

Boldon James Announces Support of Allied Communication Protocol ACP145 *ACP145 Gateway product based upon Microsoft Exchange 2003 Server*

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Messaging and Directory specialist Boldon James has announced its ACP145 Gateway product based upon Microsoft Exchange 2003 Server. Building upon years of standards-based networking and its dominant position in military messaging clients, Boldon James today announced availability of its ACP145 Messaging Gateway product which allows different formal messaging systems to talk to each other seamlessly as demonstrated at JWID 2003.

ACP145 (Allied Communications Protocol 145) is a recently published messaging interoperability standard. Designed and developed by the CCEB Nations (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States) ACP145 is designed to support interoperability between modern military messaging systems. Most modern defence forces now use Microsoft Outlook based messaging clients to prepare and receive military messages. There are many advantages to be gained from these systems, such as the ability to send Rich Text and most importantly to send and receive attachments. Despite these national systems being based upon similar technology and working on similar standards each system has its own separate operating requirements making direct interoperability impossible. Interoperability is maintained by using legacy systems or unsecured COTS software. ACP145 has been defined as an 'Esperanto' standard that will allow two nations to interoperate both syntactically and semantically.

In simple terms ACP145 is X.400 military content wrapped as an s/mime signed data stream and transmitted over an X.400 transport. Nation A would create a message with its existing messaging system send it to its ACP145 gateway for onward transmission. The Nation A gateway would then process any internal signatures or encryption, convert the message to ACP145 format, digitally sign it on behalf of Nation A and transmit the message to Nation B. On receipt at Nation B their ACP145 gateway would validate the signature of Nation A and then translate the message into the Nation B internal format. The translation is not just syntactic as many nations support different security labelling and classifications and the ACP145 gateways must be able to accurately map these labels (on incoming messages) and thus the meanings or semantics of the message between international domains.

The Boldon James ACP145 Gateway has been built upon Microsoft Exchange 2003 and thus leverages the reliability and throughput of this powerful message switch. The hugely complex processes of signing, encrypting, signature validation, LDAP address validation and X.400 transmission is a potential minefield for performance and reliability, however the Boldon James/Microsoft implementation reuses existing Boldon James components and proven gateway technology. The resultant product thus retains the reliability and performance characteristics of existing, proven code. The Microsoft Exchange baseline also means that Multi-Processor and Fault Tolerant implementations are simple.

The Boldon James solution was demonstrated as a proof of concept by the US Department of Defense and the UK Ministry of Defence in last year's International Coalition JWID (Joint Warrior Interoperability Demonstration) 2003 Exercise. This year the product has been chosen to represent Australia and the US (with the UK taking a watching brief,). In JWID 2004 the Boldon James ACP145 will be used to prove full interoperability between messaging systems from Australia, UK and US.

Further Information

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