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People

Dr. Derek Kingston receives AF award

Dr. Derek Kingston of the Air Vehicles Directorate was presented with the Harold Brown award, the highest Air Force award given to a scientist or engineer who applies research to a problem in the field. Recipients are chosen by the Chief Scientist of the Air Force in honor of substantial improvement to the Air Force's operational effectiveness.



Dr. Derek Kingston

The current method of employing UAVs at both the strategic and tactical levels is in isolation. That is, each UAV interacts only loosely (if at all) with other UAVs. Dr. Kingston's research focuses on automation tools that allow teams of UAVs to cooperatively fulfill mission objectives; making the utility of the whole become greater than the sum of its parts. The area in which this is most immediately applicable is for ISR missions. One of the most pressing needs is the ability to safely and remotely monitor critical con-

voy routes for IED emplacement. Dr. Kingston's efforts substantially improved, at both a theoretical and practical level, technology for cooperative unmanned air vehicle (UAV) route surveillance. He developed and analytically validated an innovative algorithm that allows a team of UAVs to reach the optimal

formation for route surveillance, and applied this to an AFRL rapid reaction program to survey roads for improvised explosive device (IED) emplacement. Dr. Kingston's contributions include algorithms for path planning, sensor steering, and the application of cooperative control for efficient, robust UAV routing.

The most striking aspect of his work is that it has been designed for completely decentralized operation. This provides the UAVs with the autonomy needed to meet mission requirements even during periods of non-connectivity (communication losses), which are common in operational use. Additionally, this technology applies to a number of diverse applications such as route surveillance, forest fire or hazardous material monitoring, border patrol, and integrated base defense. His efforts add significant value to the scientific body of knowledge as well as to the capabilities of the United States Air Force.

Dr. Derek Kingston received the Harold Brown award for his work toward improving algorithms for path planning, sensor steering, and the application of cooperative control for efficient, robust UAV routing.

Dr. Kingston received his PhD in 2007 from the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at Brigham Young University.

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