HSIN | Homeland Security Information Network

THE HSIN ADVOCATE

A Message from Rear Admiral Robert E. Day, Jr.
Assistant Commandant for Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology (C4IT)
Commander, Coast Guard Cyber Command

HSIN: Integral to USCG Planning

HSIN is an integral part of the Coast Guard's planning effort for any major event, incident or exercise—and has been for several years. HSIN provides a common platform for multiple users from multiple agencies to collaborate in a Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU)/For Official Use Only (FOUO) environment. The utility of HSIN lies in its security, ease of access (once an account is established), ease of use, availability of the Jabber chat tool, the availability of HSIN Connect and, ultimately, its low cost to the unit and the Coast Guard.

Coast Guard and HSIN: Since 2004

The Coast Guard has been using HSIN for more than a decade; even further back than the 2004 G8 Summit where HSIN was used to provide an internet-based counterterrorism communications system for use by Homeland Security officials, State and Local leadership and first responders at Sea Island, Georgia. Now the Coast Guard regularly uses HSIN as a coordination tool for exercises and missions that require multi-agency, real-time collaboration.

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, the Coast Guard used HSIN extensively to share SBU information with other Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies all conducting concurrent response operations along the Gulf Coast. HSIN provided the ability to rapidly vet users from inside and outside the government. Coupled with the real-time command and control capabilities of the Jabber Thick Client's first responder's role-based identification, HSIN has become the Coast Guard's collaboration tool of choice for any incident, event or exercise.

Coast Guard policies instruct internal uses of HSIN. During any significant Department of Homeland Security event, operational units are required to post daily operations summaries (OPSUM) to HSIN. Additionally, units are directed to use HSIN whenever the CGOne Network and/or the Record Message System are not accessible. Moreover, many Coast Guard operational units, particularly Sectors and Districts within hurricane prone regions, have incorporated HSIN document repository functions into their Continuity of Operations plans. Posting critical documents to HSIN, such as personnel recall rosters, checklists and status summaries, as well as port partner information, allows mutual read/write access.

A Strong Partnership Now and in the Future

The Coast Guard's use of HSIN continues to evolve with time. Last year, at the Super Bowl, HSIN proved itself again. When the power went out, there was suspicion of a terrorist attack. HSIN continued to work, with no loss of data. This was the first notable, successful use of the HSIN mobile applications capability, even with no available electricity. Now, Coast Guard District 13 is nearing completion of a HSIN mobile site that enables 87-foot patrol boats, which typically operate near shore within cellular range, to send and post the required daily OPSUM entries directly to HSIN via wireless mobile devices while underway.

Districts have proposed best practice uses on HSIN as well, including widespread requests for the Jabber Thick Client within HSIN and incorporating the National Interagency Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) into HSIN. These are just a few examples of how the Coast Guard relies on HSIN and will continue to value HSIN's information sharing platform for years to come.

HSIN and RISSNET™ Announce New Online Partnership for Secure Information Sharing

The Department's Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) has added another partner to the HSIN network to provide secure, streamlined sharing of mission critical information in support of homeland security professionals nationwide. On March 6, the Regional Information Sharing System® (RISSNET™) link went live on HSIN Central (the primary landing page for HSIN users).

RISSNET is a Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) system serving thousands of Federal, State, Local and Tribal criminal justice agencies in their effort to identify, detect, deter, prevent and solve criminal and terrorist-related investigations. As a federated partner, HSIN users will now be able to use their login credentials to automatically access the RISSNET landing page, TechPage and Automated Trusted Information Exchange (ATIX). This is only the first step in the partnership and access is expected to expand later this year.

RISSNET

RISS

www.riss.net

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"This exciting new partnership between HSIN and RISSNET will greatly benefit HSIN users and is a monumental step for the HSIN program. Through this partnership, HSIN users can now access RISSNET directly from HSIN Central," said HSIN Program Director Donna Roy.

"RISSNET welcomes HSIN, a respected homeland security information sharing program, as a federated partner," said Donald Kennedy, chairman of the RISS National Policy Group. "The RISSNET partnership with HSIN will increase the information sharing capabilities of both networks."

HSIN is the nation's front door for sharing SBU homeland security information. It enables Federal, State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, International and Private Sector homeland security partners to achieve their missions through information sharing.

If you would like more information about this or other partnerships, please contact HSIN Outreach at **HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov**.

Flood Preparedness: How HSIN Can Help

As spring nears, the potential for flooding increases. Providing updates to Federal, State and Local officials responding to a natural disaster can be a logistical challenge. In 2011, flooding along the Mississippi River required rapid and constant collaboration between Federal, State and Local government agencies to assist more than 4,000 people forced to evacuate their homes and businesses. HSIN ensured essential interagency cooperation by broadcasting announcements and enabling instant messaging and real-time discussions through the Coast Guard Command Center. During that event, dedicated HSIN portals kept local agencies informed and supported collaborative response efforts. The Coast Guard also used the Integrated Common Analytical Viewer to display maps with layers of resource information from a variety of sources.

Preparedness Tips:

1 Develop event pages in HSIN with predefined web parts and functionality that will be ready to go in the event of a flood.

2 When a flood seems likely, deploy your event response site. If necessary, HSIN Connect sessions and Jabber can be used for real-time information sharing between stakeholders.

3 Reach out to your HSIN Mission Advocate for support and best practice information learned from previous flooding events.

Contact **HSIN Outreach** for help with implementing these steps and visit the **National Flood Safety Awareness Week website** for general information and resources.

HSIN-CI Launches Air Domain Awareness (ADA) Portal

HSIN-CI
Air Domain
Awareness Portal

- **Added 2,000+ new HSIN users**
- **5,400 hits in first month**

The Critical Infrastructure Community of Interest (HSIN-CI) recently launched the Air Domain Awareness (ADA) Portal. The development of the site is the culmination of a 1-year effort to establish an information sharing resource for the aviation-related community and fulfills a recommendation of the 9/11 Commission. The ADA Portal enables everyone working in the air domain to share information and connect more easily in order to better identify potential or emerging threats.

The ADA Portal brings together members of the public and private sectors in a robust environment that facilitates routine communication and collaboration as opposed to threat-based, emergency management. The site provides access to valuable, aviation-related information and intelligence in support of tactical and strategic decision making, expands intelligence and analytic capabilities and provides access to additional intelligence resources through a request for information (RFI) system. At its launch, the ADA Portal added more than 2,000 new users to HSIN and received 5,400 hits within the first month.

Moving forward, the ADA Portal Development Team plans to create customized sub-portals related to specific information sharing requirements. To request access to the ADA Portal, send an email with your name, work email address, title and position description to **HSINCI@hq.dhs.gov**.

HSIN Helps the Nationwide SAR Initiative Save Time and Money

The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI) Program Management Office transitioned from the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance, its host agency, into the missions of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). With no budget and no time, the FBI, in coordination with DHS, turned to HSIN Connect to provide necessary training across the United States to almost 60 fusion center locations within a 6-week time frame.

The NSI provides a process to share SARs that have a potential link to terrorism with state and major urban area fusion centers and FBI offices across the nation. Prior to the transition, the NSI relied on two networks to accomplish this objective—the FBI's eGuardian system and the NSI's Shared Space technologies. In an effort to increase system efficiency and reliability, the partner agencies involved in the transition process decided to pursue a single technology solution.

This solution was predicated on the most effective use of taxpayer dollars and leveraged best practices from the previous systems. The change required immediate training on the new technology for all affected stakeholders. HSIN Connect provided a reliable and easy to use training platform to share the presenter's screen showing the presentation and a live system demonstration. HSIN Connect enabled the FBI and DHS to provide training to multiple locations on the same day at no travel cost to any agency involved.

Upcoming Events

Homeland Security Congress
April 28, 2014, 1:40–2:40pm
Washington, DC
Panel: "Operational Success with Secure, Mission-Based Content Management and Collaboration Solutions"

Texas Emergency Management Conference (TEMC)
May 12–15, 2014
San Antonio, TX

GovSec / CPM East
May 14, 2014, 1:15–2:00pm
Washington, DC
"*Homeland Security Information Network: The Data You Need... Everyday*"

HSIN Team Member Spotlight:

Linda A. McBrearty
HSIN Communications Manager

As one of the newest members of the team, I joined HSIN in January as Communications Manager. To me, HSIN acts as a critical nervous system, connecting all levels of government and, essentially, letting the left hand know what the right is doing. My experience in both the private sector and Federal government has given me a broad understanding of Federal, State, Regional and Local interests, especially the urgent need for stakeholder coordination and information sharing. My goal is to work with the Communications and Mission Advocate Teams to create a distinguished brand that best reflects all the amazing things our users are accomplishing.

Not only am I new to HSIN, but I am also a newlywed with two sons, two stepsons and a grandson I completely adore. I am an East Tennessee native, which means sports and a love of the Smoky Mountains are in my blood. Since coming to the Capital Region, we are always looking for good, eclectic live music venues and I've had to transition my love of gardening to the planters on our balcony!

Site Owner Spotlight:
David Jackson (TX-IP COI)

Dave's Tip of the Day—Use the Alert Function

Dave Jackson, the lead critical infrastructure protection planner for the Texas Department of Public Safety, has one tip for HSIN users: use the alert function! Among the many benefits HSIN provides, Jackson favors the online document library, as it enables his team to share assessments and other work products with public and private sector partners in a secure, searchable environment. As beneficial as the document libraries are, the alert function is what makes them efficient. Jackson said, by setting up alerts, HSIN users can get the information they need without having "to log in and troll all their sites for what's changed."

Jackson knows what he's talking about. He is the Site Owner for the Texas Infrastructure Protection (TX-IP) Community of Interest (COI) and has been a HSIN user for seven years. As a Site Owner, Jackson uses TX-IP to provide sensitive, unclassified information, such as intelligence bulletins and threat and vulnerability assessments. He is currently working with HSIN Mission Advocates to build an outreach and implementation strategy to ensure that TX-IP is the primary vehicle for all information sharing between critical infrastructure partners in Texas.

Download the **February HSIN Advocate** or the **End User Quick Reference Guide** from HSIN Central to learn how to set up an alert.

Focus on a Feature:
HSIN Connect

HSIN Connect goes beyond basic web conferencing capabilities to provide real-time communications and situational awareness during incident response and event management operations. A series of videos is now available on HSIN Central highlighting Federal, State and Local **HSIN users sharing their experiences with HSIN Connect** during a variety of incident response and emergency management operations. Some of their tips include:

Open Separate Chat Pods
Chat pods enable users to quickly and easily share information from their desktop or mobile device. Opening separate chat pods focused on specific topics, such as medical transports, weather updates or incident responses, provides additional efficiency and the chat histories can be emailed as an official record after the event.

Seed Sessions with Valuable Information
When setting up a HSIN Connect session as a virtual command post or situational display board, immediately post key information, such as incident response plans, important contact information and relevant maps or floor plans. This material provides immediate value and encourages users to share additional information.

Reset Sessions Every 12 Hours
During long events, resetting a Connect session saves all the posted data, documents and chat histories and ensures that servers won't get overloaded and crash the connection. The best time to schedule a reset is during planned shift changes.

To learn more about how to best implement a HSIN Connect session, visit HSIN Central to **watch the Connect Day videos** and explore the **HSIN Connect Training Materials library**.

Got Stories?

Have you discovered a new way to use HSIN? Do you have an idea about how to improve network features? We want to hear about it! Let us know by sending an email to **HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov**.

Better yet, a picture tells a thousand words. If you have an image that helps tell the HSIN story and want to share it with the HSIN community at large, email it to us with a few brief words about your success story!