



Exhibitors at the Preston roadshow were: Tait, Cyfas Systems, APD, Arqiva, European, Antennas, Traka, Autopage, Samdale, PJ & RHS, Panorama, Microbus.

BAPCO President Ian Readhead pointed out that BAPCO was attempting to create a nationally-accredited control room standard and asked whether Kinsella felt that that kind of initiative would be a useful enabler. "I think there is a need but I'm not sure about a willingness." Kinsella added that he'd created the idea of a 'superior controller' that would draw information from all three services to oversee joint operations and provide interoperability. "And there are assumptions that we all work the same way and, having discussed it with my fire and ambulance colleagues I'm not convinced silver and gold mean exactly the same for fire, police, and ambulance."

One delegate asked when he could expect to receive guidance on interoperability across all three services, and Kinsella said that category 1 guidance should be concluded around March next year.

Project SECRIKOM – Seamless Communication for Crisis Management: John Stoodley, Ahmed Aldabbagh and David Traynor of QinetiQ

SECRIKOM (Seamless Communication for Crisis Management) is a collaborative research project of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) aiming at the development of a reference security platform for EU crisis management operations. It emerged after September 2006 when the European Security Research Advisory Board (ESRAB) published a report setting the European security research agenda that "contained basic requirements. The project consortium consists of 13 EU organisations, coordinated in the UK by QinetiQ Portsmouth, which is represented by Mr John Stoodley (Project Manager), Dr Ahmed Aldabbagh (Technical Lead) and Mr David Traynor (Exploitations).

"We don't want this to be just a research project that sits there, we want it focused and to identify where ideas can be further exploited," explained David Traynor.

Ahmed picked up from David. "This project is not only aimed at the UK emergency services but also spans across Europe. Being driven by the European end user requirements means that interoperability problems are at the heart of this project. As we learned earlier, trying to integrate the UK emergency services is difficult. Here, we have to achieve integration across international boundaries as well." Clearly, the project team's ambitions are to solve or mitigate current problems in crisis communications infrastructure, and add

usability while helping tri-collaboration and interworking between different emergency responders across Europe.

Ahmed outlined some challenges for the technological solution developers in terms of reliability, security, applications and infrastructure, adding that at the centre of the information delivery system there had to be a dynamic system management and control capability. To cater for the need for governance, "elements of confidentiality, integrity and availability are necessary to address questions such as who needs to know what, how accurate information is and what is the point of having a multibillion dollar system that isn't there when you need it?"

SECRIKOM is being designed to use multiple communications bearers – including legacy equipment. "We don't want to exclude anyone out of the game," said Ahmed. Multiple bearers increase resilience and ensure information delivery; irrespective of whether by carrier pigeon or fibre optics, "this is all about information and the guaranteeing of its delivery."

The emerging IP version 6 standard has been chosen as the communication protocol. This is because of its non-proprietary "open" nature that inherently brings technological interoperability and overcomes some of the shortcomings of the current IP version 4 standard, as used by the internet, particularly with regards to exhaustion of address space and security.

SECRIKOM is likely to adopt an overlay network infrastructure, neatly bypassing legacy problems that would inevitably cause problems if they were to be connected together with a simple interface. "Why do we like this approach? By their nature, the availability of a given network changes in time. An overlay network built upon a number of other networks has the ability to present a fairly static network to the end users given the time-varying networks upon which it is built. Clearly, this approach has an inherent robustness providing graceful degradation, recoverability (e.g. self-healing) and extendibility capabilities. User mobility is well catered for by the architecture leading to an increased level of communications sustainability in areas of where current communication coverage is low. It is also the means to bring different people and technology vendors to the party, along with IP version 6."

David concluded by saying that the project aimed to make the end user agnostic to the technology and to demonstrate it as such. "The program has just started so we can only say what we think the problems are and outline our aspirations within our intended road map."

Project MESA – high bandwidth, self healing communication networks applied to highways emergencies in England: Peter Kenington, (Highways Agency/WSP/Linear Communications)

Project MESA is the name given to the research and development work that the Highways Agency (HA) is currently undertaking to examine the use of mobile broadband technology to enhance the communications capability for its Traffic Officer Service as well as improve inter-working with the emergency services. Peter Kenington, speaking on behalf of the HA's Project MESA team, presented on MESA system's capabilities.

Besides the benefits of improved inter-working and data sharing with the emergency services, MESA technology



Dr Ahmed Aldabbagh, QinetiQ, presented on project SECRIKOM.