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# Message from the HSIN Executive Steering Committee

The Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) is the Department of Homeland Security's official system for trusted sharing of Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) information between federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, international, and private sector partners. HSIN users rely on the platform to access and securely share mission critical information, coordinate public safety and security for planned events and incident response, and make key decisions. They use HSIN to share the necessary information to successfully complete their operations helping keep our communities safe.

HSIN serves the Homeland Security Enterprise, which extends beyond the Department of Homeland Security. It includes the many federal agencies and departments across all levels of government that work together to achieve the homeland security mission. HSIN plays a critical role in enabling the seamless, secure sharing of information across all levels and jurisdictions of the Homeland Security Enterprise and in doing so plays an essential role in the homeland security mission. Some of the highlights of this year's annual report include:

- **Securing our Borders and Approaches:** Sharing intelligence, tactical reporting, and best practices across the Border 5/Migration 5 partner nations: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S.
- **Strengthen Preparedness and Resilience:** Creating Common Operating Pictures and Virtual Command Centers for federal, state, and local law enforcement to coordinate public safety and event security, including U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, Superbowl 57, and the Maui wildfires.
- **Preserve and Uphold the Nation's Prosperity and Economic Security:** Combating counterfeit supply chain activities and aviation security threats.

In addition, the HSIN Program continues evolving the platform while planning for a new, modernized HSIN platform. Notably HSIN began development work to streamline login and registration and improve search, advance the HSIN Intel Mobile app for Android and iOS users, and decommission dormant sites.

We invite you to read this year's HSIN Annual Report to learn more about the critical contributions HSIN and the Homeland Security Enterprise are making to keep America safe and protect the homeland.



*Tony Sanchious*

**Tony Sanchious**  
HSIN ESC Co-Chair, DHS Office of  
Intelligence and Analysis (I&A)



**Frank DiFalco**  
HSIN ESC Co-Chair, DHS of Office  
Situational Awareness (OSA)

# Supporting Operational Excellence

With each passing year, HSIN's contributions to the homeland security mission have grown as an increasing number of agencies and private sector partners have turned to HSIN for support in daily operations, incident response, and event security. In this year's HSIN Annual Report, we share highlights of how partners are using HSIN to achieve mission success.

## Ohio State University uses HSIN Connect in response to on-campus protests

Ohio State University (OSU) has elevated campus security by integrating its closed-circuit camera system with HSIN Connect, according to Director Robert Armstrong. This collaboration creates a real-time Common Operating Picture for swift information sharing, enhancing OSU's ability to monitor campus events and prioritize community safety. Armstrong emphasized secure access for authorized personnel, ensuring confidentiality of captured footage. HSIN Connect proved especially effective during on-campus protests, expanding OSU's security capabilities. Armstrong noted, "HSIN Connect has opened new avenues for us in on-campus security." This integration represents a significant technological leap, showcasing OSU's commitment to staying ahead in addressing evolving security challenges for the well-being of its community.

## TSA uses HSIN to Contribute to Homeland Security Mission

Thanks to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) using HSIN, the Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) office has significantly improved information sharing in the U.S. transportation system. Through the TSA Intel site on HSIN, the team at the Field Intelligence Integration Division (FIID) effectively collaborates with personnel in commercial and general aviation, mass transit, freight and passenger rail, highways, pipelines, and ports.

Peter Clemens, Deputy Director of Field Intelligence Integration, highlighted the impact of HSIN on the 75 TSA Field Intelligence Officers (FIOs), who play a crucial role as on-site incident reporters for various stakeholders, including Federal Security Directors, the Federal Air Marshal's Service, and local transportation agencies. HSIN provides a collaborative space for FIOs to share information with federal, state, and local entities, allowing them to pinpoint specific topics, interests, and concerns related to different transportation modes and regions.

Clemens emphasized that HSIN allows FIOs to share information that might not be suitable for regular email channels. The integration of a Sensitive Security Information (SSI) document library, created to support aviation stakeholders and the Aviation Domain Intelligence and Analysis Cell (ADIAC), has proven instrumental in providing real-time SSI products to stakeholders. Additionally, a second SSI portal for surface transportation stakeholders, including freight rail, highway motor carrier, and hazardous liquid and natural gas transportation, has been widely praised for its information-sharing capabilities, becoming a significant success for users in the surface transportation sector. The easy accessibility of these portals on the site's landing page ensures efficient information sharing among federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, international, and private sector partners, including stakeholders in the transportation industry.

## UCF Enhances Security Communication with HSIN Connect Trial During Football Games

The University of Central Florida (UCF) recently tested HSIN Connect to enhance communication during football game days, with a home game attendance of approximately 40,000. Joseph Thalmier, UCF's Director of Emergency Management, highlighted how HSIN Connect streamlined communication among various departments, including law enforcement, fire, emergency medical support, and electronic security. During the trial, HSIN Connect facilitated quick sharing of weather radar, drone detection system information, and security camera feeds. Thalmier commended the platform's chat feature for efficient communication without overwhelming radio channels. The success of HSIN Connect during UCF's football games hints at broader applications in emergency management.

Thalmier envisions using HSIN Connect beyond game days to complement the emergency operations center's management tool, WebEOC, fostering communication with other EOCs at the local and state levels. UCF's adoption of HSIN Connect reflects its commitment to innovative solutions for effective emergency coordination, ensuring the safety and security of the university community.

## Border 5/Migration 5 Relies on HSIN for Mission Success

Border 5/Migration 5 (B5/M5) is a partnership between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S. that is designed to enhance international cooperation and coordination on border security. With HSIN, law enforcement agencies across the world can collaborate at the Law Enforcement Sensitive (LES) level, fulfilling a need that existed for years.

“We use HSIN to share intelligence, tactical reporting, and other data, which aids in implementing best practices and analytical insights such as those derived from a U.S.- Australian operation that led to hundreds of arrests of suspected organized crime figures in 18 countries,” said James Mandryck, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection. HSIN allows multiple working groups within B5/M5 to collaborate on various missions, share strategic intelligence, analyze data, and maintain a repository of historical data and intelligence products. Additionally, HSIN has served as a unique solution for bulk data sharing of multi-country law enforcement operations against criminal groups moving dangerous narcotics as well as the illegal cross-border movement of goods and persons.

## HSIN Helps Strengthens Public-Private Partnerships in the Philadelphia Area

The Delaware Valley Intelligence Center (DVIC) is teaming up with HSIN to share information and coordinate efforts amongst law enforcement, emergency teams, and private partners. Stacy Irving Senior Advisor, Homeland Security Programs and Strategic Partnerships, DVIC, from DVIC thinks HSIN is a game-changer. It helps plan ahead, talk in real-time, and respond quickly in emergencies. During big events, like sports games or parades, DVIC uses HSIN Connect rooms as virtual command centers across the city. This helps keep everyone in the loop and ensures public safety.

During important events, they use two HSIN Connect rooms – one for general info and another for sensitive law enforcement details. This makes it easy for everyone to chat, ask questions, and plan safety strategies together. During a 2023 event, a hotel manager who was an active participant in the DVIC BOC room noticed a guest who seemed suspicious. The person matched the description of a suspect wanted in a stabbing case. The information was quickly shared with the police, leading to a smooth arrest at a nearby bus terminal.

## HSIN Virtual Command Center Supports Multiple Operations for Baltimore County PD

Baltimore County Police Department (BCPD) is using HSIN Connect to create virtual command centers (VCC) for incident support, proving its effectiveness in critical situations. Recently, during an incident at Pine Grove Middle School involving an explosive device, BCPD activated the HSIN VCC to coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions, leading to the arrest of the suspect. Captain Wes Fischer emphasized how HSIN VCC streamlined communication, reduced redundancy, and facilitated collaboration.

BCPD also utilized HSIN VCC for a successful multi-jurisdictional manhunt in a kidnapping case, enabling instant communication

and intelligence sharing, resulting in the capture of the suspect. Captain Fischer highlighted the expanded use of HSIN VCC, incorporating video streaming from air assets and sharing information from an agency Team Awareness Kit (TAK), providing actionable intelligence for community safety and supporting events like the Maryland Cycling Classic and PGA tournaments. The adaptable and efficient use of HSIN Connect underscores its crucial role in enhancing safety and security measures for the Baltimore County community.



## HSIN Plays Instrumental Role in Homeland Security Investigations “Operation Chain Reaction”

Fighting against counterfeit threats, the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPRC) leads the charge in tackling intellectual property theft, which costs American industries jobs and revenue yearly. Operation Chain Reaction (OCR), a Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)-led task force, uses innovative strategies to target counterfeit goods entering the U.S. government supply chain. In 2022, OCR adopted HSIN, leading to 31 criminal investigations, 226 lead deconflictions, one indictment, three convictions, and dismantling a \$1 billion counterfeit network supplier.

Brian Martin, HSI Program Manager, highlights HSIN’s role in providing secure access to a multiagency deconfliction list, ensuring updated information, and facilitating flexible updates. HSIN also streamlines sharing sensitive documents for OCR engagements and allows easy access management based on evolving needs and missions.

Expanding its processes from 2022, OCR now focuses on neutralizing threats across the entire federal government’s supply chain. Martin emphasizes the critical role of HSIN and HSIN Connect applications in fostering open dialogue among members for sharing vital information, contributing significantly to OCR’s mission to identify, neutralize, and exploit supply chain threats, ultimately enhancing national security.

## HSIN Supports Safety and Security at U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Office of the National Capital Region (NCR) Coordination utilized HSIN Connect to bolster its NCR Interagency Situation Room during the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit held from December 13 to 15. This crucial summit,

hosted by President Biden, brought together leaders from 49 African nations to discuss important matters.

To ensure seamless communication and collaboration, various agencies, including the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the U.S. Park Police, relied on HSIN Connect for situational awareness. The platform played a key role in facilitating information sharing and coordination among these agencies during the summit.

While specific details about prevented incidents or notable happenings weren't disclosed, the use of HSIN Connect likely contributed to the overall success of the summit by enabling real-time collaboration and effective communication among participating agencies. The platform's role in supporting the NCR Interagency Situation Room underscores its importance in enhancing coordination and security during major events, ultimately ensuring the safety of participants and the successful execution of such high-profile gatherings.

## Emergency Services Sector Relies on HSIN for Mission-Critical Information

The The Emergency Management and Response - Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) has leveraged the Homeland Security Information Network Emergency Services (HSIN-ES) to enhance collaboration within the Emergency Services Sector (ESS). With over 27,000 vetted members nationwide, HSIN-ES serves as a crucial channel for sharing critical infrastructure and emerging threat information among ESS professionals. Keith Henke, Fire Program Specialist at the U.S. Fire Administration, emphasized the effectiveness of HSIN in facilitating collaboration with federal partners, state fusion centers, and other sector-based organizations. Through HSIN, EMR-ISAC provides ESS personnel with current situation reports, emerging threats, and critical infrastructure protection information.

The ESS information shared through HSIN-ES is categorized into 17 topics, covering areas such as border security, health threats, and terrorism. With over 25,000 intelligence products available, HSIN ensures that ESS professionals have access to the latest information in various security classifications. Henke highlighted the monthly Fire Service Intelligence webinar hosted on HSIN Connect, providing a collaborative platform for fire service personnel associated with fusion centers. This initiative enables the sharing of insights and challenges faced by the fire service in today's environment. HSIN has proven to be a valuable tool for EMR-ISAC, fostering real-time collaboration and equipping ESS personnel with essential information to address evolving threats and safeguard critical infrastructure.

## ACTIC Relies on HSIN for Super Bowl Security

In the face of heightened security challenges at Super Bowl 57, the Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center (ACTIC) leaned on HSIN to coordinate operations involving 15+ agencies. HSIN's role was pivotal in enabling real-time information sharing and quick decision-making among diverse organizations using different communication systems.

Teaming up with HSIN and the DHS Geospatial Management

Office (GMO), ACTIC developed a real-time incident tracking app for instant sharing of critical information. This app allowed a comprehensive view of the threat environment, helping in efficient resource allocation during multi-agency operations.

HSIN's features, such as the page navigator and GMO incident dashboards, played a crucial role in capturing and tracking over 300 incidents in the region. This not only saved time but proved essential for decision-makers and first responders during the event.

HSIN Connect became the go-to platform for open-source intelligence, emergency communications, and collaboration. Users tracked social media threats, collaborated in real-time, and coordinated state and federal responses to emergency communication issues. The platform's collaboration spaces served as a documentation hub among partners, and its alerting features kept users updated on newly added information.

With over 400 users from various sectors relying on the Super Bowl 57 HSIN community site, and 150 law enforcement officers accessing a secured subsite, HSIN's impact extends far beyond the event. The success achieved in Super Bowl security operations showcases HSIN's enduring value for daily use by law enforcement personnel and ACTIC.

## Future HSIN Features Focus on Improved User Experience and Functionality

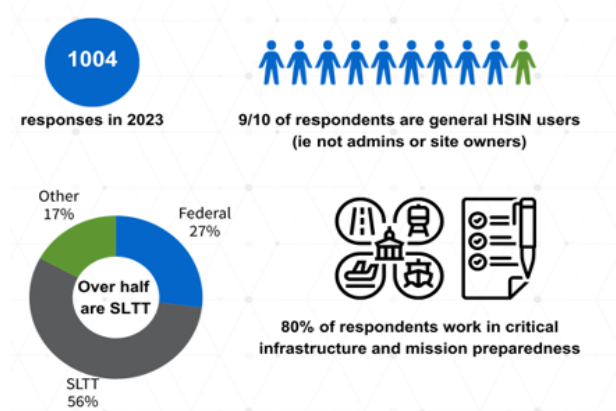
HSIN is revamping its information platform in 2023 to improve user experience and functionality. The overhaul includes a streamlined login, broader data access, and a shift away from the traditional "HSIN communities" concept. The upgraded platform will integrate enhanced search capabilities, better content and data management, real-time sharing, and mission-specific meeting spaces with features such as video, screen sharing, file sharing, and chat. HSIN plans to roll out improvements incrementally, emphasizing scalability and flexibility. According to Courtney Winship, HSIN Program and Product Director, the first step is to build a foundational platform with the right interfaces for efficient technology connections and disconnections as needed.

To facilitate ongoing interaction between users and HSIN, users can also visit the [HSIN Engage Page](#) on the HSIN Central website or contact HSIN via email to [HSIN@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:HSIN@hq.dhs.gov).

# HSIN Annual Assessment Metrics

Each year HSIN captures user feedback in an annual survey that is sent to all HSIN users. This year, 1,000 users responded to the survey and highlights of the results are presented below.

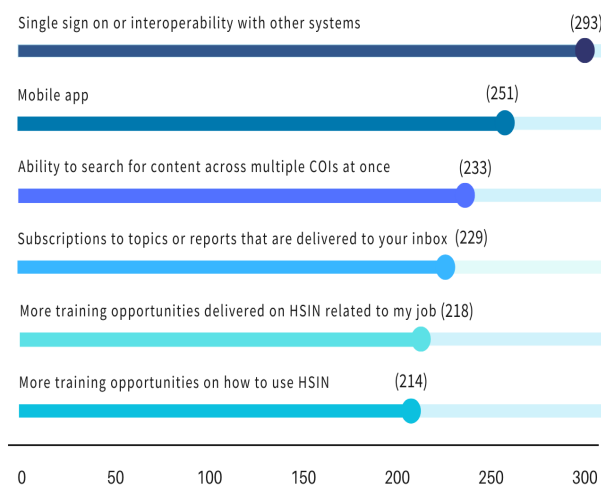
The results of the 2023 HSIN Annual survey are in, providing feedback from **over 1,000 HSIN users** like you. Thank you!



- 56% of users who provided feedback have used HSIN for less than 3 years, and most responses came from general users compared to COI owners or administrators.
- You told us that HSIN largely supports your daily operations and incident management, followed by training.
- You also reported that accomplishing your mission objectives with HSIN can be difficult and shared where changes would be the most impactful for you.

HSIN survey respondents were asked to rank a list of new features according to their preference, with these being the **top 6**.

- The most desired future HSIN platform function is a fast, secure, and simple log-in and registration process. Action: The HSIN Modernization team is actively developing that and plans to release a version later this year.
- Reliable mobile access remains a priority, and the need for Mobile access and communications should be available to those who need and want it to support their mission. In the works: we are using the lessons learned from the DHS Intel App to conduct research on the needs beyond our I&A users.
- You told us that you wanted quicker turnaround on common help desk issues, especially on user-initiated communications. Action: HSIN UX shared these findings with the Help Desk support staff which is escalating those issues and doing their best to improve the Help Desk experience.

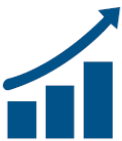


# Listening and Learning: Insights from HSIN's User Experience (UX) Team

HSIN's user research verifies that released products address user needs, identifies pre-release product improvements to increase ease of use, and informs the product improvement strategy.

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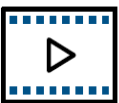
## User Engagement Increased from 2022 - 2023



Our participant panel grew to **384** members, **100** of which came from the annual survey



We conducted **4** studies with **34** users that focused on registration, login, user profiles, and how users achieve their missions



**22** research participants gave consent to show clips of them interacting with prototypes to the HSIN team, which increased team understanding of user needs



**1004** HSIN users provided feedback on the annual assessment on how they use current HSIN and what they'd like to see on future HSIN

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## Notable insights and outcomes from research studies



Our first registration prototype resulted in several task failures and confusion. After implementing a status bar, clearer instructions, and tool tips in our second prototype, participants completed registration without timeouts or failures.



Participants were curious about how the information provided on the registration prototype would impact their experience on HSIN, resulting in clearer explanations in later iterations of why different demographic data points are needed for access (such as identity proofing or content access)



HSIN site owners rely on community feedback in the form of usage analytics and direct user comments (via phone, email, or evaluation forms). A more robust and granular analytics instrument would enable them to make better decisions for their community members while reducing burden hours needed to mine the data.



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## The DHS Intel App Turns 2 in 2024!



Since its release in 2022, iOS has had **5532** installations, and Android has had **11,658**



Over the past **81** weeks, there have been **93** active monthly users on average

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## Perspectives from our users during prototype sessions



*“thank you for what you’re doing and this affects the highest levels of of people in government. And what you’re doing is trying to improve the products it goes all the way to the top levels of government. So thank you for what you do.”*



*“I like what I’m seeing [new prototype]. I think these are things [collaboration tools] that would encourage new users to use the site more compared to some of the features that we have currently.. Oh, so this would I think this would be really useful to some of our users.”*



*“I think this [curated home page] would be a great idea because it would kind of pull in things that they might want to see or need to see up front. And they can jump right to certain areas as opposed to having to, you know, click for the list and then go to the list, find them the, the one that they need to be in?”*

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## HSIN UX Research Celebrates Two Years Supporting HSIN Mobile Development

You, the HSIN User, told us that a mobile app would make meeting your mission goals easier and faster. We’re working on that.

Over the past two years the HSIN UX Research Team has been working with the HSIN Modernization team and HSIN mobile developers to build this new tool. How? The research team completed over 40 mobile user interviews and tests. From those, the UX Team created user stories which were given to the mobile development team to support the new app features, functions and design. In brief, users told us this app should provide:

- Speed – Get relevant intelligence to those who need it quickly
- Access – Make information available and secure to users who are not in an office
- Reach – Provide more timely information to decision makers who currently rely on analysts to surface relevant intelligence to them

## A New Feature: Mobile Dashboard

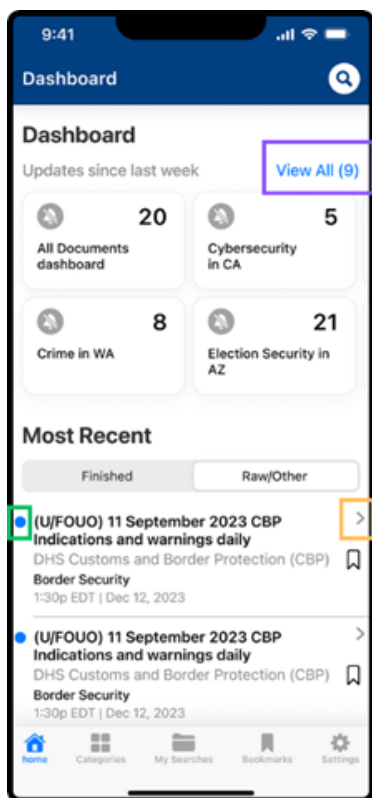
A new feature for saved searches in a Dashboard is in development to meet your needs.

What is the Mobile Dashboard?

- Provides a quick-access snapshot of new products, saved-searches, and history all in one spot.
- Notifications for new products (based on saved searches) are viewable immediately upon entering app.
- Optional – user can turn on or off.

*“Having the Dashboard with custom searches [would be great] for things I’m briefing on just before [the] briefing.”*

### Mobile Dashboard Prototype Functionality:



#### Product Counter:

- Each cell has a number in upper right corner indicating how many new products match their saved searches.

#### Subscription Notifications Indicator:

- Green when user opts in for email or text notifications.
- Blue when user is opted out of notifications.

#### Cards Peek from Right Side:

- Visual indicator that user can scroll horizontally.

*“I actually like it; it is simple. It’s not too what I call busy, and also there’s enough detail and the way that things are set up, it draws your eyes to what you need to look at.”*



Want to get involved? Visit <https://hsin.dhs.gov/HSIN-Engage>

# Planning for FY24

As DHS's trusted platform for sharing Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) information, HSIN aligns program goals to meet users' requirements. HSIN's achievements in FY23 provided the building blocks for FY24 objectives. Some of HSIN's key objectives include those listed below.

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## Modernization Success

- Build a new customer experience-centric HSIN platform for HSIN stakeholders by the close of FY24
- A new HSIN platform simplifies content discovery, strengthens professional networks, leverages modern technology, and enables continuous improvement

## HSIN Mobile Utility

- Develop and implement the DHS-Intel mobile app and select a mobile plan that offers a fit-for-purpose solution for HSIN stakeholders by the close of FY24
- Securing of parity between iOS & Android via improved technical architecture will yield an improved customer experience for DHS Intel leaders

## HSIN Artificial Intelligence (AI) Innovation

- Explore how artificial intelligence could be used to enhance the HSIN experience by the close of FY24
- AI-centric exploration and discovery will improve an understanding of how AI can be best leveraged in support of HSIN users' customer experience

## Program & Platform Sustainment

- Divest and decommission non-core applications and HSIN ICAM to more effectively manage the current platform by the close of FY24
- Decommissioning of non-core applications will mean less maintenance, lower O&M costs, superior use of enterprise-grade solutions, and an overall improved user experience

## Customer Experience (CX) Excellence

- Establish Customer Experience (CX) in alignment with DHS CX Directorate as the program and product North Star unifying all HSIN activities
- Unifying HSIN with the ambitions of the CX Directorate in partnership with SDD will generate cross-platform cohesion for users, reorient program-level mindsets to customer-focused outcomes, and inform product-level decisions toward the benefit end-users as per modern leading technology practices

