

**Progress through Public and Private Collaboration:  
An Update on the  
Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council**

The Law Enforcement Standards Council (LEITSC) continues to make progress toward its goal of developing functional and technical standards for law enforcement information technology. The overriding purpose of LEITSC is to provide standards and guidelines that will enhance the opportunity for law enforcement data integration across disparate information systems. During the past several months, LEITSC has examined the work conducted by other committees, such as the work done in the area of Courts and Corrections, with an eye toward their success in setting information technology standards. The LEITSC has also worked to define the landscape of criminal justice information technology standards to help determine the full scope of the issue. With the fundamental aspects of the project defined, LEITSC is now ready to start the process of developing the functional standards for law enforcement information technology.

The development of functional information technology standards for Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management Systems (RMS) are the key areas of concentration for the Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council (LEITSC) over the coming months. As the project evolves, the LEITS Council will begin addressing other law enforcement information technology processes through the development of standards. It is important to note, however, that information collected, collated and stored in both CAD and RMS constitutes the bulk of data exchanged between police and law enforcement agencies. In light of the fundamental importance of CAD and RMS to information sharing, it follows that initial efforts for the council should be inclined toward establishing CAD and RMS standards.

Although establishing standards in CAD and RMS brings the most value to LEITSC efforts, the work is detailed and complex, requiring a broad range of technical competencies. The volume of data elements captured in CAD and RMS, the varying processes for storage of data, reconciliation of data elements, designating namespaces, mapping source data requirements, all speak to the need for a high level of expertise in LEITS efforts. Complicating the mix is the continual changing base of knowledge in information technology. In effecting the development of functional standards to assist law enforcement in developing an effective information-sharing capacity, the LEITS Council must also guarantee that functional standards developed by the Council are timely, based on current technologies and workable in real-life circumstances.

To address these issues, the LEITS Council and its functional standards sub-committees will increasingly rely on the expertise of information technology

partners like the *Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute* and *SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics*.

The *IJIS Institute*, formed in 2001 out of collaboration between the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Integrated Justice Information Systems Industry Working Group (IWG), harmonizes the experience and technical knowledge of the vendor community with state and local governments as they contemplate integration of their information technology systems. *IJIS Institute* promotes the expertise, knowledge and experience of the private sector information technology industry in a way that benefits both public and private sector objectives.

*SEARCH* is a non-profit membership organization of member States, with the mandate to “improving the criminal justice system and the quality of justice through better information management, the effective application of information and identification technology, and responsible law and policy.”<sup>1</sup> Formed in 1969, *SEARCH* provides the LEITS Council with knowledge gained from experiences with systems integration projects undertaken by a myriad of government agencies.

Establishing partnerships with the vendor community early in the project will greatly enhance the work of the LEITS Council. To some extent, the success of the LEITSC project depends on the vendor community adopting the functional standards that the Council is developing. Clearly, the vendor community has an interest in the work done by the Council, but they also have experience and information that should prove beneficial for the process of developing functional standards. Collaborating with the vendor community will provide an opportunity for their input as the standards are developed. The effort to provide on-going participation could preclude major obstacles in the future. Additionally, by seeking input and collaboration during the process of developing the standards, the vendor community will be in a much better position to incorporate the standards into their products in the future.

*IJIS Institute* and *SEARCH* bridge the gaps between the public and private sectors by partnering with those in the information technology industry that understand the challenges and can help with defining the solutions to systems integration issues in the criminal justice community. These partnerships will be instrumental to the success of the LEITSC functional standards subcommittees since industry experts will actively participate in the identification, review and validation of CAD and RMS functional standards.

The functional standards subcommittee will review and validate the standards for CAD and RMS with the assistance of computer-aided modeling tools. The process of modeling a system or series of systems equates to the development

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.search.org/default.asp>

of a construction plan or blueprint. Computer-aided modeling manages and displays the complex functional relationships within information systems, and it provides a common framework to capture and analyze information from a variety of sources. Incorporating computer-aided modeling will allow the LEITSC functional standards subcommittees to completely understand the complex interrelationships of data elements in CAD and RMS, and allow for a more efficient process of review, identification and validation of standards that are developed.

Work in the functional subcommittees will occur over three phases. Phase One will involve information gathering and tool modification. The subcommittees will identify the current functions in CAD and RMS and create a baseline conceptual framework of standards for each function. Phase Two activities will see the expansion of the modeling conceptual framework into a full model, one that meets the requirements set out by the LEITS Council. Work will commence on validating the standards identified in the full model. In Phase Three the, subcommittees will concentrate on generating a diagram of standards and validation of those standards. Supplementary reports will be made to the full LEITS Council before approval to complete a final version of standards for CAD and RMS. Final version results will be submitted to the Justice Standards Registry where they will become available to all agencies.

The development of standards for law enforcement information systems is indeed a long and complex effort. The technical intricacies involved in this effort dictate the need for sustained and strong working relationships with industry leaders, government agencies and other law enforcement IT professionals. However, proceeding cautiously, with a comprehensive approach to the process is necessary to ensure the integrity of the final product.

The LEITS Council remains committed to developing IT standards for the effective sharing of information in law enforcement. The LEITS Council will continue to identify and leverage relationships with a variety of industry and government partners to meet this objective.

For more information on the work of the LEITS Council, please contact Terry Chowanec at PERF at (202) 454-8315 (tchowanec@policeforum.org), or PERF's LEITS Council representative, Assistant Chief Larry Boyd of the Arlington Texas Police Department at (817) 459-5718 (boydl@ci.arlington.tx.us). The LEITSC website is found at <http://www.iacptechnology.org/LEITSC/LEITSCIndex.htm>, where you can find current updates of the council's progress. The LEITSC project manager is Ms. Jennifer Hicks and she can be contacted at [hicksj@theiacp.org](mailto:hicksj@theiacp.org).