

Executive Summary

Since August 2004 Kansas Online Crash Logs have been used to meet the needs of the media, public and Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) by streamlining the delivery of crash information. Today a trooper on the scene of a crash will radio the information to central dispatch. Online Crash Logs streamlined the Kansas Highway Patrol's process of recording and distributing crash information by reducing the amount of paperwork dispatchers' complete and dramatically reducing the number of phone calls dispatchers receive from the public and media. KHP dispatchers report phone calls have been reduced by 80 to 90 percent with the availability of online crash logs. Instead of answering calls and manually completing, updating and faxing a paper crash log multiple times a day, dispatchers electronically enter and update information once. This information is made available to all via the Internet. The Online Crash Logs receive an average of 64,722 hits per month. If only 10 percent of these hits equaled phone calls, it is estimated that more than 6,000 calls per month have been eliminated and more than 700 hours have been saved.

Online Crash Logs have impacted the entire Kansas Highway Patrol by giving dispatchers more time to focus on communicating with officers on the road and travelers in emergency situations. This increases officers' access to dispatchers, who are a vital component of the KHP team. Dispatchers connect people in need with officers and provide officers assistance in the form of back-up and information.

Kansas provides the most comprehensive, interactive, easy-to-use, free online system for crash information in the nation. The Kansas Online Crash Logs give users the flexibility to search by county, date or crash type. Results are presented in a clean, easy-to-follow format with simple language and very limited use of KHP codes. Search results are sorted by the search criteria (date, county or type of crash) the user selected.

The primary user group for this service is the media. They are constantly looking for the most up-to-date information before going to print or broadcast multiple times throughout the day. Before the online system, media representatives often did not know whether there was a newsworthy accident, so they would call KHP simply to see if anything had occurred recently. Now the media and public can check as often as they wish and view the most current, accurate crash information without impacting the daily operations of the dispatchers. The service has also impacted the accuracy of information the media transmits by enabling reporters to verify information literally seconds before a publication or broadcast.

Online Crash Logs are also valuable to families and friends who are able to find up-to-the-minute information about loved ones in potentially life altering situations. KHP reports that before the online system dispatchers received calls from people across the country who were concerned about loved ones

on the road or wanted to learn more about a crash in which a loved one was involved. Now these individuals can simply go online to find this information.

A. Concise description of the business problem and solution, including length of time in operation.

Until August 2004 the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) dispatch office was a very hectic place. While dispatchers were being responsive to officers and citizens in need during emergency situations, they were also addressing media and public requests for real-time updates of crash log information. The two competing tasks created frustration for all involved.

Before the Online Crash Log service, the only way to access crash information was to call KHP and request the data. Those calls came through emergency phone lines, which tied up the lines typically during the busiest parts of the day. Dispatchers would go through the laborious exercise of creating and maintaining a separate spreadsheet for most injury and fatal crashes. When a request for information was made, a dispatcher would handle the call and then manually fax the spreadsheet information directly to the requestor. Each time a change in the status of a crash occurred, the spreadsheet would be manually updated. KHP wanted a technology solution to address the issues of providing adequate dispatch services to officers and individuals with actual emergencies, while simultaneously providing the most current crash information to the media and the public.

Since August 2004 Kansas Online Crash Logs have been used to meet the needs of the media, public and Highway Patrol officers by streamlining the delivery of crash information. Today a trooper on the scene of a crash will radio the information to central dispatch. A dispatcher will then log into the crash log system and create an electronic crash log. As soon as a dispatcher enters the information it is posted publicly online and the information is continually updated.

Logs remain online for 10 days following the last update for a maximum of 30 days from the date of the crash. The database contains only injury and fatality crashes worked by KHP. Users may search crash logs by date, county and type of crash. Search results are then listed by the search criteria the user selected. Crash logs are presented in simple language with very limited use of KHP codes. Each crash log lists the basic when, where, what and how of the crash. The log then lists vehicle(s), driver(s) and passenger(s) information, which includes the following: a description of the vehicle(s), individuals' names (if non-fatality or next of kin has been notified), city of residence, age, sex, injury status, hospital individuals' were taken to, use of safety restraints (seat belts, etc.), and any additional comments. Kansas provides the most robust, timely, and easy-to-use free online crash information system in the nation.

The KHP Online Crash Log provides the most current information quickly before the "official report" has been filed. There is a delay between the time the investigation is completed and the time an "official crash

report” reaches the KHP Records Section. The official crash report will supersede any information in the crash log.

B. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government.

Online Crash Logs streamlined the Kansas Highway Patrol’s process of recording and distributing crash information by reducing the amount of paperwork dispatchers’ complete and dramatically reducing the number of phone calls dispatchers receive. The paper form had a limited number of spaces for information. If a crash had more than four people in a vehicle or more than two vehicles involved, multiple forms had to be completed. The Online Crash Logs allow dispatchers to enter up to 99 people and 99 vehicles per crash. (KHP dispatchers saw the value of this when there was a bus crash not long after the online system was made available.) Instead of answering calls and manually completing, updating and faxing a paper crash log multiple times a day, dispatchers electronically enter and update information once.

This application actually replaces the traditional form of customer service by removing the need for customers to contact KHP directly. Instead of making multiple calls throughout the day to check crash information, the media can receive real-time information from the convenience of their computers. This keeps emergency phone lines free for their original intent-emergencies. The media only calls if they need further clarification, streamlining the process for KHP and the media. Online Crash Logs have also eliminated many of the calls from the public who need to know if a friend or loved one has been in an accident and the current status of that accident.

By using prototypes and focused testing with dispatchers, the Web design team was able to create an application dispatchers were comfortable using. Involvement in the application development also gave dispatchers a ownership of the project, which increased their adoption of the online system.

Online Crash Logs have impacted the entire Kansas Highway Patrol by giving dispatchers more time to focus on communicating with officers on the road and travelers in emergency situations. This increases officers’ access to dispatchers, who are a vital component of the KHP team. Dispatchers connect people in need with officers and provide officers assistance in the form of back-up and information.

C. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state.

Two significant benefits to users are the ease and speed of use. The Kansas Online Crash Logs give users the flexibility to search by county, date or crash type. Results are presented in a clean, easy-to-follow format with simple language and very limited use of KHP codes. Search results are sorted by the search criteria (date, county or type of crash) the user selected. Survey responses from 174 users of the

online crash log service gave an average rating on a one to five scale (5 = excellent) of 4.3 for ease of use and appearance, and 4.2 for clarity of instruction and time savings.

Another significant benefit to users is the timeliness of the information provided. The primary user group for this service is the media. They are constantly looking for the most up-to-date information before going to print or broadcast multiple times throughout the day. Before the online system, media representatives often did not know whether there was a newsworthy accident, so they would call KHP simply to see if anything had occurred recently. Now the media and public can check as often as they wish and view the most current, accurate crash information without impacting the daily operations of the dispatchers. The service has also impacted the accuracy of information the media transmits by enabling reporters to verify information literally seconds before a publication or broadcast.

Online Crash Logs are also valuable to families and friends who are able to find up-to-the-minute information about loved ones in potentially life altering situations. KHP reports that before the online system dispatchers received calls from people across the country who were concerned about loved ones on the road or wanted to learn more about a crash in which a loved one was involved. Now these individuals can simply go online to find this information and reconstruct details of a crash to help them better understand the situation.

The improved constituent satisfaction is apparent in the following comments from users in response to the question "What was the most valuable feature of this Web site?"

- "Easy to use and obtain up-to-date information on details of crash and victims' status"
- "The logs provide accurate and useful information about accidents - without media having to call dispatchers repeatedly or going on-site."
- "Crash log was invaluable in assisting my family in locating the vehicle, as well as piecing together the details of the crash."
- "Quick access to major accidents without bothering or taking up time of dispatchers in Salina KHP. They were excellent at getting the reports to us, but know they had more priority things to do and this makes it very simple and easy to get the information needed."
- "Central location of records eliminating need for several phone calls to different offices."
- "Availability of information needed to initiate the claims investigation."

The agency also receives significant benefits from the online application. Online Crash Logs increased productivity and saved public sector resources by dramatically reducing the time Highway Patrol dispatchers spend creating logs and responding to requests for information. The application gives dispatchers more time to focus on the most important aspects of their jobs - communicating with officers

on the road and travelers in emergency situations. KHP dispatchers report phone calls have been reduced by 80 to 90 percent.

Dispatchers enter an average of 134 crash logs per month into the electronic system. If dispatchers received only 10 calls per crash before the online system, it is estimated that 1,260 calls (90%) per month have been eliminated. In addition to crash specific calls, KHP estimates they received two general inquiry calls from each the state's 15 major media outlets (large newspapers and TV stations) daily, which equals approximately 900 calls monthly. Therefore, the system has conservatively eliminated more than 2,100 calls per month. KHP estimated the average call length was 6.5 minutes, which would equal almost 230 hours a month that have been saved by the implementation of the online service.

Another way to estimate call reduction is to examine the number of hits the service receives. The Online Crash Logs receive an average of 64,722 hits per month. If only 10 percent of these hits equaled phone calls, it is estimated that more than 6,000 calls per month have been eliminated and more than 700 hours have been saved.

"The Kansas Highway Patrol works hard to quickly and accurately disseminate information regarding serious traffic crashes worked by agency personnel," said Colonel William Seck, Superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol. "Thanks to the dedication and expertise of accessKansas [now Kansas.gov], we can now serve citizens and our media partners more efficiently through the Online Crash Logs Web site."

In addition to the extensive functional benefits of the service, there is also a financial benefit to citizens, KHP and the State. Taxpayers, KHP and the State are receiving the benefits of this service for zero dollars. This service was developed without the use of tax dollars at no cost to the State (see section D).

D. Realized return on investment, short-term/long-term payback (include summary calculations).

Public sector resources were saved during the creation of the online system. This application was created at no cost to the State through a public/private partnership between the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Information Network of Kansas and Kansas Information Consortium, Inc. (KIC), the network manager for Kansas.gov. KIC develops fee and free applications for State and local government without the use of tax dollars. KIC receives a small convenience fee from users for fee transactions. This allows KIC to be a profitable private organization and to further assist the State by reinvesting in the portal and providing free services. The Online Crash Logs application is one of these free citizen services. KIC spent more than 165 hours developing and implementing this application. This is an estimated minimum cost avoidance to KHP and the State of \$16,500 if KHP had paid a private organization to create this service at a

conservative consulting rate of \$100 an hour. The service is also hosted, maintained and given technical support at no additional cost to KHP, which represents continual savings to the agency. This savings coupled with the resource savings attained from fewer calls, faxes, and less paperwork equated to a substantial cost savings to the citizens and State of Kansas.

URL: KHP Crash Logs: public site = <https://www.accesskansas.org/ssrv-khp-crashlogs/index.do>

Administration site demo = <https://demo.accesskansas.org/ssrv-khp-crashlogs/admin/login.do>

Admin demo User Id: "superuser"

Password: "judge1"