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The Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council (LEITSC): Frequently Asked Questions

By Heather Ruzbasan Cotter, LEITSC Project Manager, IACP, and Meghann Tracy, Project Support Specialist, IACP

What is LEITSC?

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Sheriffs' Association, and Police Executive Research Forum make up LEITSC, also known simply as the Council. The Council consists of 10 people: each organization contributes one member and one staff liaison, and a project support specialist and the project manager round out the group. Together, these participants represent the law enforcement community as a whole on issues related to information technology (IT) standards.

What is the mission of LEITSC?

The mission of LEITSC is to foster the growth of strategic planning and implementation of integrated justice systems through the following actions:

- Promoting the merits of IT standards
- Providing advice to the law enforcement community on standards
- Sharing practical solutions
- Representing the voice of law enforcement

Has LEITSC developed IT standards for the law enforcement community?

Yes. In 2006 LEITSC published *Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems*¹ and *Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Records Management Systems (RMS)*.² These documents are designed to help guide law enforcement agencies during the request-for-proposal (RFP) and procurement processes and to inform law enforcement about the basic functions that all CAD systems and RMS should have in order to achieve interoperability.

What are standard functional specifications?

Standard functional specifications define the work that a system is expected to perform. For the purposes of the LEITSC project, the list of requirements governs, defines, and/or regulates specific tasks, activities, and operations that a CAD system and an RMS should perform from a practitioner's perspective.

What is CAD?

CAD is a computer system that assists 911 operators and dispatch personnel in handling and prioritizing calls. Enhanced 911 sends information regarding the location of a call to the CAD system, which will automatically display the address of the 911 caller on a screen in front of the operator. Complaint information is then entered into the computer and is easily retrieved. The system may be linked to a mobile data computer (MDC) in patrol cars, allowing dispatchers and officers to communicate without using voice. The system may also be interfaced with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), or several other programs.

What is an RMS?

An RMS stores computerized records of crime incident reports and other data. It may automatically compile information for Uniform Crime Report (UCR) or National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) reporting. It can perform greater functions when integrated with other systems such as CAD and global positioning (GPS).

What is information exchange package (IEP) documentation?

IEP documentation (sometimes known as IEPD) is a collection of artifacts that describe the structure and content of an IEP. It does not specify other interface layers (such as Web services). It can be preceded by "GJXDM" (Global Justice XML Data Model) to indicate or highlight that a resulting IEP conforms to GJXDM. This term replaces "Exchange Document."

Who participated in the development of the standard functional specifications for CAD systems and RMS?

LEITSC created two committees, known as LEITSC functional standards committees, to develop the specifications for CAD systems and RMS. The CAD Functional Standards Committee included law enforcement practitioners and industry representatives who were knowledgeable in CAD. The same idea was used for the RMS Functional Standards Committee to develop the RMS specifications.

What are the benefits to public safety and industry of using the standard functional specifications for CAD systems and RMS?

The CAD system and RMS standard functional specifications can

- serve as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of business processes and existing IT systems,
- identify functions to be supported by IT systems,
- help identify common data and exchange points for sharing information with other agencies,
- serve as a tool to ensure integration between CAD systems and RMS,
- ensure customer satisfaction by decreasing gaps in communication between vendor and customer,
- facilitate vendor responses to RFPs because the product will relate to the standard functional specifications, and
- serve as a guide to build integrated systems while helping to reduce the proliferation of systems that are expensive for both the agency and the vendor.

Why were standard functional specifications developed for CAD systems and RMS?

Before systems are procured, agency staff must research available technology, conduct needs assessments, and write RFPs, all of which require time and money. Defending RFPs and the decisions based on them can be problematic if staff cannot document transparency and objectiveness. RFPs are often researched and written in a vacuum, with each agency reinventing the

wheel in defining their requirements, despite the fact that most functions are common to most commercially available systems.

In addition, there were few or no universally agreed-upon requirements that dictate how CAD systems and RMS should perform to facilitate business processes, let alone share information with other agencies across jurisdictional and disciplinary lines. To add to the problem, great communication gaps often separate law enforcement agencies from the vendor community, particularly when it comes to system expectations.

The standard functional specifications for CAD systems and RMS were developed to simplify the procurement and implementation process. Commonly agreed-upon standards for CAD systems and RMS provide a solid baseline for law enforcement agencies as they plan to procure these systems. In addition, the establishment of these functional requirements will provide direction to the vendor community as they construct CAD and RMS products.

My agency would like to use the standard functional specifications for CAD systems and/or RMS. Is technical assistance available?

LEITSC can provide technical assistance to help your agency. This resource is available at no cost.

Does LEITSC provide any financial assistance for implementing a new system using the functional specifications?

Although LEITSC does not provide financial assistance, it can direct you to funding sources.

How is LEITSC funded?

LEITSC is supported by a grant awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Whom can I contact for more information about LEITSC?

Please contact Heather Ruzbasan Cotter, LEITSC project manager, for more information via e-mail at cotter@theiacp.org, or visit the LEITSC Web site at www.leitsc.org;

Notes:

¹ Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council, *Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems* (n.p.: published with support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance and National Institute of Justice, 2006), www.leitsc.org/Law%20Enforcement%20CAD%20Systems.pdf, May 4, 2007.

² Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council, *Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Records Management Systems (RMS)* (n.p.: published with support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance and National Institute of Justice, 2006), www.leitsc.org/Law%20Enforcement%20RMS.pdf, May 4, 2007.

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ABBREVIATIONS	AVL	Automatic Vehicle Location	MDC	Mobile data computer
	CAD	Computer-aided dispatch	NCIC	National Crime Information Center
	GPS	Global Positioning System	NIBRS	National Incident-Based Reporting System
	GJXDM	Global Justice XML Data Model	RFP	Request for proposal
	IEP	Information exchange package	RMS	Records management system
	IT	Information technology	UCR	Uniform Crime Report
	LEITSC	Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council		

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