

version 3.0

i•SHOP Next Generation: Interconnectivity of Shop Equipment Goes to the Web

BY: SCOTT LUCKETT

If the aftermarket is to remain competitive and prevent market share from shifting to the OE shops, we must increase the productivity of the existing shops and technicians.

The i•SHOP Standard from AAIA was developed to address a very pressing industry need. Studies in Europe have found that shop technicians spend 25 minutes of every hour focused on work directly related to servicing a vehicle. The balance of a technician's valuable time is spent searching for information, keying information into a computer or some other non-productive activity. A shop seeking more sales and profits doesn't need to look beyond this productivity leak to find a great source of increased efficiency.

But how can a tech service more vehicles in an hour? In a modern service shop it is not uncommon to have several computer systems. In the front shop there's almost certainly a PC on the service counter used to create estimates and repair orders. There is usually a database system of parts catalogs, labor guides, service and repair information. And in the back shop, you are likely to find a growing number of PC-based diagnostic machines such as alignment equipment and hand-held electronic scan tools and imbedded

processors for servicing everything from the air conditioning system to the On-Board Diagnostics.

Each of these tools is indispensable to the modern shop and the service technicians. And the most astonishing thing about them is that they do not communicate with each other in any way. The result is that shop managers and technicians are required to re-key information about the customer and the vehicle and the service work performed multiple times into multiple pieces of high-tech equipment. If the aftermarket is to remain competitive and prevent market share from shifting to the OE shops, we must increase the productivity of the existing shops and technicians.

i•SHOP is an interconnectivity standard that was developed with the cooperation of the leading makers of shop

equipment, management software and information services. These companies agreed to incorporate the i•SHOP standard in their software so that their products could "talk" to each other and share valuable information that already existed – rather than require that it be re-keyed. The i•SHOP standard brings service and repair information to the technician in their bays so they avoid the "walk of death" across the shop to look for the information. This helps keep the tech focused on the repair of the vehicle. Shops equipped with i•SHOP-enabled equipment experience

higher sales per day and greater sales per technician.

The product engineers of the i•SHOP Committee have recently completed work on version 3.0 of the standard. This is the most significant advance of this technology because it adopted Web services and breaks the standard free of the requirement for a Microsoft Windows PC. Now i•SHOP can be deployed on a variety of operating systems and even hand-held scan tools – all in the same shop.

For shop owners and technicians the best news is that with i•SHOP there is nothing extra to buy. Simply look for equipment and software products that are i•SHOP certified. This will ensure that they have the technology inside and will increase shop productivity when networked together.

The vehicle population continues to grow and age with miles drive annually at an all-time high. At the same time, the number of aftermarket shop bays is declining and we struggle to find and train the needed number of ASE-certified technicians. This is a formula for disaster and suggests that one day the aftermarket will not have the capacity to match the demand for service work. This will force consumers to explore alternative channels for vehicle maintenance. But with i•SHOP technology, aftermarket shops can increase productivity and be assured of a profitable future. For more information and a list of certified i•SHOP products, visit www.ishopstandards.org.

Scott Lockett is AAIA vice president, technology standards and solutions.

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