

SERIOUS GAME
TECHNOLOGY:
THE BOSTON GAME
DECEMBER 12, 2010

ITACG Advisory Council Meeting
April 22, 2010

The Boston Game

Overview:

- The results of the December 12, 2009 Boston Game, at the City of Boston Mayor's Emergency Operation Center.
- The training was sponsored by the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC).
- The Instructors were Dr. Barbara McIntyre from NCTC, James Peak from Red Arch Solutions, and Boston Police Lieutenant Timothy Connolly, assigned to the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group-(ITACG).

The Boston Game

Background of Gaming:

- Gaming simulates real life challenges of performing analysis and making judgments under tight time pressures.
- The Characteristics of the Game:
 - 30 minute game,
 - 4 rounds of game play,
 - During each round players are given clues-both public (clues to everyone) and private (clues to individual players),
 - 5 teams of five players per team

The Boston Game

Benefits of the game play:

- Leverages expertise
- Builds teams
- Builds community
- Fosters analytical readiness
- Enhances decision
- Enhances performance
- Enhances critical thinking
- Skill development
- Test BRIC Interagency UASI Information sharing capabilities
- Designed to enhance analyst-to-analyst information sharing:
No one person is given all the clues, so no one person can solve the problem.

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The Boston Game

Participants:

- Boston Police Department
- Boston Fire Department
- Boston Emergency Management Agency
- Mass State Police
- DHS
- ICE
- Coast Guard
- FBI-Boston
- FBI-JTTF
- Commonwealth Fusion Center
- Boston Regional Intelligence Center-UASI Partners
- MBTA -Transit Police Dept
- ODNI-Razor Team Boston
- Massachusetts National Guard

The Boston Game

Technology and Venue:

The technology used for the Boston Game is a technology that uses a web browser to merge a host computer and several client computers. The software was downloaded in a matter of minutes with a few minor adjustments to ensure the software was properly installed.

The Boston Game

The Boston Game-serious game technology:

- This interactive computer-assisted game is used to promote heightened awareness, information sharing and good detection skills. It is fast-paced and tricky. The key to beating the game and winning is quick recognition of important clues and pervasive sharing.
- The scenario involved the real situation that Boston law enforcement faces every five to seven days – the arrival of a huge liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker that proceeds into the heart of the city with its highly inflammable liquefied methane cargo.

The Boston Game

The Boston Game-serious game technology:

The players were faced with a complex interwoven scenario with growing drug trafficking, a mass of illegal arms deals, a visit by the Irish Prime Minister and the scheduled arrival of the LNG tanker. The question: is there a terrorist threat to the tanker based on clues provided in the game, or is the situation representative of “normal” criminal activity.



The Boston Game

Purpose:

The Purpose of the Boston Game is specific, it was written to test the capabilities of the Boston Regional Intelligence Center's ability to: identify threats to the Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) Tanker that transports vast amounts of LNG through Boston's Inner-Harbor; to properly share threat information amongst BRIC and UASI partners; and to ensure that informed decisions are made to defend against threats to Boston's critical infrastructure.

The Boston Game

Purpose:

The players of the game will be told at the outset that they have been convened to represent their respective agency on an Urban Area Security Initiative-UASI, Threat Assessment Task Force, due to the current worldwide threat to LNG tankers and facilities, and more specifically, the LNG tanker route from Yemen to Boston.

Each team will be made up of five players from different agencies. The participating agencies will include: Boston Regional Intelligence Center, Commonwealth Fusion Center, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Coast Guard, UASI towns and MBTA Intelligence.

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Game Results:

The game was a strenuous test; some teams won, some lost, but there was near unanimous approval of the game technology.

Some player responses:

“Makes you think fast on your feet.” “This is an EXCELLENT tool for analysts.” “Very applicable to my job, often, information comes at me from all over the place.”

“This is an awesome tool that should be used for training in this and other LE applications.” “The BRIC should do this annually.”