

## Advanced analysis of driver`s response

### Institute of Traffic Accident Investigators United Kingdom

Training and Continuous Professional Education can be a difficulty issue in respect of finding time and on occasion sufficient or appropriate sessions to attend for practitioners. On occasion, an opportunity arises that is extremely relevant, great timing and convenient. Attending this session through the ITAI, in the UK was just such a session.

The session was held in Solihull, a typical green, friendly and picturesque town, at the St John`s Hotel. An excellent facility, not only for the session itself, but for on-site accommodation, to include great gym facilities. For those that ventured out, an abundance of excellent restaurants and places of interest, to include the outstanding British National Motorcycle Museum and likewise Stratfor-Upon - Avon, are of interest.



The session itself, put on by the ITAI, with the lecturer being the highly respected Dr Jeffrey Muttart of (Crash Safety Research Centre). Jeffrey is most certainly a detailed academic lecturer, very clearly a strong A-Type personality, yet remaining most accommodating and approachable. Unlike many academics, his knowledge is very clearly and impressively complimented by hands on practical experience that shines through in the lectures. Supported by colleagues Swaroop Dinakar and Lynn Carangelo, Jeff provides an incredible volume of data, arguably daunting. Even with the session spread over five days, the data provided in the form of a specific training and guide manual, extensive class guiding documents, images, videos, specific research material, case studies, questionnaires and personal experience input, all followed in class in typical PowerPoint, the daily classes are demanding.

To the extent of the detail, at least two of the six class presentations followed over the week, contain more than two hundred slides. Notably, the ITAI forewarned attendees, through Jeffs` advice, that the classes were not to be taken lightly, this certainly is no understatement, with classes running through to five thirty and later daily. Those attend in future should certainly heed the advice.

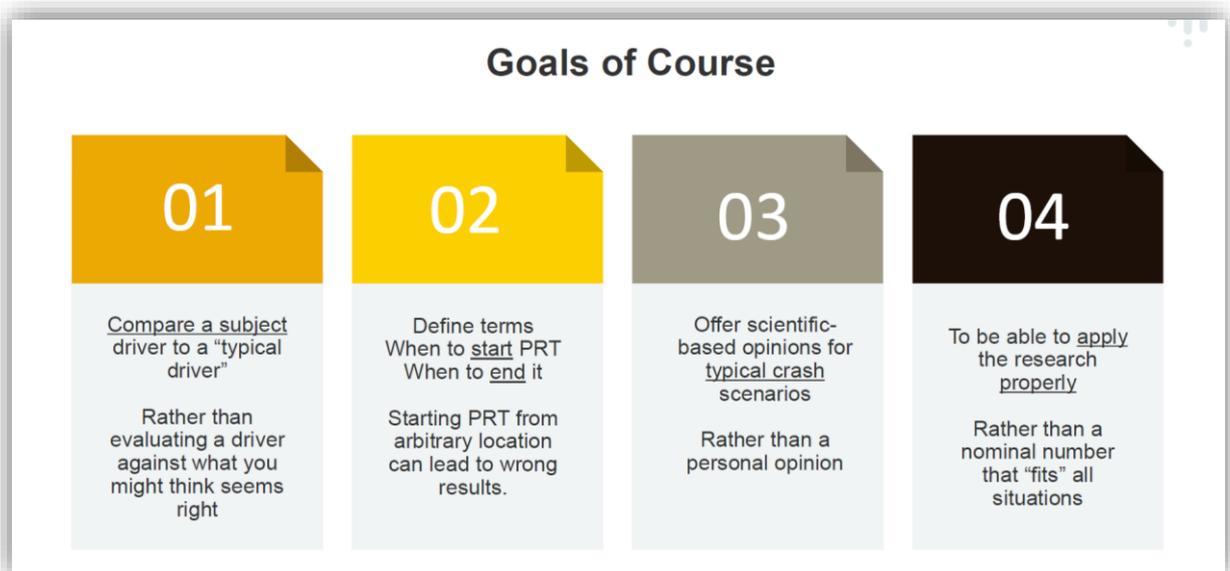
As part of the training, Jeff introduces attendees to the Integrated Driver Response Research (IDRR) software programme. As with many long term research projects, research often leads to some level of collated database. With just this having occurred, Jeff has developed the database into a useful tool. The IDRR *Getting Started* notice sums this up best:

*The purpose of this program is to relay information gained in research regarding how drivers have responded in research and real life crashes and near crashes. No attempt is being made, or suggested that this program can predict the intentions of any driver. The results offered are based upon how more than 10,000 drivers responded and represents an accumulation of years of research*

Although a relatively simple Excel spreadsheet based programme, the use of the tool certainly requires in-depth knowledge of the appropriate parameters to apply, something that definitely requires attending the session, along with a deft learned hand at getting the best out of the tool. Learning the appropriate parameters to consider is absolutely crucial, here Jeff stresses the importance of carefully choosing the correct crash type and carefully considering the CAPLETS (Contrast, Anticipate, Pattern, Lighting, Eccentricity, Time of exposure, Size). However the greatest benefit of the tool sees the listing of just what research papers are appropriate to the type of crash and parameters you have chosen, a crucial factor in referencing the accuracy or perhaps validity of your decisions on your case.

Any practitioner that has spent time considering research on a particular issue, very quickly realises the tedious task it is to find and link appropriate research. This session impressively educates, links and refines the process of considering *driver's response*, however attending the session certainly does not end on the final day. Ongoing application of the learning is critical.

It is simply impossible to place in brief prose a simple overview of the course. That noted, an appropriate synopsis is to quote the *Goals of the Course* directly from the training document, as we see below:



Perhaps an appropriate overview would be, that this training course should certainly be seriously considered as an absolute compulsory training session to any current and prospective specialist operating in any realm of traffic crash investigation. Not only for the specific training provided on aspects of the subject matter of *Advanced analysis of driver's responses*, but to the many indirect and incidental factors of critical importance that are learned, or perhaps as reminders to some; to include:

- Cases considered and reported on have a very clear requirement to meet scientific and factual detailing. Here the Daubert standard (USA) and similar case decision commentary and standards in other countries should be carefully considered.
- Driver response time analysis, and for that matter even passenger and pedestrian, are far more crucial and detailed than one considers at face value. Research on this subject starting as far back as 1868.

- The importance of appropriate research and testing of parameters, both at accepted peer review standard, however even at your own specific case investigation level cannot be stressed enough. Every case must be considered on merit, by a host of factors highlighted in the training and must be referenced to appropriate research.

Somewhat amusingly, Jeff manages to maintain a strong but subtle light hearted rouse among the serious grind of working through the volumous and detailed facts of the training. The amusement extending to include the light hearted battle of understudy and master, with Swaroop keeping Jeff on his toes both in many spheres. The appropriate, yet repetitive and amusing use of certain words *eccentricity* and *right* (!?), among others, throughout the day also provided for some for some light hearted discussion and comical relief.

As usual, the networking opportunity is ever present. Like minded individuals share the common specific and general interest in crash cases, with a range of attendees from private consultants, researchers, metropolitan and national policing crash investigators and others among the attendees, from some nine different countries.