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Do you have a question?
Call Technical Support at 906-487-2102

RoundUp

RoadSoft tech support walked me through an upgrade to a new version and also implemented a couple of changes I suggested to make the culvert module work better for our organization. I was very impressed with their responsiveness.

Matthew Fennema, Staff Engineer
Wilcox Prof. Services – Caledonia, MI

Development starts and ends with usability

Usability *n* – **1:** capable of being used. **2:** convenient and practicable for use.
(*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.*)

Scott Pollins, a software engineer on the RoadSoft development team, was the lead developer for the **new traffic signal module**. While sifting through a mountain of requirements and suggestions submitted by users to help develop the module, Pollins and the development team noticed that local agencies used several different terms to describe the same traffic signal components. To make the module adaptable to these diverse requirements, the team realized they would need to expand on the **user-defined flexibility** that is currently found in other *RoadSoft* modules. "To be useful for as many of our users as possible, including rural agencies and larger urban agencies, we knew it would have to be easy to customize," Pollins explained. The development team's realization and response make clear the **culture of usability** that drives them.

Input from the experts

Ensuring that RoadSoft is capable, convenient, and practical requires a continuous cycle of communication between users and the development team. "It's pretty simple," software development manager Gary Schlaff explained. "**We ask what our users need and then create software that meets as many of those needs as possible.**" But gathering requirements is only the beginning. Face-to-face training conducted by the people who write and maintain the code is a key component. Live phone-based technical support during business hours, several live web-based training sessions per year, at least three user-group meetings per year, and multiple site visits by various levels of administrative and technical staff all contribute to usability. In addition, one of the main objectives of the 2008 *RoadSoft* work plan is to **enable greater user flexibility**. "We're fortunate to have users who engage in the development process," Schlaff explained. "They are the key to our success as a team of developers; **our goal is to build software that's designed by those who will actually use it.**"

Coming in March

The newest release of RoadSoft-GIS, version 6.8.0, will be available in early March. It includes features that will allow you to manage traffic signals and sidewalks, and additional functionality for the sign module and the laptop data collector utility.

Traffic Signal Module (ALL NEW!)

The traffic signal module provides a means for creating a detailed inventory of all electrical devices at a point along a road segment. In addition, the module includes maintenance tracking capabilities and information about signal timing, routes, and utility responsibilities. The module also includes reporting capabilities that are similar to other modules in *RoadSoft*.

Sidewalk Module (ALL NEW!)

The sidewalk module provides a means for creating a detailed inventory of sidewalk features along a road segment, and for recording and tracking condition information and maintenance records. In addition, the module provides reporting capabilities that are similar to other modules in *RoadSoft*.

Sign Module (NEW FEATURES)

The sign module now includes a feature for planning new sign projects (log jobs). This feature will allow you to specify locations and types for multiple new signs along road segments.

Laptop Data Collector (NEW FEATURES)

The Laptop Data Collector (LDC) utility now includes capabilities for collecting driveway and guardrail data. With a GPS connected to your laptop, you can use the LDC to collect the location and physical characteristics of driveways and guardrails along road segments.

Let us know what you think

As with all versions of *RoadSoft*, this one was designed and created based on user input. If you have ideas on how to improve or add to the software, please call the *RoadSoft* development team at 906-487-2102 or attend a *RoadSoft* Users Group (RUG) meeting. Any feedback you provide will help sustain the culture of usability on which *RoadSoft-GIS* is built.

The next RUG meeting will be on 3/4/2008 (see back for details).

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RoadSoft Users Group Meeting ***Lansing Michigan***

Join us at the CRAM Annual Highway Conference in Lansing, MI for the *RoadSoft* Users Group (RUG) meeting. Learn more about using *RoadSoft-GIS*, influence development direction, and share your questions, comments, and ideas with the developers and other users.

Date: Tuesday, March 4, 2008
Time: 9:30 – 11:30 AM
Location: Holiday Inn West
7501 W. Saginaw Hwy (M-43)
Lansing, MI
(just east of I-69/I-96)

Call 906-487-2102 for more information about *RoadSoft*, the RUG meetings, or communicating with the *RoadSoft* development team.

All RoadSoft-GIS users from all regions are welcome.

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