



ELECTRONIC CALL HANDLING OPERATIONS Ltd (ECHO)

Industry Update March 2019

Many in the fire and security industry have been asking what is happening with the ECHO project, since the original concept a few years ago. I am pleased to say that the project has been making steady progress and has so far overcome several challenges.

Just to remind anyone new to our industry the origins of ECHO originate from the trade associations representing the fire and security industries that had long felt the development of Fire and Security alarm transfer from protected premises to emergency services were falling behind the technical advances being made in today's digital communications. Three industry trade associations were keen to see more effective working practices: the BSIA (British Security Industry Association), the FIA (Fire Industry Association) and the FSA (Fire & Security Association).

With this concept in mind the associations came together and submitted a bid for start-up funding from the UK Home Office. The bid was successful, and this funding has allowed for the establishment of a not for profit company ECHO (Electronic Call Handling Operations Ltd) to review the possible technical solutions that may be realistically used and would be acceptable to both the fire and security industry and response services.

To enable the technical review, a specialist group of experts was established and tasked with identifying at least two technical solutions and

developing a technical specification to allow a tender process to take place. Having looked at the problem the group found that the technical challenge was considerable in terms of data formats and ways to seamlessly connect an ARC to an emergency service Command & Control with a high level of integrity and reliability. During the review it became clear the best way to connect to these centres would be via the governments PSN network and the police PNN system, this together with ways to format and translate the data have formed the key to the two possible options presented to the ECHO board.

As of today, we are pleased to confirm that both possible solutions have been beta tested and have been proven to work and we have received advice from a procurement specialist at the Home Office who has assisted the ECHO board in moving to place a supply contract.

Alongside this the ECHO management team are working on the business process and method that will be used for an ARC to easily connect their customers to the ECHO system.

For more details of the technical proposals and to discuss the connection business model the ECHO team will be hosting an open day event this summer. The invitation will be open to anyone involved in the fire and security industry.

Visit our web site: www.echo.uk.net

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