

Charting the Course to a Secure Tablet Program

Lucas J Herring, Vermont DOC, IT Director

Chris Moore, ViaPath, Sr. VP of Business Development

Chris Ditto, ViaPath, VP of Research & Development



2023
23RD ANNUAL
TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT

RIDING THE WAVE
of Technology

JUNE 18-21
FT. MYERS



Who are We?



Lucas J Herring

Vermont DOC, IT Director

Tablet operations, networking & implementation



Chris Ditto

ViaPath, VP of Research & Development

Tablet security, software and configuration



Chris Moore








ViaPath, Sr. VP of Business Development

Tablet strategy, features & pricing









Most Common Tablet Applications








FACILITY

-  **Booking Video / Facility Rules**
Videos and documents for incoming offenders
-  **Posters/Brochures/Menus**
Videos and documents providing facility info.
-  **Grievances & Requests**
Full-featured electronic forms/approval system
-  **Online Commissary Ordering**
Compatible with most providers
-  **Religious Library**
A wide variety of resources for all major religions
-  **Online Law Library**
Access to the facility's law library subscription
-  **Yellow Pages**
Access to local business listings and numbers





COMMUNICATION

-  **Tablet Phone Calls**
Same calling functionality, but from with headphones
-  **Video Visitation**
Video chat between inmates and family
-  **Messaging**
Text chat between inmates and family
-  **Photo Exchange**
Conveniently share pictures
-  **Staff to Inmate Messaging**
Individual and group messages with attachments
-  **Grievance/Req. Messaging**
Inmate/Staff messages threads tied to submissions

ENTERTAINMENT

-  **Acuity Games**
Speed, sharpness, dexterity
-  **Puzzles**
Crosswords, sudoku, trivia
-  **Movies / Television**
Commercial-free and edited for corrections
-  **Music**
Streaming music services
-  **Audiobooks / Podcasts**
Fiction and non-fiction audio content
-  **eBooks**
Fiction and non-fiction digital content
-  **Newsfeed**
Up-to-date information on sports, politics, and more

EDUCATION

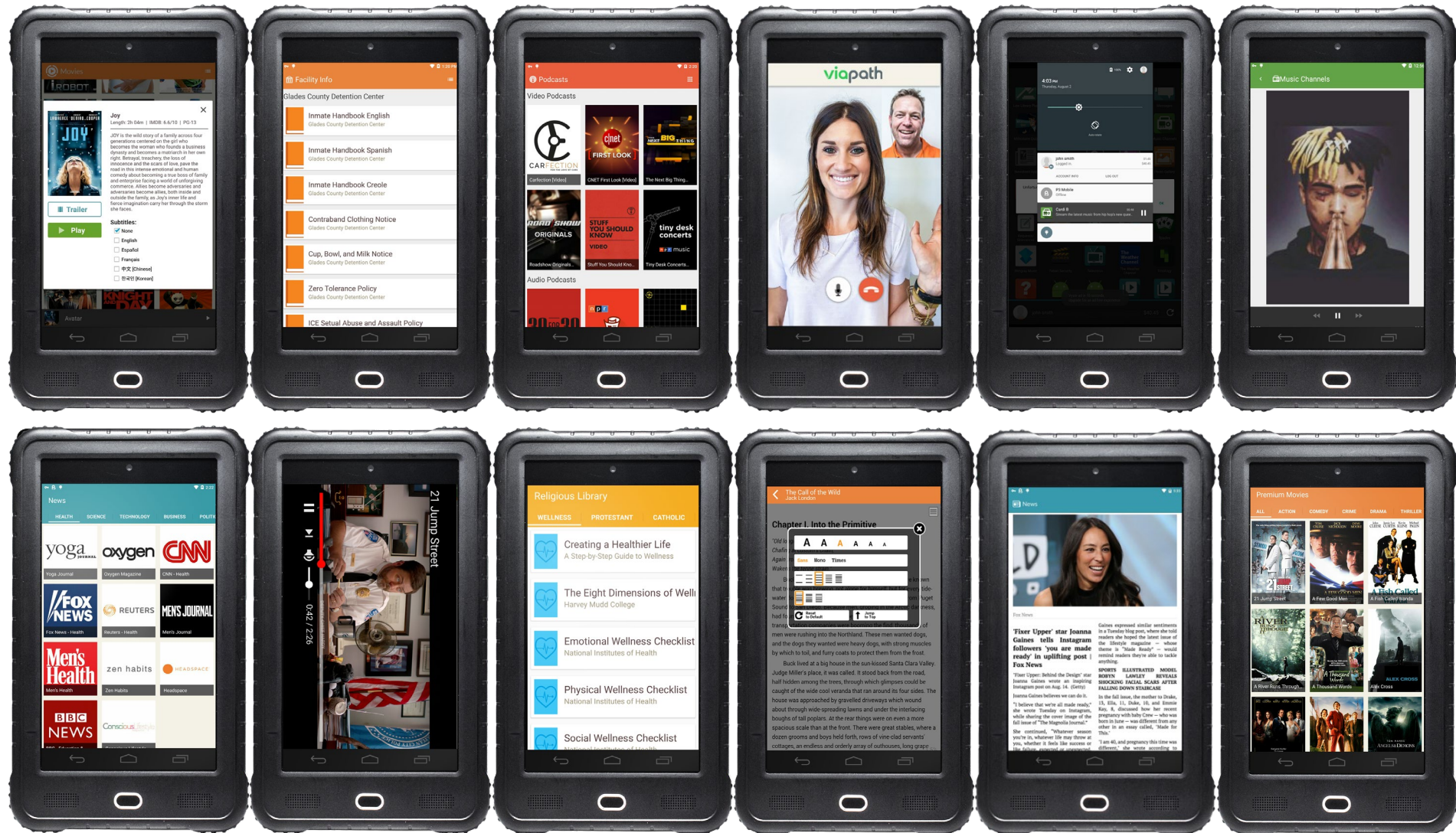
-  **Access to Existing Resources**
Portal to existing facility education solutions
-  **Independent Learning Portal**
Courses for the self-motivated
-  **Full-Featured Moderated LMS**
Instructor-involved education content
-  **Post-Release Access**
Continued access to learning after release

EMPLOYMENT

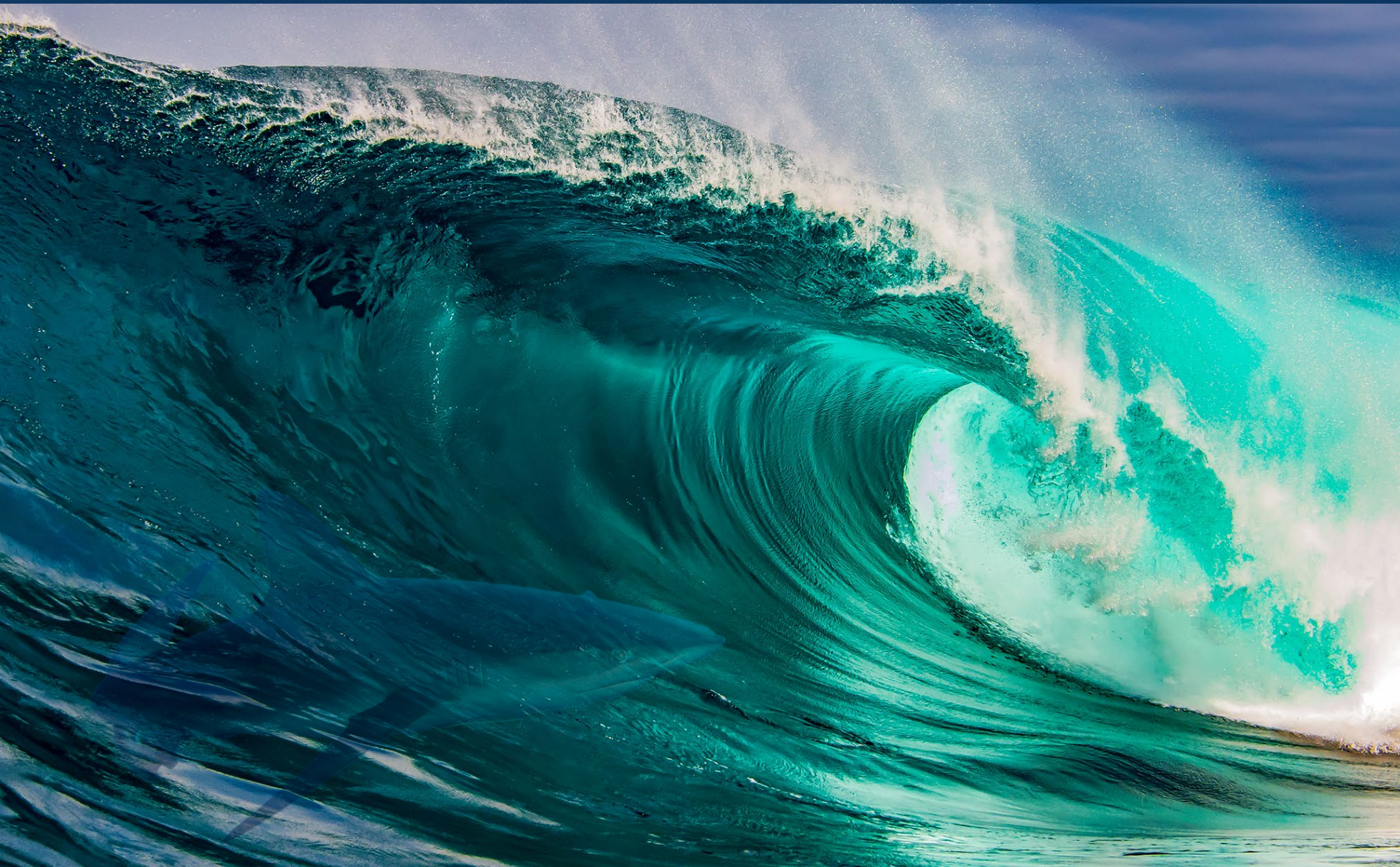
-  **Workforce Readiness**
Helping inmates develop job skills
-  **Job Search**
Search only, no communication
-  **Post-Release**
Help finding a job after release



Tablet Functionality



The Danger





Security Issues

Dangers to Look For

Tablets for Sale Online

If an identical model of tablet is available for sale online, there is an increased risk of that model being hacked and re-introduced as contraband. Even if your facility doesn't offer tablets to inmates at release, another facility may.

Tablet Hacks for Sale Online

If tablet hacks are available for sale online, that is obviously a huge danger.

Infrequent OS Updates

If a tablet isn't updated frequently, then it is less likely that the vendor will be responsive if hacks are uncovered.

Offline Tablets

Offline tablets may seem safer, but you won't know what they are being used for while they are offline. It could be that they have been hacked and are connected to a contraband hotspot.

The image shows a collage of online marketplaces. At the top left is an OfferUp listing for a tablet for \$11.11, posted almost 5 years ago. In the center is a YouTube video titled 'Tablet Hacked' by Chobee Ville, showing a hand interacting with a tablet's home screen. To the right is a Reddit post from r/AndroidQuestions asking for help with jailbreaking a tablet.

The image shows a Mercari listing for a tablet. The listing is titled 'Tablet' and is priced at \$36 with a \$12.30 delivery fee. The item is marked as 'SOLD' with the message 'Sorry, this item has been sold.' The listing includes an overview of the item's condition, category (Electronics, Tablets & E-readers), and details like the posting date (03/02/23).

The image shows a Reddit post from the community r/AndroidQuestions. The post is titled 'Need help with jailbreaking tablet' and was posted by user Tyg-41. The post content reads: 'I need some help I'm just lost I have no idea where to . Would it be b just to root does a tablet'. The post has 26 comments and a share button.

The image shows a forum post from 'HACK FORUMS'. The post is titled 'Unlocked and tablet's for sale. I recently unlocked a and tablet for someone whom has since disappeared. They are the table given to inmates for use inside prison. These tablet's are are unlock the security program removed. They have no camera's speaker's or If you're interested Hit me up on WhatsApp 352 453 0004'. The forum header includes 'PACKETS, POSTS & PUNKS'.



Why do Inmates try to Hack Tablets?

Unrestricted Communication

Access Prohibited Info / Websites

They Have No Money

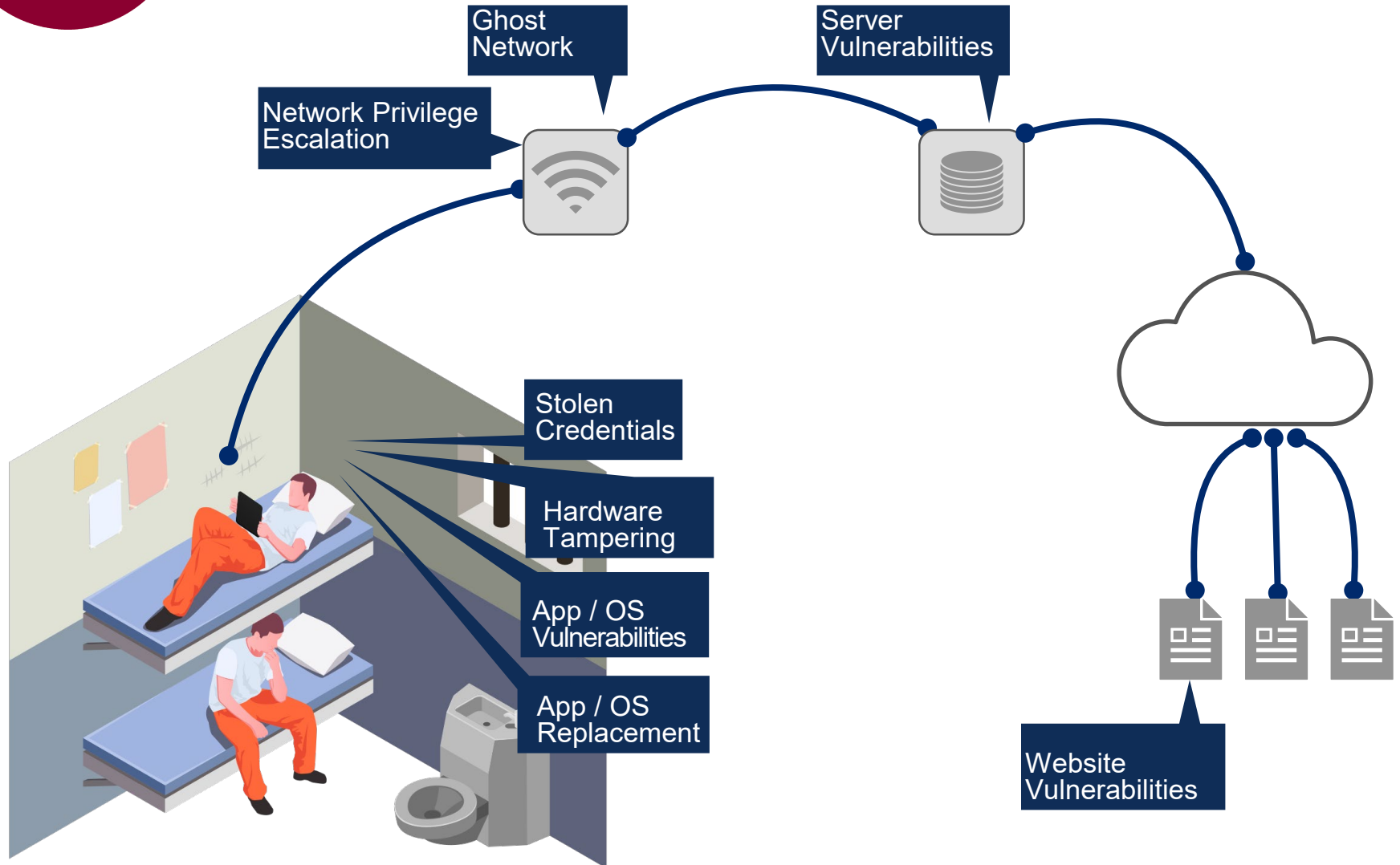
Exploit Staff and Increase Privileges

For the Intellectual Challenge

For Profit



How do Inmates try to Hack Tablets





Potential Hardware Threat Vectors

⚡ Charging

Challenge: Inmates may look for charging hardware capable of charging contraband devices, or use provided cords to link tablets to onsite computers to introduce unapproved software.

Consideration: Use charging systems that are only compatible with the tablets provided.



Lockable Boxes
✓ Magnetic Charging (unique adapter)
✓ Wireless

Rolling Carts
✓ Magnetic Charging (unique adapter)
✓ Wireless

Wall Shelves
✓ Magnetic Charging (unique adapter)
✓ Wireless

Charging Cables
✓ Magnetic Charging (unique adapter)

Hard Wired
✓ POE (Power over Ethernet)

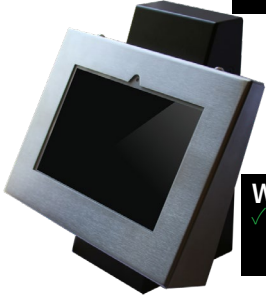
📱 Tablets

Challenge: Inmates may attempt to gain root access to tablets allowing them to install alternate software or connect tablets to another network.

Consideration: Only provide tablets that run a feature-reduced customized operating system with secure mobile management software. Updating tablets should require private encryption keys.



Command Tablets
✓ Four models and many variations



Wall Kiosks
✓ 10", 15.6" touchscreens

📶 Network

Challenge: Inmates may attempt to access prohibited sites from inmate tablets and contraband phones over a facilities inmate network.

Consideration: Wireless networks should not broadcast their presence. Permitted devices should only be able to access rudimentary services until an inmate user has successfully logged into the approved device. Once the inmate has logged in, they should only be able to connect to pre-approved sites via a secure proxy server. This will ensure that all network traffic is encrypted and routed through a firewall (ideally onsite) that only permits access to destinations allowed for that facility.

Consider using the newer WPA2 protocol, along with an additional VPN layer (additional encryption) if using WiFi.

If looking for in-cell coverage, consider using pLTE, which uses hardware keys (SIM) to connect to the network and further increasing digital security by encrypting traffic with GSM keys.

Options
✓ Secure WPA2 WiFi option uses a VPN
✓ pLTE option (hardware keys + encrypted communication)
✓ Ethernet





Potential Hardware Threat Vectors



Circumventing Software
Inmates may use any text entry field to attempt to trigger a browser window to open with a specified URL, often wrapping the URL in JavaScript.

Consideration
The OS web browser can be removed from the tablet (along with the media player). This prevents the onscreen keyboard from appearing except for specific applications and content sources.

Software Updates
Inmates may take advantage of known vulnerabilities in old versions of operating systems and applications.

Consideration
Tablets can be automatically updated over the air (OTA) to ensure that each tablet is running the latest software. Applications can be updated the same way. OS updates that take place overnight are less likely to be impacted by high traffic or user manipulation. All updates should utilize secure private encryption keys.

Access Port
Commercially available devices typically have a combination charging/data port that allows users to connect the device to any computer to introduce new applications, modify hidden preferences (such as network preferences) or replace the OS entirely.

Consideration
Tablet access ports should either be covered entirely (wireless charging), or blocked with a unique magnetic pin-based system that uses flush electrical contact points (similar to Apple Mag-Safe). Accessing the port should not allow access to the device without private software keys.

Smuggled Devices
Devices available for use outside of a correctional setting can be made insecure by hackers and smuggled back into a correctional facility. Hackers may also search for devices to modify on sites like eBay.

Consideration
Facilities should consider not providing inmates with tablet models that have been sold to inmates at any facility.

OS Reset
Commercially available devices typically have a button combination that allows users to reset the OS to an original state, often introducing insecure options.

Consideration
Tablets should not support hardware resets via buttons and the devices should not contain a minimal "stock" version of the OS.

Crashing Applications
Inmates may repeat an action dozens of times in an attempt to crash the application or operating system, hoping that the action will trigger additional privileges.

Consideration
Tablets should be hardened against these actions, and crashing applications should not result in escalating privileges.

ADA Features
Inmates may attempt to take advantage of external input devices, speech-to-text and captioning systems.

Consideration
Tablets should have a healthy suite of ADA solutions to address customer accessibility needs, but testing and maintaining security around these important compliance features is critical.

Modifying the Hardware
Inmates may attempt to remove case fasteners to gain access to vulnerable internal components and the battery.

Consideration
Tablets should use thermal bonding or security fasteners, along with internal mechanical intrusion detection, to prevent software modification. Accessing the device's circuitry should not allow any escalation in network access (should be controlled off-device).

PIN Theft
Inmates may try to steal PINs or force other inmates to log into the tablet and then take over the session to hide activities, or bypass permission blocks.

Consideration
Tablets should deter PIN theft by restricting users to a living area and requiring a photo to log in. Taking a photo of the active user at the beginning of their session, and making this accessible to staff, will help.

Saving State
Inmates may attempt to save files, text, or application state in order to share messages with other inmates.

Consideration
Tablets can be set to reset each time they are used, preventing locally stored files or application state.



Control Network Traffic



Network traffic to and from tablets should be analyzed and regulated by an onsite server. This server should perform the following functions:

- ✓ **Device Management**
Ensures authorized devices are connected
- ✓ **Connectivity**
Handles connectivity for both AWN and WiFi networks
- ✓ **Encryption**
Ensures WPA2 Encrypted network with VPN encryption per tablet for WiFi traffic. AWN uses hardware keys in addition to encrypted traffic.
- ✓ **Hidden Network**
Both AWN and WiFi networks do not broadcast their presence, rendering them largely invisible to 3rd party devices without network analysis tools.
- ✓ **Continuous Monitoring & Alerting**
Industry leading monitoring software provides realtime analysis and alerts of CPU usage, disk activity, bandwidth usage, request traffic, and more.
- ✓ **Proxy**
Full-featured proxy server, which means no direct connections between tablets and 3rd party sites.
- ✓ **Firewall**
Blocks outside systems from initiating contact with devices.
- ✓ **Internet Whitelist**
Access limited to facility-approved URLs, IP addresses, ports, and request types.
- ✓ **Logging**
Log everything.

Whitelisted Content

Approved Communication

Blacklisted Content

Blocked Communication



Allowed



Blocked





Network Control

FACILITY NETWORK

✓ Pro

Agency has direct control over management of the channels.

✓ Con

Troubleshooting complexities, additional work for the agency to manage the vendor's devices, additional cost. Inmates may share facility bandwidth, and hardware may not work as intended with untested network hardware and configurations.

VENDOR NETWORK

✓ Pro

Inmate data doesn't ride the same physical network as agency data, vendor is accountable for the end-to-end solution/service, no cost to the agency.

✓ Con

If using WiFi, this may require coordination of available channels.





Ownership Model

Most vendors have moved away from an ownership model and moved to a no-cost lease.

Reasons:

- ✓ **Hardware Security:** Security concerns related to the devices being available to the public and hacker forums
- ✓ **Content Ownership:** Hassle related to dealing with “owned” devices and content that must be made available upon release
- ✓ **Stratifies Inmates:** Only inmates with money get a device, and access to beneficial services.
- ✓ **Black Market:** Inmates can sell access to an owned tablet for cash and favors.
- ✓ **RMAs:** The process of providing a warranty, determining fault when tablets stop working, and providing replacements is difficult.
- ✓ **Increases Property:** Inmates may seek revenge by damaging another inmates owned tablet, and adds to inmate property.



Case Study – VT DOC Tablet Deployment



viapath
TECHNOLOGIES



Lessons from VT DOC

- Who is allowed to have tablets and why
- Lessons learned related to policy changes
- What are the highest use services/applications
- How are paid services billed
- Tablet ratio – shared or 1:1 assigned
- Method for charging and why
- Choice for network connectivity
- Any other insights

Thank You



viapath
TECHNOLOGIES