"Port facilities want seamless integration with vendor–neutral capabilities, where images can be displayed from any location, integrating data from multiple sensors."

Exclusive Q&A

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Outline your key products and list the items that your systems can detect in a port.

L-3 Security & Detection Systems (L-3 SDS) supplies cargo screening solutions using networked hardware and software that permits a unified and customised view of the critical information analysts need to assess cargo contents for contraband and other illicit materials, including dangerous radioactive materials. Key to an efficient and high-throughput screening operation is L-3's ClearView software. ClearView integrates data from all scanning systems onto a single, centralised 'Command Center' display and includes tools for image analysis, system operations, user and asset management and computer-based training.

On the hardware side, L-3 SDS supplies a full range of non-intrusive inspection solutions. These include the CX-Mobile G3, an advanced, high-energy, self-powered scanning vehicle that can be deployed rapidly at any location; and the CX-Portal, a high-energy, drive-through X-ray inspection solution which offers a tool that tackles the high throughputs at the busiest ports and borders. L-3 SDS also provides multiple mobile and fixed platforms for radiation detection and identification.
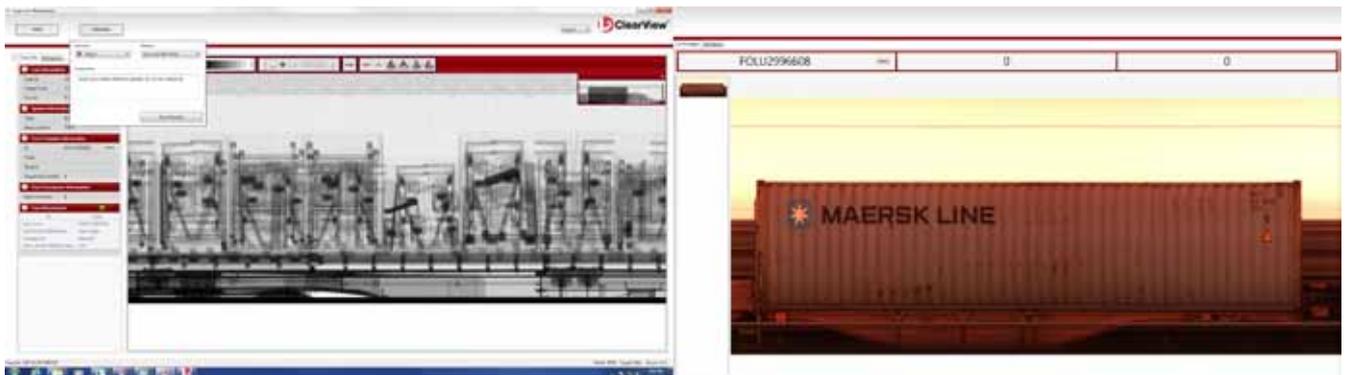
ClearView software integrates data from all scanning systems onto a single, centralised Command Center display

Top: The CX-Mobile G3 is a high-energy self-powered scanning vehicle that can be rapidly deployed at any location; Insert: The CX-Portal: a high-energy drive-through X-ray inspection solution

What are the main applications of your products at ports and terminals?

Our scanning solutions enable customs and security operations to protect the supply chain by finding contraband and threats, enforcing tariffs and duties and facilitating legitimate trade, all while minimising risk. The major task is to efficiently determine the contents of the millions of containers that come through port terminals. L-3's cargo solutions offer customs and security officers a portfolio of configurable, high-energy X-ray screening systems and radiation detection systems, as well as integration and support services.

What would you say is the really big trend in port security and detection currently, whether from your or your clients' viewpoint?

Networked, automated solutions are the big trends, as ports seek to maximise the effectiveness of their investment in non-intrusive inspection solutions while minimising the operating costs and resources needed to operate those systems. Port facilities want seamless integration with vendor-neutral capabilities, where images can be displayed from any location, local and/or remote, integrating data from multiple sensors.

How much operator training is required for some of your more complex systems and where does the training take place – at your headquarters or onsite?

Training requirements depend on the experience of our customers and their particular application of our solutions. We offer a broad range of courses for operations, maintenance and engineering personnel onsite or at multiple L-3 SDS facilities worldwide.

Apart from automation, what else do you feel is necessary to increase the efficiency of existing terminals?

Networking is the key to increasing the efficiency of cargo screening operations at existing terminals. The most important impact is the ability to display image data from any location – local and/or remote – and seamlessly integrate data from multiple sensors, including other vendors. This allows screening personnel, such as image analysts, to be used efficiently across multiple scanning systems rather than being dedicated to only one local system. For example, L-3's ClearView networking software and high-throughput, drive-through scanning solutions – including the L-3 CX-Portal for X-ray imaging of cargo contents, and the L-3 CR-Portal for detecting dangerous radiation in cargo – can be seamlessly integrated into a terminal's security and customs operations to optimise throughput.

In the current climate, will it be possible for ports and container terminals to optimise operations, yet at the same time decrease operational costs?

Yes. As ports and container terminals look for ways to manage the operating costs associated with cargo screening, they are implementing solutions that leverage legacy investments in cargo scanning technology while making more efficient use of their screening personnel. For example, by employing a common user interface across different vendor systems, ports can save on training costs, deploying personnel and equipment more efficiently across multiple locations.