

Exciting space tech on show at joint UK/US held demo-day

In November 2020, the [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) (DASA) hosted the world's first [International Space Pitch Day](#) (ISPD) – a joint UK and US initiative to find and fast-track innovations that enhance space domain capabilities. The competition culminated in ten tech start-ups securing contracts each worth up to £53,000, after pitching exciting space technologies directly to UK, US and NATO military leaders.

To keep pace with evolving threats, a grand coalition of Dstl, DASA, Royal Air Force, UK Strategic Command, the US Air Force, US Space Force, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) turned to the commercial sector to connect world-class space innovation to military end-users at pace.

ISPD marked a series of incredible firsts, such as the first time same-day contracts have been awarded by the UK Ministry of Defence, and the first time two international allies have jointly held a “pitching” style event to award defence contracts.

Four months later, on 30-31 March 2021, we saw the results of that funding during two-days of technology demonstrations, witnessing ideas emerge from concept to reality in an incredible display of innovation.

The technologies on display during the demo day offered an actual glimpse into how UK and US militaries will cooperate to ensure challenges in the space domain can be overcome.

Is this the exciting future of space defence?

The space domain is ever developing, with challenges such as the intent of space actors, the ability to accurately monitor space debris, the threat of space weather and the ability to safeguard satellites to consider.

The event showed a fresh way of working to fast-track innovation and cutting-edge technology to the front line quicker than ever before.

Cognitive Space, a US company that demoed multi-level space asset security through partitioned blockchain said;

ISPD has helped enable aerospace focused tech startups like us (Cognitive Space) to collaborate and grow while supplying DASA with innovative technologies not currently available in the industry.

Melanie Stricklan, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, Slingshot Aerospace said;

The Slingshot team would like to thank DASA for a great experience throughout the ISPD event and pitch process.

The Slingshot Orbital ensemble catalog provides a foundation for reliable, predictive analytics and will provide space operators with important information to maintain space superiority over adversaries. We look forward to working with Dstl to commercialize this critical technology.

And precursor SPC, who showcased a space weather impact tool said;

The DASA platform is the catalyst for the future of Space Weather now casting and forecasting, precursor's 4D Space Weather Operational Impact Tool.

The technologies demonstrated at the event were::

Visualisation and analysis

- 114 AI Innovation LLP (India)
- RiskAware Ltd (United Kingdom)
- Rocket Communications (United States)
- Swim.ai, Inc. (United States)
- Slingshot Aerospace, Inc. (United States)
- Clutch Space Systems Limited (United Kingdom)

Satellite spectrum monitoring

- Clearbox Systems Pty Ltd (Australia)

Multi-Level Security through Partitioned Blockchain

- Cognitive Space, Inc. (United States)

Space Weather

- precursor SPC (United States)
- Spire Global UK (United Kingdom)

Note to editors: What is the International Space Pitch Day?

International Space Pitch Day is a joint UK-US initiative that aims to find, fund and fast-track innovation and technology that gives advantage to military personnel and operations in the space domain.

The competition was open to innovators and entrepreneurs from all over the world delivered through the UK Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), assisted by Starburst Accelerator.

It is specifically designed to bolster tech start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and harness the power of their ingenuity and innovation.

The endeavour is jointly funded by the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), Royal Air Force and the US Air Force.

A grand coalition of Dstl, DASA, Royal Air Force, UK Strategic Command, the US Air Force, US Space Force, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has been assembled to find, fund, and fast-track the best ideas from start-up innovators to the front line.

The format is the first of its kind in an international collaboration between two international allies.