Newsletter

PMS411
COTS Tech IPT

Commercial
Off The Shelf
Technologies
Integrated Project Team

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Inside this Issue

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CORE: Making Obsolescence Obsolete

In response to COTS IPT issues, the CORE concept has been formed. CORE, COTS Obsolescence Resolution Effort, resolves the issues brought to the IPT in the most timely and cost effective manner. The effort relies heavily on the expertise of FTSCLANT, NUWC, A&T, and LM/OEMs in resolving specific obsolescence issues.

CORE researches suitable substitutes and submits recommendations and ECP data to the IPT for approval. When substitutes cannot be found, repair or manufacturing efforts are explored.

This is an approach the CORE effort will explore with other equipment as well. LRUs currently thought of as 'throw away' can be repaired at the component level and used as spares. The long range cost savings to the government is immeasurable.

Thus far, CORE has initiated the repair and testing of Q-70 battery assemblies, Q-65 Barco monitors, alternate keyboards, and various COTS firmware modules. Additionally,

Being Proactive Works!

For the first time, a COTS vendor is asking for input from the AN/SQQ-89(V) community to help determine End of Production (EOP) dates for some or their products. This confirms that *a proactive stance toward COTS obsolescence can lead to a productive relationship with your COTS vendors.* The military consumer of COTS products need not always be the 'victim' of its vendors in a COTS environment.

The vendor requesting our assistance is Sabtech Industries, which is a major supplier of COTS products to the

Web Site News…

↪ The USW InfoDesk (www.uswinfo.com) is now mirroring the OLDR based (sqq89.com) COTS IPT site, so you can access the site from either place.

↪ The Web interface to the HW Database is in the testing phase. We'll let everyone know when it is officially available.

↪ "COTS and the AN/SQQ-89(V) Program," presented by Mr. Wayne Boothe at the Mid-Atlantic Logistics Conference, has been posted. This presentation was extremely well received at the conference, and it is definitely worth checking out.

↪ The IPT's Charter is available.

CORE…   *Continued from Page 1*

CORE has managed the manufacture of SLR upgrade kits, reconfiguration switches, 53C extender cards, and UYK-43 lowboy cables. CORE will continue to resolve issues as provided in the "Hot Items List" in their successful efforts to make obsolescence obsolete.

For more information about CORE, contact Mr. Wayne Boothe at wayne-boothe@ftsclant.navy.mil. ◆

Being Proactive…
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AN/SQQ-89(V) Program. Sabtech is looking for information about our current and projected requirements for two of their boards being used in AN/SQQ-89(V)12/53D and AN/SQQ-89(V)15. They will use this data to help compute their EOP date and to procure spare piece parts for repairs. Refer to the Side Bar to the right titled, "Help Sabtech to Help Us" for detailed information.

While the COTS Technologies IPT has vehicles in place to handle reactionary obsolescence issues (see OAM and CORE articles in this issue), developing a *proactive* stance, one that produces a working relationship with vendors like Sabtech, is also a major focus of the IPT. The Vendor Tour, which took place over the last year, and the COTS Hardware Database (HWDb) are just two of the tools the IPT is using as it proactively tackles COTS obsolescence.

Help Sabtech to Help Us

Sabtech Industries, a major supplier of COTS products to the AN/SQQ-89(V) Program, would like the SQQ-89 community's help in determining the production life span of two of its boards: VME1397DEJ and VME1397AB.

Sabtech has requested information from us on number of installations, spares required, number of years we plan on using the boards, and the number of boards we currently have. They will use this data to determine an EOP date and to calculate spares requirements.

The AN/SQQ-89(V)12 and 53D use four of Sabtech's VME1397DEJ boards in Unit 490. The current EOP date for this board is 2001.

AN/SQQ-89(V)15 uses two VME1397AB boards in Unit 861. This board's current EOP date is 2004.

Sabtech has promised a 5-7 year life span for all their boards; VME1397DEJ has already exceeded that life span by two years, and VME1397AB has several years to go (production began in 1997).

Immediate obsolescence of these two boards is not an issue at this time. However, programmatic decisions should be made concerning the potential problem, with results forwarded to Sabtech.

The COTS Technologies IPT is requesting help from the affected Projects in answering Sabtech's questions. Responses should be forwarded to Mr. Jerry Decker by July 30, 1999. Mr. Decker can be reached at 703-553-1579 or deckerj@tst.tracor.com.

Meeting the Vendors
The Vendor Tour was used to initiate a working relationship with selected vendors such as Sabtech. The IPT discussed applicable obsolescence issues with the vendors and when feasible, worked with the vendor to outline some possible so-
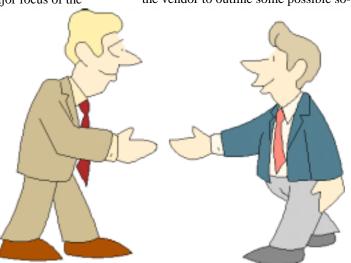
lutions. The IPT also took the opportunity to explain that although a Prime Contractor may make the actual purchases, PMS411 is the real customer and end user. The visits also provided the vendor with a single, identifiable point-of-contact who could disseminate or gather information across the whole AN/SQQ-89(V) Program.

The Hardware Database
With the initial data entry of the HWDb nearing completion, we are now able to demonstrate to OEMs the high volume of COTS products being used across the entire AN/SQQ-89(V) Program. This high volume, with its correspondingly high dollar value, establishes the SQQ-89 Program as a legitimate

The following is an excerpt from the April 1999 Newsletter published by Interactive Circuits & Systems, LTD — another COTS vendor who views the SQQ-89 Program as a valuable customer. See the full article and ICS Newsletter at http://www.ics-ltd.com/news.htm.

ICS COTS in Action
SQQ-89 Starts Production

Lockheed Martin Corp., Syracuse, NY, is now in the production phase of the AN/SQQ-89(V)14 and (V)15 sonar upgrade programs…. ICS supplies a significant portion of the COTS hardware for this program.

[For the AN/SQS-53C], ICS provides the data acquisition, test signal generation and injection, sampling skew correction and complex demodulation functions for the (V)14 systems. Each ship set uses a large number of ICS-110AM, ICS-7220-ALU, and ICS-2200S boards…. The (V)15 upgrade includes the transmit system for which numerous ICS-115 Digital-to-Analog Converter boards are also used. …For ICS, the AN/SQQ-89 program represents our largest production program ever.

ICS has been involved since the beginning of this program in 1994…. As an active participant from concept development to project completion, ICS helped to integrate the functionality contained in three cabinets of the original system into one cabinet in the new system using ICS COTS building block solutions and the Front Panel Data Port (FPDP) data flow concept. A major achievement of the PSM program was that the prototype system was ready for sea trial in less than 18 months. In November 1996, the PSM team was awarded the prestigious AEGIS upgrade contract.

After the award, Mr. Steve Johnson of the PSM project management team wrote in a letter to ICS, "…ICS … worked through design issues, supported the system integration effort and became a strong player in the project. …" ◆

When the Warranty Expires…

FTSCLANT has set up a warranty tracking process and has had much success. But what happens when the warranty expires?

Since their introduction to the fleet, failed Q-65 Barco monitors were returned to the manufacturer for warranty repair. When the warranty was no longer in effect, the OEM began charging $400-$500 for screening, and repair costs of $2,000-$4,000. This was reasonable considering the cost of a new monitor is $30,000, but funding constraints and lengthy turn around times forced a revision to the process.

Through existing contracts, FTSCLANT now manages the repair and testing of Barco monitors at significant cost savings. Due to their contractor's abilities to isolate component level faults vice faults at the assembly level, the average repair cost per unit has decreased to $800, with a turn around time of 3 weeks.

FTSCLANT has tracked repair efforts and component failures on the 15 monitors repaired at the contractor's facility. This data will be useful to the IPT when considering possible product improvement upgrades.

The accessibility of hardware, firmware, and electronics manufacturing capabilities is a valuable resource to the IPT for resolving obsolescence issues for both COTS and legacy equipment. ◆

COTS means…

- ❧ COST OVERRUNS ARE THE STANDARD
- ❧ CAST OVER THE SIDE
- ❧ CHICKEN OF THE SEA?

These are courtesy of Mr. Wayne Boothe, our charming and delightful Supply Support LEM. He thinks these up when he has nothing better to do. ;-)

Being Proactive:

"player" in the COTS market.

In addition, by associating the various SQQ-89 programs together under the COTS Technologies IPT umbrella, the SQQ-89 program as a whole receives more visibility and consistency in the COTS arena. An example of this visibility can be seen in the Side Bar to the left titled, "Vendors are talking about us…" which is an excerpt from the April 1999 Newsletter published by Interactive Circuits & Systems, Ltd (ICS). ICS was another stop on the Vendor Tour.

The AN/SQQ-89(V) Program as a whole uses over 1,400 products from Sabtech worth several million dollars, and it uses over 600 products from ICS, again worth several million dollars. ◆

What is an OAM?

The Obsolescence Alert Message (OAM) is the IPT's method of distributing emerging obsolescence information throughout the AN/SQQ-89(V) community. OAMs are usually the result of a new obsolescence issue that has been identified through continuous Market Surveillance of SQQ-89 COTS products.

Market Surveillance

The IPT is currently conducting Market Surveillance of over 100 vendors and 300 separate COTS products. What is involved in continuous Market Surveillance, or even, what is Market Surveillance?

Once a COTS product has been selected for use in the SQQ-89, the IPT contacts the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) to ask about price, Start of Production (SOP), End of Production (EOP), End of Support (EOS), Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF), follow on product availability, special software or firmware requirements, warranty information, support posture, and so on.

All of this information is entered into the AN/SQQ-89(V) COTS Hardware Database (HWDb), where we link it to the Sites that use the COTS product. The information is also linked to the applicable SQQ-89 Variant, Subsystem, Unit and Reference Designation. In this way, the IPT can track all uses of any particular COTS product throughout the AN/SQQ-89(V) program.

When we identify an obsolescence problem through Market Surveillance, we query the HWDb to determine the total usage of the product in the SQQ-89 Program. Then the IPT re-contacts the vendor to gather information about last opportunity to buy and last delivery of the products. Finally, we generate an OAM to disseminate the above information. If the SQQ-89 community has further questions, we will again contact the vendor and return the answers to the requesting activity.

OAMs to Date

The COTS Technologies IPT began this effort in February 1999, and since then, we have issued five OAMs. They are:

- OAM-1 4/2/99-Interphase, All FDDI products

- OAM-2 4/19/99-Seagate, 9GB hard drive

- OAM-3 5/17/99-Update to OAM1

- OAM-4 5/21/99-Force, SPARC-II Single Board Computers (SBC)

- OAM-5 6/4/99-Lanart, Bought by Transition Networks

The OAMs can be accessed from the COTS Technologies IPT Web page. For more info, contact Mr. Jerry Decker at deckerj@tst.tracor.com. ◆

Share Your Ideas…

If your group has developed a process for handling specific COTS issues, let the rest of the SQQ-89 community know about it. Send a brief article about it to either Ms Maureen Weaver at weavermk@navsea.navy.mil or to Ms Penny Burke at burke@ae.tst.tracor.com. We can add it to the next Newsletter issue, along with the names of the group/people involved so others can contact you for more information.

Conferences & Workshops

1999 Military/Aerospace (Transportation) COTS Conference
   Aug 25 - 27, Berkeley, CA

Johns Hopkins Univ., Applied Physics Lab, Laurel, MD, in Liaison with Crane Div., Naval Surface Warfare Center
http://rac.iitri.org/cots_conf.html

SEI Software Engineering Symposium '99
   Aug 30 - Sept 2, Pittsburgh, PA

"Improving the State of Software Engineering: Principles, Practices, & Projections"
http://www.sei.cmu.edu/products/events/symp/

CERT® Conference 1999
   Aug 30 - Sept 3, Omaha, NE

"Information Assurance & Infrastructure Protection: Asset Protection in an Open Environment"
http://www.omaha.com/cert/

Reducing Total Ownership Costs Through Technology Management and Full Service Life Cycle Support
   Sept 14 - 16, Bloomington, IN

Midwest Section of the American Soc. of Naval Eng., in Liaison with Crane Div., Naval Surface Warfare Center
http://www.crane.navy.mil/asnesymposium99/default.htm

COTScon '99 West
   Dec 1 - 2, San Diego, CA.

The 3rd International Conf. and Exhibition for the Rugged Defense Electronics Industry
http://milaero.com/cotscon.htm

Commercialization of Military and Space Electronics
   Jan 30 - Feb 3, 2000, Los Angeles, CA

US 2000 International Workshop, Components Technology Institute
http://www.cti-us.com/