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O N L I N E   E X C L U S I V E

Research Program Offers ISSI Test Tool
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PSCR

By Sandra Wendelken, Editor

A free software tool from the federal Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program allows agencies and vendors to test Project 25 (P25) Inter-RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI) compliance.

The ISSI Test Tool (ITT) is currently available free to the public. The ITT project is being hosted at https://p25-wireline.dev.java.net.

Most of the interest in the ITT software has come from the ISSI vendor and systems integrator community. "This makes intuitive sense since vendors are trying to get their products ready to be commercially available," said Kameron Behnam, electronics engineer. Commercial ISSI-based products are expected to be available in late fourth quarter 2009.

The vendors and systems integrators that have shown interest in the tool include EADS North America, EF Johnson Technology, General Dynamics, Harris, Motorola and PowerTrunk, said Behnam.

A few state agencies have also expressed interest in ITT. In 2008, ITT was used to capture and interpret ISSI traffic obtained from the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) network. At the time, the Arizona DPS was evaluating the performance of a trial ISSI-based system. In late 2008, the state of Idaho was looking into using ITT to run conformance tests to help evaluate ISSI-based infrastructure that it was considering purchasing.

"Since the Web site does not track who is downloading the software, there may be other state, local and federal agencies that are using the software who we do not know of," said Behnam. "Once commercial ISSI-based products become widely available on the market and agencies start to procure these systems, interest in the software will likely pick up."
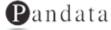
The PSCR program is a partnership between the Institute for Telecommunication Sciences (ITS) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Office of Law Enforcement Standards (OLES). The PSCR laboratories provide research, development, testing and evaluation to foster nationwide communications interoperability. The PSCR program provides insight to wireline and wireless standards committees developing standards for voice, data, image and video communications.

It is not mandatory that vendors use the ITT software to demonstrate that their ISSI product meets the requirements of the P25 Compliance Assessment Program (CAP). If a vendor has another CAP-approved method that demonstrates their ISSI product meets the requirements set forth by the CAP, the vendor can use that method.

There are three full time ITS staff working on the development and validation of ITT. The Web site has been in operation for almost a year, and the ITT software is in release 6. This project is sponsored by the Homeland Security's Office for Interoperability and Compatibility.

Your comments are welcome, click here.

Pandata