

## **DOD Launches Project To Fix War fighters' 'Critical' Info-Sharing Gap**

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***Inside the Pentagon***

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The Pentagon is launching a high-tech project to fix a major information-sharing gap affecting warfighters on the front lines, according to military officials and documents.

A Defense Department report sent to Congress in January reveals there is a “critical” information-sharing gap at the “tactical edge” where deployed warfighters operate. Systems used by these troops typically share data with higher echelons via tightly coupled, point-to-point interfaces. But that data is not visible, accessible and understandable across the U.S. military services, nor with coalition partners, the report states. *Inside the Pentagon* obtained a copy of the report.

In addition, the services continue to develop unique approaches for data sharing that meet individual program needs. This “redundant capability development” boosts costs, the report states, adding that authoritative data sources have not yet been adequately “identified and exposed for discovery.”

To fix these problems, U.S. Joint Forces Command is sponsoring a new joint concept technology demonstration for fiscal year 2010. The project, dubbed Tactical Edge Data Solutions (TEDS), will enable joint command-and-control data sharing on the front lines by applying net-centric solutions to designated C2 systems of record for increased visibility and accessibility outside of tactical edge networks, according to the report.

U.S. Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, VA, is the sponsor and lead agency for the project, which is overseen by the Pentagon’s director for defense research and engineering. Leslie Winters, head of the command’s joint data and services division, explained the problem facing warfighters today.

“Lack of data-sharing flexibility means that current data sharing is limited to predefined, point-to-point interfaces between known data sources and known consumers,” she told *Inside the Pentagon*. “Our goal is leader-centric, net-enabled data, which makes information more readily available to any warfighter who needs it and allows for the rapid injection of new information feeds into C2 nodes. This net-enabled approach better supports the ever-changing information needs of complex joint warfighting.”

David O’Neill, who works in the same JFCOM division, said current command-and-control systems such as Landwar.net, C2 Constellation and FORCEnet use multiple data formats and architecture standards. “Data sharing between these systems is available today, though not as flexible as it can be,” he said. The goal of the TEDS demonstration is to implement a common C2 data standard, and Web services to improve interoperability and provide accessibility and visibility of C2 data, he added.

The report says the project will not modify tactical edge networks. Rather, it will implement C2 Core, an extension of the Universal Core interagency information-sharing initiative, at the battalion level. The project will develop data-sharing standards, practices and agreed-upon semantics and syntax. It will use a Web services-based, data-sharing framework associated with Universal Core. The project will also use authoritative data sources for the command and control, battlespace awareness and force application domains. In addition, the project will develop a joint/coalition/enterprise methodology for implementing data strategy.

The demonstration is slated to wrap up in FY-12 and transition to the military in FY-13. TEDS will transition to the Army project manager for battle command, the Marine Corps' Marine Air-Ground Task Force C2 effort and the Distributed Common Ground System, according to the report. According to FY-11 defense budget justification materials sent to Congress last month, the Marine Corps is providing the technical lead for the project and the Army is providing the transition manager.

The effort will reduce redundant software being developed across multiple programs and will enable the seamless exchange of data within the U.S. military services and with NATO and coalition partners who adopt Universal Core, the documents state. The Pentagon is slated to spend \$4.2 million on the project in FY-10 and anticipates spending the same amount in FY-11 and FY-12, the report states.