

April 26, 2013

Over the last four weeks on Tuesday of each week AFD dispatch has been conducting tests with a CAD program called Auto Dispatch. Initially tests were conducted primarily for City of Austin calls only but as the weeks have gone by we have slowly added all of the ESDs to the test. We will be one of only about 5 TriTech customers to use this technology across the US.

The concept of auto dispatching has always created some concern about whether units would miss calls or not, we chose to not notify anyone during our testing to see if how we conduct business on a daily basis was sufficient to carry forward. I am happy to report that after dispatching approximately 700 calls over four 12+ hour periods we never had a unit fail to respond or saw any delay in response because of auto dispatch. The first time it was turned on was during the large thunderstorms several weeks ago and it actually helped us out tremendously.

You may be wondering, what auto dispatch does or how it is different from what we do now. Up till now every time a call is created in CAD, the call goes to a pending queue. Once a call is in the pending queue a dispatcher opens the call and clicks on a button that makes CAD evaluate units based on the response plan requirements and their current location.

The process of recommending units is currently performed at the physical workstation the dispatcher is working at. The workstations computing power, memory, mapping and network traffic have a huge impact upon the dispatching process as does the dispatcher's attention. This process can take on average 16-18 seconds when dispatch isn't busy.

With auto dispatch all of these transactions are performed automatically at the server level and the process takes about 2 seconds for CAD to process a full BOX alarm assignment (locate the proper resources and the closest units). There is still another 6 to 10 seconds for Locution to assemble the message and alert units. Currently to get you notified of a call you are looking at somewhere between 24-30 seconds. Now it should be closer to about 8-12 seconds

The primary problem we have seen with auto dispatch affects the ESDs and your use of Case Numbers. It appears that auto dispatch (the server) is working so fast that case numbers are failing to be entered into the comments section of the incident text. The case numbers are still created they just aren't in a place you can see them. An oversight in my opinion is the fact that nowhere in VisiNet Browser can you look up your case numbers if they fail to be entered into the comments.

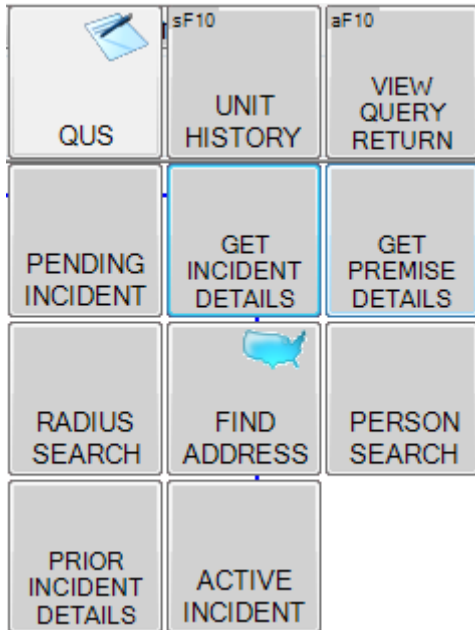
I have turned in a trouble ticket to TriTech and they are supposed to be working on a solution. Solutions don't often come fast so it may take a while to resolve this. My first preference for this fix is to simply add a field in the VisiNet Browser report that would list the case number. A second work around may be for us to develop some sort of report server that would allow you to look up this information from within VisiNet Browser that would provide you the information.

I have setup paging to send case numbers as a temporary workaround but it has the limitation of only going to the unit assigned to the incident. I also do not know if multiple units receive this information in

a multi- unit response scenario or if only the first unit assigned gets the case number. I think this is dependent on whether it is a group page or and individual number.

The only method currently available for you to view case numbers is by looking them up on the MDC. This could be done while a unit returns to quarters by the officer so at least you don't have to make a second trip to the apparatus. I am including screenshots below to explain how you may retrieve case numbers from the MDC.

Under the Query Tab choose GET INCIDENT DETAILS.



You will get the following screen where you can enter the incident number.

A screenshot of a web application window titled 'VisiNET Mobile - [FormHTMLQuery]'. The window has a menu bar with 'Login/Logout', 'Queries', 'Messages', 'Drafts', 'Units', 'Calls', 'Status', 'Tools', 'Options', and 'Help'. Below the menu bar, there is a status bar showing 'Sector: AFD_B03(AF)', 'Unit: COM07', 'Call: <unassigned>', and 'Status: AVCL'. Below the status bar, there is a row of buttons labeled F1 through F10. F1 is '[NAV]', F2 is 'BACK', F3 is 'FWD', F4 is 'MSG', F5 is 'RESP', F6 is 'STGD', F7 is 'ONSC', F8 is 'SCENE [STATUS]', F9 is 'UNIT [STATUS]', F10 is '[QUERY]', and there is a 'FIRE VIEWER' button and a '[SOS]' button. The main content area has a header with the 'Austin / Travis County Fire Rescue' logo. Below the header, there is a section titled 'Get Incident Details' with a text input field labeled 'Incident Number:' containing the value '13038516'. A 'submit' button is located at the bottom right of the input field.

When you hit submit you will get a reply in the MSG folder:

VisiNET Mobile - [Message Window]

Login/Logout Queries Messages Drafts Units Calls Status Tools Options Help

Sector: AFD_B03(AF Unit: COM07 Call: <unassigned> Status: AVCL

F1 [NAV] F2 BACK F3 FWD F4 MSG F5 RESP F6 STGD F7 ONSC F8 SCENE [STATUS] F9 UNIT [STATUS] F10 [QUERY] FIRE NEWER [SOS]

Actions... Forward... Delete Refine Qry Insert Com

From: System
To: COM07
Subject: RE: GetIncident Query: Confidential parameters_#1

Incident

Agency	FIRE
Incident Number	13038516
Date	04/26/2013 12:45:38
Problem	AUTO - Auto Fire
Disposition	
Call Taker	NEIGHBOR, DAVID A
Primary TAC Channel	AT FCOM S
Secondary TAC Channel	AT MCOM-S

Sector	AFD_B02	Priority	2F
Assigned Units	<u>ENG31</u>		

Priority	Att	From	Subject	V Sent
NOR...		System	RE: Getl...	13:43:51 4/26/2013

Clear Route Recalculate

Within that message you can retrieve the case number for your jurisdiction.

Incident

Agency	FIRE		
Incident Number	13038516		
Date	04/26/2013 12:45:38		
Problem	AUTO - Auto Fire		
Sector	AFD_B02	Priority	2F
Assigned Units	<u>ENG31</u>		
Address	Bunny Run / Cedar St		
	AUSTIN TX 78746		

Cross Street			
Map Info	Map#:523U, Coordinates:30.342070,-97.808779		
Response Area	00-3105		
Phone #	(512) 563-5067	Extension	
Case Number	AFD-2013-0026821, ESD09-2013-0000497		
Call Type	I - Still ENG		

We apologize for the inconvenience but hopefully any inconvenience will be offset by the faster response times. We will continue to work to find a better solution for you.

Our date to go live with Auto Dispatch is May 6, 2013 at 0900. Almost all call types will auto dispatch with the biggest exception being traffic injuries. The reason for this is the number of duplicate incidents received on this call type due to cell phone callers. Calls types not impacted by auto dispatch include:

EMS Traffic Injury Code-3
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Confined Space-Notification
Control Burn-Notification only
*RA ABIA
*RA LAW
FPS - Fire Prot Sys Impaired
HOLD
INFO - Info Only, No Resp.
INV - Investigator Use
TRANS - Transfer & Log Only
TEST - Test Only, No Rpt.
HMCLAN
CBRN - REGIONAL STRIKE TEAM

We encourage all crews to monitor the radio (Locution) anytime you are away from your station. It will be more important than ever since calls will be processed faster. Dispatchers will still be monitoring calls and will be checking your last known location to make sure you are aware and responding to the call.

Please forward this information to anyone who may need it and please don't hesitate to contact Fire Communications with any questions.

Captain William B. Brooks
Austin Fire Department Communications
(512) 974-0407