

A **Tachyon Dynamics** White Paper



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**The Importance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)
Unified Capabilities Requirements (UCR) Approved
Products List (APL) Product Certification**

And How Tachyon Dynamics Can Help Your Company

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Introduction

For Information Technology (IT) product vendors trying to sell to the Federal Government and the Department of Defense (DoD), product certifications are key to even getting in the door. The hottest, and likely disqualifying ones, today are: FIPS 140-2, Common Criteria, U.S. Government IPv6 (USGv6), and the DoD's Unified Capabilities Requirements Approved Products List (APL) Certification. The last one is probably more important than most of the others as it requires the other certifications before testing for UCR can even begin.

This white paper will illustrate what UCR APL testing is, why it is important, and how Tachyon Dynamics can help your company from losing out any more important DoD procurements.

What is UCR Anyway?

In 2007, the DoD CIO's office was on the receiving end of numerous complaints from the commercial IT industry about the many different certifications, products lists and registries they are required to go through. At that same time, the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) was looking to consolidate and streamline testing.

The most successful and mature testing program at DISA was run by the former Defense Switch Network (DSN) program office. This program office had been testing and certifying phone and switching systems for decades. The process was proven and repeatable.

So the DoD CIO at the time, Mr. John Grimes, issued the DoD Unified Capabilities Requirements (UCR) 2008. Along with the public law modification, it requires all voice, video, and data systems to be procured only from the DoD UCR APL. This process also



collapsed many of the stove-piped product testing systems in DoD.

The current standard is on its latest version called UCR 2013. It is currently located here:

<http://disa.mil/Services/Network-Services/UCCO/Policies-and-Procedures?panel=1>

DoD UCR APL Testing Composition

The testing is broken down into two very separate but equal parts: Information Assurance (IA) and Interoperability.

IA Testing

IA testing consists of having your product undergo a self-hardening process that makes sure it complies with Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) Security and Technical Implementation Guides (STIGs). It also consists of a penetration testing (Pen Testing) phase to ensure your product is patched to the most up to date Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVEs) and Information Assurance Vulnerability Announcements (IAVAs).

Interoperability Testing

Interoperability testing consists of taking your product through a rigorous test evolution that evaluates the product's performance (throughput, packet loss, latency, and high availability), functionality to the current standards contained within the DoD UCR, and interoperability

tests with like-vendor implementations.

Why UCR Testing should be on Your Product Development Roadmaps

For many in the industry, there are competing engineering priorities in product development. However, the DoD UCR test engineering is the most comprehensive and technically robust of any in the industry.

Reason 1: You Can't Sell it

You can't sell your IT products to the DoD unless you end up on the DoD UCR APL. That list is here:

<https://aplits.disa.mil/processAPList.do>

Reason 2: Forward Marketing Channel

You can now give your federal sales engineers a bullet point that they will inevitably be asked. For some in the DoD community they may not follow the UCR AP. However, if your product is on the list and a very similar one is not: they will go with the one that is on the list almost every time.

Reason 3: Your Competitors are Already on the APL

If you are a router, switch, Video, or VoIP vendor your competitors are already on the list. You now have a lot of catch up to get your company on it.

Reason 4: Pre-Hardened Cyber Security Solution

Going through the process allows your company to properly harden the product and make it more hardened to face today's cyber security challenges. There are few test programs that provide this level of



information Assurance (IA) – cyber security test and evaluation.

What Tachyon Dynamics Can Do to Help

For newer vendors to this process it can be seriously overwhelming. We can help. We offer a consulting engagement that provides your company with a Subject Matter Expert (SME) that has worked at DISA and/or Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC). We handle all of the heavy lifting for you:

Interface with DISA and JITC

Our SMEs will work directly with the JITC and DISA personnel and advocate on your behalf. We speak the language and understand the requirements. We also know the history and justification for current requirements, restrictions or limitations.

Submit and Manage all Documentation

We will develop and build all required documentation. Given our engagement with various vendors we understand the exact items needed for each document from application, to STIG Self-Assessments, to IA Report Mitigations, Interoperability Testing Test Discrepancy Reports (TDRs) and Deployment Guides.

Provide a Hardened Product Configuration

Our SME will take your product and harden it for you according to the

current specifications. Working closely with your product engineers, we can help build the final configuration for test and final deployment.

We Save you Valuable Resources

You are too focused on the mission of supporting your customers, and pulling away from it can actually cause you to miss out on opportunity elsewhere.

Summary

The DoD UCR APL certification is a required hurdle for any IT product vendor trying to sell their products to the DoD. Tachyon Dynamics can help your company through this confusing process and save you money and time.

For more information, or questions please call us at (703) 259-8550 or info@tachyondynamics.com

