NationalModel

for the Statewide Application of Data Collection and Management Technology to Improve Public Safety

N E W S L E T T E R

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Welcome

Welcome to the April/May/June edition of the National Model Newsletter. In this volume, Web TraCS is spotlighted and Florida reports on their TraCS program in the *State Report*. TraCS 7.3 External Search functionality is discussed and the TraCS 10 Rules Builder is reviewed.

The National Model Newsletter aims to inform and educate about the goals and activities of the National Model in an effort to increase membership interest. You are encouraged to pass this newsletter on to anyone you think might be interested in learning more about the National Model.

National Model News

The National Model members have been busy upgrading to TraCS 10. Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Manitoba, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania have all started the upgrade process and some have even started deploying TraCS 10 to their local agencies.

Thanks to these trailblazers' patience and due diligence with working through defects and issues, TraCS 10 has matured to the point that we are able to change from a bimonthly release cycle to a monthly release cycle staring with the May 3rd release.

The subcommittee on the case management functionality enhancements for TraCS 10 met twice in April and has produced a prioritized list of improvements that will lay the foundation for enhanced TraCS 10 case management. This list will be presented to the Steering Committee for action at the next meeting.

Web TraCS development is progressing and is still on track for beta testing in late August or early September, 2010. National Model members will be asked for Web TraCS beta testing volunteers at the next meeting. We need your help to ensure Web TraCS is the application we all want and expect it to be. Beta testers must already be using TraCS 10.

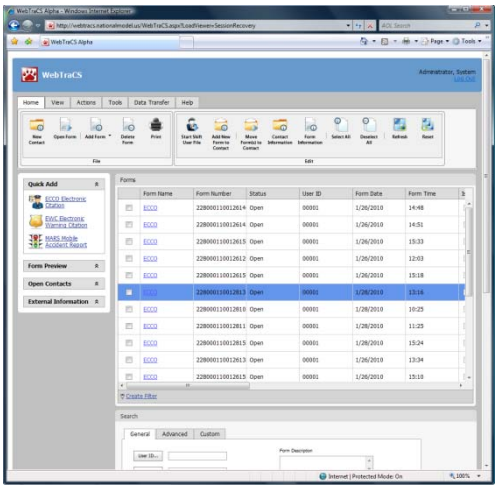
The next National Model Steering Committee meeting will be August 5 and 6, 2010 in Pittsburgh, PA. Visit www.nationalmodel.us for updated details as they become available.

Visit the National Model web site: www.nationalmodel.us

Product Spotlight

Web TraCS

Web TraCS is a browser based version of TraCS and has the same look and feel as TraCS 10. No client preloaded software is needed on the computer running Web TraCS except for Microsoft Windows XP SP3 or above, Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 or above, and the latest version of the Microsoft .NET Framework. Web TraCS functionality is similar to TraCS 10 and includes an on-demand downloadable ActiveX control used to interface with peripherals connected to the computer such as barcode imagers and signature tablets and third party applications like diagram tools.



With a flexible and scalable architecture, Web TraCS is able to be configured in several ways. One option allows the law enforcement agency to host its own Web TraCS server. As long as the agency's workstations and field units have connectivity to either the agency's LAN/WAN or to the internet, they are able to utilize Web TraCS. With this configuration, since the same TraCS database is used for both, the agency can choose to use a combination of standard TraCS clients and Web TraCS to meet any unique equipment and connectivity scenarios the agency may have.

Another available configuration option allows a centrally located Web TraCS server, hosted by a state or regional agency, to service multiple smaller or remote agencies. As long as an agency has internet connectivity, it will have the capability to utilize the fully functioning web based TraCS data collection tool. Each agency is permitted access only to its own data which resides in a common TraCS database on the Web TraCS server. Transmission and other export/import functionality occur on the Web TraCS server as well and are able to be controlled by each agency independently.

Web TraCS adds yet another robust option to the National Model software offerings and features:

- Completely browser based interface;
- Familiar TraCS look and feel;
- Multiple configuration options;
- Instant access to any stored TraCS forms from any IE web browser;
- Simple to manage updates made in only one location;
- Minimal technical support to small and remote local agencies;
- Shared form, report, and rule files and databases with TraCS 10.

Web TraCS will be available nationwide in late 2010.

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State Report

Florida

by Amy Cochran – TraCS Florida

In 2003, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in cooperation with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and other local, state and federal agencies, began licensing TraCS with the goal of improving both the timeliness of collection and accuracy of traffic safety related data. Since inception, TraCS Florida has achieved these goals by distributing the TraCS Florida software to over two hundred of the nearly four hundred agencies in Florida. About one hundred of these agencies use TraCS 7.3 in some fashion. About thirty maintain a central data repository. Since the inception of our electronic submission initiatives in June 2009, twelve of these agencies have started electronically submitting crash reports to FDOT, with a total of over four thousand crash reports submitted electronically to DHSMV to date.

Our goals at TraCS Florida are to increase statewide usage overall, to increase the number of electronically submitted crash reports received by DHSMV within ten days of the report creation date, and to become the second vendor in the state of Florida to offer the electronic submission of Citations. As of April 2010, we submitted our first round of test citation data to the Florida Association of Clerk Courts and Comptrollers (FACC). We look forward to beta testing this functionality with TraCS Florida agencies beginning in May 2010.

Our biggest hurdle in implementing TraCS Florida statewide is that there are currently several other vendors in the state of Florida that provide electronic crash reporting and ticketing software along with a Records Management System (RMS). While the other vendors are costly, the features provided in their total package is attractive to agencies.

We began converting our TraCS 7.3 forms to TraCS 10 in August 2009. We received SDK training in September 2009. Since then, we have successfully converted and deployed 8 of our 11 forms, and have begun testing at nine agencies so far at varying levels. All of this was accomplished with two people working on TraCS 10 development part-time in between support calls and other development initiatives. We look forward to deploying our first release of TraCS 10 sometime in June 2010.

With the help of TEG support, below is a list of just some of the features that we have been able to implement with TraCS 10 that we are most excited about:

1. **Distribution Files**
   Automation of updates is the single most important factor towards supporting TraCS growth and scalability to large agencies. We are currently using distribution files for updates to access levels, forms, rules, reports, the support database, user defaults, and for customized searches.

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2. **Customized Searches**
   A customized search can be created for virtually any field in TraCS 10 forms. One particular agency requested that officers be able to search the central database for warnings for a violator by name, driver license number, and more, so that if a warning was previously issued to the driver for the same offense, the officer knows to instead issue a citation. Some other searches that have been requested are number of citations issued per statute during a particular time period by a particular officer, and the ability to query violator race by statute number.

3. **Advanced Print Options**
   Rules can be used to force printing to certain locations based on a status change, such as "accepted" reports printing to a networked printer in a records department. In addition, rules can be used to force printing to a PDF with automated saving to a pre-specified location.

4. **Buttons and Ribbons**
   We are excited to finally be able to make buttons that are tied to actions, with the ability to customize ribbons on a per agency basis. So far, we have made buttons that are tied to additional status codes. We have also made buttons for our NCIC/FCIC query vendors that pull in external search data for seven different NCIC/FCIC vendors.

5. **Integration**
   TraCS 10 is generally much easier to integrate with just about anything than TraCS 7.3. The key to that is its vastly improved ability to call .NET assemblies from rules – that means virtually any kind of functionality or integration can be accommodated. Since Florida requires that books of numbers be assigned to specific officers, we have used this feature to accommodate our form numbering needs.

Below is a list of features that we are in the process of implementing:

1. **Electronic Submission of Crash Reports and Citations**
   Instead of relying on an external utility and scheduled tasks to conform and submit data, TraCS 10 will provide the ability to translate forms directly into the XML format required by DHSMV.

2. **Active Directory**
   The use of Active Directory helps to simplify the administration of handling user names.

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Legacy Lowdown

External Search Functionality

The TraCS 7.3 External Search functionality can be used to share information between any outside source and TraCS. For example, an External Search can be used to bring data from an external database, an external file, or a third-party application into TraCS. Once the data is returned to TraCS, depending on the method by which the search was launched, it can be used to populate fields within a TraCS form, launch a TraCS form, create common information items, notify the user of an event, or log a user into TraCS. The communication between TraCS and the external source(s) is handled by a DLL that is custom designed by a TraCS Forms Developer.

A TraCS External Search can be launched in four different ways:

Click the Search Button on a Databar – This launch method can be used to execute an External Search from within a TraCS form. Values from fields on the form can be passed as parameters to the External Search DLL, and results passed back from the External Search DLL can be used to either populate fields on the form from which the External Search was launched or to create Common Information items to be used throughout TraCS. An example would be: Enter a driver's license number into a field on a TraCS Citation form, select the search button from the databar, and receive the driver's name and address information back so that it can be automatically populated into the Citation form.

Read a Barcode or Magnetic Stripe – This launch method can be used to execute an External Search when a barcode or magnetic stripe is read into TraCS. Values read from the barcode or magnetic stripe can be passed as parameters to the External Search DLL, and the External Search DLL can pass back a message that can be displayed to the user within TraCS. An example would be: Read the barcode on a driver's license and notify the TraCS user with a message box that the driver's license number read from the driver's license was found in a file of suspended or revoked driver's license numbers.

Select a Custom External Search Menu Item from the TraCS Main Screen – This launch method can be used to perform an External Search from outside of a TraCS form. The External Search DLL can pass back results that can be used to populate fields on any TraCS form or create common information items. The results can also be used to open an existing TraCS form. An example would be: Call a third-party wireless client application and enter a driver's license number as a parameter. The third-party application runs a query on the driver's license number and passes the results back to TraCS so that they can be used to automatically populate the fields on any of the forms within TraCS.

Login to TraCS/Logout of TraCS – This launch method can be used to perform an External Search that logs a user in to or out of TraCS without using TraCS User (.usr) files. The username and password entered into the TraCS login screen are passed as *(cont.)*

Remember that state and provincial National Model members can post and track software issues and questions by registering with the National Model Issue Tracker.

Contact the National Model software support line to register at (724) 368-4500 x 121

parameters to the External Search DLL, and the authenticated user information is passed back from the External Search DLL, enabling the user to login. This launch method is typically used for agencies that want to maintain a single location for all login information, such as a centralized database.

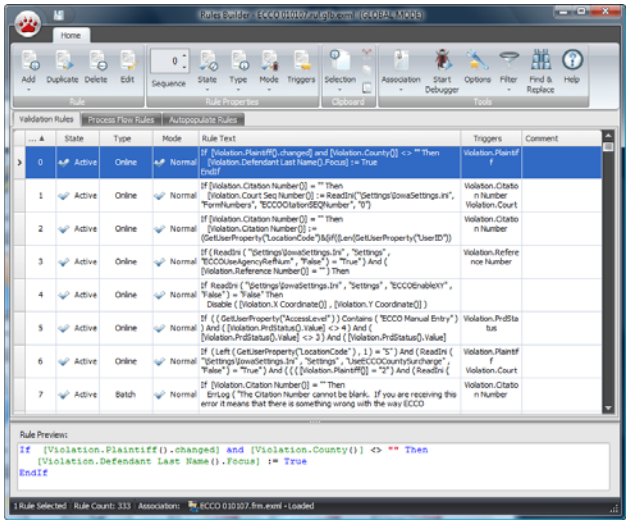
The TraCS 7.3 External Search functionality can be used to interface external data sources with TraCS. It is another powerful tool that allows TraCS users to customize the application to meet their unique needs.

In TraCS 10, the external interface takes the functionality to the next level including allowing XML data to be passed back and forth between TraCS and other applications and the ability for a third party application to control how forms and rules behave within TraCS.

Tech Blog

TraCS 10 Rules Builder

The Rules Builder allows you to code your own TraCS functionality through rules using a flexible set of functions and commands. Validation, Process Flow, and Autopopulate rules are all created using the Rules Builder.



A rule is a piece of user defined code that can be used to add additional functionality to TraCS. Rules can automatically populate fields on a form, call external DLLs, display message boxes to users, and much more. The array of functions provided in the Rules Builder allows you to easily create complex rules using a simplified and intuitive user interface. There are three main types of rules that can be created in the Rules Builder.

Validation Rules

These rules are used to validate the information users enter on a form. For example, you can create a validation rule that checks the *Birth Date* field to make sure that the value entered by the TraCS users is not after the current date. Validation rules are also used to help users interact with the form as they are entering data into the form. Automatically filling in fields on the form based on other entered values and disabling and enabling fields as needed are other examples of validation rules.

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Process Flow Rules

Process Flow rules are assigned to actions. When an action is executed (i.e.; a button is clicked), all the Process Flow rules assigned to that action will run. For example, when the Delete button is clicked, any process flow rules created for the Delete action will be executed.

Autopopulate Rules

Autopopulate rules are used to automatically populate fields from one form (the source form) to another form (the target form). This functionality is useful if, for example, you wanted to issue more than one citation to the same defendant. Using an Autopopulate rule you could automatically create copies of the original citation and change only the necessary fields required for issuing a new one.

The TraCS 10 Rules Builder is a vast improvement over the TraCS 7.3 SDK tools that it replaces (Validation Builder, Process Flow Builder and Autopopulate Builder.) The TraCS 10 Rules Builder has a sophisticated rule editor that utilizes color coded syntax checking, an easy online help reference, and an automatic debugging utility to check for logic flaws. With the TraCS 10 Rules Builder, you can code rules to control almost every aspect of the TraCS interface and TraCS forms.

In the next Tech Blog we will discuss the TraCS 10 Database Builder SDK tool.

Next Newsletter

Stay tuned for the July/August/September 2010 issue of the National Model Newsletter where we will feature:

Product Spotlight	IMAT
State Report	ALASKA
Legacy Lowdown	COM SPLITTER

Questions or Comments? Would you like your state/province report to be included in this newsletter? Do you have any corrections or suggestions? E-mail us at:
newsletter@nationalmodel.us