VQiPS Working Group

Project Description

SNAPSHOT

Public safety practitioners rely heavily on video technology as a tool by which to keep the Nation safe. Poor quality video footage can have serious implications and may mean the difference between life and death. Through the Video Quality in Public Safety (VQiPS) initiative, public safety practitioners, Federal partners, manufacturers, and representatives of standards making bodies are working to improve the way in which video technologies serve the public safety community.

BACKGROUND

In the past, many practitioners relied on manufacturers to provide video equipment specifications. However, as video technology has evolved, the equipment options have become increasingly complex. As a result, many public safety agencies now lack the tools, support, and information they need to make informed video system purchasing decisions. Unbiased guidance is essential for practitioners to clearly articulate their video quality needs.

In 2008, the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility within the Command, Control and Interoperability Division partnered with the Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program to form the VQiPS Working Group. The VQiPS Working Group is comprised of volunteers from each public safety discipline, including law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services from the local, state, and Federal levels, as well as representatives from industry, Federal agencies, academia, and non-profit organizations. Together, these entities work to coordinate disparate video standard development efforts and ultimately arm public safety consumers with the knowledge they need to purchase and deploy the right video systems to fulfill their missions.

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

The VQiPS Working Group's effort consists of the following steps:

1. Conduct a survey of video quality standards and specifications that have been developed for all application areas within public safety.
2. Create a framework for specific application areas to state their requirements in generalized terms that are common to all (or most) applications.
3. Create a guide to assist agencies in mapping these generalized requirements to any existing specifications and standards that might apply to them, even if the specifications have been developed for a seemingly very different application.
4. Determine the areas where specifications have not been developed, and guide the current research to these areas.

VALUE TO PUBLIC SAFETY

The VQiPS Working Group provides a forum in which stakeholders can educate each other on their work, and collaborate on next steps and future solutions, thereby reducing the duplication of efforts.

RESULTS

VQiPS workshops and international collaborative efforts are providing:

- A community approach to accelerating standards for utility video.
- A sharing of lessons learned from past and current video projects.
- A clear roadmap to move from current state to future state of video quality .
- A plan of action to support the practitioner and inform the manufacturer.