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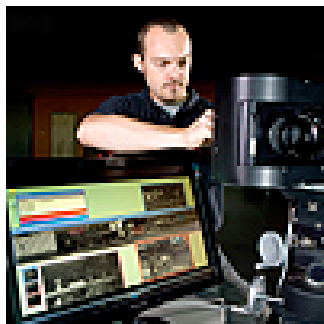
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"Situational Awareness" (2013). *News Releases*. 417.
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Situational Awareness

06.12.2013 | Research, Engineering

The University of Dayton Research Institute was awarded \$3 million in Ohio Third Frontier funding Wednesday, June 12, to advance sensor technologies that will help first responders, law enforcement, Homeland Security and other security agencies better prepare for possible threats and emergency response.

New technologies developed through the Research Institute's "Trusted Situational Awareness" program will also help small- to medium-sized businesses compete in the field of cyber-security by making it easier for their situational-awareness products to be easily integrated into major systems.

Situational-awareness systems are used to provide surveillance and information exchange between event monitors, response coordinators and responders, said Kevin Klawon, group leader for software systems in the Research Institute's sensor systems division. They're used in shipping ports, airports, college campuses, border patrol, military installations, disaster response, search and rescue operations and other locations and circumstances where coordinated event monitoring and response is critical.

"First-generation SA systems are highly inadequate," Klawon said. "They allow for only minimal exchange of data and information between response coordinators and first responders, they typically don't have the capacity to integrate air- and ground-based surveillance feeds, they're not set up to accept feedback from sensors systems outside their own, and real-time capabilities are severely limited."

Klawon said research and development efforts through the Trusted Situational Awareness program will result in streamlined, real-time situational-awareness systems that will resolve each of these problems. In addition, the systems will allow for easy integration of situational awareness products from multiple manufacturers, providing a platform for smaller businesses to demonstrate new products.

"Current systems are typically built by large manufacturers who work hard to keep their systems proprietary, which limits the opportunities for small- and medium-sized companies to provide products for these systems, even though their products may be superior," Klawon said. "Our goal is to create systems with 'plug-and-play' capabilities, much like today's computers that are compatible with parts from other manufacturers. This will help remove some of the barriers to market for smaller businesses."

In addition to advancing situational awareness technologies, Klawon said the program will also benefit local economic development efforts.

"This will enhance the Dayton region's quickly growing reputation as a leader in sensors development, and having a platform like this available here will help to bring new jobs to the region," he said.

The Research Institute's partners in the program include Woolpert, Greenlight Optics, Tenet 3 and Optica Consulting. In addition, the city of Dayton will use the system to support its emergency management and law enforcement operations, as well as to provide feedback to the research and development partners for system improvements.

The award was funded under the Ohio Third Frontier's "Innovation Platform" program, which brings together Ohio companies and universities, colleges and nonprofit research institutions with established technologies to help bring those technologies to market.

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