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Satellite Venture Yields To-Earth Benefits

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The Cover:

The merger of satellite teleconferencing and educational resources represents a new era in law enforcement training. (See article p. 1.)

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Joint Satellite Venture Yields Down-To-Earth Benefits



By
MICHAEL P. KORTAN
Special Agent
and
TONY E. TRIPLETT
Special Agent
Police Training Coordinator
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Kansas City, MO

"Satellite teleconferencing has proved to be a cost-effective tool for providing valuable training information to a large law enforcement audience."

High technology and law enforcement training came together once again in Kansas City at the fifth national satellite teleconference sponsored by the Law Enforcement Satellite Training Network (LESTN). The March 25th program focused on criminal profiling and how it may be used by law enforcement agencies throughout the United States in the investigation of violent crime.

Acting FBI Director John E. Otto joined two Bureau behavioral science experts from the FBI Academy to examine profiling, personality assessment, and other behavioral strategies as in-

vestigative tools. The panel also discussed the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP), a part of the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime based at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA. In a case study, Capt. Gary Gene Terry of the Hillsborough County, FL, Sheriff's Department explained how profiling was used in combination with multiagency police investigation and forensic analysis to solve a series of 10 murders in the Tampa area in 1985.

LESTN is a cooperative venture of the FBI's Kansas City Office and the



Special Agent Kortan



Special Agent Triplett

Kansas City, MO, Police Department. The latest program was part of a series of telecasts designed to foster discussion on current issues of interest to law enforcement.

Since the inaugural teleconference in March 1986, LESTN has broadcast to an average of 100 receiving sites and 2,000 viewers. Wide-ranging topics, such as advanced hostage negotiations, drug abuse by police officers, homicide investigations, and drug awareness and education, have been featured.

The programs originate at a Kansas City television station and feature a moderator and a panel of experts on the particular issue being discussed. The format of each program consists of live and preproduced lecture from the experts, followed by call-in questions and answers between the panel and viewing participants across the country.

History of Satellite Network

The marriage of teleconferencing and law enforcement training was first proposed by the FBI's Kansas City training coordinator and two police officers assigned to the department's training academy. When tasked with the assignment to develop and produce training videos, the two officers merged the traditional seminar training session format with an institutional cable channel in Kansas City.

Regular inservice training for police officers and investigators is necessary to ensure up-to-date information is available on the myriad of complex legal, investigative, and administrative issues facing the law enforcement community. Yet, without readily available training at a reasonable cost, usually provided by Federal, State, and/or larger municipal agencies, many departments would be virtually without inservice training.

Seminars have long been used as an effective way to provide training information to law enforcement employees. An expert in a particular subject area lectures to an audience, and members of the audience respond with questions and comments. In recent years, however, the use of video tapes has proved to be a valuable supplement to—and often a substitute for—a speaker to provide information on a wide range of topics. Video tapes allow for greater flexibility in program presentations and dissemination of educational information to agencies where speakers are not readily available.

As a result, the videotaping of seminars, along with the feedback of questions and comments from the audience, has become popular. And with access to a cable channel and up-to-date technology, sought-after speakers on popular law enforcement topics can be made available to a wider audience on a regular and timely basis.

Prompted in part by cable franchise restrictions which would limit distribution of the program in outlying areas, the FBI Agent and the two officers decided that today's technology should be taken a step further—to the sky. With the help of a police department long known for opening law enforcement's door to experimentation and innovation, the idea to bring police training into the satellite age was born in Kansas City.

The FBI has been a continuous source of programming resources for local law enforcement training. However, to ensure the success of this untested project, more than a commitment of speakers and topics was necessary. It became evident that the Bureau's nationwide field structure would be the key to bringing together law enforcement agencies across the country into a single, simultaneous training session.

Production Obstacles

Initially, the technical and logistical aspects of satellite teleconferencing had to be addressed. The three law enforcement officers, armed with a basic understanding of teleconferencing requirements, examined the necessary elements, i.e., production facilities, an "uplink" which transmits the program from the studio to an "earth station," the earth station to send the program up to the satellite, and a transponder, or channel, on the satellite which acts as a mirror and "reflects" the program back to receiving sites. On the ground, two elements are necessary—a satellite receiving dish and a facility with television monitors and telephones to allow viewers to participate.

The first objective was to acquire a production facility. Although a studio was available at the police academy, its dated equipment could not meet the technological demands of a satellite production. At this point, American Cablevision of Kansas City was approached for the use of a facility. Not only was a studio offered at a modest cost, but so was a volunteer crew. And, the cable company's facility had an uplink to an available earth station at WDAF television in the metropolitan area.

The next step was to acquire satellite time and an uplink contract. Both services can be rented—with an advanced reservation and at a modest cost. Production dates and times for the inaugural March 6, 1986, program were set, and the necessary technical arrangements were made.

The major cost associated with satellite teleconferencing lies with the rental of receiving sites. With a hotel, or another type of meeting place capable of accommodating a large group and

equipped to receive a satellite program, rental costs can range from \$50 to \$200 an hour. As a result, a typical 3-hour broadcast to 40 sites could become an expensive endeavor on a limited law enforcement training budget. To help defray this expense to police departments, American Cablevision's parent company, TIME, Inc., was approached. TIME owns cable franchises across the country, and the individual companies agreed to donate the sites as a community service.

Partnership Expands

The Kansas City FBI Office was the logical place to assist in identifying receiving sites. Each of the Bureau's 59 field offices has an Agent assigned as the coordinator for police training in the office's jurisdiction, and this coordinator is familiar with each police department's training officers and educational needs and interests. Because of these established relationships, the FBI representative was a logical choice to coordinate teleconference participation and develop liaison with local cable operators. More importantly, the Bureau coordinator could provide feedback on the quality of the production.

Once the production aspects were in place, the FBI's training facility at Quantico, VA, was contacted to enlist the participation of the Bureau's highly regarded education and training center to ensure programming resources. With a commitment from the FBI's training facility and the support of FBI field training coordinators in those cities with a TIME-owned cable franchise, the Law Enforcement Satellite Training Network was born.

Inaugural Program

Months of planning and discussion materialized on March 5, 1986, when over 1,000 police officers at 32 viewing sites nationwide participated in a live

satellite teleconference on the subject of advanced hostage negotiations. The Kansas City chief of police and the Special Agent-in-Charge of the Kansas City Office watched as a combined effort of the two agencies began a new era in law enforcement training. Experts from both the FBI and police departments shared insight on a critical subject with law enforcement officers across the country.

While the response to the initial effort was overwhelmingly positive, the planners began immediately to look for ways to improve and streamline the production process for the next program. The first goal was to expand the number of receiving sites to include those cities not served by a TIME-owned cable company. For this, the Kansas City Area Hospital Television Association was approached about the feasibility of using hospitals around the country as receiving sites. As a result of a meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, with the national director of Hospital Television Networks, over 400 participating facilities donated their meeting rooms and satellite receiving capabilities. With the hospitals' offer of receiving sites came years of valuable experience in satellite teleconference production.

The second teleconference on June 25, 1986, tackled the growing problem of substance abuse by police officers. The program was transmitted through the new hybrid network of cable affiliates and hospitals and featured FBI experts and the personnel director of the Chicago Police Department in a discussion of the behavioral, medical, and legal questions surrounding the issue. Several police training academies and colleges also participated in the

"... satellite teleconferencing [has] found its place in law enforcement."

Acting FBI Director John Otto presented introductory remarks at the fifth national satellite teleconference. Also on the panel were, from left, SA Larry Welch (retired), SA Robert Ressler and SA John Douglas, behavioral science experts from the FBI Academy, and Capt. Gary Gene Terry of the Hillsborough County, FL, Sheriff's Department.



program, increasing the number of receiving sites to over 100 in 80 cities. At some locations, rented dishes and home units were used to receive the broadcast.

It became evident that satellite teleconferencing had found its place in law enforcement. The program on October 22d featured veteran homicide investigators and a Yale University pathologist who offered an overview of techniques critical to conducting successful homicide investigations. On December 3d, a panel of Drug Enforcement Administration narcotics experts, an assistant police chief, and a nationally noted medical researcher and founder of the Cocaine Helpline provided educational information to law enforcement officers on cocaine and "crack" from both the enforcement and demand sides. Feedback following each program was positive as viewer

participation grew to an estimated 5,000 viewers at 150 sites for the December teleconference.

The format of each program—provided at no cost to the receiving agencies—allowed viewers at the receiving sites to ask the panelists questions, resulting in an increase in viewer participation and a further sharing of valuable information.

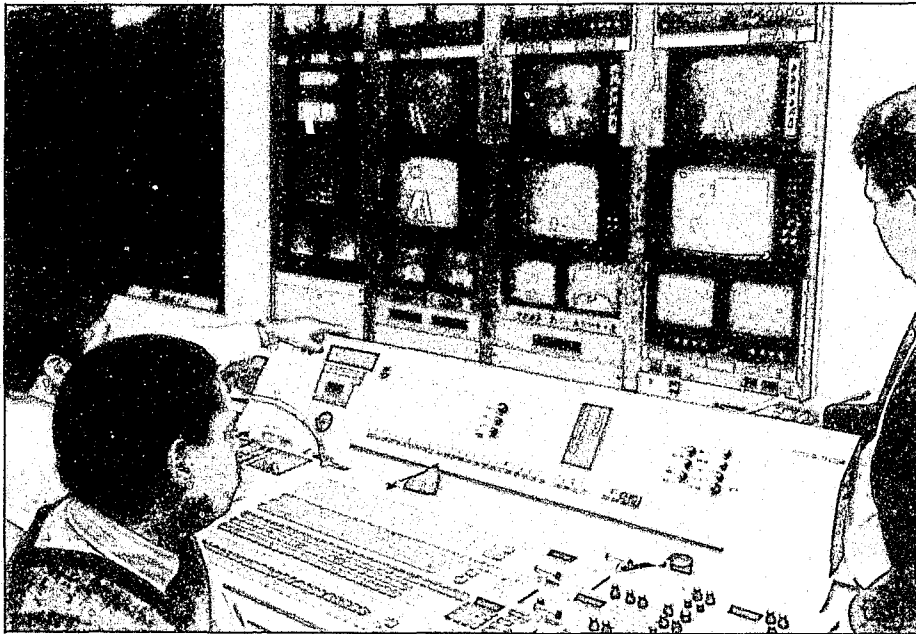
Future of Satellite Teleconferencing

As the cost of satellite receiving dishes continues to drop, many agencies can now afford to purchase their own. And when the volume of quality programming increases, dishes will no doubt be in even greater demand. Many agencies are anticipating increased use of the medium. For example, the New Jersey State Police Academy and the Alcoa, TN, Police Department have been authorized funding for receiving dishes, and the Kansas City FBI Office recently installed one.

The application of satellite technology to law enforcement needs is not limited to the area of training. The capability to encrypt the signal could allow agencies to transmit information on criminal suspects, as well as intelligence data.

The FBI is studying satellite teleconferencing for its own informational and educational needs, and the National Academy and other bureau training programs are likely recipients of such technology. Budget demands will no doubt continue to pressure Federal, State, and local agencies to seek alternative ways to maintain quality training programs.

As savings continue on both the production and receiving ends, the success and continued growth of the medium seems assured. Some predict a satellite channel dedicated entirely to law enforcement will be in place in a few years. As technology advances, it's



The program's producer directs technical adjustments in the television control room.

conceivable that individual agencies could originate a training program which would be made available to all members of the network.

Although the current cost of approximately \$10,000 to produce a national satellite teleconference is modest, the Kansas City Police Department continues to explore funding alternatives to further reduce the department's financial burden. Government and foundation grants and corporate sponsorships are among some of the potential alternatives under study.

Conclusion

Quality training is essential to the success of every law enforcement agency. The formation of the Law Enforcement Satellite Training Network has proved to be a major step toward meeting the escalating challenge of providing that training.

Satellite teleconferencing has proved to be a cost-effective tool for providing valuable training information to a large law enforcement audience. Although used by business and trade associations for the past few years, teleconferencing is new to law enforcement and the result has been quality, up-to-date training on useful topics at a modest cost.

This joint effort of a major police department and the FBI has benefited from the strengths each agency could offer. The department, in its ongoing responsibility to prepare police officers for the street, is constantly evaluating and searching for ways to improve the level of police training. And the Bureau, with a historical commitment to using its unique national position to maintain the highest standard of law enforcement training, will ensure educational resources for years to come.

FBI

The next LESTN satellite teleconference is scheduled for July 1, 1987, and will examine terrorism. Any law enforcement agency interested in participating is urged to contact the nearest FBI office for further details.

“...each law enforcement department which uses polygraph should have a well-structured, carefully considered written policy for polygraph usage.”

