

SOFTWARE DEFINED RADIO: THE RIGHT TIME TO BUY?

The long term objective for developed militaries remains to have a completely 'joined up' network between all points of deployment that feed into a centralised system from which real time operational decisions can then be made. Software Defined Radio (SDR) is seen to be the key enabler of Network Centric Warfare (NCW) in the pursuit of greater transparency and interoperability for the future of military comms. Although there are 10 SDR programme countries at present (Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, USA) and although SDR is seen as the accepted way forward for military communications technology, many other militaries are looking to see how the technology evolves before becoming fully committed.

Dr Al Emondi (Deputy Chief Technology Officer, TEAM SPAWAR, US Navy) has been chosen to chair his SDR peers in considering whether it is the right time to buy software defined radios or whether the community should wait for costs to fall, at the 8th Annual Software Defined Radio (www.sdreurope.com) forum in October. In today's operational environment, finding the truly "essential" requirements for an efficient tactical communications system is a complicated process. The current economic climate has not made decision-making in this regard any easier. Indeed nations are torn between adopting SDR fully and bearing the burden of the cost now or approaching a halfway house in SDR adoption while costs decrease. The debate rages on: Full adoption and full costs or half measures and reduced costs?

All of this is happening too with the backdrop of evolving SDR technology. At present, the US military's Joint Tactical Radio System (JTRS) is the only operational SDR platform in use, providing warfighters the ability to communicate regardless of radio type or frequency. How long though before the SDR technology of other nations closes this capability gap? Will that wait continue to depend on cost? Dr Emondi's SDR Panel Session in Rome in October should provide some of the answers.

To view more details on Dr Emondi's participation at the event as well as the rest of forum's agenda, download the brochure in full at www.sdreurope.com.

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