




F O R W A R D

Steady Advance



Technical solutions to interoperability abound. The goal of interoperability requires many concurrent considerations, all of which must be in place for success. Resource identification, planning, governance, SOPs and training are prerequisites to success. The technical side of interoperability is the foundation upon which these prerequisites stand.

Technical interoperability is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. The ultimate, optimal scenario would be every public safety agency operating in a single cohesive frequency band, using the same technical implementation technology.

The truth is there are as many technical variations as there are agencies. The majority of regions across the country use a mélange of frequency bands and system technology. With the limited possibility of all these agencies, even on a region-by-region-basis, realistically being able to conjoin into a single technical platform for their day-to-day operations, we must address other considerations.

The most common solution to the problem of disparate radio systems is the integration of the various systems via a method commonly referred to as a "gateway."

Many dispatch centers can patch radio channels on their consoles, with varying degrees of success. Most console operations have certain limitations when joining systems, in order to allow cross-jurisdiction and/or cross-discipline communications.

Depending on the technical-resource criteria and compatibility (and disregarding the issues of planning, training, SOP and governance), this is a viable solution in many dispatch centers.

More recently we have seen the development of specialized "switches" designed to make the process of interconnecting systems more

straightforward. These interconnection switches vary greatly.

Some are very sophisticated. Each has its pros and cons, along with varying price tags.

One commonality of these gateway solutions is their ability to connect existing channels and/or talk groups. They require either connection to existing radio equipment, essentially integrating into one or multiple existing systems/radios, or entirely new radios that become integrated into the switch (gateway). In essence, they are only a more sophisticated version of the console patch.

Interoperability: Technical Solutions

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