

Defense industry is “at the start of the AI revolution”

FINN’s Editor-In-Chief, Alan Peaford, interviews Accenture’s Adrian Spragg on the transformation technologies for defense businesses.

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Alan Peaford: The DSEI show that's been happening in London recently gives the opportunity for the whole aerospace and defense industry to come together. We look at what's happening now, but what's going to happen? Where is the technology going to go in the future? How are companies going to be managed? And what do they need to do to survive?

Alan Peaford: Well, one organization that generally has the answers to those questions is Accenture. And I'm with Adrian Spragg who's going to tell me what's happening in this world.

Adrian Spragg; The simple answer is there's a lot happening in this world. We look around us and we see a showcasing of innovation. We see a lot of autonomous products, cloud-based services, increasing use of technologies such as artificial intelligence. We're really looking also beyond the surface, beyond what's visible today; at how aerospace and defense companies can and are increasingly looking to reinvent how they go about their business.

Adrian Spragg; That's really about things like capitalizing on the opportunities around artificial intelligence, for example. We recently surveyed over 100 executives in the industry, and they agree with us that AI will be probably the most significant technology development over the coming years. Whether that's in the products to enhance the war fighting potential, whether it's helping in the predictive analytics to help drive maintenance performance and costs. Whether it's in collaborative design, smart manufacturing of new products like the Tempest for example, which we've seen today. And then back into the industry space in terms of automating their businesses, to release the workforce, to focus on more value adding tasks. So, I think we're at the start of the AI revolution, the data-driven revolution.

Alan Peaford: And do you see that going wider? Because we've had a number of major primes, but we're now seeing the number of small countries getting involved, developing their own industry. Have they got to be really tech savvy to be able to this and embrace the digitalization of this industry to survive? Or are we just going to see it scatter gunned around the world?

Adrian Spragg: I think one of the opportunities around digital is the ability to extend the ecosystem and make it more accessible to the smaller manufacturing companies and emerging nations. So, some of the distributed ledger technology like blockchain for example, some of the collaborative tools around the design space, smart factory and how you can better connect parts of the supply chain. So, I think there's a real opportunity there. I think there's also a challenge around things like cyber resilience and, and security, and getting trust into those extended networks. Tempest is, is a good case in point; new partner, new collaborative networks appearing with opportunity, but also challenge in terms of how you get them to work.

Alan Peaford: Brilliant. And I think that sums up where we are fantastically. Adrian, thank you very much.

Adrian Spragg; Thanks very much.

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