

Review of Models, Simulations, and Games

The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) partnered with ThoughtLink to review models, simulations, and games (MS&G), to identify which products could meet federal, state, and local training and exercising (T&E) needs. The potential benefits of MS&G include increased T&E frequency, delivery, and realism. They also have the potential to lower costs, facilitate event planning, enhance feedback, improve lessons learned, and offer safer T&E conditions. Possible disadvantages include high costs, often due to customization or other vendor support that may be required.

The resulting report reviews domestic preparedness T&E requirements and nearly 100 MS&G. In order to help readers make informed decisions, the report discusses key factors to consider at the product category level, and provides detailed evaluations of individual products. No single group of MS&G products can be recommended that will work for all communities, because they cover such a broad range of characteristics and capabilities – from simple training media, such as reference tools and CD-ROMs, to complex multi-team computer simulations. Of the 100 products reviewed, nearly all are suitable for some kind of T&E. This report describes advantages and limitations of product categories and provides some selection guidance.

The positive news from this project is that MS&G have significant potential to fundamentally improve T&E programs:

- New T&E niches can be filled
- MS&G offer the potential to increase frequency of T&E and expand program reach to many more T&E participants
- Many suitable products are available today.

There are two reports available through ODP's website (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/exercises.htm>) or the ODP Secure Portal (<https://odp.esportals.com>)

Volume III: Review of Models, Simulations, and Games (MS&G) for Domestic Preparedness Training and Exercising (March 2004). This report includes:

- discussion of potential benefits and pitfalls of using MS&G in T&E
- analysis of nearly 1100 T&E requirements collected during this project
- analysis of 100 MS&G products reviewed, at an aggregate (vs. individual product) level
- discussion of how various kinds of MS&G can be used in T&E and examples of their use.

Volume III Product Reviews. This consists of detailed reviews of each of the 100 products, including contact and cost information, hardware and software requirements, and T&E attributes, such as whether the product can be used for training and exercising of individual or teams, the functional areas it supports, and more.