



ECS AI3: SERVING MAVEN SINCE 2017

Competitive Collaboration Drives Decision Advantage

Competition has a way of driving innovation, the best performance, and the best value.

From the race between the Wright brothers and other aviation pioneers, to the space race that propelled humanity to the moon, to rival scientists' experimentation with prototypical internet (ARPANET), a healthy combination of competition and collaboration has led to some of history's most significant technological advances. Now, **AI** represents the next frontier of technological advancement, offering unprecedented capabilities to **analyze, anticipate, and act on complex data** at speeds unimaginable in the past. It has fallen on key federal agencies to harness this transformative technology to **secure decision advantage** on the battlefield, where rapid, accurate insights can mean the difference between success and failure.

The challenge: How do you maintain decision advantage in a rapidly evolving AI landscape?

The answer: Competitive collaboration: bringing the industry's best and brightest together to solve hard problems, compete to deliver the best solutions, and share lessons learned to drive continuous improvement and innovation. This is a key component of **ECS' AI Interoperability Integration (AI3)** framework, which enables an ecosystem of diverse AI tools and systems to communicate seamlessly, share data, and optimize performance across multiple applications.



THE POWER OF AI3 IS THE POWER OF COMPETITIVE COLLABORATION

Since 2017, ECS has spearheaded and leveraged the concept of competitive collaboration as the prime AI3 on the now National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's (NGA) Maven Program. Formerly known as "Project Maven" — under the Department of Defense (DoD) Algorithmic Warfare Cross-Functional Team (AWCFT), a part of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security (OUSD(I&S)) — Maven is the DoD's flagship GEOINT AI program.

Within AI3, technology partners collaborate under a structured framework, allowing them to innovate freely within their domains while aligning with NGA's overarching goals. They also compete directly to produce exquisite, secure, and performant AI at scale for NGA and the DoD.

"As ECS partners with specialized providers to meet specific needs for the NGA Maven Program, we encourage them to contribute unique perspectives, innovative ideas, and proprietary methods to the mission work," said Marshall Thames, senior vice president of Technology and Innovation at ECS. "The fundamental beauty of AI3 is the ability to vet and quickly onboard partners who are technically competitors on the open market, but who are united and aligned with Maven's mission."

"We have proven that this approach can help our nation stay on the leading edge of AI development and deployment," he added.

Competitive collaboration drives partners to continuously push for better, more effective solutions, often leading to groundbreaking advancements that might not emerge in a more traditional, siloed setup. "To date, ECS has leveraged this principle to great effect, onboarding industry vendors and partners from academia into the U.S. Defense Industrial Base (DIB) to innovate within NGA's ecosystem," said Thames.

AI3 LEVERAGES A DYNAMIC PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

No single vendor can address the full spectrum of AI requirements. By fostering a dynamic ecosystem of thoroughly vetted partners, ECS enhances the mission capabilities delivered to NGA Maven with diverse, innovative solutions while avoiding vendor lock-in. This approach enables interoperability with rapid scaling and adaptability in fast-evolving intelligence environments. It also supports seamless data sharing and collaboration across agencies, vendors, and contractors.

“ECS brings together diverse, specialized partners to deliver frontier AI capabilities. AI3’s dynamic ecosystem is designed to avoid the vendor lock-in that stifles creativity and rapid solutions,” said Thames.

LEADING THE CHARGE FOR DECISION ADVANTAGE

With ECS enabling these collaborative competitors, the NGA has achieved seamless integration across the intelligence and joint force operations spectrum. This ecosystem connects diverse AI assets and processes, empowering NGA Maven with advanced real-time decision-making tools while maintaining rigorous Responsible AI (RAI) standards. As a result, the joint warfighter is better protected and better equipped to execute the mission.

In a rapidly evolving world facing numerous global crises, ECS’ continuing competitive collaboration approach will contribute to advancing AI innovation, ensure a robust AI ecosystem to meet emergent needs, and strengthen our national security

From the boardroom to the battlefield, ECS empowers your mission, amplifies your impact, and drives lasting results with frontier technology solutions. Our highly skilled teams bring the best of innovation to urgent mission needs across the U.S. public sector, defense and intel, and commercial industries, with a focus on efficiency and impact. ECS maintains partnerships with leading AI, cloud, and cybersecurity technology providers and holds specialized certifications in their technologies.

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