



Satellite Network Technologies

# Comtech Satellite Network Technologies born to optimize increasingly sophisticated networks

Unveiling merged capabilities of EF Data and Xicom as one-stop provider at Satellite 2021



Comtech Satellite Network Technologies unveiled a series of new equipment solutions at Satellite 2021

Increasingly sophisticated satellite constellations, networks and equipment must have advanced and orchestrated support systems to optimize operations. That's why Comtech Telecommunications Corp. has merged two of its well-known satellite tech units, Comtech EF Data and Comtech Xicom Technology, into one well-oiled one-stop shop called Comtech Satellite Network Technologies (CSNT). Unveiled at Satellite 2021, executives touted the move from supplier of top ground segment electronics, RF gear, and network optimization devices to an integrated provider of technology products and services ranging from installation and engineering to contract management. Eric Schmidt of Comtech Xicom, and Louis Dubin of Comtech EF Data, spoke to us during the Satellite Conference and Exhibition in National Harbor, Maryland to dive into details about the motivation behind the reorganization and the improved position to meet the fast-changing demands of vertical markets.

**Paul Sims, Contributor, Satellite Evolution Group**

**Question: What was the driving force behind the formation of Comtech Satellite Network Technologies?**

**Louis Dubin:** More than a reorganization, this is an optimization of our capabilities and expertise. We're able to leverage the strengths of both companies in one seamless full-service provider. Our goal is to migrate into more vertically integrated programs so we're much closer and valuable to our customers in markets ranging from airborne to mobile network backhaul and government solutions. The word network in our new company name really says it all. We have components and we have the networking piece on top. Collectively we enable the Earth side of things in a satellite communications network to be linked together.

**Eric Schmidt:** You have to think about customer scenarios to truly realize the value our newly merged capabilities bring to the market. The people who use our gear in an Earth station environment, for example, are multitasking with a staff that has been reduced from dozens, even hundreds in some cases, to just a few. So, the equipment we provide, whether its RF gear such as amplifiers and converters or VSAT equipment, modems or WAN acceleration devices, they need it quickly installed, they need it to work, easily serviced, and to last a long time. And they need a provider that can do it all – from delivery to service support. That's where the world is going, and that's the biggest force behind the move from a manufacturer of gear to a turnkey provider of gear and everything else companies need to optimize their systems.



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**Question: What are the benefits of the new company that seemed to resonate most with customers you met with at Satellite?**

**Eric Schmidt:** One of the biggest value-adds that came up in conversations a lot during

Satellite is by having a tighter coupling we can take the best-in-class offerings and capabilities from each division.

We have a very strong manufacturing system in Santa Clara, California that our facility in Arizona may adopt, for example. While at the same time, the Tempe, Arizona factory has a stellar ERP management solution that we plan to implement across our operation in Silicon Valley.

**Louis Dubin:** There are compelling cost advantages as well. When we purchase parts under one roof now, we're seeing significant economies of scale, better pricing with vendors, and longer warranties. These are all cost savings we can move on to our customers as real benefits beyond the technical.

We can also support the entire customer solution from top to bottom, which can be a game changer for many of our customer companies where the closest thing to a satellite engineer might be an IT department.

**Question: The world of satellite communications is changing so fast. How is Comtech Satellite Network Technologies positioned to meet the transformation globally?**

**Eric Schmidt:** Sadly, we've seen a lot of the traditional systems integrators being squeezed out. As a result, the industry is expecting more from the satellite operators, service providers, and certainly the equipment manufacturers to pick up those pieces.

We're seeing a growing trend to pick up more of the pieces, become somewhat more vertically integrated and provide services that maybe some of the ground segment equipment providers weren't comfortable providing ten years ago.

**Louis Dubin:** Satellite operators are now providing services. Ground equipment manufacturers are now providing some level of installation, service, finance, and packaging of continued maintenance. The satellite constellations are far more complex. The devices you're interfacing with, such as routers and switches, are more complex, and companies aren't equipped to manage and maintain them. That's where our expanding role fills the gap.

We have added a global tiered services department with offices in the U.S. China, India and Latin America providing 24/7 support.



Comtech Satellite Network Technologies' Eric Schmidt unveils new Bobcat ground-based portable amplifier that's easily backpackable for military





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Louis Dubin of Comtech Satellite Network Technologies shows off the new portable mudbox modem

**Question: How integral is your service offering to customer operations, now that Comtech Satellite Network Technologies has rolled out its turnkey approach?**

**Louis Dubin:** We are running full networks for satellite operators so that they don't have to add staff, train their team on our equipment. We have some contracts where a satellite operator wants to sell an end user bandwidth without dealing with the day-to-day running and monitoring of the equipment and SLAs.

We can work with end users, many who prefer our equipment and the overall cost savings from leveraging authorized access to our network and NOC over a VPN or secure mechanism.

We can remotely run and monitor their network and check to see if their gear is up and running properly or if there's a problem. We can troubleshoot their network, support VSAT installations, and if we discover an issue, we tap local companies on the ground to fix issues.

**Question: Aside from the unveiling of Comtech Satellite Network Technologies, what did you announce at Satellite 2021?**

**Louis Dubin:** On the digital side of the business, we introduced an ultra-high-speed, multi-gigabit modem that will play in our SCPC and VSAT

business. We are also introducing a new military modem that will enable us to more effectively address the foreign or four MOD market.

**Question: What markets do you expect to drive significant growth for CSNT over the next few years?**

**Eric Schmidt:** We are investing big in Ka-band Earth stations for LEO and MEO space, volume platforms that will drive growth affordably. Airborne is also a growing market for CSNT. Military aircraft and UAVs are leveraging our technologies for situational awareness, camera views, maps, weather and jam proof services in the air.

Likewise, if you fly commercial airlines and have an internet connection at your passenger seat, chances are we are enabling that inflight connectivity service. As the pandemic recovery takes shape, we see growth in the airborne market.

We are on the verge of introducing some new higher-powered products in the airborne market very soon. Stay tuned.

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