

VERY LIKE A WHALE ... THE MISSING META-PHOR

Gregory Tackett

Director, Ballistic Missile Defense Systems (BMDS)
Operational Test Agency (OTA)
Bldg 5224, VB III, Room 2-C-306
Redstone Arsenal, AL 35898, USA

BIOGRAPHY

Gregory Tackett is the Director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Evaluation Directorate (BMDED) and the Ballistic Missile Defense System Operational Test Agency (BMDS OTA), U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command, Redstone Arsenal. He has full technical and managerial responsibility for operational testing and evaluation of Missile Defense Administration (MDA) capabilities, including tactical and strategic ballistic and cruise missile defense. Tackett serves as the Army focal point and authority as well as the multi-service lead for all operational testing and evaluation of MDA capabilities. He also serves as the executive agent supporting Defense Operational Testing and Evaluation requirements (DOT&E) for MDA activities.



ABSTRACT

We simulationists are in the meta business. The best of us think in abstracted terms about the questions we are tasked to answer and the referents we are challenged to represent. Yet what we have found most elusive is the meta-language for our own identity. We have been called "tool builders" but we know we are more. Our position descriptions are entitled "engineer, scientist, programmer, analyst, researcher" but we know those words are inadequate. Our terminology overlaps with the ontology owned by the systems we simulate. Our attempts to be officially recognized as a unique profession have thus far failed. But we recognize something in ourselves and in each other that we have thus far failed to name. Literal attempts to differentiate us from other technical professionals have proven uninspiring. Is it possible for us to apply our metaphorical skills to unite our thinking and equip us with a common vision? Or are we simply very like simulationists?