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## Software developed for FAA moves to national stage

BY DAVID PAGE  
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OKLAHOMA CITY – In 1997 Tod Hardin was teaching a database class in Oklahoma City.

His students included researchers from the Federal Aviation Administration Civil Aerospace Medical Institute in Oklahoma City.

The teacher-student relationship created in the class resulted in Hardin developing software for the FAA. Now, nine years later, Hardin is still providing contract software services for the FAA and researchers for the federal agency are showcasing his products on a national basis.

“What is great for us is that we have these research scientists promoting our software,” he said.

After the class, Hardin, co-founder of DiscoverSoft Development in Oklahoma City, was offered a contract to develop software for the FAA institute.

“They basically told me what they needed,” he said. “I developed the software and have been making modifications ever since.”

Hardin’s Toxicology Laboratory Information Management Solution Software, know as ToxFLO, and Research Activity Monitor, related software developed for the FAA, are both receiving national attention.

ToxFLO was demonstrated by FAA researchers at the American Association of Forensic Scientists 77th annual conference earlier this year.

The FAA’s Civil Aerospace Medical Institute uses the software to evaluate postmortem biological samples collected from victims involved in transportation accident. The biosamples are analyzed for the presence of alcohol, drugs and primary combustion gases, such as carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide to help find out what happened or caused the crash.

The software was initially developed to meet the requirements of the FAA laboratory, said Dennis V. Canfield, forensic scientist and laboratory manager at the Federal Aviation Administration Civil Aerospace Medical Institute.

“However, from the beginning, the system has been going through development processes on a continual basis and has become a true dynamic forensic application designed with input from the scientists in a user-friendly fashion,” Canfield said. “It also meets the certification requirements for laboratories needing to conform to the standards of the College of American Pathologists and the American Board of Forensic Toxicology or other accrediting agencies.”

The toxicology software can track chain of custody and unlimited specimens per case with barcode labels created for specimen vials. Blind quality assurance and quality control samples can be created and their history can be tracked. Final case information is locked from changes.

“The dynamic character of the software system makes it user-friendly and easy to extract information for research,” Canfield said. “In essence, it is an effective tool that could be used in any laboratory to improve performance and maximize its operations and services.”

Hardin’s work with the FAA scientists led to the



Tod Hardin, left, and his wife, Leslie, talk about their software company, DiscoverSoft Development, which recently received national recognition. PHOTO BY JENNIFER PITTS

development of a second software program.

“Both products were developed with input from the researchers,” he said.

The second program – Research Activity Monitor – helps scientists trap data and create reports, Hardin said. The software allows the scientists to spend more time conducting research and less time dealing with administrative and accounting activities.

Hardin’s Research Activity Monitor software will be presented in May at the Aerospace Medical Association, which will be in San Diego.

“The FAA users will set it up in a room with a small network for demonstrations,” he said.

The Research Activity Monitor software allows managers and scientists to review work in progress and define new assignments. The software can be integrated with management initiatives, such as ISO 9000 certification, to facilitate research and the management programs.

In addition to the FAA contracts, Hardin developed ordering systems for some Oklahoma food brokers to streamline and track their order process.

He also created web applications including the annual reporting system for the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. Each library branch logs into the system through the Internet and enters data into a central database. The information is accumulated from branches, totaled and counted, then documented in an annual report conforming to federal

requirements.

“What used to take many days and weeks to manually calculate is gathered in hours and reported in minutes, he said.

Hardin also has developed an equipment calibration system for Accurate Laboratories in Oklahoma City. The system tracks equipment and its calibration with barcode labels on the equipment, allowing technicians to create certificates at customer site with laptops. When they return to the home office, they can automatically update their system with the field entries.

“What’s so rewarding about being a developer is when I see the light go on for a client who’s spent weeks or days on a process that gets reduced to hours or minutes,” Hardin said. “I also hate to see anybody entering the same data in two places. There’s no reason for that in today’s world.”

Hardin and his wife, Leslie, have worked together since 1986.

“I manage the company and the business side while he handles the software,” Leslie Hardin said.

She also works as a software trainer and a technical writer. Additionally, she contracts as a classroom instructor at the Mid-Del Technology Center.

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