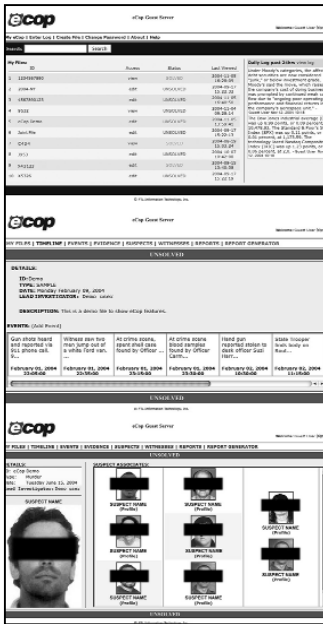


Technology & Communications

eCOP technology allows law enforcement agencies to share data



HERKIMER – Annese & Associates, Inc., a supplier of law enforcement applications to the state will be the integrator and master distributor for eCOP (electronic Criminal Operating Picture), a crime solving networking system that allows for tracking of investigative information about individuals or groups. eCOP will allow sharing of investigative information among users of the system.

As the integrator of eCOP, Annese will install and support the eCOP application and provide technical assistance to the end user/integrators of the program.

“eCOP allows for the sharing of investigative information and streamlines daily detective procedures to improve police effective-

ness and efficiency,” said Henry Cheli, president and COO of Annese & Associates.

Easily installed in existing law enforcement infrastructures, eCOP users create an investigative file by entering or importing data related to a criminal investigation. Such information can include: events, witness interviews, autopsy reports, pictures, crime lab reports, suspects, wiretaps, video surveillance and suspect acquaintances.

eCOP then organizes and presents the data in a format that allows for quicker crime solving and documentation. At the click of the mouse, the system will create a summary view of each investigative file. The view may include everything from the criminal’s identification, picture and detailed profile to the status of the investigation, filed police reports, evidence and witness testimonies.

“Technology is truly the wave of the crime fighting future,” Cheli said. “eCOP helps to keep law enforcement costs under

control, increases efficiencies, and makes the investigators on a case more effective.”

Annese & Associates covers New York State with sales and service offices in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Herkimer, Albany, Plattsburgh, Poughkeepsie & Binghamton. Annese & Associates provides sales, implementation, and service for voice, data and video applications; specializing in enterprise, education, state and local government, and law enforcement applications. For more information, call 1-800-723-2213 or visit www.annese.com

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World Wide Access: Accessible web design

By Dan Comden and Sheryl Burgstahler

Much of the World Wide Web power comes from the fact that it presents information in a variety of formats while it also organizes that information through hypertext links. Because of the multimedia nature of the Web combined with the poor design of some Web sites, many Internet surfers cannot access the full range of resources this revolutionary tool provides.

Some visitors cannot see graphics because of visual impairments; cannot hear audio because of hearing impairments; use slow Internet connections and modems or equipment that cannot easily download large files; have difficulty navigating sites that are poorly organized with unclear directions because they have learning disabilities, speak English as a second language, or are younger than the average user.

People use a variety of technologies to access the Web. For example, a person who is blind may use a speech output system that reads aloud text presented on the screen. A person with a mobility impairment may be unable to use a mouse and may rely on the keyboard for Web browsing. To create resources that can be used by the widest spectrum of potential visitors rather than an idealized “average,”

Web page designers should apply “universal design” principles. This requires that they consider the needs of individuals with disabilities, older persons, people for whom English is a second language, and those using outdated hardware and software.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires that U.S. programs and services be accessible to individuals with disabilities. A 1996 Department of Justice ruling ([http://](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/foia/cltr204.txt)

www.usdoj.gov/crt/foia/cltr204.txt) makes it clear that ADA accessibility requirements apply to Internet resources.

Accessibility Guidelines

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) develops and maintains the protocols used on the Web to insure interoperability to promote universal access. The W3C’s Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) has proposed guidelines for all Web authors. As Tim Berners-Lee, Director of the W3C puts it: “The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect.”

In 2001 the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) developed accessibility requirements for Web pages of federal agencies. The list of guidelines for accessibility provides a good model even for organizations that are not required to comply.

The following suggestions are based on the WAI guidelines and the Section 508 standards for Web content that can be located by referring to the resource the Web site listed at the end of this article.

- **Maintain a simple, consistent page layout throughout your site.** A consistent design and look makes it easier for visitors to locate the specific information they seek.

- **Keep backgrounds simple.** Make sure there is enough contrast. People with low vision or colorblindness, or those using black and white monitors, can have difficulty reading information at sites with busy backgrounds and dark colors.

- **Use standard HTML.** Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is the standard code used to create Web sites. HTML was designed to be a universal format outside

the bounds of proprietary software and computer operating systems.

- **Caption video and transcribe other audio.** Multimedia formats that include audio can present barriers to people with hearing impairments as well as to people with less sophisticated computer systems. Provide captions and transcriptions for these resources so visitors who cannot hear have an alternative method for accessing the information. MAGPie from the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) is a free tool that allows developers to add captioning to streaming content.

- **Make links descriptive so that they are understood out of context.** Visitors who use screen reading software can adjust their software to read only the links on a page. For this reason, links should provide enough information when read out of context. Use a more descriptive phrase than “click here” as a link or next to a graphic used as a link.

- **Include a note about accessibility.** Notify site visitors that you are concerned about accessibility by including a Web access symbol on your page (see Resources list). Include a statement about accessibility and encourage them to notify you with their accessibility concerns.

Graphical and Audio Features

People who are blind cannot view the graphical features of your Web site. Many people with visual impairments use speech output programs with non-standard browsers (such as IBM’s Home Page Reader or Lynx) or graphical browsers with the feature that loads images turned off. Include text alterna-

tives to make the content in graphical features accessible. Described below are guidelines for providing alternative text for various types of visual features.

- **Include appropriate ALT/LONGDESC attributes for graphical elements on your page.** ALT attributes work with HTML image tags to give alternative text descriptive information for graphical elements of a Web page. The alternative text helps visitors understand what is on the page if they are not viewing the graphic. This could be because they are blind and using a text-based browser or a graphical browser with the image loading feature turned off.

- **Use a NULL value for unimportant graphics.** Some graphical elements may add no content to a page or are used for positioning and can be bypassed from viewing by using an ALT attribute with no text. By using just two quotation marks with no content, you can reduce the amount of distracting text when a page is viewed with graphics capabilities turned off or with a text-based browser.

- **Include descriptive captions or other options for making graphical features accessible.** Providing ALT text for an image is sufficient for logos and graphics that contain little information content. However, if the graphics provide more extensive information, adding captions is important for those who cannot see your page because they are using a text-based browser or have turned off the image display capability of their browser. This includes people who are blind. If you are not sure how critical a particular image is to the content of a page, temporarily remove it and consider the impact of its loss.

Some Web designers make an image accessible by placing a hyperlink “D”