November 5, 2012

NEW SOFTWARE REDUCES COST, IMPROVES QUALITY FOR CARBON COMPOSITES

A new software platform designed exclusively for carbon composite manufacturers and maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) organizations has been launched by NLign Analytics, the newly-renamed NDI division of Etegent Technologies Ltd. The NLign™ platform makes vast amounts of inspection, maintenance, and manufacturing data useful by displaying it in an intuitive 3D environment. This breakthrough approach reveals hidden relationships in the data, dramatically reducing the time, cost, and effort needed to create and maintain carbon composite structures. NLign is also designed to be a core fiber in the "Digital Thread," an integrated data stream drives improvements throughout the entire product life cycle.

"Carbon composites allow the aerospace industry to create stronger, lighter, and more efficient parts, but they can be difficult to manufacture and repair.   There are mountains of data generated during the manufacture and repair processes of composites" says Etegent Principal Tom Sharp. "NLign transforms all that raw data into powerful and actionable information that simplifies the manufacturing and repair process."

In the past, sifting through reams of raw information was a lot like looking for a needle in a haystack. With NLign, data is mapped to a 3D computer model of the part, making it easy to find and access the information needed in moments. NLign can automatically collect aircraft inspection data from Non-Destructive Inspection (NDI) equipment, inspector annotations, digital images, SAP systems, paper forms, and other process data.

Early adopters of NLign—including the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and private sector companies in the Airbus and Boeing supply chains—have cut costs and reduced scrap rates by improving their "first pass yield," or the number of parts that pass inspection the first time. Over time, trends in multiple structures can be identified faster, saving time and money by helping to prevent problems before they occur. Cost reductions realized by current partners suggest that NLign offers a savings of as much as $5 million–$10 million per year.

NLign also has powerful applications for aircraft in the field and is already improving communications across global organizations. Just by snapping a digital photo, precise damage location information can be captured and relayed back to maintenance, repair, and overhaul teams. According to the U.S. Navy, repair tasks that once took one to two days can now be completed in as little as an hour using NLign. Early rollout of the system is showing the potential to save the Navy more than $1 million in labor costs each year on just one aircraft fleets it manages with NLign.

Rapidly-growing demand from government and private sector organizations led Etegent to form an independent division focusing exclusively on the NLign platform in 2009. Formerly known as the NDI division, it was officially renamed NLign Analytics on October 12, 2012. A new website was launched at www.nlign.com on the same day.

"We're on the precipice of a very exciting opportunity," Sharp says. "The ability to easily collect, organize, and map information back to 3D will fundamentally change the way big data assets are managed, and there's nothing else like NLign available in the industry today."

About NLign Analytics: NLign Analytics is a software company that specializes in revealing hidden insights in complex data associated with carbon composites. Adapting Geolocation technologies used by GPS devices and services like Google Earth, NLign™ made data easier to access and analyze by mapping it to 3D digital models of physical components. More information about NLign™ software and NLign Analytics is available from Bill Ashton at NLign Analytics, 1775 Mentor Avenue, Suite 302, Cincinnati, OH 45212, telephone 513.373.6972, email bill.ashton@nlign.com.

# # #