

Editorial Comment: Innovative Customers

Reprinted from earlier issue of The Intersection / Tarrant County Sheriff's Office

Recently, we came across an original *User's Guide* for the first edition of Intersect's Records Control and Management System software in a storage area. With a copyright date of 1994, and in the original blue cover some of our long-term users may recall, it was interesting to look through this nearly fourteen-year-old edition.

One thing stood out in examining this original publication: the original functions in the RCAMS software were pretty basic. The number of functions and features that have been added to RCAMS since this original edition was published make up a long list. In fact, a majority of the features and functions that have been added over the years have been the result of suggestions for additions and improvements by Intersect customers. Clearly, our users are an important asset to Intersect in the continuing refinement of our software, and in identifying appropriate new features to add.

Other users have cooperated in helping us test and evaluate additions and updates. Intersect would like to express our appreciation to all of our users for the comments, suggestions, and feedback that have helped us improve our applications over the years.

While there isn't space to mention all of the contributors, we would like to note a few that have contributed recently and over the long term. The Arlington Independent School District, one of the first customers to install and use Intersect records management software, has provided a continuing list of suggestions and recommendations since 1994, including the very recent revision to the check-out default date feature. A need identified by the Plano Independent School District resulted in a more convenient way to add comments to a retention schedule; the Authority / Comments Insertion Editor is now incorporated in all Retention Schedule Manager versions. Suggestions from the City of Plano have helped us improve the management and reporting process in the records disposal section of RCAMS. And the recently announced Global Editor application has been the result of suggestions and requests from a number of our users.

Recently, Intersect has worked closely with the Tarrant County Records Department in two areas, leading to the new *Accession* and *Accession Monitor* remote access and workflow application extensions, and to the implementation, testing, and refinement of the Global Editor.

Finally, we note that innovation by our customers may have an even broader impact. Recently, we have followed with interest installations of the RCAMS software in the Tarrant County Sheriff's Office – in particular, the use of RCAMS in the Dispatch Center for time-critical access to incident reports and for sharing this information with other agencies (see article in this issue). The Tarrant County application brings to mind recent comments by Dan Verton, former U. S. Intelligence officer and award-winning journalist, in his book *Black Ice* (McGraw Hill / Osborne, 2003) dealing with the new challenges of terrorism and the need for improved information access and sharing between local, regional, and Federal law enforcement agencies. A particular problem Verton cites is the reliance on manual searches through hard-copy "be-on-the-lookout" lists by many agencies, and the failure to apply technology to support these and related areas for improved information access.

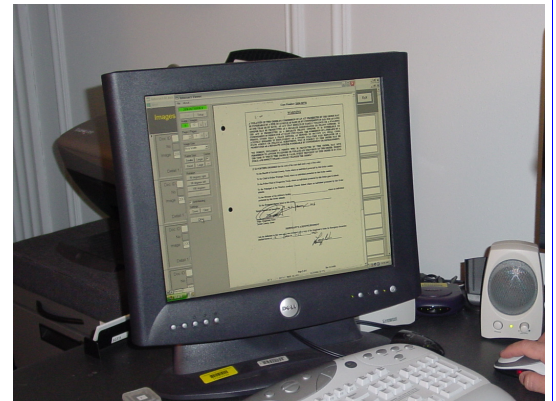
Verton documents the slow progress in addressing these needs nationally, and observes that "...timely information sharing will in the near term depend on preparations made by

state and local (law enforcement agencies)... The good news is that some of America's major metropolitan areas are taking steps to insure that they are prepared..."

Clearly, Tarrant County is one of these metropolitan areas. Intersect Systems is pleased to support the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department in this project.



Sergeant William Wilkerson at RCAMS Image Access computer station, where imaged documents such as Protective Orders can be quickly retrieved, viewed, and printed as necessary.



RCAMS Image Access station with a page from a protective order displayed. Typical access time with the AutoQuery function averages fifteen seconds from the time the user begins typing a name until the image is displayed.



Sgt. Wilkerson at large-screen display with RCAMS Image Access main screen in the Dispatch Center.



Communications Specialists in the highly automated Dispatch Center of the Sheriff's Department. The RCAMS Image Access system is being added to these stations.