

## [FIVETHINGS]

EVERY SOLDIER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

# Smartphones for the Army

Soldiers can now download commercial applications on commercial devices and sensitive data on government-issued devices. But the Army is still working out the policy and technology issues that would allow them to cross the streams securely, and it ain't easy.

"This is hard," was the takeaway quote from Col. Wayne Grigsby, director of Mission Command Center of Excellence, which is leading the network integration effort. Grigsby was one of several speakers on a smartphone panel at the Association of the United States Army's annual convention.

Deciding the standards for securing data in transport and "at rest" on the devices has required coordination between the Army's chief information officer, the National Security Agency and at least three other federal or Defense Department-level agencies.

If only there was an app for that.

Here's what you need to know about smartphones:

**1 Grunts will choose.** If the Army's acquisitions system spends too much and is outpaced by commercial technology, the Network Integration Evaluation is the intended solution.

To keep pace with technology, these new twice-annual exercises at Fort Bliss, Texas, let the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, give a "go" or "no-go" to commercial networking gear for rapid fielding. Anything that winds up in soldiers' hands, from a tactical cell tower to a ruggedized smartphone, would first be tested at the NIE.



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**2 The timeline.** The Mobile Capabilities Development plan has called for an Army apps marketplace to release nonsensitive apps for personal devices in 2012, for tactical apps on secure devices in eight brigades in 2013, and for a device that can operate everywhere with both secure and commercial apps by 2014.

**3 The best is yet to come.** The Army is still hashing out what it calls the common operating environment, basically the networking and computing standards that let all devices play together, whether through cellular networks or tactical radios. Industry can then build to those standards, and the Army will choose what devices it wants.

**4 Blooming at school.** In schoolhouses, where security may not be as big of an issue as on the battlefield, there's a lot of movement. A year after the Army launched "Connect-

**Soldiers manipulate smartphones for mapping and communications during a field exercise.**

ing Soldiers to Digital Applications" and the Signals Center of Excellence began app development classes, nearly every school within Training and Doctrine Command is developing its own training applications for iTunes and the Android Market.

**5 The tactical side.** The policy questions mentioned above have slowed the tactical side, but it hasn't stopped. The situational awareness program TIGR, or Tactical Ground Reporting, is already on prototype smartphones as part of the Joint Battle Command-Platform handheld program. And the Army's wearable computer program Nett Warrior plans to test handhelds that connect to tactical radios.

— Joe Gould