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Mobile Incident Management Information Technology Pilot Project Wireless Thin Client Networking Kits for Incident Management

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A rapidly deployed, easily managed, information technology kit has been developed for incident management. The Mobile Incident Management Information Technology (MIMIT) kit has computer and networking hardware and software stored in a trailer (figure 1). The equipment is preconfigured so it can be deployed quickly at an incident. The project's goal is to develop and test a cost-effective, easily refurbished kit that can be ordered through the national cache system. The Interagency Interoperability Oversight Group (IIOG) is sponsoring the pilot project.

The kit is being evaluated in the Great Basin Geographic Area during the 2009 fire season. The evaluation is assessing the kit's ability to meet the information technology (IT) needs of incident management teams, its ease of deployment and system administration, the effectiveness of ordering the kit through the cache system, and overall user satisfaction.

MIMIT Kit

The MIMIT kit includes a terminal server, wireless LAN (local area network) controller, wireless access points, mobile thin clients, laptop computers, printers, and associated networking equipment. The components are standardized and have been configured to meet the needs of incident management teams.

All the equipment is stored in a 20-foot air-conditioned trailer that can be towed to an incident. The trailer is set up with workstations (figure 2) where incident managers will have instant access to the network when the trailer arrives. The kits will support the incident from beginning to end, a change from the present system where each team brings its own computers and networking equipment to an incident.



Figure 1—This trailer will be used to transport the networking equipment to the incident, where the trailer can be used as a workspace.

What's in a MIMIT kit?

- High-powered IBM Server running Windows Server 2003
- Uninterruptible power supply
- 20 mobile thin clients
- 6 laptop computers
- 1 wireless LAN controller
- 5 wireless access points
- 4 black-and-white printers
- 1 color printer
- Router, firewall, switches, cables, and other networking equipment

What's NOT in a MIMIT kit?

- Internet connectivity
- Telephones or cell phones
- Plotters



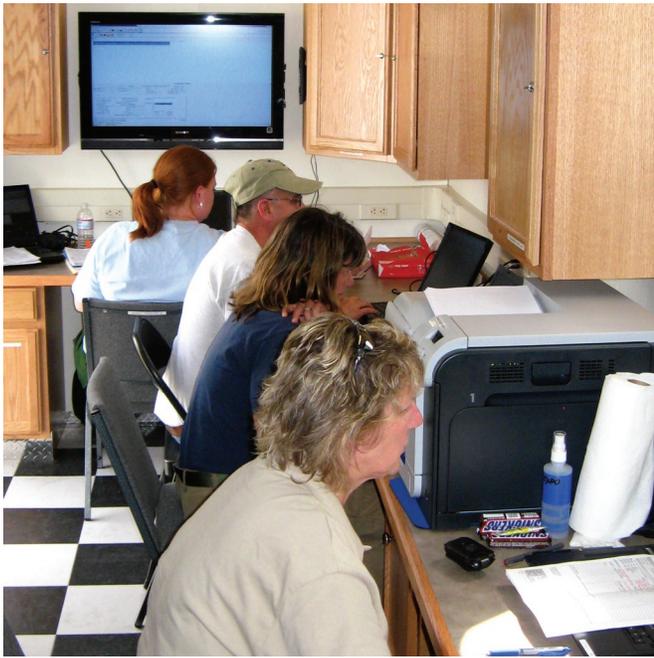


Figure 2—The Incident Computer Technical Specialist manages the server and system from the MIMIT Trailer. The trailer also has workstations.

Benefits of the MIMIT Kit

Persons working at an incident command post will access applications and data by connecting to the server from a mobile thin client. The mobile thin clients are relatively inexpensive computers with no hard drives that normally access the server through a wireless LAN (although they can be connected with a network cable). All applications run on the server and all files are stored there. Benefits of the system include:

- **A stable, secure IT environment.** All of the incident’s data (including personally identifiable information) is stored centrally on the server—not on the individual mobile thin clients. User accounts and permissions are managed centrally on the server. The wireless security configuration meets agency requirements.
- **Quick deployment and setup.** All the equipment is preconfigured and ready for setup. The MIMIT trailer can be up and running within half an hour.
- **Smoother transitions between incident management teams.** The server and PCs will stay at the incident through team rotations.

- **Standardized, reliable hardware and software.** Standardized hardware and software will allow consistent operational procedures, making training easier and troubleshooting more efficient.
- **Flexibility.** The wireless mobile thin clients and laptop computers can be moved easily because the computer network isn’t strung together with wires.
- **Quick, reliable refurbishing.** After an incident, the kits can be refurbished by the national cache system so they’re ready for deployment on the next incident.

Ordering the MIMIT kit

In the future, MIMIT kits will be available through the national cache system, allowing them to be ordered early at the start of an incident. The kits will be assigned to the incident, not to a team, so kits won’t have to be broken down and rebuilt when one team leaves and another team takes over management of an incident.

When an incident is closed, the equipment will be returned to the cache for cleanup and refurbishing—at minimal cost to the incident.

Once the standard MIMIT kits become commonly available, they can be used for training or other activities during the off season.

Interagency Cooperation

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