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NEWS p10

DreamHammer goes Ballista for multi-vehicle control software

California-based software provider DreamHammer (booth 2727) has integrated its Ballista unmanned aircraft control system to include the UAS Control Segment (UCS) interoperability standard, allowing operators to use the software with several vehicle types.

Ballista allows operators to control multiple unmanned vehicles across different industries, whether they be on the ground, used for maritime applications or in the air. DreamHammer has outfitted

the software with components to bring proprietary unmanned platforms up to these UCS standards.

Ballista is the first commercial off-the-shelf software of its kind to be integrated with UCS, says DreamHammer. It envisions its universal "plug and play" architecture saving money for unmanned vehicle operators.

"For years, customers have dared to dream of complete interoperability with all unmanned systems, and we at DreamHammer continue to

work very hard to help make that dream a reality," says Nelson Paez, CEO of the software firm. Ballista includes a software development kit that allows developers to use the software with their own

unmanned vehicles, robots and outside applications.

The software has undergone demonstrations with the US Department of Defense and prime contractors.

At a press briefing, Dream-

Hammer said it has formed a strategic partnership with Ocean Aero, which is developing Submaran, a new type of unmanned underwater surface vessel that scavenges energy with solar panels.

Nelson Paez, CEO (left), and Chris Diebner, chief technology officer, share the same DreamHammer

'SENSE AND AVOID' HALTED

The US Navy has paused the development of the Northrop Grumman MQ-4C Triton's "sense and avoid" radar system that would enable it to avoid other aircraft traffic. The Triton would have been the first unmanned aircraft to be fitted with an airborne sense and avoid solution, but the system is behind schedule and over budget.

"We have made a decision to pause of the development of that capability," says Capt Jim Hoke, the Naval Air Systems Command program manager for the Triton. "It remains a requirement to the

"We need to take a hard look at the path going forward based on where we are

CAPT JIM HOKE

Naval Air Systems Command program manager for the Triton

navy and to our program, but we need to take a hard look at the path going forward based on where we are on the technology perspective." The decision to defer the sense-and-avoid radar is

due to both budgetary pressures and technology, Hoke says.

At present, the radar is not integrated on the Triton, Hoke says. The system will have to be cut into production at a later date, he says. The USN is working with Northrop to determine what its best option is to cut a sense-and-avoid system into the MQ-4C production line, but fundamental problems remain.

"We just have to make sure it's the right system, it's an affordable system and that it's going to take care of the things that we need it to

take care of," he says. "We have not answered all those questions yet."

Hoke says all options are on the table including radar contractor IIT Exelis losing its place as the sense-and-avoid system supplier. "I'm waiting for Northrop Grumman to come back to me and brief what are our potential options going forward," Hoke says.

Hoke says he is cognizant of how important sense-and-avoid technology is to the US Pacific Command and USN 6th Fleet commanders, who have said the system is critical for their operations.

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