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### Parco's PAL technology set to debut

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**PORTLAND, ME** — Outfitted with a Department of Defense ultra-wide band frequency, Parco Merged Media soon plans to unveil new wireless technology designed to be a highly accurate location system.

The ultrawideband frequency known as PAL (Precision Asset Locator) has been around since the 1960s, used by the military for radar, collision avoidance, data communication and real time location. Parco bought the exclusive license to employ the frequency after it became declassified by the DOD in 2002.

"We like it for healthcare for the same reason it worked for the military – it's very stealthy," said Parco President Bertrand Dugal. "Ultra-wide signals can't be detected."

As a result, Dugal doesn't expect the frequency to exacerbate the radio frequency interference situation caused by wireless equipment.

"It's so low it shouldn't conflict," he said. "The peak output when pulsing is 30 milliwatts of power. When averaged out over a few seconds, the output is 5.4 nanowatts. It's a tiny little peak of energy."

Although PAL 650 has data communication capabilities, providers who've seen the technology are most interested in its locator function. Dugal describes it as "an indoor global positioning system in reverse." Where GPS uses satellites, the Parco system will use transmitters triangulated by receivers to track people and products. "Finding things is a big issue in hospitals," he said. "This is accurate within a foot."

With a reputation as an advanced IT environment, Washington (DC) National Medical Center is working with Parco on installing the PAL 650 system. Because Parco has plans to expand the system's functionality, the Washington facility seems to be an ideal place to start, Dugal said.

By next year, the PAL 650 should be providing automated log-in for medical professionals who enter specific "trigger areas." It has the potential to save physicians a lot of time, Dugal said.

"ER physicians working 18-hour days can log in upwards of a couple hundred times during a shift," he said. "This does it for them."

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