



# Route Tracker: Keeping Canadian Transporters on the Right Track

Transportation companies, especially large fleets, are increasingly turning to sophisticated tracking systems to increase their efficiency and reduce their operating costs. One of the businesses helping provide them with high-quality, cost-effective tracking products is Cancom Tracking, a leader in providing mobile communications solutions for the Canadian transportation industry. And one of those products is Route Tracker, their low-cost GPS and engine-diagnostic tracking system.

BY JIM HYNES

**M**ississauga, Ontario-based Cancom Tracking, a Shaw Communications company, provides tracking, two-way messaging, and integrated transportation and logistics solutions to the trucking industry. For more than 15 years, Cancom customers have been increasing revenues, enhancing security and improving productivity with the company's products. Cancom owns the rights

to Route Tracker, proprietary hardware that records routing and engine information for fuel tax reporting, vehicle maintenance and driver behaviour modification. The system was developed by Cancom's partner, Turnpike Global Technologies.

"Due to rising fuel costs, fleets need to manage out-of-route miles and idle times," says Mike Ham, vice-president (business services), Cancom Tracking. "Another challenge

that the trucking industry is dealing with is a driver shortage. Tracking and communication technology can help drivers concentrate on what they do best—drive. Systems like Route Tracker eliminate the need for data entry and trip sheets by providing a seamless flow of information."

Ham says the types of companies benefiting from Route Tracker are truckload, less-than-truckload, private fleets, utility vehicles,

**RouteTracker**



**Plug options**



ready-mix and short-term vehicle leasing, as well as other segments that require driver performance management, automotive fuel tax reporting, automotive vehicle maintenance and accident deconstruction.

**HOW IT WORKS**

Route Tracker collects and stores engine and routing information through an integrated GPS antenna unit. At the end of a trip, once a truck is within 100 meters of the terminal, data is downloaded wirelessly, and detailed reports are automatically generated. The reports include information such as where the vehicle has been and how it was driven. The data is then forwarded via Internet to special Web servers, for conduct analysis and fuel tax reporting. Entirely Web-based, Route Tracker requires no software. In-cab and base station hardware installations take approximately 15 minutes each.

Route Tracker is easy to use and mainte-

nance free. Other advantages include the precision of the system thanks to its GPS element, its automatic processing and automated vehicle activity reporting (idle times, over speeds, RPM, automated driver activity reporting, stop times by customer location, route tracking, out of route monitoring).

“The tracking business has changed dramatically in the past ten or so years,” says Mike Ham. “A decade ago, the necessities of tracking were simple—it tracked freight and the driver. Tracking helped optimize planning for the drivers, shippers and customers. But today it’s not enough to just track company drivers and shortages. Companies want to receive real-time about driver productivity and detailed vehicle performance of assets. This means that there is more valuable data available for the end user.”

**A SATISFIED CUSTOMER**

One of Cancom’s many satisfied customers is Caron Transportation Systems, a

private, for-hire, specialized chemical hauler and dry-bulk oilfield carrier, based in Sherwood Park, Alberta. While Cancom currently provides Route Tracker services to Caron, and now holds the rights to the product, Caron actually purchased their system from Turnpike Global Technologies early in 2004. Back then, Caron wanted to monitor drivers and equipment with a system that was easy to install, and provided intuitive, simple-to-use reporting. They wanted a solution that provided easy access to the data for their terminal managers who were located in different locations.

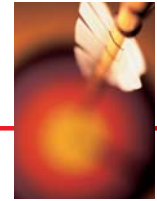
“With the demise of our previous supplier we needed to find a low-cost, user-friendly, method of tracking and monitoring our drivers and equipment—one that would keep abreast of changing technology and not be continually coming to us for costly system upgrades,” says Greg Johnson, operations manager, Caron Transportation Systems.

The company started with a test group of 25 trucks for six months in 2004 and liked Route Tracker so much that the system is now installed in all 220 of its power units.

“One of the greatest benefits of using Route Tracker has been the heightened awareness, which our driver pool now has, that someone is tracking and evaluating their driving performance. I would say that the single most important benefit we’ve experienced has been reduced driver speeds, which translates to lower cost of operation—fuel, repairs, maintenance, and accidents,” says Johnson, who cited simplicity, ease of access, and lower start-up costs and monthly fees as some of the system’s other key benefits.

“From my perspective, this business has gone from a rate-driven business to one where quality of service, equipment reliability and dependability, and partnerships are the forces behind a successful carrier,” says Johnson. “The people at Turnpike were extremely easy and accommodating to work with. We were their initial venture into Western Canada so I think we may have received some preferential treatment. The implementation was not without problems, although none were insurmountable. And Turnpike was front and centre in dealing with them. They would have a representative out here whenever an issue arose or if there was some type of change or modification required.”

## ▶▶ COMING SOON IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Brendan Staub, vice-president (business development), Turnpike Global Technologies says that “Caron is happy with the speed, hard-brake, and idle-time monitoring of the system. It provides them with graphs detailing how long drivers are speeding on each trip. By monitoring speed, Caron saw overall fleet speeds drop by 5% to 10% in a short period after implementation.” According to Staub, Caron estimates a similar percentage decrease in fuel costs for the fleet as a result of these reduced speeds, coupled with increased monitoring and control of truck idle time.

“Through reduced speeds, and hard-brake monitoring, Caron feels they have improved the driving habits of their employees, reducing their vehicle maintenance costs, and helping in the reduction of accidents. The detailed hard-brake reports, and the ability to download and view a driver’s route data, including all stops and speeds has also helped Caron with its accident investigations,” says Staub. He says Caron has also benefited from Turnpike’s Stop Reports, which give them the ability to monitor time spent loading and unloading at shipper and receiver. To review driver pay when required, Caron also utilizes the system’s Driver Activity Detail reports as a second check on billable hours.

### THE FUTURE OF TRACKING: DETAILS, DETAILS

As for the future of tracking products, Cancom’s Mike Ham says systems like Route Tracker will one day be able to provide even more detailed information.

“Tracking will have increased benefits with better technology,” says Ham. “It will provide data to the operations team and more detailed information to the shipper and customer.”

“A decade ago, there was only simple technology. Today, our customers are getting border-crossing information, they are invoicing customers and they have real statistics,” says Ham. “Transport companies need current and up-to-date information at all times to effectively manage their business. Due to the demand from the industry, technology will continue to develop and evolve. Technology is consistently changing to provide solutions to issues in the industry—issues like automated border crossings, and hours of service. More detail and information will be needed by all parties involved in the industry.” ■

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125	Cancom	<a href="http://www.cancomtracking.ca">www.cancomtracking.ca</a>	11
157	Econorack / Logix	<a href="http://www.logixconveyor.com">www.logixconveyor.com</a>	37
287	FedEx	<a href="http://www.fedex.ca">www.fedex.ca</a>	15
313	Groupe Fortier	<a href="http://www.transportfortier.com">www.transportfortier.com</a>	18
130	Groupe GCL	<a href="http://www.gclgroup.com">www.gclgroup.com</a>	39
339	Infolog America	<a href="http://www.sistema-logistics.com">www.sistema-logistics.com</a>	35
354	Logistics Institute	<a href="http://www.loginstitute.ca">www.loginstitute.ca</a>	27
340	Milgram	<a href="http://www.milgram.com">www.milgram.com</a>	34
102	Psion Teklogix	<a href="http://www.psionteklogix.com">www.psionteklogix.com</a>	7
173	Reimer Express	<a href="http://www.reimerexpress.com">www.reimerexpress.com</a>	40
350	Segway Truck Lines	<a href="http://www.segwaytrucklines.com">www.segwaytrucklines.com</a>	17
102	Sim-Tran	<a href="http://www.simard.ca">www.simard.ca</a>	2
352	Softmatch	<a href="http://www.softmatch.com">www.softmatch.com</a>	14
329	Sologlobe	<a href="http://www.sologlobe.com">www.sologlobe.com</a>	4
300	Syspro	<a href="http://www.syspro.com">www.syspro.com</a>	33

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