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St. Louis Metro  
PD Laboratory

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Ask Customer Care:  
Technical issues  
addressed by  
our experts

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**SIMON SAYS**

# Easing the Burden on DNA Analysts

Welcome to our new, revived JusticeTrax newsletter – JusticeFacts!

**T**his issue highlights our new product, LIMS-plus DNA which replaces the DNA analytical module in LIMS-plus version 3. Presently, there are about 20 labs in various stages of implementing this latest iteration of our DNA software. Meanwhile, we are continuing to develop new and exciting features based on our customers’ suggestions. In this issue, you can read about some of the work we’ve done to integrate the new DNA product with LIMS-plus Version 3. There’s also a fairly in-depth description of one of this version’s more powerful tools—Dynamic UI. In an effort to add real world utility to the newsletter, we’ve added an ongoing column that gives information on customer care issues. A customer case study in each issue describes the advantages that a specific forensic laboratory finds from using one of the JusticeTrax software offerings. So, we hope you find the newsletter’s content informative and useful, and we invite your feedback as to how we can make JusticeFacts better.

LIMS-plus DNA showcases some of the ideas that we have been discussing for some time now. The entire application is delivered through a browser to make it easy to install and to upgrade without having to visit every single tablet or PC that will use it.



**Simon Key**  
President

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The browser architecture also makes the geographical distance between labs and servers irrelevant. We’ve included services that provide a standard way to integrate LIMS-plus DNA with LIMS software from any vendor, and an instrument interface that is easily configured by laboratory staff instead of a programmer. None of these capabilities are remotely useful if the software performs poorly and doesn’t ease the burden on DNA analysts. We’ve spent significant time and effort ensuring that all of the lessons learned from the prior DNA analytical module now translate to a smooth, effective implementation of LIMS-plus DNA. This software’s sample-centric approach to batches, consumables management features, and a lot of DNA-specific functionality mean that the product is tailor-made to boost productivity of the forensic biology discipline. We’re excited to put this product to work for our customers as we continue to develop the next generation of software tools for all of the disciplines within the forensic laboratory.

Finally, I give a personal note of thanks to all of our customers for their patience while we developed LIMS-plus DNA, and for your continued support.

~Simon



# St. Louis Metro PD Laboratory Views LIMS-plus as Essential for Making Operations More Electronic

**T**he Crime Laboratory of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department is one of only 250 laboratories to receive ISO accreditation from the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors. Gaining this accreditation was aided in large part through the laboratory's use of the JusticeTrax LIMS-plus software.

Today, the laboratory's 70 staff members access LIMS-plus on 73 terminals. The software is also installed on a computer at the prosecutor's office, plus various federal agencies have access to it for laboratory reports tied to cases.

LIMS-plus was installed at St. Louis Metro PD's crime laboratory in 1999. "It started off as a system for us to track evidence and inventory," said Jenna Oakes-Smith, the laboratory's LIMS administrator. "It's become more of a management tool for us, which was ultimately the goal we had for it."

Because St. Louis Metro PD's crime laboratory has several sections (Biology/DNA, Drug, Evidence, Firearms, ID, Photography, and Crime Scene), it took time for each section to adopt LIMS-plus for its specific needs. In 2010, however, there was a push within the laboratory to have all sections

**"Files are more accessible in LIMS-plus. As a result, the software has helped us in acquiring and justifying grants, and ensuring smooth workflow."**

standardize on LIMS-plus because preparations to apply for reaccreditation were underway. "We needed standard documents, and had to have the same work product," Oakes-Smith said.

One example of how LIMS-plus helped meet accreditation standards was its ability to give users quick, easy access to electronic files, then secure them with electronic signatures. "We have to have proof of our documentation," Oakes-Smith emphasized. "Files are more accessible in LIMS-plus. As a result, the software has helped us in acquiring and justifying grants, and ensuring smooth workflow."

Time savings is substantial, too. For instance, the laboratory started archiving its paper case files two years ago. The laboratory's front office was no longer distributing reports as that was performed using iResults, a LIMS-plus module. This allowed time to tackle the archiving project. "In the last two years, we've been able to archive five years of back files as well as keep up with new files coming in," Oakes-Smith said. "We're talking about thousands of files they've been able to scan archive."

The St. Louis Metro PD crime laboratory started with slow growth, then saw exponential growth over the last few years as it began using more

## THINK OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL COMPUTER

Dual monitors and peripherals allow the biologists to maintain a clean and dirty computer set up in their lab with only one CPU. Criminalist I Amy Rathmann uses LIMS-plus data extension forms to take notes during a biological screening. The Biology Section is the lab's only paperless section.





# At Last, Sample Processing Made Easier

## LIMS-plus DNA Allows Seamless Integration With LIMS-plus



**Melissa Seccariccia**  
Product Manager

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**J**usticeTrax’s new LIMS-plus DNA software is a full-featured DNA process management tool designed by DNA analysts for DNA analysts. Its sample-centric approach allows any forensic laboratory to easily capture real-time batch data, export to instrumentation, import results, and manage the efficiency and effectiveness of the DNA analysis processes based on your

business requirements.

Now, users of JusticeTrax LIMS-plus v3x can use the integration feature to seamlessly move their samples with all the key data points to LIMS-plus DNA. The DNA staff can review the details of samples sent and determine, based on the data provided, how to process each sample to maximize the potential for generating accurate, timely results. By using a single configuration option, the DNA staff member can be advised as to whether or not a similar sample has already been processed; for

example, if a sample related to a convicted offender had been processed in another case, to eliminate duplication. This integration eliminates chances for human error in transcription that often occurs with manual re-entry.

Because of LIMS-plus DNA’s underlying architecture, reports can be written to consolidate data between LIMS-plus and LIMS-plus DNA based on the sample identifying information. These reports can contain a myriad of information related to the processing of a case and to specific samples related to the case...up to and including the profile data generated and sent to the CODIS database. Technical reviewers can access all worksheets relevant to the case samples’ progression through DNA analysis to complete their reviews prior to the generation of the case final report. If used to capture profile data, LIMS-plus DNA can generate the appropriate files for uploading into the CODIS application, which reduces and prevents errors in transcription. The application also will validate the CODIS data to ensure compliance with all required and optional data elements and formats needed by the application.



## Paul Tracy Rejoins JusticeTrax Team



**Paul Tracy**  
Implementation Specialist

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Paul Tracy, a longtime JusticeTrax team member who took a sabbatical, has rejoined the company as an Implementation Specialist. Paul was the company’s first member in this position when he started with JusticeTrax 14 years ago. “There is more knowledge and expertise required (in the job),” Paul noted now that he’s back at JusticeTrax. However, “with all of my experience in various administrative jobs during the last few years, I’m now able to more effectively help JusticeTrax with implementations of our products and with how they fit together,” he explained. Also, just as 2015 began, Paul agreed to tackle a product management role for JusticeTrax’s ChainLinx property and evidence management software.

During his sabbatical, Paul became a certified professional performance coach and he helps emerging leaders and groups within high-tech industries reach their maximum potential.

In addition to his JusticeTrax and coaching credentials, Paul is a former criminalist with the Arizona Department of Public Safety.



# DYNAMIC USER INTERFACE:

## Making LIMS-plus Version 5 and LIMS-plus DNA your own application



**David Epstein**  
Business Development  
Manager

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**J**usticeTrax has delivered software for forensic science laboratories for 20 years, yet our experience so far has not enabled us to imagine every possible data point that users may need to collect, track, and report. In versions 2 and 3 of LIMS-plus, we gave users the option to configure “local data” fields, and as our users know, this was a good start. But there were limitations, too.

Therefore, when designing version 5 of LIMS-plus and LIMS-plus DNA, we applied what we learned by incorporating a far more robust approach to handling data. Thus was born the Dynamic User Interface (UI). This powerful

**“... we applied what we learned by incorporating a far more robust approach to handling data.”**

feature gives LIMS administrators the tools to create custom data fields in these applications. Once these data fields are built and ready to use, the data collected is instantly available for querying and reporting, and allows creation of statistical reports essential for generating period reports to be used with grants or for any other type of data mining desired. For instance, with this capability, you can know what it costs to run an instrument every year, how many samples you uploaded to CODIS, or how many times weapons were test fired. The possibilities are limited only by the users’ creativity.

User created fields can be placed on nearly all screens within LIMS-plus version 5 and LIMS-plus DNA, adding to their usefulness. So, for example, if you wanted to create a specific data field for a particular instrument, you can select the exact instrument on which you want the field to appear. Then, the software presents the screen that allows

you to build required data fields and to set the properties for that field (i.e., field type, read-only, length required, mandatory or optional, etc.). In addition to properties, each data field includes the data conditions under which it will appear. The beauty of this approach is that the administrator customizes the applications with built-in tools, so there is no need to contract customized work – a.k.a. free of additional costs.

The Dynamic UI feature in LIMS-plus version 5 works hand-in-hand with the analytical module designer just as it works in LIMS-plus DNA with the laboratory methods. By configuring the data fields with the type and properties, the administrator and subject matter experts in each laboratory unit can fit the application to their own work flow. Increasingly, you can make our applications your own without fear that the effort will be wasted when new versions of the applications are delivered. 

### UPCOMING TRADE SHOWS

**April 26-30**

*American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD)*  
Marriott Wardman Park  
Washington, DC

**May 6-8**

*North Carolina International Association for Identification (NCIAI)*  
Embassy Suites Greensboro Airport  
Greensboro, NC

**May 4-8**

*California Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (CACLD) and California Association of Criminalists (CAC)*  
Ventura Beach Marriott Hotel  
Ventura, CA

**July 27-29**

*Green Mountain DNA Conference*  
Sheraton Burlington Hotel  
Burlington, VT

## How Can I Tailor LIMS-plus To Fit My Work Flows?

**A**s software versions evolve, the hope, of course, is that capabilities improve. It doesn't always turn out this way. Fortunately, for forensic laboratories, the JusticeTrax LIMS-plus v5 software has vastly strengthened the way analysts can work with analytical modules.



**Matt Murphy**  
Customer Care  
Manager

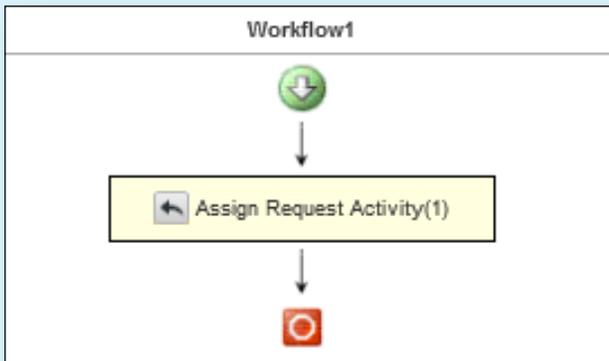
[CLICK HERE TO EMAIL](#)

LIMS-plus v3 provided laboratories with a handful of pre-existing, and for the most part, fully configured modules. These modules were linked to services and acted as a road map for the data and information that was to be gathered. The analytical modules gave forensic laboratory analysts quick and easy guidance, although they also somewhat restricted agencies that may

have had work flows that didn't fit the LIMS model. Enter LIMS-plus v5 whose analytical modules, or work flows, addressed this issue, giving the laboratories the freedom and creativity to develop their own analytical modules. The v5 modules can be created specifically for all services, not just those main six that were used in v3.

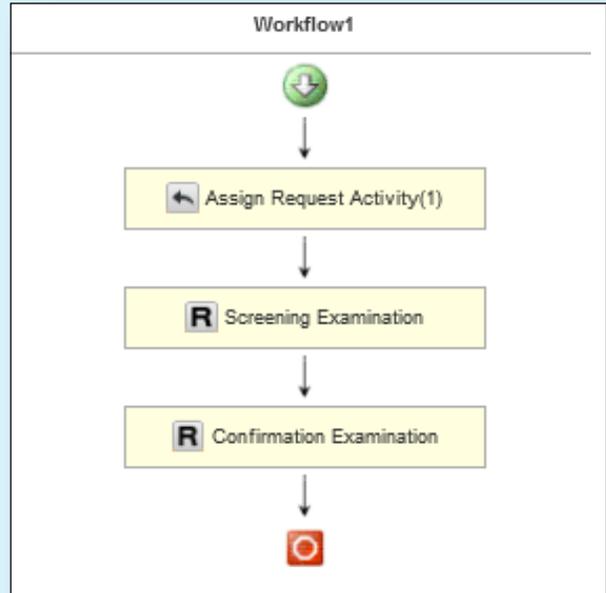
The LIMS-plus v5 analytical modules are created in the Admin section of LIMS-plus, in the Analytical Module Designer. The Designer allows each laboratory to insert predetermined, step-by-step processes. This workflow, once connected to a LIMS-plus Service, will become a road map that every user working that service will follow.

For example, the first step of any workflow would be the Assign Request Activity.



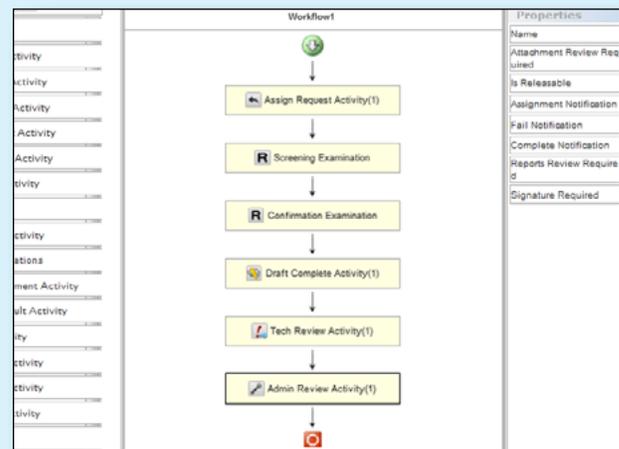
After that block is dropped into place, then the Examination Activities typically are inserted. Several Examination Activities can be added, and

they can have specific Dynamic User Interfaces attached to them to serve as "worksheet templates" for the user to enter required data and notes.



Finally, most work flows will require Draft Completion of the request by the user and then the appropriate reviews.

Once a workflow is completed, it is ready for service. Service Requests are added to your case and the user is provided with the steps needed to complete the assignment.



As you can see, while the LIMS-plus v5 analytical modules involve a little more time with configuration and setup, they allow lab specificity and user familiarity for examination/results entry. 

# St. Louis Metro PD

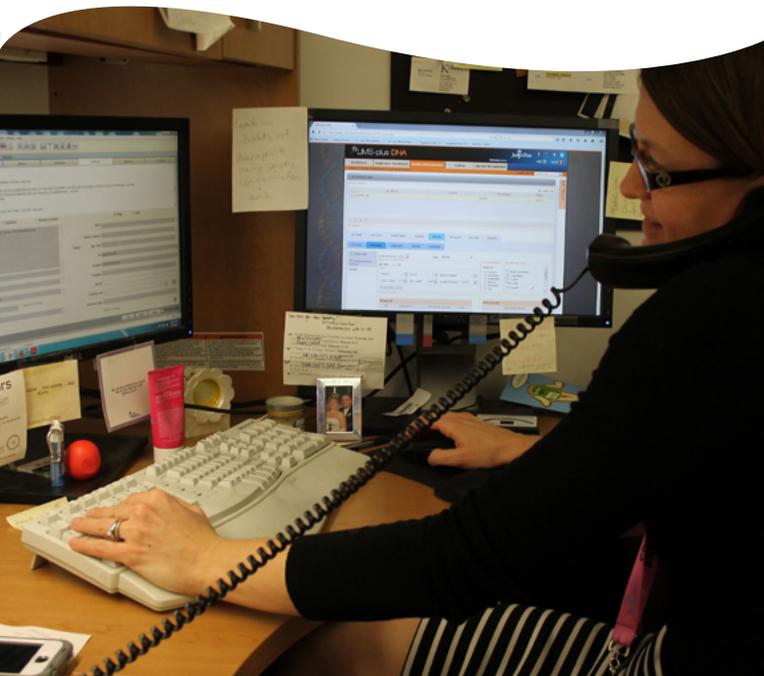
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capabilities within LIMS-plus. Initially, the software was used to create reports and chain of custody. Today, it also generates statistics. What's more, LIMS-plus helps the laboratory create accountability for its numerous sections, and even for individual staff professionals. "LIMS-plus helps determine how efficiently and effectively analysts are working," Oakes-Smith said. "It helps them adjust to become more productive."

Looking at areas for future laboratory growth, and automation, Oakes-Smith believes that DNA sample documentation will be better achieved with a standalone solution. Which is why the laboratory is carefully examining and considering adoption of the new LIMS-plus DNA software. Based on the strong success that the laboratory has had so far with LIMS-plus, "We think it (LIMS-plus DNA) will be a good fit for our laboratory," Oakes-Smith said. 

## AN ADMINISTRATOR'S WORK IS NEVER DONE

LIMS Administrator Jenna Oakes-Smith takes a break from development on the LIMS-plus DNA module in order to assist an analyst with a LIMS error.



JusticeTrax is showcased in the March-April 2015 issue of EVIDENCE TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE, in a feature article that discusses automation in DNA analysis. To read the article, please click on the following link: [www.evidencemagazine.com](http://www.evidencemagazine.com)

## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

**JusticeFacts is our quarterly newsletter with news and information for your benefit.**

To make each issue more interesting and valuable, we need your feedback. This feedback will enable us to tailor JusticeFacts to your information needs and interests.

By all means, send us your recommendations as to what content you want more of, but also can do without. Do you want more photos, screen captures, other graphics? What kind of information will help you in your work?

JusticeFacts is your newsletter, so help us make it a valuable resource that you'll look forward to receiving and reading, issue after issue.

Please send your comments to: [david.epstein@justicetrax.com](mailto:david.epstein@justicetrax.com)

Meanwhile, enjoy JusticeFacts, and we'll be on the lookout for your suggestions.

Thank you.

David Epstein,  
Business Development Manager



# Welcome to JusticeTrax!

Since January 1, 2014, the following have joined in using our applications.

CUSTOMER	LOCATION	CUSTOMER PRODUCTS
Center for Advanced Forensics	Greenville, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li><li>• LIMS-plus DNA</li><li>• LIMS-plus Portal</li></ul>
Colorado Springs Police Metro Crime Laboratory	Colorado Springs, CO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li><li>• LIMS-plus DNA</li><li>• LIMS-plus Portal</li><li>• CIMS</li></ul>
Defense Forensic Science Center	Forest Park, GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li><li>• LIMS-plus Portal</li><li>• CIMS*</li></ul>
District of Columbia Consolidated Forensic	Washington, DC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li><li>• LIMS-plus DNA</li></ul>
Horry County Police Department Regional Drug Analysis Laboratory	Conway, SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li><li>• iResults</li><li>• CIMS*</li></ul>
ITSI Biosciences, LLC	Johnstown, PA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus DNA</li></ul>
Raleigh/Wake City-County Bureau of Identification	Raleigh, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li><li>• LIMS-plus Portal</li><li>• CIMS*</li></ul>
Redwood Toxicology Laboratory, Inc.	Santa Rosa, CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li></ul>
St. Louis County Police Department Crime Laboratory	St. Louis, MO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li><li>• LIMS-plus DNA</li><li>• iPrelog</li><li>• iResults</li><li>• CIMM**</li><li>• ChainLinx</li></ul>
Texas Southern University Forensic Science Learning Laboratory	Houston, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus</li></ul>
Trinity DNA Solutions	Milton, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LIMS-plus DNA</li></ul>

\* Consumable Inventory Management System (CIMS)

\*\* Chemical Inventory Management Module (CIMM)



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