October 2020

Application Software Utilization

With Covid-19 negatively impacting Public Safety budgets for the next 2 to 4 years, it is critical that current software applications are fully utilized and implemented. While application software utilization has always been important, it is becoming critical that all of the capabilities of CAD, Mobile, RMS, Fire, EMS, Jail and other Public Safety applications are fully utilized. More often than not, agencies are using less than 50 percent of the features and functions built into the applications, and staff training on these applications is put on the back burner. Covid-19 has exposed numerous shortcomings in both process and workflow processes within departments, especially in areas that previously had sufficient staffing but now are short-staffed because of the virus. This staff shortcoming coupled with the increased hours needed to react to recent demonstrations and violence has caught many departments off-guard and struggling to meet normal day-to-day public demand.

The good news is that increasing process and workflow efficiencies through better application utilization. is an achievable goal. Not only can application utilization improve process and workflow, it can eliminate redundant tasks and reduce workload. Failing to fully utilize applications, on the other hand can lead to inefficiencies for in-house and field staff; result in endangerment of field personnel, limit management's access to current and up-to-date information needed to make informed tactical and personnel decisions, and negatively affect budgets.

There are a number of factors that play a role in how application software is utilized including:

Application Knowledge and Live Implementation Environment

- Has staff been adequately trained on all application modules?
- Has staff been trained to proficiency?
- Has the staff embraced the application specific processes and workflows, or are they resistant to it?
- Has the organization implemented processes and workflows that work with the application flow?
- Is there a culture of ensuring quality data that is timely, accurate, relevant, objective and comprehensive?
- Is there a formal quality assurance/quality improvement process in place to ensure consistency and accuracy of data/information?
- Is there a crime analysis initiative with specific objectives to improve the collection of data that identifies trends, patterns, methods of operation and solvability factors?
- Are applications utilized to provide actionable information to management and in-house/field personnel?
- Is there an ongoing training initiative to bring all staff to the appropriate level of proficiency on all relevant application modules?

Technical Environment

- Is the internal network fast, reliable and secure?
- Is the mobile network fast, reliable and secure?
- Are the applications at the latest release level published by the vendor?

Winbourne Consulting offers a full range of public safety services, including strategic planning, systems integration, specifications development, solution acquisition, and implementation project management and quality assurance.

- Are the workstations and mobile devices adequate to run the applications at optimum?
- Is there a long-term plan to keep workstations and mobile devices upgraded for optimum operation?

Improving Application Utilization

First and foremost a detailed assessment of the current state of application utilization has to be undertaken. While this sounds simple, it requires due diligence and an accurate assessment of how field personnel, in-house personnel and management are utilizing the applications. A current assessment should include the following:

- Is the data being collected in a timely, accurate, relevant, objective, comprehensive and actionable fashion?
- What is the time gap between the time information is collected in the field to the time it reaches in-house personnel and management?
- Are the time gaps acceptable for the various applications and situations?
- Is the information reliable as to provide management with information that can be acted upon immediately, or is the data stale and only useful for historical and statistical reporting?
- Do current processes and workflows adhere to agency expectation and policies/procedures?
- Is information flowing seamlessly between all of the applications such as CAD to mobile to RMS to Jail to Fire/EMS, etc. or are there duplicate data entry and manual processes that staff need to perform?
- Are report approval processes seamless and adequate to move reports quickly from CAD to mobile to RMS to dashboards, so that management can act on the information proactively?
- Are there any manual processes or workflows that have not been automated?

Action Plan

Once a current assessment has been completed, then an action plan can be developed to improve processes and workflows. Future planning should include the following:

- Identification of goals to be achieved with the plan and development of associated measurement criteria and implementation timelines
- Review of training programs that include initial training and ongoing/refresher training with curriculums, training videos and testing procedures that measure knowledge and proficiency, not just attendance.
- Assessment of all the technical aspects of the work environment, including workstations and mobile devices having the latest operating and application software installed, with the latest map updates.
- Development of a network stress test with IT to ensure that the network is providing adequate response times for the various applications including: CAD, mapping, field reporting, state/NCIC, body camera video feeds, automated license plate readers, etc.
- Conducting an assessment with department leads to review the current operational environment and identify process and workflow improvements that can be immediately implemented as well as ones that will need additional training or application change orders to accomplish.
- Developing a plan that includes a gap analysis of the current system utilization and compares it to existing features and functions of the applications to determine what changes can be implemented
- Identifying application functions that will improve agency operations and effectiveness, based on the gap analysis requirements verses features and functions not available through current applications.

- Creating operational plan that includes immediate, medium term and long-term initiatives.

Ongoing Departmental Practices -
Below are recommend practices to keep applications current and fully utilized:

- Monitor application software proficiency and utilization within the various departments:
    - o Define goals for the effective utilization of each application such as CAD, mobile, mapping, RMS, Jail, Fire/EMS, body worn cameras, dashboards, data analysis with graphs, reporting, etc.
    - o Measure each application's effectiveness throughout the organization, including a review of the applications effectiveness and utilization on an annual basis.
    - o Develop an annual assessment document that provides recommendations and remedial actions to be taken to improve any deficiencies uncovered.
    - o Determine what application features and functions have not been implemented and determine their applicability to the agency, then develop a plan to remedy the situation.
    - o Work with each application vendor and/or consultant, to incorporate new or existing features/functions currently not utilized into the processes and workflows of the organization.
- Maintain user proficiency in the use of the various applications:
    - o Develop new and ongoing application software training curriculums with video training courses. After the initial training curriculums are developed, they should be revisited annually to make any relevant changes based on new processes and workflows or new features and functions released by the application vendors.
    - o Train new and existing personnel through initial and on-going/remedial training programs, with proficiency testing to measure effectiveness and thoroughness of the training program. Annual refresher training with proficiency exams and remedial training could be implemented.
    - o Monitor application utilization and adherence to policies and procedures, assuming policies and procedures are up-to-date including an annual review of application utilization with an assessment and recommendations on how to improve processes and workflows.
    - o Develop internal department-centric user manuals and make them available online from a web portal or through the application itself. Manuals should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, or whenever a new application release is installed.
- Stay current with software updates and hardware upgrades:
    - o Ensure that application software is updated on a timely basis, typically shortly after an application vendor releases a new major software update. Work with each application vendor to determine their software release schedule and plan upgrades accordingly.
    - o Conduct a thorough review of all new application software releases/updates to fully understand the new features and functions being released and how they could be utilized within the organization. Develop a plan to incorporate features and functions with the most impact on the organization.
    - o Ensure that operating system, server and database software is kept current. An annual review of all operating systems, server and database software should be conducted and upgrades scheduled based on vendor's release schedule.
    - o With today's everchanging technology landscape, workstations and mobile devices should be replaced on a 3 to 5-year schedule,

Clients include city, county, state, and federal agencies located throughout the United States and the world, as well as countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America.

to ensure that end-users have equipment that provides response times in-line with the application requirements. Conduct a biennial audit of workstations and mobile devices to determine response times and throughput for each application.

o Monitor network performance and cellular connectivity performance to ensure response times and throughput is in-line with application requirements. Automated network monitoring software is available to ensure reliable and consistent network response time and throughput is achieved.

o Monitor firewalls and security breaches to ensure no un-authorized access or hacking is occurring. Develop a cyber-security plan to mitigate security breaches or hacker attacks. Implement an automated security breach monitoring program and conduct an annual or bi-annual independent security review to determine vulnerabilities and/or hacker attempts that might have been missed by the automated software, or in-house IT staff.

Maximizing application software utilization requires pro-active system management on an on-going basis. In our current pandemic environment budgetary and personnel constraints are having a significant impact on public safety agencies. We have witnessed first-hand the efficiency gains and staff morale improvements when application software is fully utilized. We have also witnessed the struggle to keep up with antiquated and manual processes/workflows that are inefficient and outdated, and that require additional personnel to maintain. Since manpower is the number one budget item for most agencies, the utilization of resources is probably the most effective way to mitigate budgets and provide the services expected by the public. Winbourne has conducted hundreds of assessments across the United States as well as globally, helping agencies improve both operational efficiencies and management oversight. We are dedicated to serving agencies in the pursuit of process and workflow improvements with the aim of reducing workloads and improving morale, while managing budgets.   For more information, contact us at **info@w-llc.com.**

Winbourne Happenings

Winbourne Consulting was among a selected group of 35 leading companies in providing technology solutions for Smart City projects that attended the recent ASEAN Smart Cities Summit & Expo 2020 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The conference sessions provided highly interactive dialogues to provide updates on the latest trends on global urban transformation, as well as to leverage knowledge and shed light on pressing issues facing modern cities. Additionally, the International exhibition offered the 1,500+ visitors a one-of-a-kind opportunity to gain valuable information on ground-breaking advances from world-leading technology suppliers for smart city project implementations.

Industry Events

December 1-3, 2020

Now a Virtual Event

Join us December 1-3, 2020, for this unique event that blends live presentations and a virtual exhibit hall. And because it's now a virtual event, you can attend from anywhere!

For further info, visit: https://techforum.apcointl.org/

Articles of Interest

Delivering Empathetic Constituent Services In Challenging Times

Government agencies provide critical services that people regularly depend on -- services that are tested during times of disruption. The most recent disruptor, COVID-19, resulted in a surge of requests for unemployment benefits, case worker responses, social services and more -- many of which created long wait times and disjointed experiences. Combined with employees unexpectedly needing to work from home, many agencies' technology limitations surfaced while IT staff struggled to respond to requests quickly and empathetically. This left many agencies re-evaluating their long-term strategies to ensure they can adapt quickly in the face of future change to better serve constituents -- no matter the disruption.

Government agencies want to do better, but their operations are often constrained due to their legacy systems that create siloed data and disjointed processes, and often, the backup plan is a manual workaround that slows responses even further. Instead, agencies need technologies that can be implemented quickly and provide flexibility in how agents can deliver personalized, empathetic services to constituents when and where they most need help.

To read the full article visit:
https://gcn.com/articles/2020/10/22/empathetic-constituent-services.aspx

APCO, CTIA Petitions Ask FCC to Reconsider 9-1-1 Location Accuracy Rules

The FCC announced the deadlines for oppositions and replies to petitions for reconsideration of the commission's sixth report and order on wireless E9-1-1 location accuracy requirements filed by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and CTIA.

Oppositions to the petitions are due Nov. 3 and replies to those oppositions are due Nov. 13.In its petition for reconsideration of the order, APCO requested that the FCC reconsider the way in which the dispatchable location requirements were revised to take into account the end of the National Emergency Address Database (NEAD).

"The new rules lacks basis in the record, fails to chart a course for achieving real progress with the delivery of dispatchable location and risks creating a way for carriers to comply with the location accuracy requirements without actually providing improved location information with 9-1-1 calls," the petition said.

The full story can be viewed at:
https://www.rrmediagroup.com/News/NewsDetails/NewsID/20163

Motorola Releases 9-1-1 Public Input Solution

Motorola Solutions announced that it has made a new service available to the public safety market. CommandCentral Citizen Input is designed to help 9-1-1 call takers to better engage with citizens in their time of need. Citizen input is a cloud-based service that allows citizens calling or texting 9-1-1 to send video, photographs and recordings of an incident to the public-safety answering point (PSAP), using controlled and permission-based procedures.
RSS
 "With CommandCentral Citizen Input, Motorola Solutions has really listened to its customers," said Anita Pitt, 9-1-1 program manager, Brazos Valley Council of Governments in Texas. "It allows the 9-1-1 call-taker to send a link to the citizen calling or texting 9-1-1, which allows the citizen to send the media to the PSAP. With this, the 9-1-1 call-taker is in control of what is sent."

The full story can be viewed at:
https://www.rrmediagroup.com/News/NewsDetails/NewsID/20122

It Is 'Beyond Time' for Congress To Consider Reclassifying 911 Personnel Into First-Responder Category, Torres Says

Federal legislation that would reclassify 911 telecommunicators as members of a protective-service occupation—the job category that includes first responders like firefighters and police officers—continues to gain support but is still awaiting even committee-level consideration, according to the bill's primary sponsor.

Rep. Norma Torres (D-Calif.), a former 911 dispatcher and sponsor of the 911 SAVES Act, said that the legislation is designed to correct "an injustice here, plain and simple" by having the federal government classify 911 telecommunicators in the same category as other first responders.

"It makes absolutely no sense that the federal government categorizes 911 dispatchers as office and administrative support," Torres said Tuesday during the opening session of this week's virtual NENA Ignite conference.

To read the complete article visit: https://urgentcomm.com/2020/09/23/it-is-beyond-time-for-congress-to-consider-reclassifying-911-personnel-into-first-responder-category-torres-says/

What The Future Holds For Smart Cities

Our very digital existence, as defined by the sum of all data created, captured and replicated on our planet in any given year, is growing rapidly, and – if managed well - offers us unparalleled control over our future and the chance to improve our collective lives.

Connected devices and smart real-time data sharing are set to transform urban living, yet there is a significant knowledge gap between what people know about smart city technology and what they want from the smart cities of the future. The implications of a smart, networked city – in terms of how it could improve our lives, save us all money, and how it might challenge our data privacy or how it might drive change to our laws and society – are truly enormous. So what are smart cities and what might they mean for us all?

In the past few decades, society has witnessed a pivotal transition from analog to digital. The Internet, mobile computing and the dawn of IoT (Internet of Things) has transformed our personal lives while Industry 4.0 has brought significant changes to the workplace. Now local governments and municipal authorities are also getting on board, innovating the way our towns and cities manage and deliver a broad range of utilities and services. Practical examples of this include automating trash collection, street lighting or building management that allows cities to increase efficiency and reduce energy costs, or automating parking management to generate higher revenues. Such savings and new revenues are needed to respond to a changing world and environmental challenges, yet they are just the tip of the iceberg. As smart city systems become more integrated and as more data is fed into them, more use cases will emerge that will bring ever-greater efficiency savings and optimization.

The full story can be viewed at:
https://www.americancityandcounty.com/2020/10/07/what-the-future-holds-for-smart-cities/

We Are Interested in Your Thoughts on the Above Topics.
To share them with us, please:

Email us at: **info@w-llc.com**
Or
Twitter us at https://twitter.com/winbournellc

For more information about our services and solutions, visit our website at:
www.winbourneconsulting.com

Look us up on LinkedIn
https://www.linkedin.com/company/winbourne-consulting-llc?trk=biz-companies-cym