

High-tech solutions ease inaugural challenges

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Officials get the big picture in real time. Credit: University of Maryland CATT Lab

Transportation and security officials on Inauguration Day will have a centralized, consolidated stream of traffic information and other data displayed on a single screen using software developed by the University of Maryland. The Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) gives officials a single real-time view far more comprehensive than previously available.

"At this point, our team is working almost around the clock to incorporate as much data and functionality as possible," says Michael L. Pack, director of the University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory (CATT), part of the Clark School of Engineering.

The RITIS system fuses, translates, standardizes and redistributes vast amounts of real-time information obtained from multiple agencies in the region in order to provide an enhanced overall, real-time view, or digital map, of traffic and incident conditions across the region's transportation network. It can present the data in both two and three-dimensional graphical formats, creating a life-like simulation and display.

The system was originally developed to coordinate traffic-related information, but the CATT lab is now working to build-in additional data sources from public safety agencies, transit groups, weather data, and numerous other groups.

"We're trying to visualize the real-time status of our transportation system - showing the real-world and providing situational awareness to decision makers - all on a single screen." Pack says. "We're enabling these many disparate systems to communicate with each other."

The idea is to enhance officials' ability to monitor vehicular traffic, accidents, incidents, response plans, air space, weather conditions and more - data that's available, but until now could not be simultaneously displayed on a single platform or user interface.

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