


What's New...

Scout Version 4.2

Scout™ Version 4.2, released in spring 2016, adds improvements to broaden Scout's ability to provide customers with more communication choices, includes features to tailor and streamline the dispatcher's experience, and expands capabilities for efficient configuration and system management.

Critical Communication Support

Avtec's dedication to remain technology agnostic continues as it expands interface functionality to help support features of the varied radio systems with which Scout interacts. This Scout version finds new options for interfaces that support radio systems by Tait and Icom including the Tait DMR Tier II for digital systems, Icom's IDAS conventional radio systems, and radio systems that use the Icom VE-PG3 radio controller.

Cimarron Driver Inbound Emergency Declarations Support

Scout currently supports inbound emergency declarations when operating in Cimarron's Multichannel format. The 4.2.12 minor release enhances Scout's Cimarron interface by adding support for this same feature when operating in Cimarron's standard format.

Tait DMR Tier II Support

Avtec enhanced its Scout DMR-AIS wireline interface by incorporating new functionality to support DMR Tier II. The interface now supports the following for conventional radio systems: group calls, emergency inbound group calls, and frequency selection. This functionality is licensed separately with a supplementary VPGate DMR license.

Selex DMR Tier II Support

Scout version 4.2.13 further enhances its DMR-AIS interface with support of Selex DMR Tier II. This version offers a limited feature set from Selex, supporting group calls, inbound emergency calls, and ANI.

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*/# Keying Support for Icom VE-PG3 Endpoints

The Icom VE-PG3 is a radio controller that connects to an Icom radio using an analog port and connects to VPGate using the SIP interface and is VOX keyed. Scout's SIP interface is enhanced to allow */# keying in addition to the currently supported VOX method.

SIP Interface Update

Scout's SIP interface is enhanced to allow silence suppression to be configurable. Instead of automatically suppressing silent audio packets, the interface either sends or suppresses the packets, depending upon configuration. When configured to allow silence packets to stream toward the endpoint, host SIP servers that typically drop the SIP connection due to inactivity remain connected instead.

Enhanced Access Control

Permissions by Location for Scout Manager Editing

Scout grants user access to Scout Manager for editing according to permissions associated with the user identification. The permissions can be either a custom set of rights or rights associated with the user's assigned role. A Scout Manager user with full access to "Layout" can add, delete, or configure any Scout component on Scout Manager's Layout tab, in any location and in any site.

However, this Scout version provides new granularity to the Layout tab permissions. For Scout systems that include multiple Locations, the Scout System Administrator can grant access to specific Locations via the user's role or custom rights. The permissions within the Location follow the user's additional rights. For example, a user with access to Location 3, but without access to Consoles cannot add, delete, or edit consoles within the location. Locations default to read-only if the user does not have permissions to update the location.

Webpage Authentication Enhancement

Scout Version 4.1 began to consolidate Scout user management into the Data Management System (DMS) by moving the user creation and user role management for Scout Central Distributor (SCD) users and Scout Manager users to the Administration tab in SCD. In addition to moving this portion of user management, Scout also began offering Windows Active Directory (AD) as an option for user authentication for SCD and Scout Manager users.

Scout Version 4.2 adds Web Authenticated users to the list of users managed in DMS and available for AD authentication. This Single Sign-On user enhancement eliminates the need to log in to each web configuration page (such as VPGate or Frontier) before updating and it also eliminates the need to access each instance of a web configuration page to create and maintain users for the service. As with Scout Manager and SCD users, the Web Authenticated users can be authenticated by Scout's internal authentication instead of AD, if desired.

Operational Flexibility

Scout Version 4.2 seizes the opportunity to broaden Scout's operations across an enterprise and its Wide Area Network (WAN) and remove restrictions associated with local operations. Barge-in, a feature that allows dispatchers to join a call-

in-progress, and VPGate endpoint redundancy are both available across a WAN. In addition, an enterprise that operates across many sites and locations finds a new configuration option that allows administrators access to specific locations for configuration, thus enabling the enterprise to continue to operate a single, diverse Scout system without the worry of administrators configuring locations other than their own.

Barge-In Across a Wide Area Network

Barge-in, a feature that allows a dispatcher to select a telephone or duplex radio endpoint to join a conversation that another dispatcher has in progress, was not supported over non-multicast enabled networks. Dispatchers could not barge-in on a call that was hosted by an endpoint whose home is across the WAN and accessed via Frontier.

This Scout version enhances Scout's Barge-in feature to allow dispatchers to join a conversation on any telephone or duplex radio endpoint in a Scout system that allows Barge-in, despite the originating endpoint's location. Scout's Barge-in limits remain the same as in the past. Barge-in conversations can support 11 simultaneous talkers: one field endpoint and 10 dispatchers. VPGate supports up to 250 talkers depending upon codecs in use and their effect on performance.

VPGate Endpoint Redundancy Over a Wide Area Network

Before Scout Version 4.2, VPGate endpoint redundancy existed for two or more VPGate systems within the same LAN. VPGate could not be redundant over a Wide Area Network (WAN) with Frontier or without multicast support. However, Scout now provides new opportunities for VPGate endpoint redundancy. A new configuration option enables VPGate endpoints to be redundant across a WAN. The new configuration uses unicast communication between the VPGate systems and is not dependent upon Frontier.

Configurable Option for Orphaned Calls

In a Scout system, an orphaned call is a call-in-progress that gets disconnected when the dispatcher's console shuts down. Currently, Scout handles an orphaned call by immediately ringing the endpoint on the other consoles that have the endpoint.

To provide more flexibility for handling orphaned calls, Scout now provides a configuration option in the Endpoint Profile. A new property, "Allow Orphan Calls," enables the customer to continue to handle orphaned calls the traditional way for all calls, only inbound calls, only outbound calls, or for no calls at all. The default behavior remains ringing any orphaned call at all consoles that have the endpoint.

Enhanced User Efficiency and Productivity

Scout promotes dispatcher productivity with new features to support the dispatcher's control of the Scout User Interface. New features allow the dispatcher to choose where ringtones originate, to choose indication levels for the endpoints on the Scout User Interface, and to use PTT for SIP endpoints in a patch with radios. In addition, the dispatcher gains the flexibility to place an endpoint in privacy mode for personal calls instead of stepping away from the console to use a personal phone.

Dispatcher-Controlled Ringtone Location

A new Ringtone to Secondary function pad allows the dispatcher to move incoming ringtones between speakers and headsets. If the dispatcher's ringtone originates in the speakers and the dispatcher wants it to originate in the headset, the dispatcher simply touches the Ringtone to Secondary function pad. To revert the ringtone location, the dispatcher touches the function pad again. The Scout System Administrator configures speakers and headsets for their primary and secondary ringtone locations, and the Scout console initiates with primary ringtone locations active.

Show Ring Function Pad

A new function pad, Show Ring, allows the dispatcher to view and change the call indications for the endpoints on the dispatcher's Scout User Interface. This easy-to-use function pad lets the dispatcher touch the function pad to place the console into show-ring mode and simply touch the endpoint pad to change the call indication status. After updating the call indications for each endpoint as necessary, the dispatcher touches the Show Ring function pad again to remove the console from show-ring mode and to return the endpoint pads to their normal modes.

In show-ring mode, the endpoint pads change to steel blue and the yellow status bar provides text to describe the indication status for each endpoint: none, visual only, or visual and audible. The Scout System Administrator must enable the Show Ring function for an endpoint and the administrator can configure the show-ring colors and text as necessary.

SIP Endpoint PTT to Radio

A new configuration option enables the Scout System Administrator to configure SIP endpoints that are connected to radios to use */# keying to communicate with the radios. All dispatchers in the telephone conversation can discuss the operational situations without audio reaching the radio. If a dispatcher on a telephone PTTs, the audio from the telephone conversation goes through to the radio. This functionality allows dispatchers to hold planning conversations before communicating the plans to the radio users.

Scout Console Privacy Mode

Avtec introduces privacy mode for Scout consoles with this release. Designed to allow a dispatcher freedom from barge-in during a private conversation, privacy mode is available on endpoints configured for the feature by the Scout System Administrator. A visual indication alerts dispatchers when an endpoint is being used in privacy mode. Privacy mode ends when the dispatcher ends the conversation; however, the dispatcher can cancel privacy mode before the call ends, if desired. A dispatcher cannot start privacy mode on a selected endpoint if another dispatcher is using the endpoint. Privacy mode does not interfere with console recording; console recording continues when privacy mode is in use.

LED Indicators for Outpost Auxiliary I/O Status

A new Outpost feature provides the capability to indicate connectivity for Auxiliary Input/Output (Aux I/O) endpoints. When an Aux I/O endpoint is connected from VPGate to Outpost, the LED indicator shines green. The indicator changes to yellow when all Aux I/O endpoints disconnect.

This feature uses the Outpost telephone port status LED. When configuring Outpost, the Scout System Administrator must choose Aux I/O for the Phone Port LED Association. When the port is configured for Aux I/O indications, all phone port-related LED operations become disabled.

Efficient System Management

Scout supports efficient system management by consolidating authentication for many services that previously were authenticated separately; by providing a new Enterprise Endpoint Editor for simultaneous, multi-endpoint editing; and by providing an easy-to-use new licensing option for the Scout console.

Enterprise Endpoint Editor

For existing endpoints, the new Enterprise Endpoint Editor simplifies endpoint and driver configuration by centralizing configuration for multiple instances of VPGate. For example, instead of editing each VPGate instance individually, users can access the Enterprise Endpoint Editor from the Scout Manager menu to make changes to multiple endpoints at the same time. When dealing with large Scout systems, using the editor significantly reduces the time needed to implement changes and helps reduce errors. The Enterprise Endpoint Editor requires an Enterprise Management Tools (EMT) license.

Pool Licenses for Scout Consoles

Traditionally Avtec uses license dongles, hardware devices that attach to a computer, to manage rights to access the Scout software components that reside on the computer. For example, a Scout console position that uses the Scout Software Audio Package would use a dongle to license the audio package.

In addition to the dongles now in use, with this Scout version Avtec is also offering licensing for the Software Audio Package from a "pool" of licenses. The Scout Central Distributor (SCD) distributes the licenses to appropriate consoles as they become active, stopping when the pool is depleted. As pool license users log off, the licenses become available for other users to access. A new Licensing webpage in SCD tracks and displays all licenses in use and the number of licenses available in the pool.

Pool licenses extend the mobility of a Scout system by allowing a customer to use a Scout License for the Software Audio Package when traveling or when remotely located from its operations center. This added flexibility keeps customers connected to critical situations no matter when they happen.

New Operating System Support

In the 4.2.13 Scout software minor release, Avtec introduces support for Scout Suite components on Windows Server 2012 R2 Update 1 ensuring that Avtec products run on current Windows Server operating system versions. These components include rackmounted server machines and Scout components that typically run in a back-room environment (VPGate, Call Voter, etc.).

Essential Compatibility Testing

As part of a continuing effort to ensure that Scout remains compatible with its technology partners, Avtec tested and approved compatibility with following :

- Cisco router for the 4-wire Ear and Mouth (E&M) analog trunking systems (Cisco Analog 8E/M SIP Gateway)
- Cisco router for the Foreign Exchange Station (FXS) for T1 telephones (Cisco Analog 8FXS SIP Gateway)
- Cisco router for the E1 telephone gateway (Cisco E1 SIP Gateway)
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager Version 10.5
- Motorola's MOTOTRBO® Linked Capacity Plus and Connect Plus v2.5 and v2.6 firmware (tested compatible for Scout 4.1)
- Tait's DMR v2.07.01 firmware
- Tait's P25 v1.80 firmware