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Think-A-Move Awarded Center for Commercialization of Advanced Technology Grant

Think-A-Move, Ltd., a Beachwood, Ohio based company, has been awarded a grant for \$75,000 from the Center for Commercialization of Advanced Technology (CCAT), of San Diego, California. Under the contract, which began February 21, 2009, Think-A-Move will develop additional functionality to provide increased human-robot audio interaction of its SPEAR™ speech control system for unmanned vehicles. This added capability will be integrated with the Multi-Robot Operator Control Unit (MOCU), which is utilized by the U.S. Navy's Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, San Diego. This builds upon an initial integration of SPEAR with MOCU that was completed in 2008, and that was also funded by CCAT.

The Department of Defense currently utilizes Unmanned Ground Vehicles, for Improvised Explosive Device (IED) disposal and surveillance. Over 7,000 Unmanned Ground Vehicles have been deployed, mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Currently, no systems uses speech commands to control military robots because of their inability to work well in noisy environments. Think-A-Move addresses this problem by capturing speech in the ear canal and using its proprietary algorithms to eliminate ambient noise, enabling a soldier to effectively use speech commands for robot control.

Today, soldiers control military robots by using joysticks or video game controllers connected to ruggedized personal computers. These methods have several drawbacks, including limiting a soldier's situational awareness of his or her environment. In addition, a soldier cannot hold a weapon, and consequently requires a security detail to stand guard. Think-A-Move's technology helps overcome the limitations on using military robots, and increases the effectiveness of the soldiers operating them.

Think-A-Move is also in the process of integrating SPEAR with the PackBot® platform from iRobot® and Foster-Miller's MAARS™ platform, under work that is being funded by the U.S. Army's Tank-Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center in Warren, Michigan. In addition to the application of its technology for military purposes, Think-A-Move is in the process of entering into licensing agreements with strategic partners for other markets, including voice communications and enterprise systems.

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