



The Haivision Podcast

Operation Center Best Practices with current and former law enforcement member - Part 1

Summary of the Episode

In this episode of The Haivision Podcast, the discussion centers on the innovations and challenges in video technology, specifically focusing on video wall solutions and real-time operation centers. Haivision's Colin Coyle moderates a panel of former and active law enforcement leaders, including Kristen Ziman, Jay Draisin, Sean Arthur, and Darin Hull, who share their experiences in building and managing real-time crime centers (RTCCs).

The panelists emphasize the importance of tailoring RTCCs to the specific needs of their agencies rather than following a one-size-fits-all approach. They discuss the significance of collaboration, funding, and the integration of technology and personnel in these centers. The conversation highlights the necessity of gaining buy-in from both the community and internal departments, educating all stakeholders, and ensuring the technology supports rather than hinders the decision-making process.

Key points include the challenges of changing organizational culture to embrace new technology, the importance of having a clear mission for the operation centers, and the value of partnerships with both public and private sectors to enhance the effectiveness of RTCCs. The episode provides practical insights and strategies for law enforcement agencies looking to establish or improve their real-time operation centers.

Transcript

Introduction to the Podcast

Welcome to the Haivision Podcast, where we take a deep dive into the innovations and challenges shaping video technology. In each episode, we'll bring you insights from experts behind cutting-edge video networking, visual collaboration, and video-wall solutions.

So whether you're a professional navigating the complexities of video-wall technology, working in live production, or someone simply curious about new tech, this podcast is for you.

Join us as we explore the latest trends, share success stories, and discuss the technology shaping the future of mission-critical video environments.

00:41 - Episode Overview

In part one of this episode, Haivision's Colin Coyle joins former and active law enforcement leaders in a discussion on how to get local law enforcement and other agencies to adopt more technology in their crime centers.

00:55 – Episode Starts

Thank you for joining us here today to talk about real-time operation centers, collaborative intelligence sharing. We really appreciate you coming and sitting down.

My name is **Colin Coyle**. I'm with Haivision. I'm one of our senior vice presidents. Haivision is a manufacturer of video wall processors. So we manufacture the software that drives the video walls that are often the centerpiece of these rooms. But as we'll learn talking to our panelists

here today, the wall is probably the most visible but least important part of a successful operation center.

I'll now invite my wonderful panelists to introduce themselves, starting with you, Kristen.

Hi, everyone. I'm **Kristen Ziman**. I retired as chief of police of the Aurora Police Department. Since retiring, I've been going around talking about mass shooting prevention and preparation, highly involved with the IACP's Mass Violence Advisory. I'm honored to be here watching all of you eat.

Well, good morning, everybody. My name is **Jay Draisin**. I am the director of FUSUS Academy and field support for FUSUS. However, my background prior to that, I retired also recently 28 years in law enforcement. My last assignment was the captain of the Crime Center and Forensics Division with the Orlando Police Department, where I was assigned in 2019 to basically research, build, staff, fund, and run the real-time crime center there. We've had probably close to 150 agencies come through our crime center since that time.

Hello. My name is **Sean Arthur**. I recently retired from Collier County Sheriff's Office after 30 years in October. I took a position with Constant Technologies. They were our leading vendor. My last assignment with Collier was to actually be the project manager for our ROTC and then actually ran it for three years after that prior to retirement.

And my name is **Darin Hull**. I'm a police captain with the Cobb County Police Department, which is the north side of Atlanta and home of the Atlanta Braves. I help run the real-time crime center in Cobb County along with some other responsibilities. And I'm the one person that's not retired from law enforcement, still trying to get there.

Colin: So up here today, we have about 100 years of law enforcement experience. And then me, I did some community theater, which can often seem like a mass crime. So before I get going here, I want to give all of us up here on the stage a sense of who's in the room today. Just by a quick show of hands, how many of you have or work in some sort of a real-time operation center today?

That's good. It's about half.

And how many of you here today, your agency or department are looking at or considering a real-time operation center?

Okay. So a lot of folks here with experience.

So what I wanted to start our discussion with today is a real-time operation center.

What is it and what is it not?

04:40 – Naming Your Operation Center

There's a great discussion that was going on last week on LinkedIn, actually, with folks talking about the term of a real-time crime center, perhaps being a little bit dated and perhaps leaning a bit more towards the crime aspects of an RTCC versus more of a broader community tool than a public safety tool.

And Chief Ziman, you and I had a great discussion where you didn't call your operation center a real-time crime center. So let's talk about that.

Chief Ziman: We called it a critical incident intel center. So it's interesting because to answer your question, your real-time crime center or whatever you call it is exactly what you want it to be. There is no one cookie-cutter approach to it.

Just to give you a small background as to why I felt it was necessary is because in our department, the second largest city in the state of Illinois, we had no one central hub for information. Things were going into all different silos. And I wanted a place where we could have operations where intel could come in and then within that kick center that we could push out information to whichever division would be most beneficial to handle that.

So what we set out to do was build this crime center, intel center. And so we went around to Chicago's. We went to Miami Gardens. We traveled. We went to about six different police departments and looked at, of course, the setup. And what we came back is what we realized is that we wanted a little bit of every one of them. There wasn't one cookie-cutter approach. And so I think that what I'm trying to say here is the takeaway is that don't emulate someone else's. You have to look at your organization, realize what your needs are, and then build it from the needs of your organization and your city or whatever that might be.

06:17 – Examples of Real-Time Crime Centers

Colin: Captain Hull, I think you have a great relevant recent example. You built your operation center for one purpose. And then in May as part of that Midtown Active Shooter response to Atlanta, I think have been able to kind of broaden out the interagency mission. Is that accurate?

Captain Hull: Yeah, it is. Like she was saying about there's no cookie-cutter approach for this technology and it's emerging technology. It is not very established. So you can find out not only what you want it to be for your agency, but be willing to adapt as you discover new uses for it.

In our case in May, the active shooter in Atlanta that came up into the Cobb County area, we used it for the very first time as an incident command center or an operation center. And that was just by almost sheer chance. The incident commander happened to swing by to talk to me before we left.

And with all the activity, our real-time crime center has an interdisciplinary approach. So we had a criminal intelligence analyst, public safety analyst, Homeland Security Lieutenant. When he saw the amount of information coming into our real-time crime center, that became our incident command center.

We had a very successful operation, very successful arrest. And that kind of operation center is very powerful technology. So that's where we were open to new possibilities.

07:39 – Synergy Between the Private and Public Sector

Colin: So Sean, you and I have been discussing kind of when folks are building out a center or expanding a center or kind of changing the needs or the uses. Not everyone kind of starts with that approach that Kristen shared with us of it can be whatever it is that's right for you.

There seems to be this idea that no, we have to do this best practice that this other person did. But you've got experience both in the public and the private sector dealing with that.

Lt. Arthur: Yes. So I think with my new position with Constant, we kind of, I go around to all these agencies and talk to them about building their RTICs.

The basic one thing I have to say is have a mission or a purpose for your room and have that in the back of your head. I talk to a lot of people and I ask them, I say, what are you going to do? What do you want your room to be able to do? And they're unable to answer that.

Have a mission or thing. And I know like when we were building ours, we had a three pillar. We made it a three pillar. We did real-time crime. We did command center operations and then we did analytical data as well. So that room that I was in charge of was constantly busy. And a lot of the times when you build these, they want to see productivity. What are you using a room for? So that was one of the aspects that we did and it worked out great. But have that mission or that purpose for that room prior to building it.

09:00 – Having the Right Partners

Colin: Jay, I think one of the benefits of working with someone like FUSUS is the idea that building the tool isn't the reason for the room, right? It should be in the background. It should be literally just a tool for the people in the space.

Capt. Draisin: Correct. You need to be concerned not just with the products, but the people and the process, right? Those are the things that are going to really make your operation center, crime center, whatever you call it, work for you.

And much like their approach, and that's what I do with FUSUS now, is the agencies that we work with, we built in Orlando, I took nine months when I was assigned to this in 2019, build a crime center. Some of you may be in the same position in this room today going, I have no idea what that means.

So we took nine months and actually built out a strategic plan that included everything from what partners did we need to have involved in creating this strategic plan, finances, where were we going to get money for this? And we had to be creative on some of that.

We had to bring in our IT folks and we had to bring in those partner companies that we already had established relationships so they could help us and guide us along the way. And I share actually that plan now with agencies when they're interested. We've kind of rebranded it.

It's a roadmap to an RTCC. I supply people with that strategic plan because without a plan, right, that's why I change it to a roadmap. You don't have a roadmap to where you're going. You don't know when you reach that final destination. So kind of like what Sean said is every crime center, real time crime center is different. You need to establish what problems you are trying to solve, because it's not the same at every agency, and then you can identify what tools are going to help you get there.

Colin: Yeah, I think in my experience with Haivision, I think the one thing I love that you called out the people in the process, right, and I said at the beginning, the wall is the most visible part but often the least important. Where we have seen agencies be most successful is the ones who aren't building these things just for the worst possible day that someone can have.

They're building it with a vision in mind how this can serve the community on a daily basis and also be a resource for those days that we hope that we don't need it for. Kristen, I have this vision from talking to you.

You said that you started building your room by just putting people in an empty room. So I've just got this idea of like three people at a table with notebooks for a year.

Chief Ziman: Yeah, that's about, that's the correct visual.

So let me first give you a note of caution when you decide to build your center. Maybe don't do it when a pandemic is about to loom. So I did it differently and here's why, is because I wasn't exactly sure what we needed.

I knew that we wanted a place that again wasn't for just that one critical incident but a place where we could perhaps tap into with our cameras and where we could share those visuals where we could problem solve. We could look for open source, maybe rumblings of protest.

So I had this kind of vision for it and then of course information sharing. So what I did is got people way smarter than me that were patrol officers who we had tapped to run this once it was basically finished. And I said, instead of me telling you what this should be, why don't you tell me? And so we kind of put them in a room and we said, what software do you want? What hardware do you want?

And so they started building and it was just a, it was a risk to take, but in the end it paid off.

The only problem that we had in the middle of it is they were in an empty room for a long time because the pandemic hit and then of course we had civil unrest. But had that not happened, then they were the ones gathering the information and they were the ones building it and talking to people in the department. What do you want from this?

And so I took a very different approach. But yes, they sat in an empty room until we were able to. And you mentioned funding. So once our kick center was launched, it was then I actually retired.

So I actually, I reached back to find out what we should have or could have done differently. And they told me that it was the funding that was the big thing. There were a lot of grants that were supposedly promised and we knew that in 2019, 2020, but those grants still haven't come to fruition.

So what they said is, so think about funding is have the funding on the front end because they're still waiting for things that were promised them with this, with the grants coming through. So that's just an aside.

13:25 – Funding Your Command Center

Colin: And on the topic of funding, I think funding a space like this, many of you already have a space, but I'm sure you're evaluating expansions, changes, partner agencies. One of the big challenges is the price today is not going to be the price by the time you're ready to pull the trigger. I mean, these are two, three, four year projects to get something like this off the ground.

And Kristen, you were talking about, hey, tell me what tools you need, tell me what software. One of the things that I think I love about working with this group is it feels like a space where from the private industry perspective, we can really partner with law enforcement and get in

early and help answer questions for you. At the end of the day, we just want a relationship. We're not trying to say you have to buy this or buy that.

And so, Sean, you've been on both sides of that coin. Do you want to talk about that relationship?

Lt. Arthur: Yeah, it's important to realize that if you are going to begin this and you have like Captain Hull who runs a great center, you have Jay, who works for FUSUS, who also ran this great center. You have all of us and you have the chief who created one. And if you have any questions about theater, Colin is here.

But just to let you know that you can reach out to people and that's where you need to start. Reach out, talk to people, see what worked, what didn't work. It could be a vendor. It could be another agency. Just to see what's out there, what you can do and what you have. And we all realize that everyone's budget constraints and we realize that. And you need to format something that's going to work for you within your budget.

You have people that can do \$2 million. You have people who do \$100,000. It goes from wherever you go. And I got to tell you a story.

I went to this one agency where we were talking with them about their room and we were going back and forth about how much and then I asked what software and they go, what do you mean software? And I'm like, the software is the money. So we had to explain to them, you're going to need a VMS (video management system). You're going to need cameras. You're going to need this. And then they realized, wow, it's a lot more depth than I thought. So reach out. Like I said, we're all here to help each other. We're all police officers.

15:46 – Finding the Right Platform

Colin: And Jay, I mean, so talking about cameras, right? So one of the value propositions of FUSUS is being kind of that single pane of glass, but letting different parts of a city, especially as we talk about information sharing, right? You folks have technology that allows different agencies to interoperate without having to be on the same platform, right?

Capt. Draisin: Correct. So that's truly what led me to go work for this company. Building out a crime center dealt with many, many companies, right? So be careful who you give your email address to if you're responsible for that, as everyone up here can probably attest to. The one company that, the last piece of our puzzle was actually FUSUS. As we built out our crime center, and probably a good time to share, as we built out, and feel free to use this, steal it, we came up, we kept coming back to four pillars, I'll call them, that enabled us to not just build our crime center, but to run it, right? And what those were, and it was kind of grew organically within the group that was on my project team. So our first one was educate.

We realized, number one, we had to educate ourselves, right? Like Sean said, technology is always changing. It's going to change from the start of your project to the end of your project. So we had to continue to educate ourselves. We then moved that along, we had to educate our department when we deployed these technologies, because you have to have buy-in from the people that are going to use it, which is huge.

We had to educate the public, so we held media days in Orlando, invited the media to come in and see the technology and get rid of some of those misinformation that is put out there.

LPRs (license plate readers) track people, no they don't.

We explained to them how it worked, we showed them how it works. So that was the educate piece. Then we said we want to automate as much as we can, right? LPR is a perfect example of that. All of us know in this room, I can sit on the corner with my MCT (mobile computer terminal) and I can run every tag that runs through that intersection.

A lot more effective to have something that does that automated already and then sends that automated response. And that's how we explained it to the media. We're not doing anything we don't already do, we're just doing it smarter. And especially in today's day and age with staffing issues with law enforcement. So that was automate.

We tried to automate as much as we possibly could. Then we realized we need to integrate as much as we can and that's kind of where FUSAs started coming in for our agency. At one point we had 16 different logins for technology in our crime center. We've narrowed it down to one. We have a couple that are separate but that is for operational reasons. And that's what I said, that's really what drew me to this company and that's what we do in working with all these partners and working with our agency partners.

I mentioned that we supply policy and we supply a roadmap to building in our RTCC. I now get the luxury, I said we had about 150 agencies before I left come through our crime center. Now I have the luxury of going to 211 agencies that we work with and see how they operate and we update a sample policy that we can then supply to you as an agency. Because our concern is really to help you get the best product out there.

And then our final one was collaborate, which ends on what you were asking about. So one of the top things on our list when we were doing our strategic plan was we have to be able to integrate not only with our private partners, other agencies, large malls, arenas. We also wanted the ability to integrate with our schools and private donor sites. And that is really what FUSUS has mastered.

So you don't have to be on the same VMS. You don't even have to have a VMS. If you have cameras, we can install a device that allows you to share those camera feeds back into our

police department. And now that is that collaborative effort between the community and one of my guys that worked in my crime center, I need to trademark this, he labeled it a digital snitch. That's what an LPR is and that's what a camera is. They're not going to be harassed to not show up in court. They're not going to be threatened. They're not going to forget what happened because it's recorded. So it's really the technology is just using it to collaborate with our communities and allow them to be a part of the solution without actually putting too much work on them. They don't have to show up in court, right? They do it on the front end. They share their information with us and now we have a collaborative effort to reach our goals.

20:10 – Inter-Agency Collaboration

Colin: So speaking of collaboration, again, being outside law enforcement, I was naive when I got into this space. I was like, of course the county and the neighboring city want to share things. That just makes sense. Of course they want to mix their money together. They don't care who controls things.

So Captain Hull, I think you have recently moved forward on an expansion of your operation center and I think a lot of that is due to collaboration with nearby entities. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

Capt. Hull: We're trying to take an approach where two things, one, different law enforcement agencies have different resources they can bring to the table and different capabilities. So one of the things we're looking at doing is Cobb County is blessed with the resource of building a nice real time crime center and we have seven cities inside of our county of varying tax bases. It's probably a nice way to say that, right?

So what we're looking at doing is dropping the price of admission to real time crime center technology and the best public safety technology because we all know criminals aren't bound by our jurisdictional lines and having the cities come into our real time crime center and start an interagency real time crime center. The price of admission that we're asking for from the agencies is they would supply a staff member. It could be a sworn or non sworn position and if every agency does that and my county contributes a certain amount of people, we can staff a real time crime center seven days a week, potentially 24 hours a day. That's an impossible lift for a lot of agencies, right? But if we work together, it is not an impossible lift and that real time crime center is going to be whatever agency's real time crime center needs it at the time.

And so what we're finding is that this is taking us down a path of technology sharing, resource sharing, intelligence sharing that we haven't experienced before on the local level because there's always been that kind of artificial divide. So we're just starting to take those steps right now. Matter of fact, we have our second interagency meeting tomorrow and Jay will be there

with us. But we see it as the future of policing, that cooperative effort, that resource sharing and really making a laser-focused impact on public safety in a jurisdictional area.

One of the areas where I think we've seen some jurisdictions stumble is focusing too much on the technology, building a beautiful room with beautiful displays and beautiful consoles and all this stuff, but not getting buy in from the field on making use of these resources.

Colin: And Jay, I think you were telling me that you were one of those field guys, right? And you weren't quite 100% on what all the value of this is and you came around. Want to talk about that?

Capt. Draisin: Yeah. So my previous assignment right before I had the crime center was in charge of our tech units, which is those unmarked two man cars going out hitting the stuff that nobody else has time or effort to do. My main job was to keep them out of trouble from themselves, right? We know those units. So I came from that and then into what I didn't know was going to be and was highly administrative function.

So once we started to get up and running, I called in some favors because I knew we had to get buy in within our agency. So the first two people I brought up to operate in our crime center was a 20-year detective, very well respected. He's one of those guys that as an officer, if he got your case, you felt really good about it. The other person was one of the people that was on my tech unit was a SWAT officer and people thought I was crazy. You're never going to get a SWAT guy to come sit in a room and watch cameras, right? That's what they thought. He came up there as a favor and ended up getting promoted out of there. So I guess he did too good of a job for me. But he had that immediate respect of every officer on the road.

So when he came on the radio and he was directing things, people said, oh, if he's bought in and he's telling me where to go and what to do, I'm going to listen. We didn't want those techie guys, right? That's what people thought. You just want to fill your crime center with techie guys. We are now a 24/7 operation and we are operations. We do pre-surveillance on SWAT warrants. We are doing proactive work with our assets that we have, which is where you then get that enhancement to your staffing, right? I can clear a call with a camera, right? Everyone hears about drone as first responder.

Darin and I were just talking yesterday, you really have cameras as first responder, right? I get a call to a 7-Eleven that has someone loitering outside. If I have a camera and if I have their cameras due to that collaborative effort, I can check and see if they're still there by the time we get the call, because we know that's not going to be a priority call. I can then call into that convenience store and say, hey, I don't see him out there anymore. Is he still there? No, he's gone. You don't have to respond anymore.

So everybody talks about staffing and these manpower issues. It truly does help and then it truly helps officer safety. I shared with Colin when I was talking to him about this, I knew that we had kind of made it with our crime center when I started hearing officers on the radio going to priority calls and saying, can you get Chase, which was our helicopter, can you get Chase and K-9 to the channel and the crime center? It was like that proud father moment almost. I was like, they get it. And repeatedly, that's what they ask for now. And sometimes they don't even ask for the other two. They're just asking for the crime center because of the resources and the operational value we provide.

Colin: I love that you talk about the fact that it's not the tech people running these rooms because at Haivision, we serve both the public safety and large enterprise community. And in these GSOCs for these large multinational corporations, its prior law enforcement, its detectives, its lieutenants, its people who've been in the field who know how to filter through a lot of information quickly and make a fast decision that run those rooms as well. And I think our job on the tech side is to make sure that the tech disappears as much as possible to let folks with decision-making experience do what they need to do.

Colin: Chief Ziman, you talked a lot about building that same kind of trust between your team and the field and getting the field to embrace your kick.

Chief Ziman: Yeah, and it can't be overstated that the hardest part is that culture of your organization that looks at this foreign object and is like, what do you want me to do with this thing? And so there were two major obstacles aside from the aforementioned, but one was the community because when we called it the critical incident intel center, the word intel usually begs the question, are you watching us?

And so that is just a matter of communication. It's just good marketing. It's getting out in front of it and describing this is a great crime-solving tool. But to your point, the culture inside the organization, people were so resistant to it. And we did exactly what you described, is put people in there, one from vice and narcotics and the other a detective, both well revered. And even with that, it took some time. And I had the very same in that rollout when I started to hear people call kick and let's see what they can work up. What ultimately occurred was it's kind of like the early adopters that we look at in technology.

You've got your early adopters, your Luddites that are really resistant, but then the early adopters are the ones. Then they go back and they say, hey, wow, kick really, they worked up a file for me. So what was happening was someone from vice narcotics would call up there and go, all right, this is the guy we're watching. What do you have? Can you find us? So they would work up a file. They would share that intel. So then that individual would go back and say, hey, this is what they did for me. This was saved me mounds of time. So then just by sheer word of

mouth, it then became a tipping point where then people just started to call up there. And that did take a lot longer than I thought though. So just be mindful of the culture of your organization and you honestly have to just keep touting it and remind people and soon enough, it'll start a movement.

Colin: So law enforcement culture doesn't change quickly. Got it!

End