

Challenge Workshops

The goal of all the ARDA Challenge Workshops is to bring together the very best experts for a particular task to work together for a relatively short and intense period of time on some challenging problem relevant to ARDA's current research thrusts. The experts invited to lead and participate in these workshops come from industry, academia, government and non-profit research laboratories, and they usually bring a multiplicity of technical viewpoints on any particular workshop topic. For workshops it is usually a requirement that there be representatives from a variety of institutions who bring unique strengths and credibility to the endeavor.

Typical challenge workshops in the past have consisted of eight to twenty technologists who get together for four to twelve weeks (usually with breaks in between one- or two-week long sessions) to collaboratively address the chosen technical challenge. It is expected that these meetings will take place at one of the Regional Research Centers (NRRC, NWRRC, or SRRC). The assignment of particular workshops to Regional Research Centers will be made by the sponsoring organization, with input from the Regional Research Centers' Executive Committee. Specific workshops can propose specific schedules that best address their needs and constraints. The results of these workshops may include annotated data, technical papers describing new approaches, novel algorithms, prototype software that demonstrates solutions to some parts of the overall challenge, detailed scenarios that elucidate how particular technical capabilities can address the needs of the sponsoring organizations, etc. By mixing participants from academia, government and industry, the workshops attempt to bring the most creative thinkers to bear on hard problems, ensure that the proposed solutions remain relevant to sponsor problems, and promote the accelerated transition of workshop ideas to their operational use.

This year the funding for workshops and their expected length have increased. One reason for this is to provide time and funding for the initial results from a workshop to be better transitioned to potential government users and sponsors. It is expected that there will be greater attention paid to identifying government "champions" who will help the workshop participants relate their activities and goals to the needs and constraints of particular organizations within the government.