

■ COTS Watch

Advanced Tools Simulate Communications Networks

JACK BROWNE/TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS offer a tremendous array of features and functionality, whether employed in the battlefield or in the shopping mall. But advanced digital networks, such as the Department of Defense's (DOD's) Warfighter Information Network (WIN), can be difficult to evaluate. Fortunately, sophisticated parallel-processing simulation tools from Scalable Network Technologies (SNT, www.scalable-networks.com) can analyze and predict the performance of a digital communications network under changing conditions.

The firm's QualNet(R) family of network evaluation tools allows developers and network troubleshooters to create a digital representation of a network or even multiple networks. These virtual networks can then be "exercised" in terms of the capabilities of devices for reliable communications and high performance under different loads, interference levels, changing protocols--in short, allowing evaluation of a network or networks under all the changing conditions likely to be experienced during real-world operation.

For an application such as WIN, QualNet(R)

allows the digital creation of networks that include wireless, wireline, satellite-communications, and airborne components. The software takes advantage of multicore 64-b processors, supporting network testing with software, human interfaces, and hardware components.

Recently, the firm added another powerful network analysis tool in EXata, which takes QualNet(R) a step further and allows the construction of a live representation of a network, creating a hardware/software version of the network that can actually replace that network and allow users to interact with the representation in real time. As with QualNet(R), EXata will be available for UNIX, Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux operating systems. For a more detailed look, don't miss the Special News Report in the June 2008 issue of Microwaves & RF. Scalable Network Technologies, 6701 Center Drive West, Suite 520, Los Angeles, CA 90045; (310) 338-3318, FAX: (310) 338-7213, e-mail: info@scalable-networks.com, Internet: www.scalable-networks.com.

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