



# AMTC News

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— ANGELA TURNER

## AMTC News

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## Maximizing Impact with Technology

When I think about the many factors that make up an organization, the one thing they have in common is producing results. In the nonprofit sector, results are often measured by the number of people we serve and the types of services provided. Each of our clients needs to track performance in an efficient manner, and staff in client organizations can't all be data systems gurus.

Over a decade ago, I was chatting with a colleague of mine named Michael O'Malley. He had worked with me in the 90s when I did not even know the power of a spreadsheet. Michael actually built my first desktop computer. Given our long history and his great success in developing data-driven solutions for his clients, he convinced me that our clients needed a web-based data system that could:

- Assist managers who were located in different cities and states to feel connected to their staff's performance
- Allow AMTC to measure performance for its clients in real time
- Allow educators to have an easy way to record outputs and outcomes in a timely way

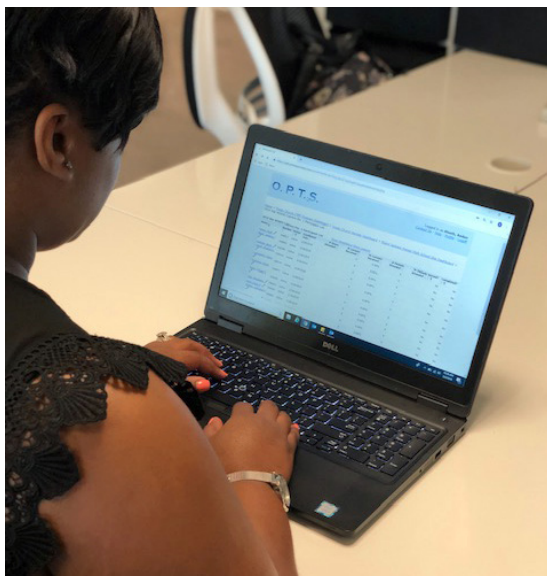
- Catch problems to remedy issues and replicate successes
- Autogenerate reports to ensure accuracy and timeliness

Since the Online Participant Tracking System (OPTS) launched in 2007, Michael and his partner in Two Island Solutions, Benjamin Bernard, have maintained and evolved OPTS, continuing to innovate so that the system grows with AMTC and adapts quickly to changing program requirements. In this newsletter, I invite you to read more about OPTS, along with a case study and a profile of the OPTS co-designer.

Please let us know how AMTC & Associates can keep your programming on track. We look forward to hearing from you.

Angela Turner  
Principal





# OPTS

## *Optimizes Programming*

Clients can quickly see what is working and what isn't and make changes to improve their programs.

Staff at AMTC & Associates utilize measurement and assessment tools to provide continuous program improvement and to maintain the highest degree of effectiveness for staff to perform their work. An essential technology tool is the Online Participant Tracking System, or OPTS. OPTS is an online platform designed exclusively for AMTC that allows program partners and AMTC associates to address programming strengths and needs in real time during the entire duration of a grant cycle.

### **Unique in Its Flexibility**

What is unique about OPTS is that it is flexible enough to address the specific programming models and needs of each partnering organization, such as for a specific program, clientele, geographic area, and whatever else the partnering organization and AMTC deem important for success.

"It is a versatile participation tracking, case management, data aggregation and reporting tool that can be tailored to meet the diverse needs of any program," said Melanie Porterfield, AMTC Senior Evaluation Associate. "OPTS can operate either

as a sole data capture and reporting solution for small programs/organizations, or work in concert with existing data systems, to provide a configurable case management or class management solution for specific programs within an organization."

### **Accurate and Efficient Data Tracking**

At the same time, no matter what is being addressed, OPTS ensures that data and feedback is measured accurately and efficiently. One of the factors that make OPTS efficient and powerful is that data is inputted from the physical sites where the programs take place. This allows for an organization's staff to enter data and provide feedback as it happens, as well as to have an integral stake in the data-gathering process.

Michael O'Malley, a Principal of Two Island Solutions, the firm that built the OPTS platform with AMTC, explained that OPTS enables "program and partner staff to enter data through the web interface at the site/participant level at key milestones, for example, at enrollment, after a classroom or other activity,

after completing a post training/class follow-up, and key program delivery milestones."

### **Timely Data Affects Lives**

What makes data meaningful? "Having the data allows you to see what's working and what isn't and to focus on more of what's working and improving what isn't," said O'Malley. Porterfield agrees, adding, "Gathering data helps to report on program reach, community engagement, recruitment and retention, maintaining fidelity and quality, continuous quality improvement activities, implementation challenges, and sustainability."

Data is not just a set of numbers or isolated feedback. To the contrary, the role of data is essential to informing decisions about making programs more effective—programming that affects lives. Data reporting also holds all stakeholders accountable to federal performance measures, thereby affecting an organization's sustainability and future chances to receive further funding through grants. Thanks to OPTS, data and assessments keep everyone on track for peak performance. ■

# Being **PREPARED**

*with* OPTS

The continuation of a client's program was in jeopardy until OPTS data demonstrated its success and saved the day.

Being prepared sets the stage for success. Thanks to the Online Participant Tracking System (OPTS), AMTC & Associates is even more prepared to respond to the next challenge.

As an illustration, a particular client of AMTC had longstanding success with implementing teen pregnancy prevention programs in area schools; however, due to the high turnover of school principals across the district, the client was in jeopardy of losing its programming at these particular schools—for no other reason than newly hired principals were unaware of the success of these programs. In other words, new principals could cut the program at their discretion.

This required the client to prove the value of the teen pregnancy prevention program. AMTC's client had to "resell" the program to new principals in order to continue teen pregnancy prevention programming.

OPTS to the rescue! From previous school years, educators had completed attendance and fidelity logs (information that tracks adherence to the curricula) through OPTS. These benchmarks can determine whether a particular

participant completed a program, as well as the total percentage of students who fulfilled program requirements. Participants had also filled out information such as satisfaction surveys, measuring whether the students found the program helpful and whether the educators leading the programming were engaging, among other indicators.

The results spoke for themselves. Not one principal disallowed future programming; there was 100% buy-in. Even the way in which the results were delivered to the new principals was impressive, with an eye-catching program-at-a-glance that highlighted this client's amazing work. It all goes back to being prepared with a system in place for any situation that might arise.

Thanks, OPTS! ■



## KEY FEATURES

- Allows for flexible, configurable data that can be customized to each organization/program
- Enables program management, staff, and evaluation team members to manage all aspects of a program online
- Can function as an independent tracking system or in concert with pre-existing data systems
- Effective for organizations and programs of all sizes
- Can manage programming assessments and data throughout the entire duration of a grant cycle for continuous quality improvement
- If more than one provider is assisting participants, those different providers can all work in concert with each other through OPTS
- Milestones are clearly defined and measured
- Includes participation data and demographics
- Helps to determine best practices, specific to each organization, program and locale
- Facilitates fidelity and is utilized as a reporting tool to the organizations that fund grants
- Provides meaningful and relevant data that leads to collaborative efforts toward strengthening programs

# Get to Know OPTS Co-Designer

## Michael O'Malley



Michael O'Malley is Co-Principal of Two Island Solutions and co-designed OPTS, along with his business partner, Benjamin Bernard. They continue to maintain and make advancements for OPTS, thereby providing AMTC clients with a powerful tool.

**When did you begin collaborating with AMTC & Associates?**  
In 2004.

**What past experiences do you have in regards to the work that you do?**  
I have over 20 years of technical, brand, strategy and management consulting experience, across a variety of different clients, including non-profit, pharmaceutical, financial services, entertainment and insurance.

**Could you explain your work in terms of what you do for AMTC?**  
Through Two Island Solutions, we partner with AMTC to enable small-to-medium community-based organizations to effectively manage a variety of different programs and grants through a case management and program tracking tool called OPTS.

**What has your experience been like working with AMTC?**  
AMTC is a great organization that has always been focused on helping organizations who deal with communities in need to serve their

participants more effectively. AMTC has been a great partner and it's been an honor for us to collaborate with them.

**How do you ensure that OPTS meets the needs of each organization?**  
We work closely with the AMTC program lead to document the specific requirements for each grant program and organization. We perform a gap analysis to determine whether these needs can be met by OPTS through configuration, or if system enhancements are necessary. The tool is then set up for the organization and validated by the AMTC program partner and key client stakeholders. This standard process helps us make sure that the tool is collecting the right data for the program and providing the necessary metrics for ongoing program monitoring and quality assurance.

**What do you hope to accomplish with your work as it moves forward?**  
We are looking forward to continuing to work with AMTC to help organizations make a difference in the lives of people in the communities they serve, by evolving the technology to support the insights and experience that the AMTC organization provides.

**Outside of work, what do you enjoy?**  
Music and travel.

## Clients & Programs Currently Using OPTS

### Trinity Church

Miami, FL and Harlem, NY. *Partner since 2006.*

- Personal Responsibility Education
- Sexual Risk Avoidance Education
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention
- Title V Sexual Risk Avoidance

### Mission West Virginia

Hurricane, WV. *Partner since 2007.*

- Sexual Risk Avoidance Education
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention
- Title V Sexual Risk Avoidance

### OIC of South Florida

Fort Lauderdale, FL. *Partner since 2004.*

- Sexual Risk Avoidance Education
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention

### Better Family Life

St. Louis, MO. *Partner since 2005.*

- Sexual Risk Avoidance Education
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention

### Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee

Milwaukee, WI. *Partner since 2006.*

- Teen Pregnancy Prevention

### Community Action of Southeast West Virginia

Bluefield, WV. *Partner since 2007.*

- Title V Sexual Risk Avoidance

### Rainelle Medical Center

Rainelle, WV. *Partner since 2007.*

- Title V Sexual Risk Avoidance

### Regeneration, Inc.

Harrisville, WV. *Partner since 2007.*

- Title V Sexual Risk Avoidance