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**City firm is on front lines of command post for future**

By **Brian Bowling**  
**TRIBUNE-REVIEW**  
 Saturday, November 19, 2005



Software developed by a Pittsburgh company is helping Army unit commanders in Iraq share and analyze battlefield data in seconds instead of hours.

Jake Kolojechick, chief scientist of General Dynamics C4 Systems Viz, said the faster analysis allows commanders to make faster decisions with more complete information. Delay in the middle of a firefight is as dangerous to soldiers as the enemy, he said.

"It's easy for that to cost lives," Kolojechick said.

Kolojechick and Steve Roth co-founded MAYA Viz in 1998 to commercialize the research Roth did at Carnegie Mellon University on using computers to visualize data. One of the company's products is the software that forms the basis of the Command Post of the Future system that the Army's 1st Cavalry Division started using in 2004 when it deployed to Iraq. Since then, the 3rd Infantry Division has also begun using the battlefield analysis system.

story continues below

General Dynamics of Falls Church, Va., bought the South Side company in April.

Manny Mora, vice president of the Battle Management Systems Division of General Dynamics C4 Systems, said his company was as excited about getting the development team MAYA Viz put together as the software. General Dynamics decided to open a new office in the South Side Works to keep the team together, he said.

The military is increasingly expecting contractors to help it determine what it needs. Meeting that demand requires a creativity and an ability to see things from an 18-year-old soldier's perspective, which comes easier to MAYA Viz than General Dynamics, he added.

Kolojechick said MAYA Viz started by imagining how the commanders would use the system and worked from there. A key point was that it should mirror the way the commanders see and analyze combat situations so that their focus remains on the battlefield.

"You don't want the person to have to stop thinking about the problem to think about how to use the computer," he said.

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'Military command post of the future'  
 Sidney Davis/Tribune-Review

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John Pike, an Alexandria, Va., defense industry analyst who operates the GlobalSecurity.org Web site, said the battlefield program still needs considerable development, such as a better ability to work with other systems and a more rugged hardware that can withstand battlefield conditions. On the other hand, both the Army and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency like the program and the Marines are thinking about adopting it.

"The way that they run things right now, you basically have to go back to the command post to get a briefing," he said.

By comparison, the Command Post of the Future allows the Army to conduct the same briefings while the commanders stay with their units.

"Every way you look at it, it should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the military," Pike said.

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