CASE STUDY: Toronto Hydro Simplifies Emergency Response with DLAN

DLAN Dashboard Driven Implementation

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Introduction

Toronto Hydro-Electric System Limited (THESL) recently implemented Buffalo Computer Graphics' DLAN software to help improve overall situational awareness during incidents. Based on THESL's needs, BCG setup their system slightly differently than typical installations, with a much bigger focus on creating visual guides for users to ensure adherence to THESL's processes. The system uses role-based and task-based dashboards instead of a typical menu interface, resulting in very streamlined processes and simplified user interfaces. The new system will allow users to access up-to-date incident information, access the latest situation report, review the Incident Action Plan for the next operational period, access key documentation produced during the incident, and monitor a number of external platforms including social media, traffic, and weather to help determine the impact of the incident.

Role-based Dashboards

Typical DLAN installations use a main menu to let users navigate to different areas of the system. For example there are menu links to the Ticket Manager or Communication Center. For THESL's system all users work out of role specific dashboards with link bar buttons to navigate to other DLAN tools or boards. This simplifies training and streamlines the user experience.

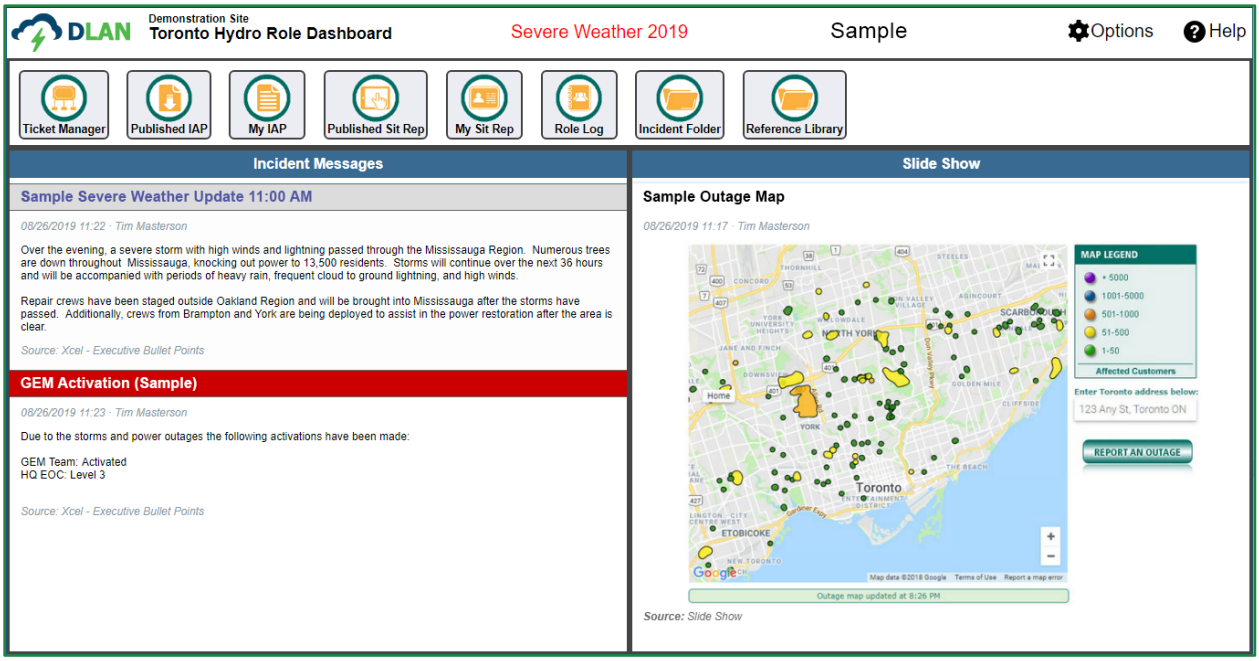

Figure 1: Sample Role-Based Dashboard

Using these role based dashboards, THESL users are able to access tasks assigned to their role, see key information about the incident, and have access to the documentation they need to do their work.

Task-based Dashboards

Another key difference between THESL's DLAN configuration and other systems is the use of "builder boards" for key tasks. Each main function has its own dashboard with an instruction panel on the left and a portal to the task page on the right. This allows users to work directly from the dashboard to complete tasks. These builder boards allow users to easily read through step by step instructions as they fill out the appropriate information. For example, they use these builders to boards to guide users through creating Incident Action Plans and Situation Reports.

Incident Action Plans

THESL uses DLAN to more quickly create, review, approve, and share Incident Action Plans for each incident. Features within the application allow THESL to easily create new IAPs off of templates based on particular types of incidents. Additionally, planning staff are able to clone IAPs from previous operational periods as the basis of documentation for future operational periods.

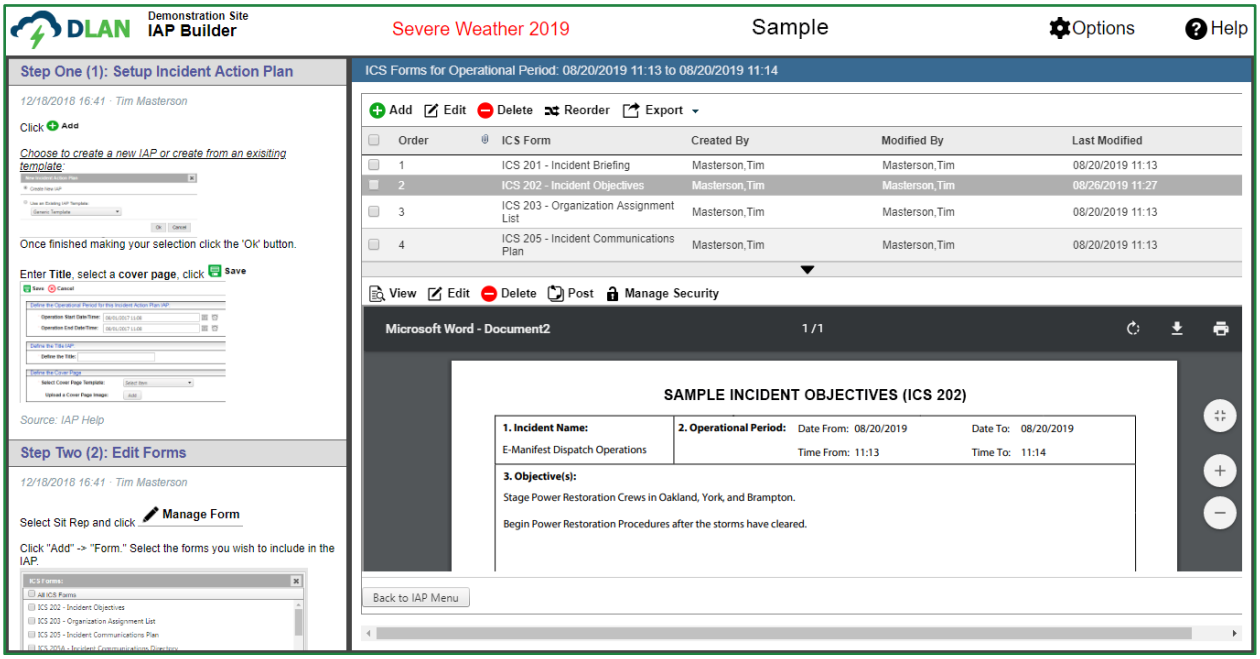

Figure 2: Sample Incident Action Plan Dashboard

Situation Reports

Like Incident Action Plans, THESL uses DLAN to more quickly create, review, approve, and share Situation Reports with staff that are a part of the incident. Users are able to submit templates specific to their roles, access the latest Situation Report, and easily share that information with other partners and staff.

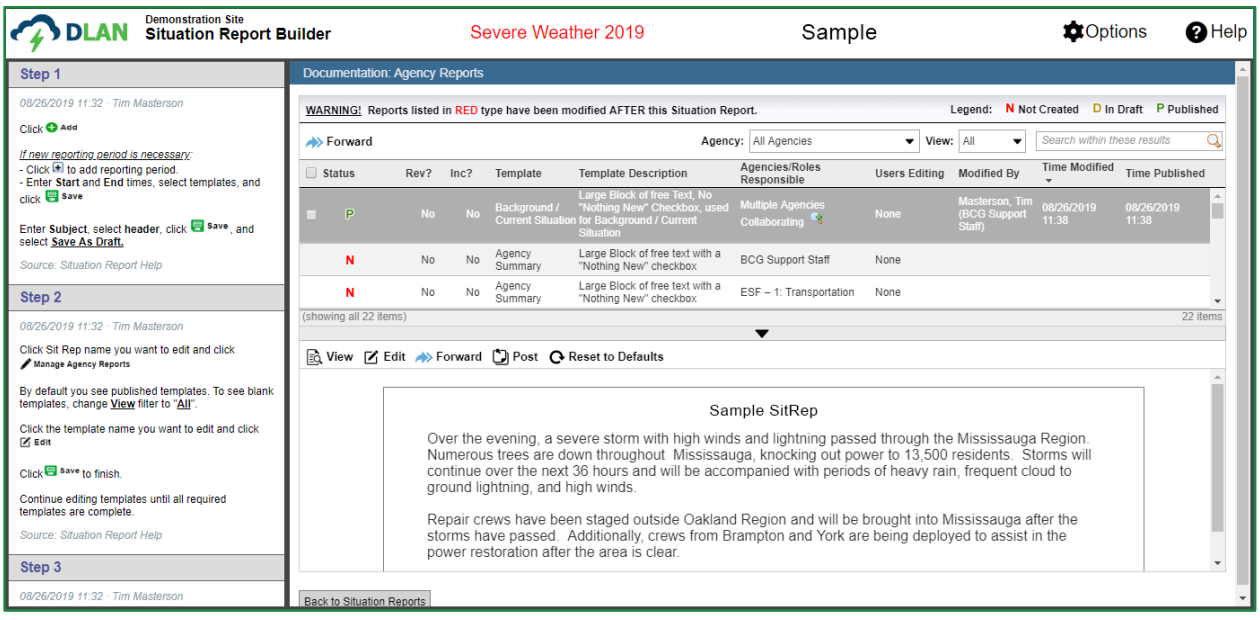

Figure 3: Sample Situation Report Dashboard

Conclusion

Using DLAN's core configuration tools, THESL was able to tailor their system to meet their specific needs and workflows. By choosing a dashboard-driven approach over the typical menu-driven navigation, THESL created a very simplified environment for users to view information pertinent to their specific role and complete tasks without the need for formal training.

About the Authors

About Buffalo Computer Graphics, Inc.

DLAN is engineered by Buffalo Computer Graphics, Inc. (BCG), a veteran owned small business that has 35 years of experience in software, hardware, and systems engineering. BCG has four primary business areas - Incident Management Systems, Mass Notification Systems, Maritime Simulation Solutions, and Custom Hardware & Software Engineering.

About FutureShield Inc.

FutureShield Inc. was founded in Toronto, Canada in 2005 on the premise that there is a strong need for domain expertise in integrating software solutions for security, emergency management, and critical infrastructure protection.

Toronto Hydro-Electric System Limited

Toronto Hydro owns and operates the electricity distribution system for Canada's largest city. It has approximately 774,000 customers located in the city of Toronto and distributes approximately 18% of the electricity consumed in Ontario.