

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

TRANSITIONING ADVANCED CONCEPT TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATIONS TO ACQUISITION PROGRAMS

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This thesis evaluated the Department of Defense's Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (ACTD) process and the challenges encountered in transitioning an ACTD to an acquisition program. The methodology included case analyses of two ACTD programs that transitioned to acquisition programs to determine their levels of success. The scope included a review of: 1) ACTD origins and processes as of July 2002, 2) past ACTD programs, 3) the established documentation criteria associated with ACTD selection and evaluation, 4) the two ACTD case programs selected for analysis, 5) the apparent ACTD transition areas prone to success or failure, and 6) potential process improvements that would aid in ACTD transition to acquisition programs. This thesis identified both the strengths and the weaknesses in the existing ACTD transition process. The results indicated that several of the existing ACTD criteria should be maintained. However, it was also determined that several enhancements could be incorporated into future processes. This thesis concluded with recommended improvements that would enhance the insertion of technology to the warfighter via the acquisition process. With the combination of current practices and implementation of these recommendations, ACTDs could become the cornerstone of the Secretary of Defense's new acquisition process.

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