

The IACP Technology Clearinghouse: A Decade of Practitioner-Oriented Objectivity

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The IACP Technology Clearinghouse, established in 1997 through a cooperative agreement among the IACP, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), has quickly evolved to become the exclusive technology resource for objective law enforcement automated data collection and information management. The Clearinghouse was originally proposed as a restricted-access, subscription-based bulletin board service (BBS) but instead became the first law enforcement information technology (IT) resource center available through the World Wide Web. Today, the Web site receives over 2 million hits each year.

The Clearinghouse has led efforts to inform law enforcement information technologists and police executives of advances in transportation-related technology issues (e.g., the importance of a crash report training video, minimum uniform crash criteria, intelligent transportation systems [ITS] initiatives, the Capital Wireless Integrated Network [CAPWIN], Traffic and Criminal Software [TRaCS], etc.). In addition, the Clearinghouse represents law enforcement technologists at transportation and traffic safety venues through its publications and formal presentations to thousands of law enforcement executives.

With funding support from the FHWA and the U.S. Department of Transportation's ITS Joint Program Office (ITS JPO), the Clearinghouse is also the exclusive conduit through which the Department of Transportation addresses data collection, information management, and reporting requirements for law enforcement information technologists at all levels. Through its relationship with the IACP, the Clearinghouse message is heard by agencies of all sizes.

New Design and New Content

The IACP Technology Clearinghouse, found at www.iacptechnology.org, debuted its Web site redesign in June 2007, offering a more user-friendly experience with a cleaner look, updated content, and easier site navigation. The site includes the following current topics:

- Communications
- Computer-aided dispatch
- Evacuation planning resources
- IACP Law Enforcement Information Management (LEIM) Section and conferences
- Information sharing
- Incident management
- ITS
- Records management systems
- Speed management
- Technology standards
- Traffic safety management resources

As an added feature, the Clearinghouse now provides a monthly resource that highlights new technologies and programs targeted at law enforcement and transportation practitioners. This monthly resource provides executives and technologists with contemporary information that aids in the development of strategic decisions for the finance, purchase, and maintenance of new and emerging technologies.

In keeping with its one-stop-shopping philosophy, the Clearinghouse maintains a comprehensive Web-based library of resources that serves as a guide for executives, IT managers, and practitioners who have recently been assigned technology-related duties. The Web-based library includes the following items:

- A database of mobile computing projects throughout the country, sample requests for information (RFIs) and requests for proposals (RFPs), model policies, articles on current and emerging technologies, and presentation materials from IACP LEIM Section conferences and the IACP Annual Conference Technology Institute.
- A database of traffic records and other traffic-related law enforcement technologies.
- Searchable IACP radar and light detection and ranging (lidar) conforming products lists (CPLs): The lists indicate the available models for each type of speed measurement device

meeting performance specifications based on tests conducted at IACP-certified laboratories.

- Application forms and past-winner information for the IACP National Law Enforcement Challenge, a competition that recognizes and rewards competing departments for the best overall traffic safety programs in the United States.
- The IACP-iXP Excellence in Technology Award Program was created to recognize a law enforcement agency's superior achievement and innovation in the field of information technology. The program is international in scope and is open to local, tribal, state, provincial, federal, and multijurisdictional law enforcement agencies.
- The technology projects section highlights noteworthy IT initiatives from law enforcement practitioners, including an explanation of how the technology helped their agency management make more informed decisions and how this information is shared with other federal, state, and local users. The Clearinghouse provides a connection to these practitioners as well as a reference point for those considering like projects in their own jurisdictions.

Supporting Members' Needs

The IACP Technology Clearinghouse is a valuable resource, informing its readers of new developments and technologies. The Clearinghouse staff is also available to provide customized research in meeting an agency's need for special assistance. The information from reader inquiries, together with research trends observed by the Clearinghouse, influences future IACP technology-related resources and training agendas. Therefore, the Clearinghouse welcomes all opportunities to serve as a conduit for IACP members to share information, ideas, and concerns that ultimately improve the effectiveness of decision making and the delivery of vital law enforcement services.

For additional information about the Clearinghouse, please contact Bill Albright, IACP Technology Clearinghouse Specialist, at 703-836-6767, extension 263, or via e-mail at albrightw@theiacp.org. ♦