



# The Computerworld Honors Program

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## Final Copy of Case Study

**YEAR:**  
*2012*

**STATUS:**  
*Laureate*

**Organization:**  
City of Bryan, Texas

**Organization URL:**  
[www.bryantx.gov](http://www.bryantx.gov)

**Project Name:**  
Collaborative Technology Support for the Brazos Valley Child Abduction Response Team

**What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address?  
What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?**

When a child is abducted, time becomes a critical factor in effecting a safe rescue. Rapid response requires pre-identified multi-agency resources, an operational plan and protocols, and a well-equipped, trained and exercised team. In an effort to enhance each agency's ability to respond quickly and effectively to a missing or abducted child within their jurisdiction, Amber Alert Network Brazos Valley (AANBV) has established an inter-agency Child Abduction Response Team known as the BVCART. BVCART is comprised of members from local law enforcement agencies throughout the Brazos Valley Region (Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, Washington counties), emergency management representatives, communications personnel, state law enforcement, prosecutors and various other state and local agencies and civilian stakeholders within the Brazos Valley region, who by Mutual Aid Agreements have committed resources to rapidly respond to a child abduction or missing child event. This nomination form is for the efforts that the City of Bryan Department of Information Technology has undertaken in coordinating the technical support necessary for BVCART to function efficiently with existing Bryan IT staff. These four areas are 1) the establishment and support of a "lead" tracking system through an existing digital document management application, 2) computer support in the Mobile Operations Command Post and Community Emergency Operations Center, 3) GIS mapping, including search team GPS tracking and data conversion, and 4) the establishment of interoperable radio communications amongst all participating agencies. We have measured the success of our efforts with completion of two "mock" child abductions where the systems that we had in place worked as planned. We have three Bryan IT staff members, a

GIS coordinator, a radio engineer and a public safety/system support supervisor who are a part of and deployed with the BVCART group.

**Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.**

1) Cases involving abducted or endangered missing children are very time-sensitive and information-intensive situations. If information management is neglected or left to chance during investigation, valuable leads may be lost or neglected. Computer systems are superior to handwritten lead sheets, Post-it notes and personal recollection when dealing with volumes of information associated with these types of cases. It is imperative that proper and consistent procedures be followed regarding lead management. As leads are phoned in to the tip line, the completed lead form should immediately be routed to a central location, assigned a sequential "Lead" number and scanned into the computer system as pending review/assignment as well as for archival purposes. 1) The City modified their document imaging application (Laserfiche) to allow tips and leads to be scanned into a searchable system available to personnel in the field as well as in the ECO and Command Post. 2) City of Bryan IT staff makes sure that all computer and mapping systems in the Mobile Command Post as well as the Community Emergency Operations Center are ready and operational on a moment's notice. 3) City of Bryan GIS staff collect, maintain and provide mapping support for the BVCART within the seven-county region. 4) The City of Bryan's Radio System Engineer makes sure that any participating entities, which differ for each event, can communicate amongst themselves through handheld and portable radios.

**Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.**

The benefit that we see is the "peace of mind" in knowing that if the unthinkable happened, and a child abduction occurred within our seven-county region, the technologies that we have made available to the Brazos Valley Child Abduction Response Team will be utilized to help find that child quicker, and hopefully safe and unharmed.

**Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.**

As a member of the Brazos Valley Child Abduction Response Team, the City of Bryan was tasked with finding a simple digital solution to tracking all information gathered during a response. Currently there are 20 participating law enforcement agencies with 39 sworn officers and 53 civilians. The primary goal of the digital initiative was to get data gathered from the various sources into a single repository and then quickly dispersed back out for field use in an easily accessible and searchable format for command staff to evaluate. Leads arrive from many sources, such as 911, field interviews, and tip lines. We opted to continue the initial entry of information onto the existing paper forms, allowing officers, dispatchers and volunteers to gather information as they have always done. These forms are then faxed back to the Community Emergency Operations Center, reviewed by a law enforcement officer, then scanned into Laserfiche along with all appropriate metadata entered into the searchable fields. Field units with secure web access are then able to log on to the website, search, view, and print new leads within minutes of it being entered. By increasing the speed with which information is gathered and sent to the field, all decision-makers are able to review the same data and make better-informed decisions. Command staff also utilizes the system to improve the deployment of resources during an event. All volunteers offering to help are documented, verified and deployed quicker to assist with the incident. They are able to verify quickly which leads coming in require immediate attention versus those that could be followed up on at a later time. Last, activity tracked using this

digital system during the event will be easily accessible for later review by an incident review committee.