

Case Study: Western States Information Network Watch Center



Low-Cost, High-Performance Video Wall Solution Keeps Law Enforcement Safe from 'Friendly Fire'

Every day, the Western States Information Network (WSIN) provides supportive services that are critical for the United States law enforcement and criminal justice operations nationwide. WSIN ensures that collaborating law enforcement agencies do not conflict with each other's operations.

Critical to WSIN's mission is facilitating the timely exchange of intelligence as well as monitoring operations to minimize the risk of "friendly fire" incidents or other unintended interference.

To prevent accidental but potentially dangerous conflicts, a customized "deconfliction" software was installed at the WSIN watch center in 2008. Monitored 24/7 by a staff of analysts, all operations, surveillance, warrant service, and training missions are reported and the software promptly detects if officers from any other agency are in the proximity. In the software's first year alone, 101,565 incidents were reported with 80,222 officers notified that their operations were in conflict.

However, because each analyst was restricted to their own desktop PC that was only able to monitor their own region, WSIN began looking for a large display system solution, or "video wall," that would enable the simultaneous viewing of all regions in the United States, along with any critical areas, news feeds, and other sources of information.

After discovering that traditional hardware-based video wall systems were priced well beyond the agency's budget, WSIN turned to international monitor leader Samsung Electronics in search of a more affordable solution. Samsung introduced WSIN to business partner Hiperwall, an Irvine, Calif.-based firm. WSIN anticipated an investment of \$140,000 to implement a video wall, but Hiperwall offered a solution at a much lower cost. The Hiperwall software-centric solution required only ordinary PCs and monitors and a standard Ethernet network, making the technology more affordable than previous video wall technology.

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The Western States Information Network

Established in 1981 by the U.S. Congress, the Western States Information Network (WSIN) supports the information sharing needs required by law enforcement and criminal justice operations at the local, state, and federal levels for five Western states: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

To avoid conflicts, all operations, surveillance, warrant service, and training missions are reported, recorded in a database developed by the Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS), and posted on an interactive map at WSIN. The deconfliction software in the 24/7 watch center promptly detects if officers from any other agency are in proximity.

WSIN is a part of RISS, which has served the nation for 30 years and is composed of six regional centers, operating in unique multistate geographic regions, and offers services to local, state, federal, and tribal law enforcement and criminal justice agencies to enhance their ability to identify, target, and remove criminal conspiracies and activities spanning multijurisdictional, multistate and, sometimes, international boundaries. RISS supports investigation and prosecution efforts against terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, identity theft, cybercrime, organized criminal activity, criminal gangs, violent crime, and other regional priorities, while promoting officer safety. RISS provides information sharing services, investigative analysis support, equipment sharing, investigative funds support, training, and technical assistance to law enforcement and criminal justice agencies that are members of RISS.



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While the Hiperwall system can display still images up to 1GB resolution or larger, HD videos, or HD streaming content, WSIN officials were most interested in its ability to display PC applications, live video and TV on a bank of monitors composing an ultra-high resolution video wall. The system would enable WSIN to have multiple feeds displayed on the wall simultaneously with the ability to reposition and resize each feed as easily as moving and resizing windows on a PC desktop. Any feed could also be scaled up for viewing on several monitors or the entire wall instantly, at the user's discretion.

Glenn Gatbonton, assistant director at WSIN, visited Hiperwall's headquarters to view a live demonstration of the system. Gatbonton instantly realized that the system met WSIN's needs and a purchase order was signed a week later.

Today, the Hiperwall video wall lies at the heart of the WSIN watch center, displaying all crucial information in a single display. The system went live on Sept. 21, 2009, initially with eight monitors in a four-by-two video wall configuration. WSIN officials were so pleased with the performance, functionality and simplicity of the system that they expanded to 15 monitors two months later.

The new configuration features a six-by-two video monitor wall with additional remote monitors in the Director's office, Deputy Director's office, and in the conference room, so those outside the watch center can also keep tab on situations in real-time. The remote monitors are another unique feature of the Hiperwall system and can replicate the entire wall or display selected data feeds for those located away from the main video wall.

"The Hiperwall system was very easy to configure and our analysts are now able to view our deconfliction software, CNN news feeds, surveillance, maps, events tables, and conflict tables all at once in real-time due to Hiperwall's multi-source streaming flexibility," said Karen Aumond, Director of the Department of Justice at WSIN. "This gives anybody who comes in the watch center everything they need to see to know what is going on in the

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territory—on one screen. Most importantly, our analysts can now make better informed decisions.”

Aumond said the Hiperwall system adds another unforeseen benefit -- it instills confidence in law enforcement officers for their safety when they come through the watch center and see operations on the large detailed screen.

The Hiperwall is now a critical tool helping to manage the WSIN deconfliction software system more effectively. It ensures the success of tens of thousands operations and protects law enforcement officers. The positive impact of the Hiperwall on WSIN operations has led to it expanding into other regional watch centers and Homeland Security facilities.

WSIN System Architecture

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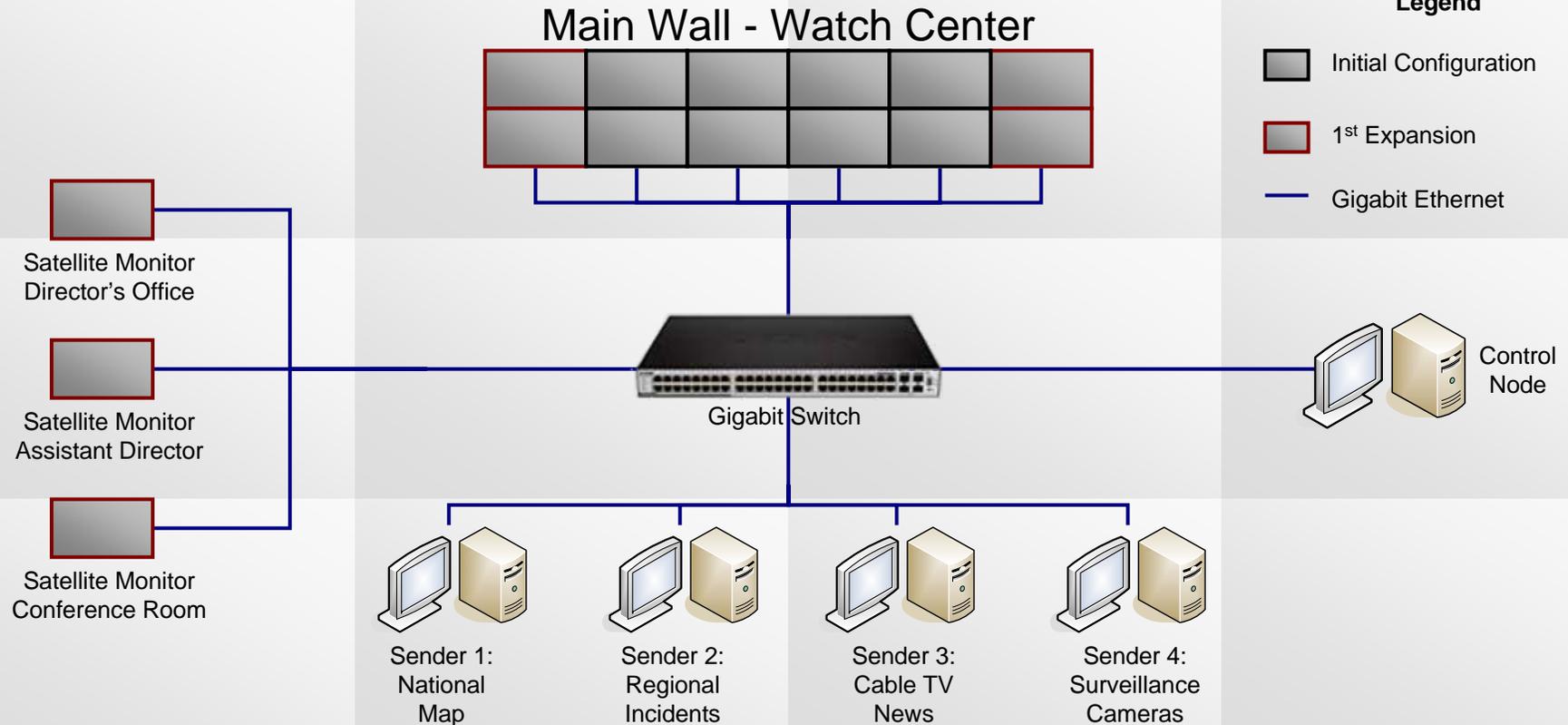
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Legend

 Initial Configuration

 1st Expansion

 Gigabit Ethernet



Like all Hiperwall installations, the WSIN system uses an ordinary gigabit Ethernet switch as the complete operating infrastructure. All 15 display nodes, the control node and all 4 sender nodes are directly connected to this switch via ordinary ethernet cabling. All command/control, content delivery and synchronization communications take place over the IP network that runs through this switch.

WSIN's initial deployment consisted of 8 display nodes, 1 control node and 4 sender nodes, all installed in the organization's watch center. After two months of use WSIN recognized the value of the technology and decided to increase the size and reach of their installation. They added 4 additional monitors to the watch center, increasing its display real estate by 50% to 12 total monitors. In addition, WSIN installed 3 satellite displays in the director's office, assistant director's office and the conference room, enabling team members in those locations to monitor activities as they occur. After nearly one year of use the system continues to meet all of WSIN's information sharing needs, helping the agency protect the missions and lives of law enforcement officers from a broad spectrum of federal, state and local departments.