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## **BACK TO THE FUTURE WITH COPPER**

**By Cpl Jonathan Garland**

Technological advances are leading to a return to older, more robust materials in the realm of field communications.

Fibre optic cable, used in many communications and information-transfer tasks, is being replaced in some instances with an old friend of the signal corps - copper wire.

Scott McGeechan, Special Operations Project Director in the Directorate of Command, Control and Intelligence Support Systems, said there were several advantages.

"The fibre-optic cable is far more expensive, bulky and difficult to repair than the field cable, which can be field-repaired with a pair of pliers and a roll of electrical tape," he said.

"The system works through our adaptation of civilian technology to supply high-rate data transfer within and between controlled spaces on the battlefield.

"Within spaces where we physically control the cables, we can go from using expensive, difficult-to-repair fibre-optic cable to using an Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Link (ADSL), which is cheap, effective and can be used with normal field cable."

"In the wider area we use a Synchronous Digital Subscriber Link (SDSL) that lets us provide a secure transmission but we still get the benefits of field cable, which is a lot quicker to lay and recover."

ADSL passes information at different speeds in each direction, while SDSL passes equal quantities of data in each direction.

The ADSL and SDSL have been widely trialled within the Special Operations Command Support System and ADSL was also deployed in East Timor.

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