

MAP11

Engineering, Re-engineering, and Reverse Engineering: Who Owns the IP?

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Abstract

During the 1980's and 1990's, the Department of Defense (DoD) relied heavily on Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to design and sustain major weapon systems in the hopes of creating a high quality and responsive supply chain for the Military Services. Present day, this expanded reliance has led to a complex, multifaceted approach for materiel sustainment involving various aspects of policy, technology, and systems engineering. While aligned with the DoDI 5000.97 initiative for digital transformation, re-engineering and reverse engineering often raise complex legal and ethical issues surrounding Intellectual Property (IP) rights. This challenge is compounded by the fact that many OEMs are now "fabless" and wholly reliant on external manufacturers, which increases the risk of IP theft and necessitates stringent protective measures. This work will present the IP constraints surrounding the sustainability of DoD Weapon Systems and potential solutions to enhance the DoD's capabilities in technology development and acquisition, ensuring that the United States remains at the forefront of defense innovation.

Conference Track

Military Applications