among different states.

With the help of L-Tron Corporation, TraCS became more efficient, supported input from the users, and evolved into a real-time information exchange solution.

Now, the mission of TraCS is shared by the “National Model” (National Steering Committee) that oversees and manages the fourteen states that use the system.

Though the federal funding that catalyzed its creation dried up years ago, TraCS is now a “user-funded community” that runs on donated time and resources from various stakeholders.



- 1994**
TraCS is built with Federal Highway Administration grant funding
- 1995**
Traffic citation capability added
- 1995 - 2000**
National Model is founded
Grant money dissolves
- 2000 - 2010**
National Model grows in popularity
MACH added to National Model
- 2010 - 2014**
TraCS Web launches
- Present**
16 TraCS forms utilized around the nation: warnings/citations, commercial vehicle enforcement, complaint affidavits, field data tags, investigative reports, etc.
- Future?**

“Synergy helps us move forward together”

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TAKE AWAYS

TraCS is now enabling users with the following benefits:

- Improved decision-making & informed structural changes
- Collaboration among states/provinces to share/improve data collection
- Ability to scan and capture all barcodes, regardless of condition or country/state of origin
- Seamless information sharing and records processing
- Significant time-savings
- Little-to-no training needed
- Increased accuracy of vital data
- Reduced need for appropriations/grants
- Significant taxpayer dollars savings
- Legible, automated data capture

So how does TraCS work? What technology is used to create such marked improvements?

Check out the [Iowa Department of Transportation's TraCS page](#) and our [eCitation microsite](#) for more information.

Technical Specifications:

- L-Tron/Honeywell Area-Imaging Scanner
- Web Server
- Shared Database

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher Tarantino is L-Tron Corporation's Public Safety Communications Consultant and brings almost ten years of experience in public safety, emergency management and special operations. He works with and provides subject matter expertise/training across the country with a variety of agencies.

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“94% of all crash incidents in Iowa are recorded in TraCS. That’s HUGE.”

TraCS Stakeholders

Iowa DoT

Public Workers | Municipal Engineers

Government

Policy Makers | 240+ Iowa Organizations

Law Enforcement

State Legislature | State Court System

David Meyers

State of Iowa (DoT)

David Meyers has thirty years' experience in the public sector and is the Iowa TraCS Program Manager – he also heads the National Model of TraCS Program.

An expert in Traffic Incident Management and information sharing, Mr. Meyers has been with Iowa DOT for more than four years. He collaborated with L-Tron Corporation's technology experts to choose devices and support systems compatible with and flexible enough for TraCS. This partnership and his ability to “think big” have created an incredible system for information management.

L-Tron Corporation would like to commend Mr. Meyers for his vision and thank him and his team for their service and dedication.

The State of Iowa Department of Transportation employs four support staff under David to manage TraCS. Like Iowa, each state within the National TraCS Model (there are 14) manages their own data.

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