



# CRAFT PROSPECT

A Space Engineering Practice

15<sup>th</sup> November 2018, ESA Phi-Week

**CubeSats for OnBoard Realisation of Autonomy**





# Craft Prospect Today



Mission & System Engineering



Enabling Technologies & Services



Novel Mission Applications

MISSION CONSULTANCY

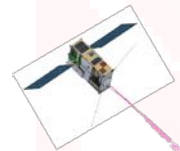
RESPONSIVE OPERATIONS



Products  
e.g. Forwards Looking Imager

Revenue

KEY AUGMENTATION SERVICE



Enables

Throughout all investing in the development of systems engineering and processes



# Opportunity

- Growth in **demand for real-time actionable** data from space
- **Resource-constrained small satellites** dominating manifests
- **Intensive applications** like space video and IoT communications
- Need to manage complex **networked concept of operations**
- Existing **operational paradigms outdated**
- Rapidly evolving **consumer-driven autonomy** market

**=> Develop common product components to enable more responsive operations**



# What is responsive operations?

- Shift in the concept of operations paradigm
- (Near) real-time actionable delivery
- Onboard autonomy and decision making
- Bypassing the human in the loop
- Retasking assets on-the-fly
- Networks of networks: sensing, processing, delivering

Machine learning

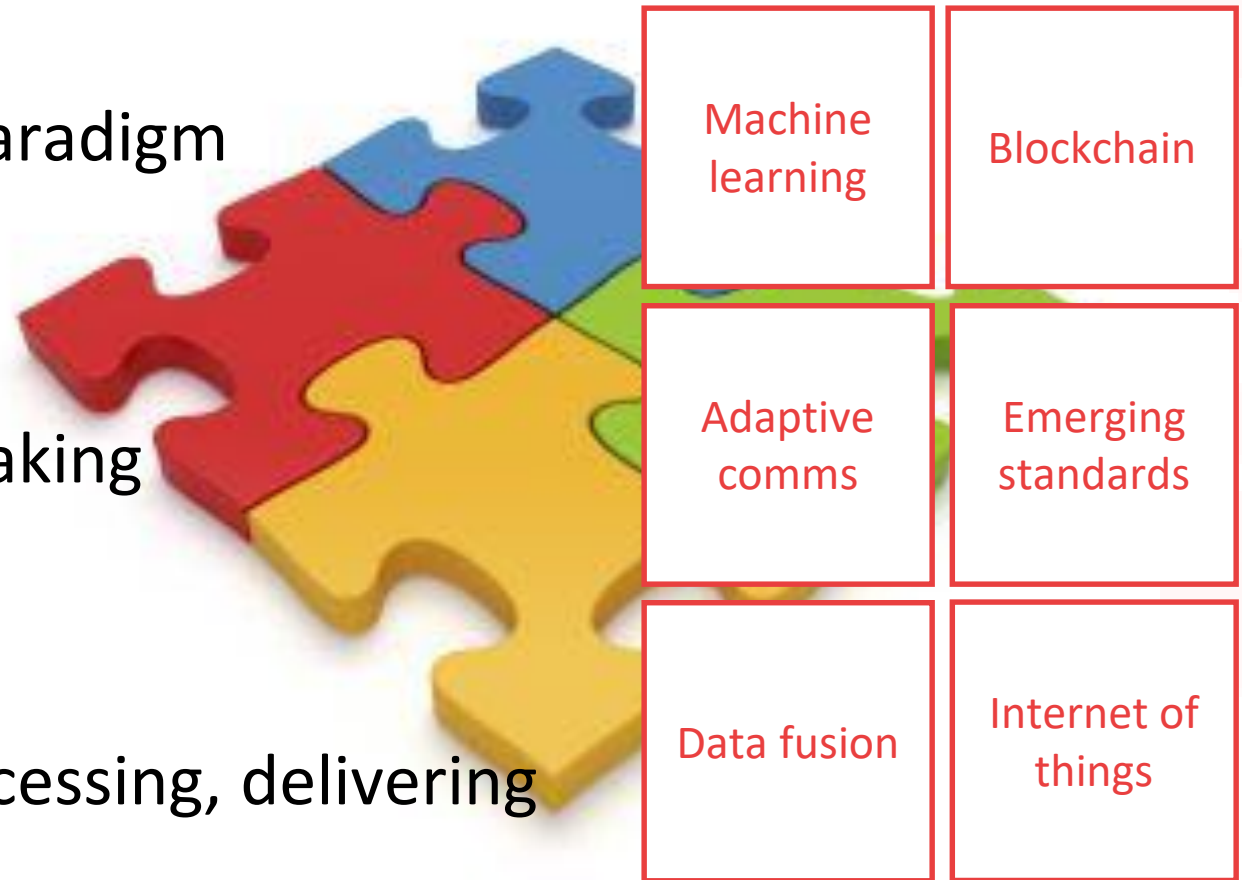
Blockchain

Adaptive comms

Emerging standards

Data fusion

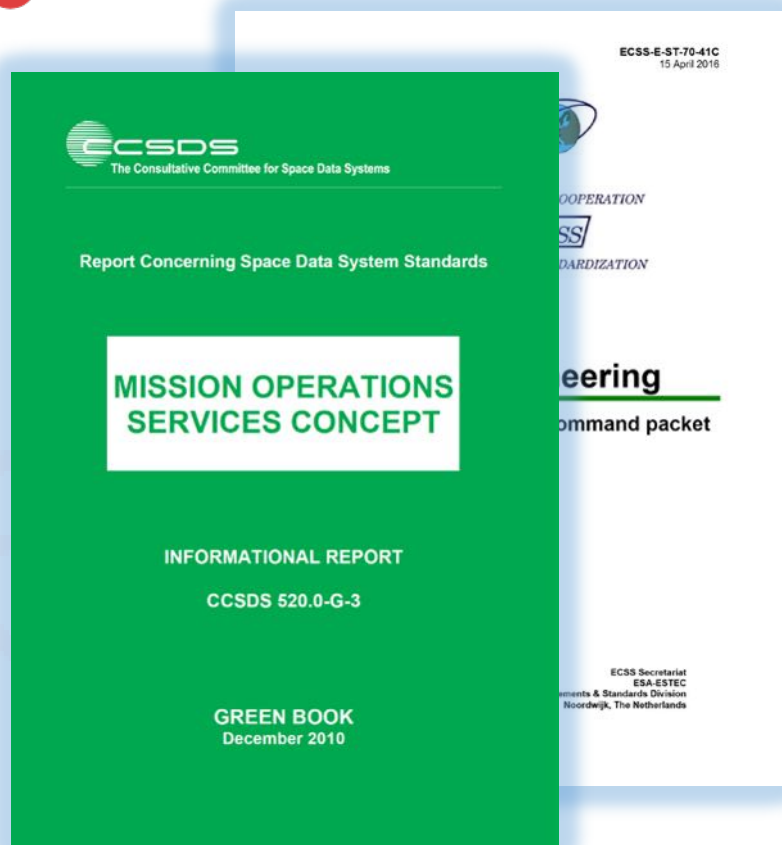
Internet of things



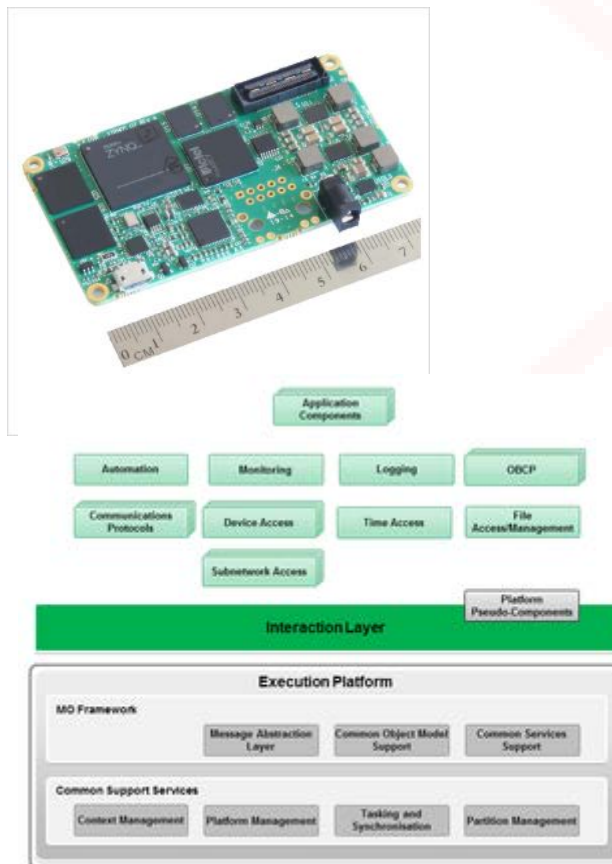




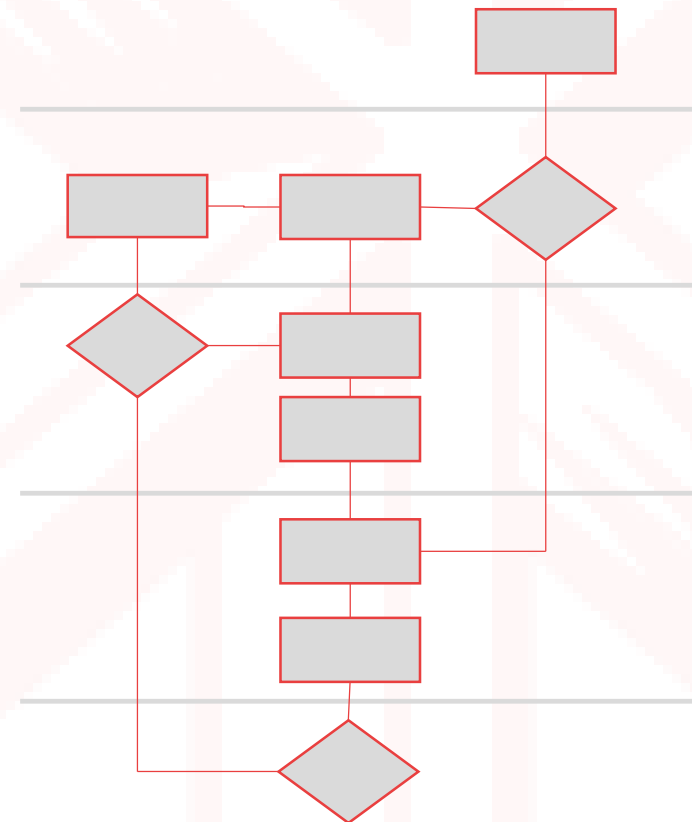
# Framework needs



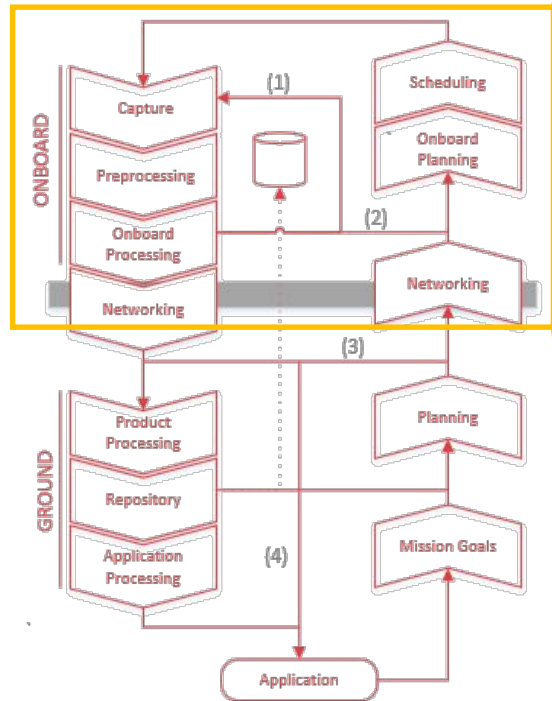
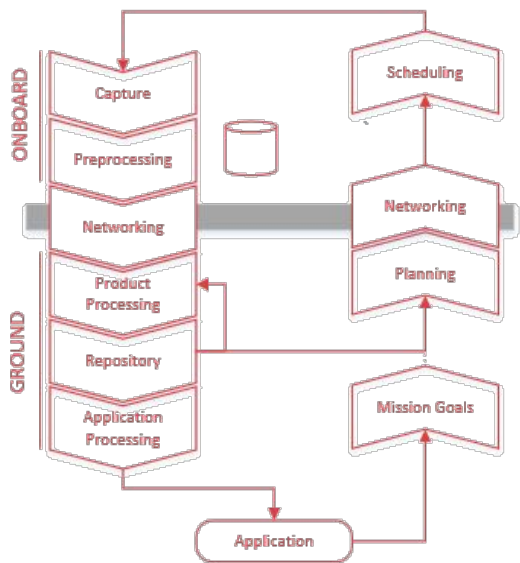
Align to/extends existing approaches



Interfaces to existing software/hardware



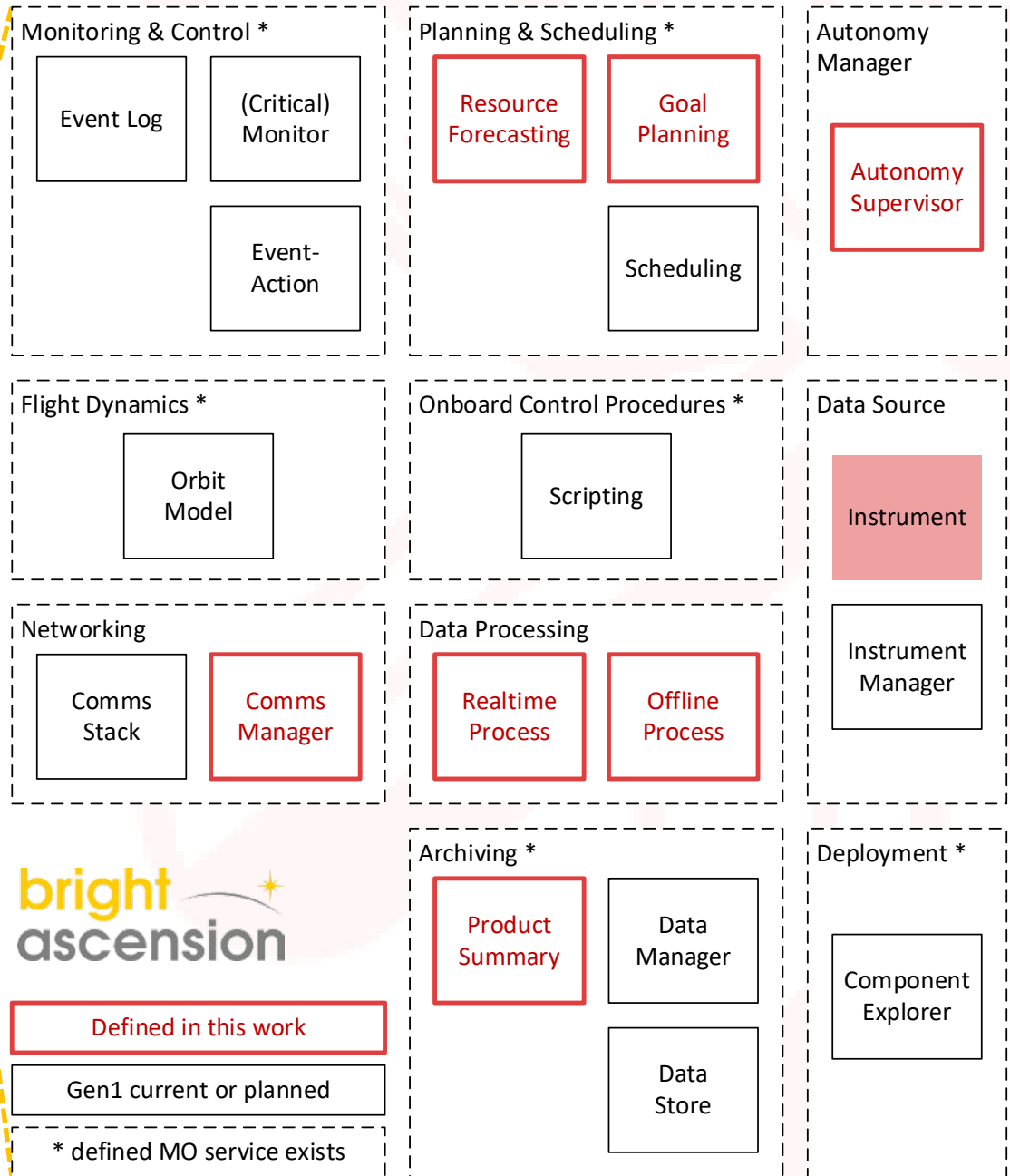
Allows robust fault detection, isolation and recovery

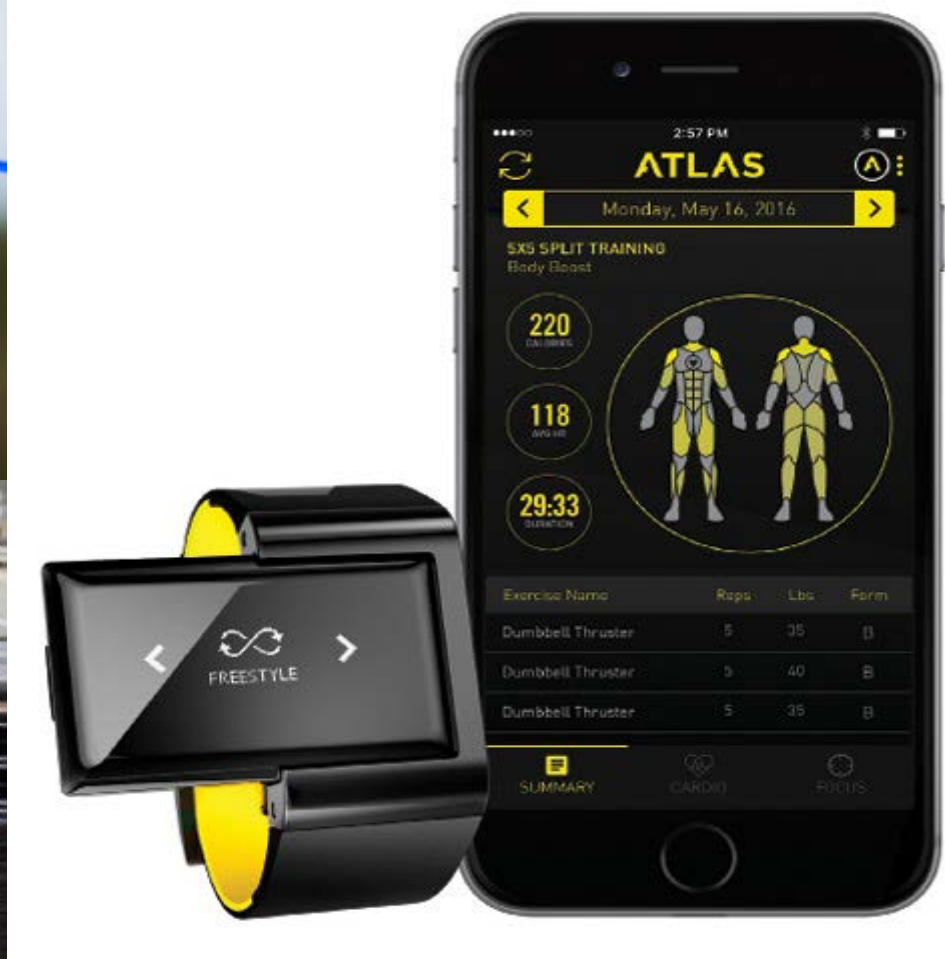


Current



Future

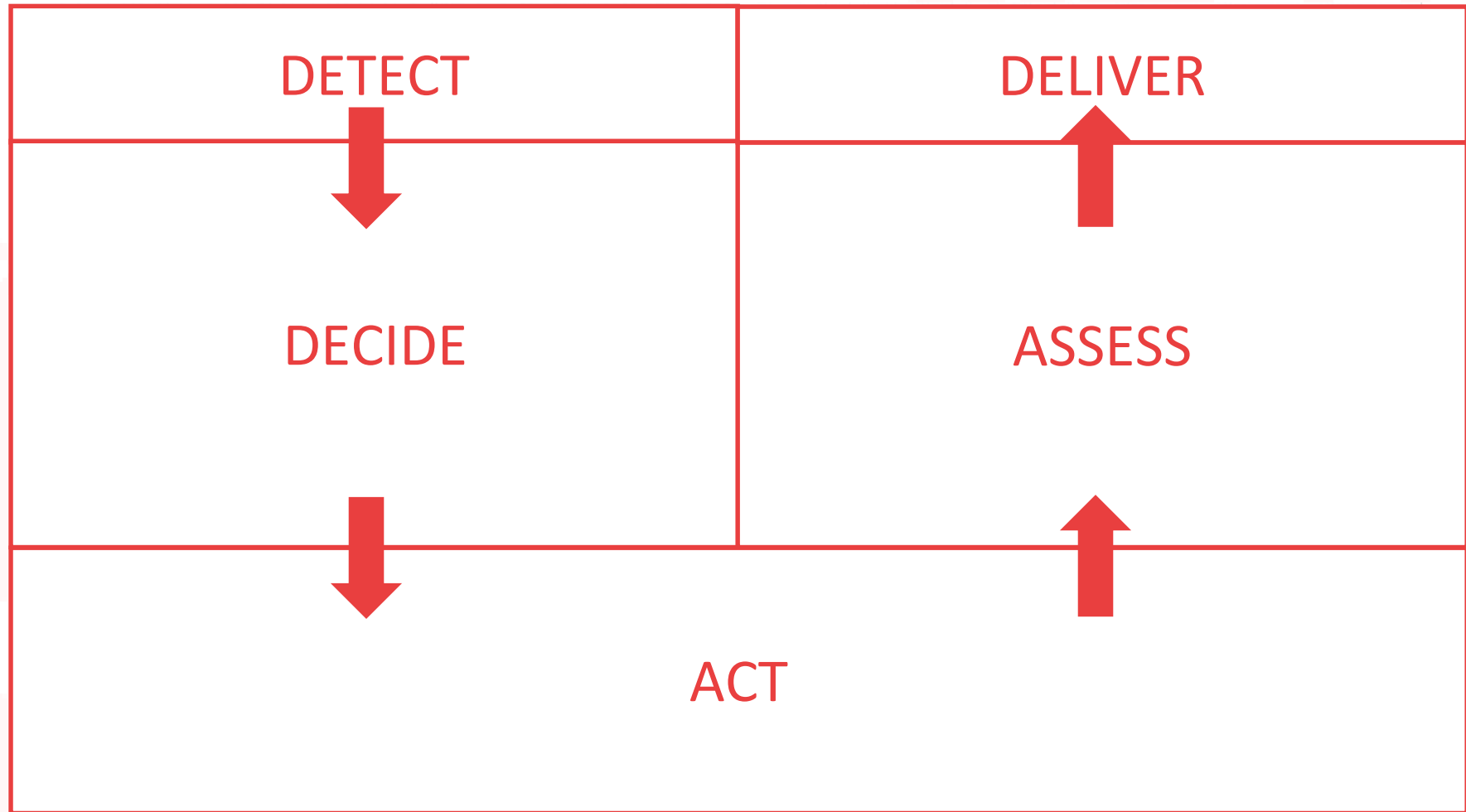




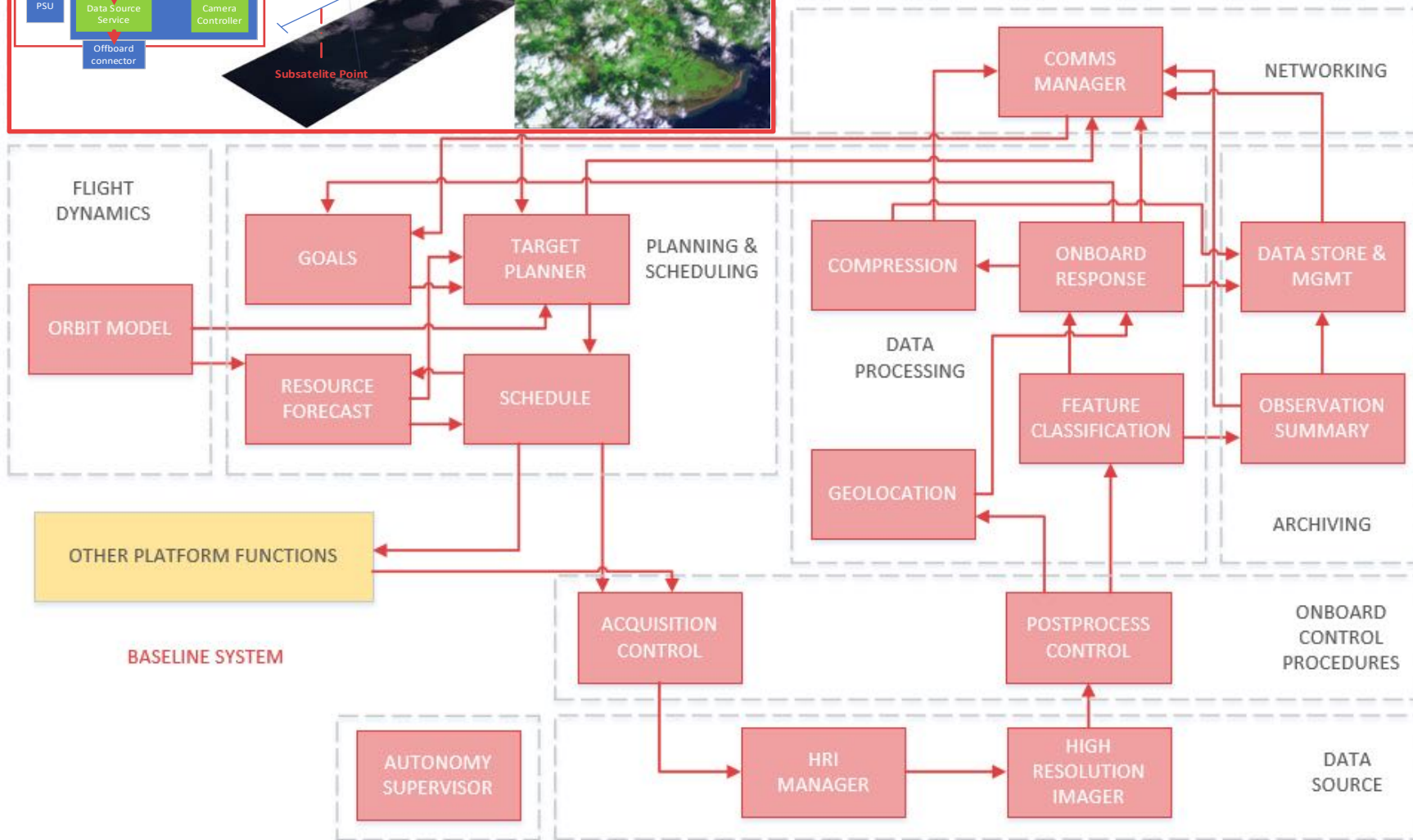
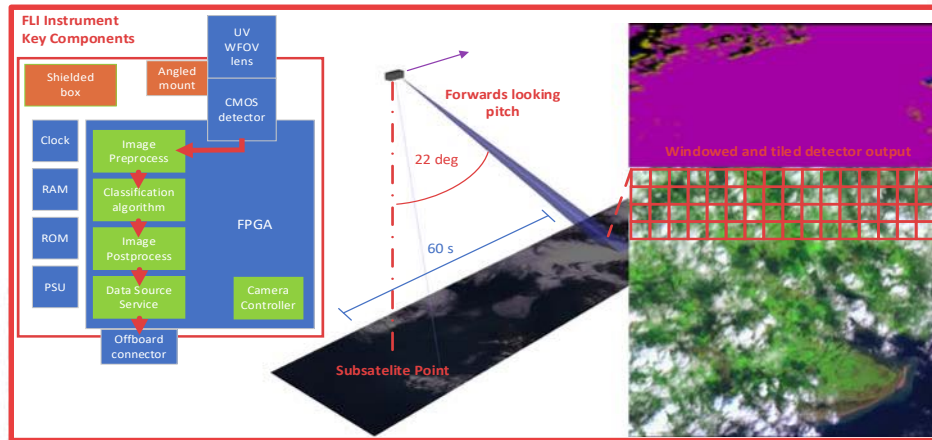




# Reference Onboard Architecture





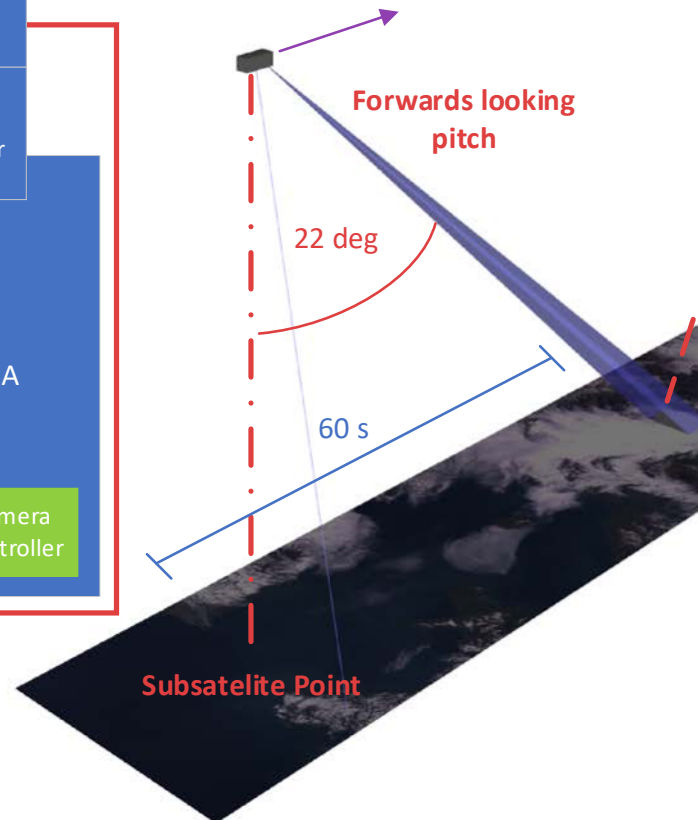
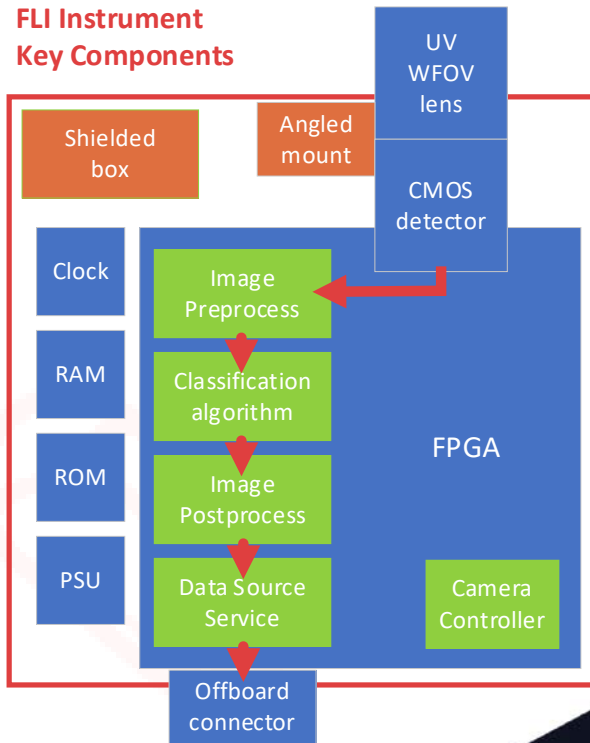






# DETECT: Forwards Looking Imager

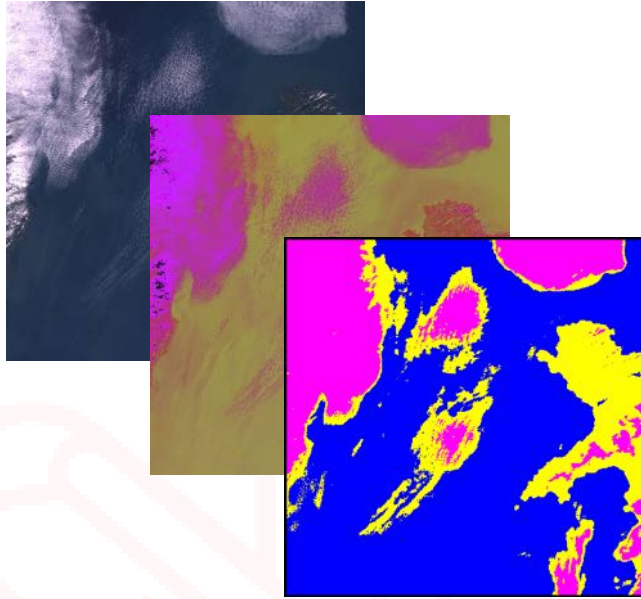
## FLI Instrument Key Components



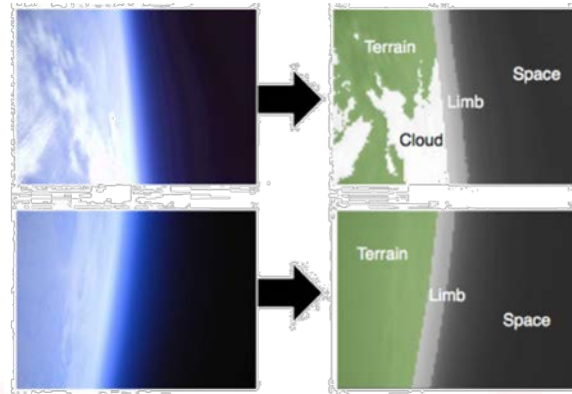
- Target prioritisation
- Resource assignment
- Payload repointing/slew
- Constellation task reassignment



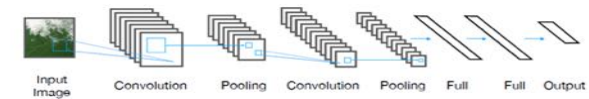
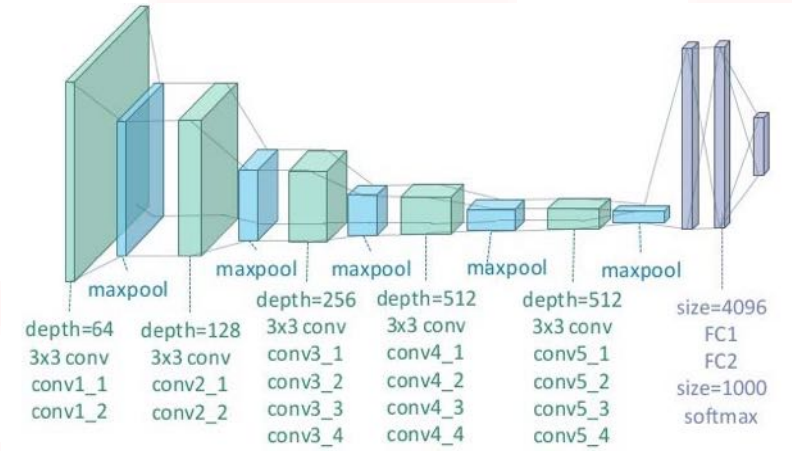
# FLI Algorithm Downselect



Fmask



TextureCam



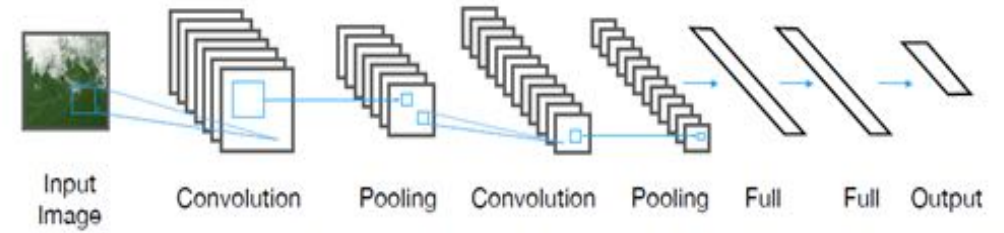
Deep learning

Increasing applicability across domains



# Deep learning

- Applied transfer learning to existing CNN
- Modified open source VGG
- Trained using Planet Labs classification tiles
- < 1 hr training
- < 1 s inference



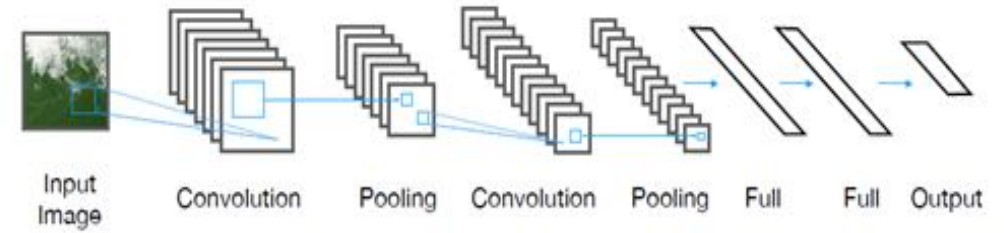
```
{ 'agriculture', 'cultivation',  
{ 'agriculture', 'primary', 'road',  
{ 'habitation', 'partly_cloudy',  
{ 'waterway', 'primary' }  
'primary', 'road' }
```





# Deep learning

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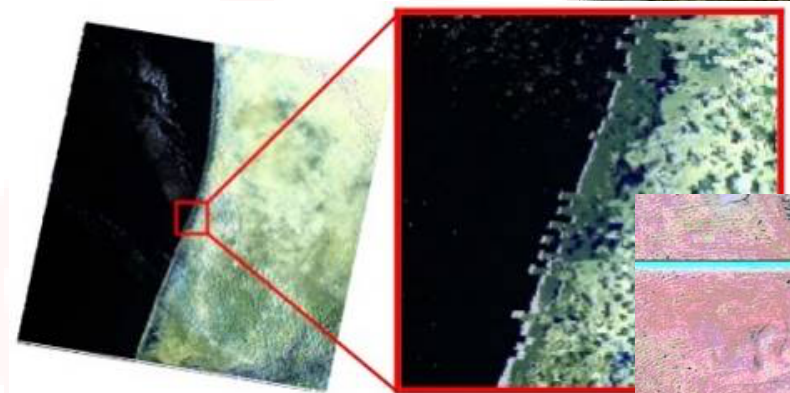
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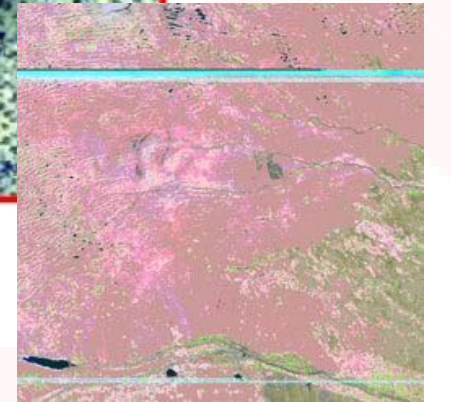
# Implementation challenges

- Power and processing constraints
- Access to applicable Level 0 training data
- Ground reference points
- Incorporating anomalies
- Onboard systems interfacing
- Meeting operational regulations
- Demonstrating mission assurance
- Parallax error due to forwards looking

Gain Correction



Pixel Alignment

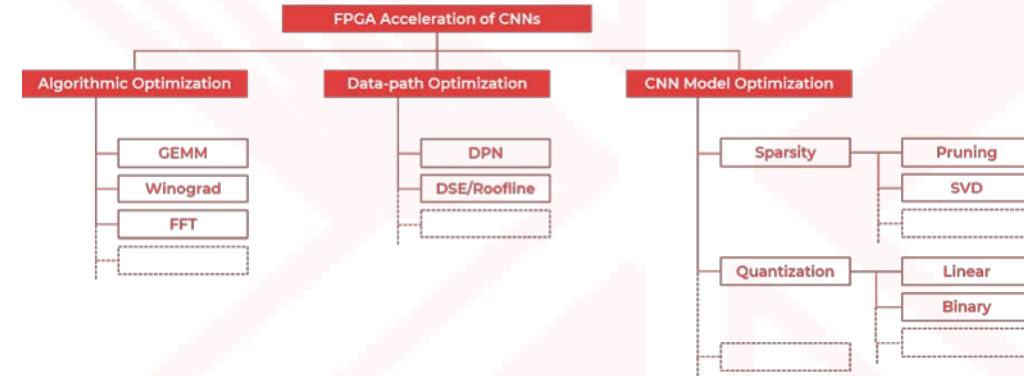


Sun Glint



# Enabling strategies

- Target FPGA with known flight heritage
- Tools to enable rapid synthesis from high level languages to embedded
- Evaluation of a number of optimization pipelines and approaches
- Adapted existing open source libraries for image processing and deep learning
- Discretisation/quantisation of the convolutional neural network
- Creating a system-in-the-loop test including distortions and anomalies

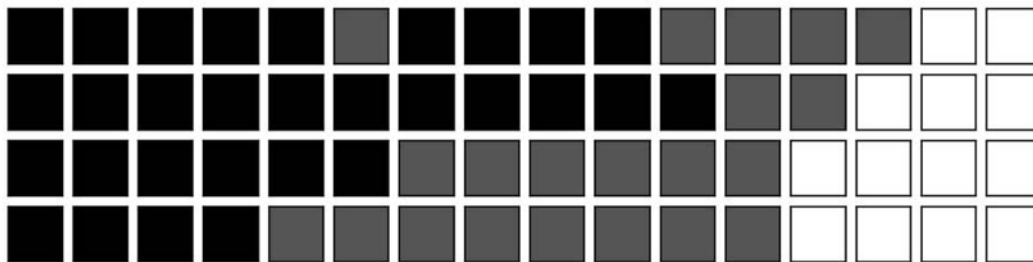
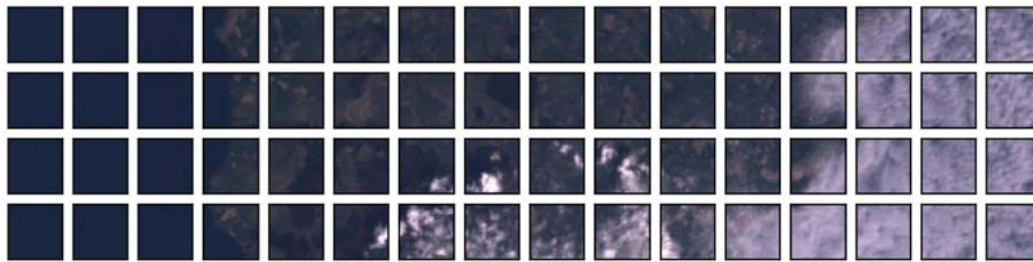


| Name          | Interface     | Devices                   | Design Space Exploration               | Year     |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------------|--|----------|
| fpgaConvNet   | Caffe & Torch | Xilinx SoC                | Global Optimiser (Simulated Annealing) | May 2016 |
| DeepBurning   | Caffe         | Xilinx SoC                | Heuristic                              | Jun 2016 |
| Angel-Eye     | Caffe         | Xilinx SoC                | Heuristic with Analytical Model        | Jul 2016 |
| ALAMO         | Caffe         | Intel SoC & Standalone    | Heuristic                              | Aug 2016 |
| Haddoc2       | Caffe         | Xilinx & Intel Standalone | Deterministic                          | Sep 2016 |
| DnnWeaver     | Caffe         | Xilinx & Intel            | Custom Search Algorithm                | Oct 2016 |
| Caffeine      | Caffe         | Xilinx Standalone         | Exhaustive over Roofline Model         | Nov 2016 |
| AutoCodeGen   | Proprietary   | Xilinx Standalone         | Heuristic with Analytical Model        | Dec 2016 |
| FINN          | Theano        | Xilinx SoC & Standalone   | Heuristic                              | Feb 2017 |
| FP-DNN        | TensorFlow    | Intel Standalone          | Algorithmic                            | May 2017 |
| Snowflake     | Torch         | Xilinx SoC                | Heuristic                              | May 2017 |
| SysArrayAccel | C             | Intel Standalone          | Exhaustive over Analytical Model       | Jun 2017 |
| FFTCCodeGen   | Proprietary   | Intel HARP                | Roofline and Analytical Models         | Dec 2017 |





# Test case



- Image is split into tiles
- Cloud detection payload classifies each segment with a single label:

Clear

Partly cloudy

Cloudy



- Payload pointing controller avoids cloudy regions and targets clear regions

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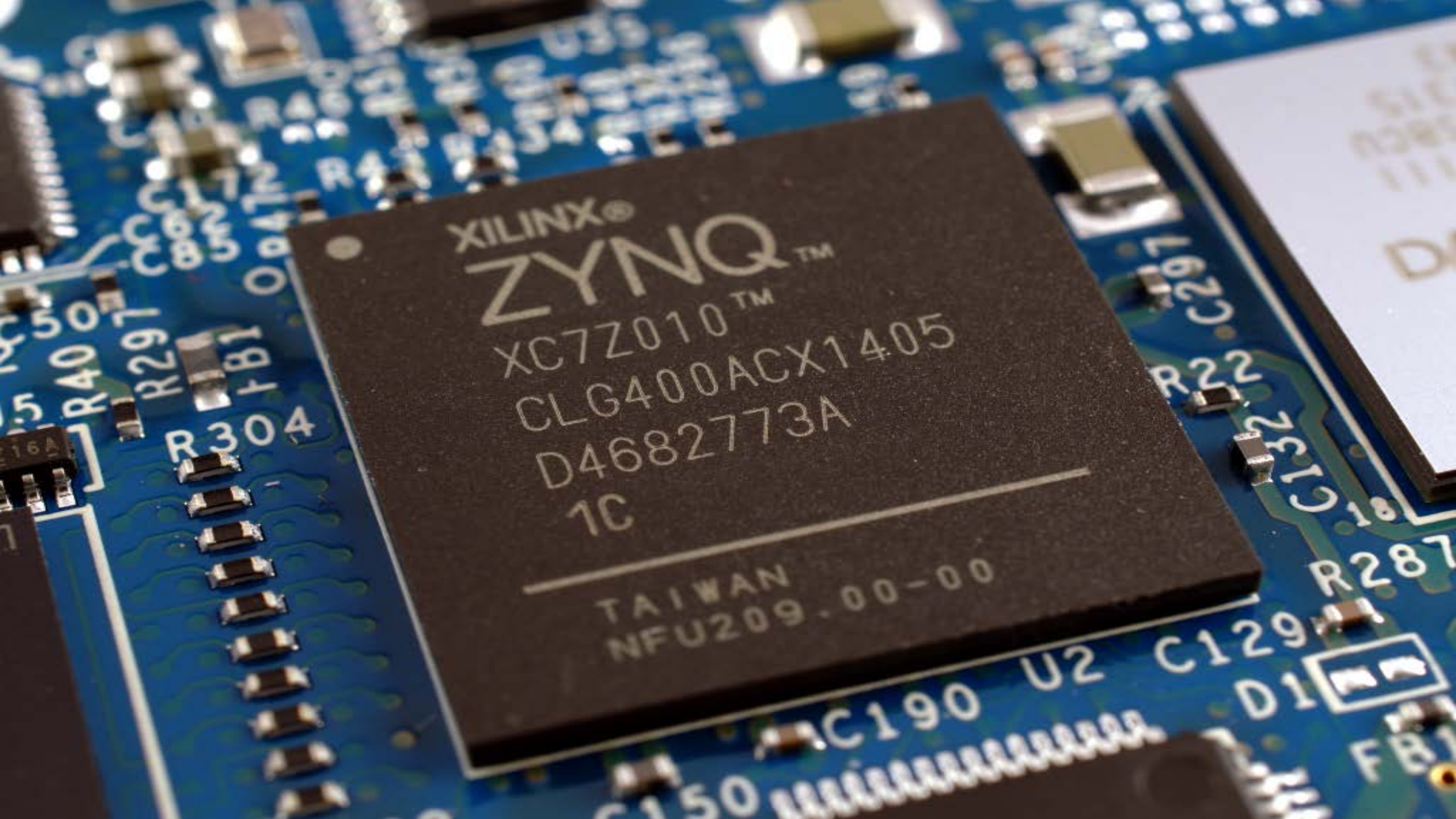
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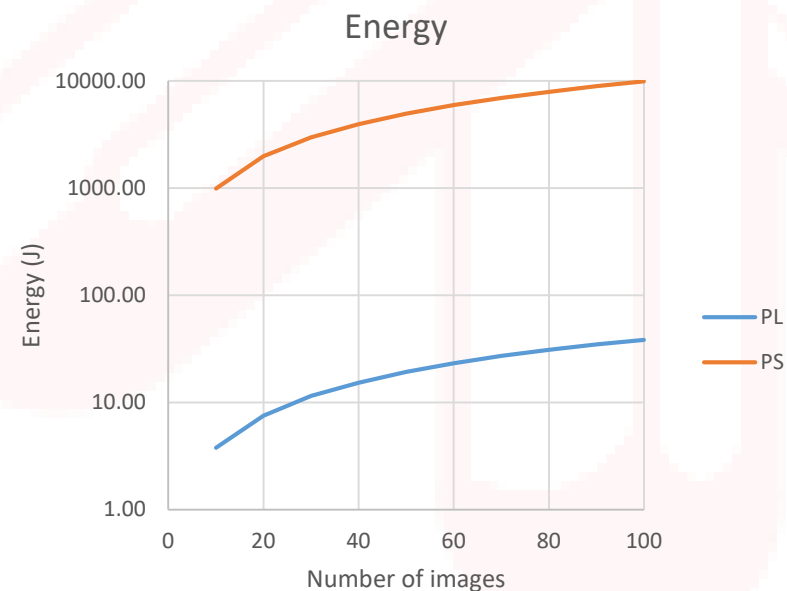
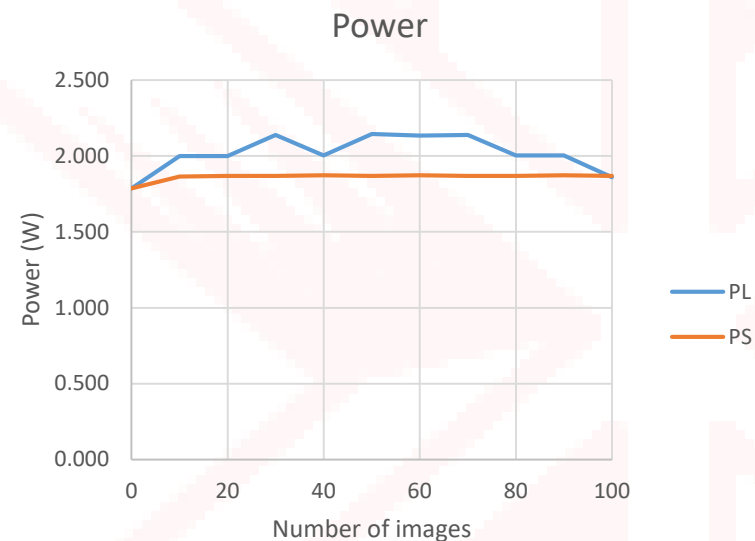
# Results

| Model                 | Initialisation <sup>1</sup> | Inference <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Pre-optimal           | 7.06 s                      | 3.63 s                 |
| Pre-acceleration (PS) | 0.36 s                      | 52.9 s                 |
| Accelerated (PS+PL)   | 0.36 s                      | 0.19 s                 |

(1) Initialisation is always in PS. Involves loading neural network libraries and creating NN object.

(2) Inference performed on single image split into tile segments and batch classified

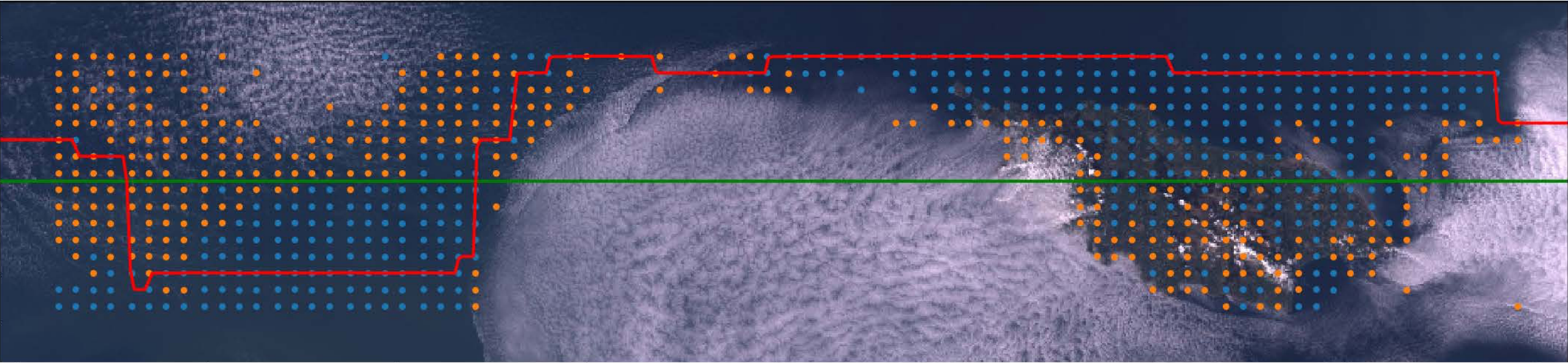
Accuracy of 97% achieved against human evaluated tiles, now being formally benchmarked







# Payload cloud avoidance



- Inference model is deployed on FPGA, allowing real-time cloud detection
- At the area access rate in LEO we can extract features at 60% max loading
- $< 2$  W,  $< 5$  s from capture through to planning output



- Engineering Models of the Forwards Looking Imager MVP now available

- Delivered to first customers for third party performance and interface testing

- Tools for adapting to a range of real-time feature detection applications

**Forwards Looking Imager**  
Advanced Issue, Preliminary Only

The forwards looking imager provides real time and actionable knowledge about the incoming satellite environment for onboard planning of effective operations. Designed initially for the LEO environment to meet the needs of CubeSat and small satellite systems, the deep learning based algorithms can be trained to report incoming subsatellite observation features such as clouds or water turbulence to maximise utility of mission payloads, ensuring optimal use of resources such as power and bandwidth. Highly configurable for user applications, challenge us to meet the needs of your mission in LEO, or elsewhere.

Provides additional information of the future satellite environment for real-time decision making and maximises utility of onboard resources to allow networked planning within constellations or base nets for responses to environmental changes. Trained nets for specific applications or base nets for Earth observation, telecommunications and beyond.

• Python-based modelling environment for modelling end to end system hardware in the loop and form factors

• Additional processing and customisation including absolute pointing, compression, etc on request

**TYPICAL SPECIFICATION**

| Performance         | Physical           |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Swath width         | Active power       |
| up to 1000 km       | < 2 W              |
| Tile resolution     | Operating temp     |
| > 16 pix, 50-500 m  | -20 to 65 degC     |
| Feature confidence  | Mass               |
| 97%                 | < 100 g   250 g    |
| Reference time      | Design environment |
| < 1 s, < 5 s to OBC | 3 years, LEO       |
| up to 180 s         | Mechanical housing |
|                     | < 95 x 95 x 20 mm  |
|                     | Interfaces         |
|                     | CSK PC104, microD  |

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# Ongoing development

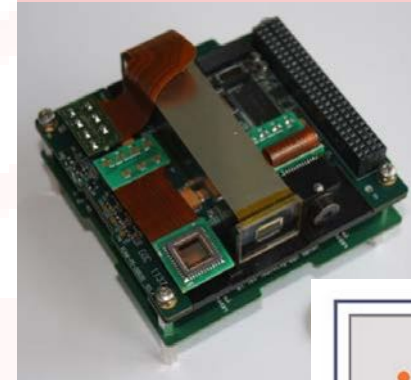
Extending core computing capability with additional low power processing nodes



Adapting and embedding third party algorithms for different spectral bands and use cases



Interfacing with existing flight heritage sensors and camera systems





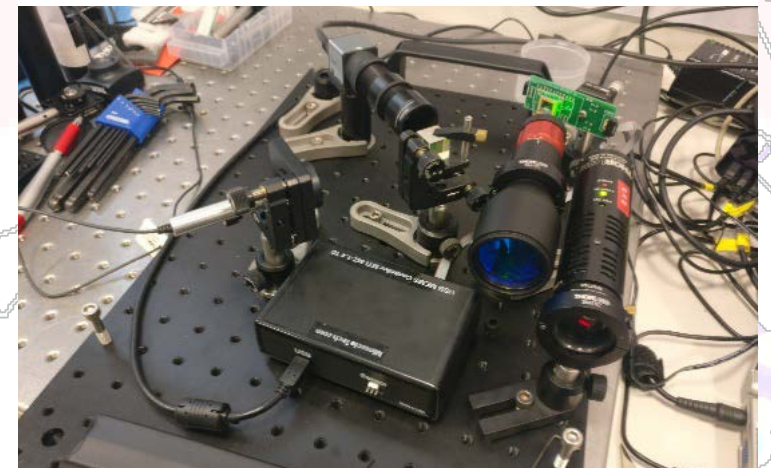
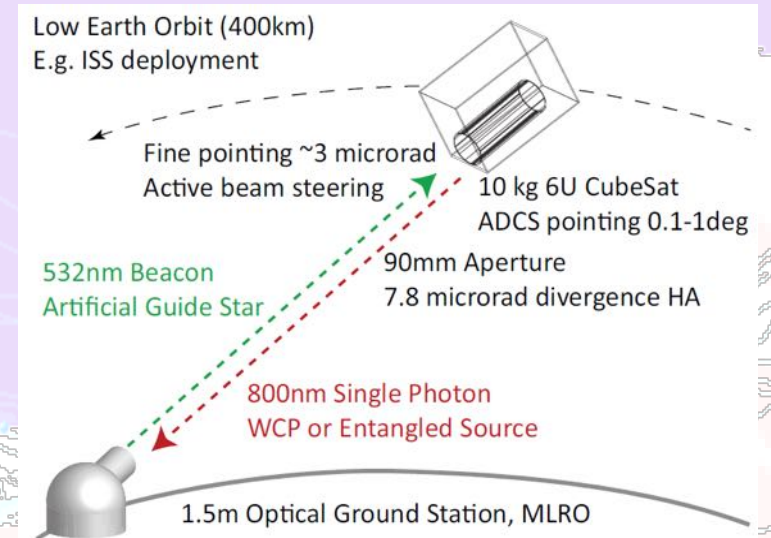
# Drone testing

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# Responsive Operations for Key Services

- Maximise utility of high power and bandwidth Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) payload
- Towards delivery of secret keys for securing BT telecoms infrastructure
- In-Orbit Demonstration opportunity for FLI and autonomy framework
- Onboard ML to support real-time planning and signal identification

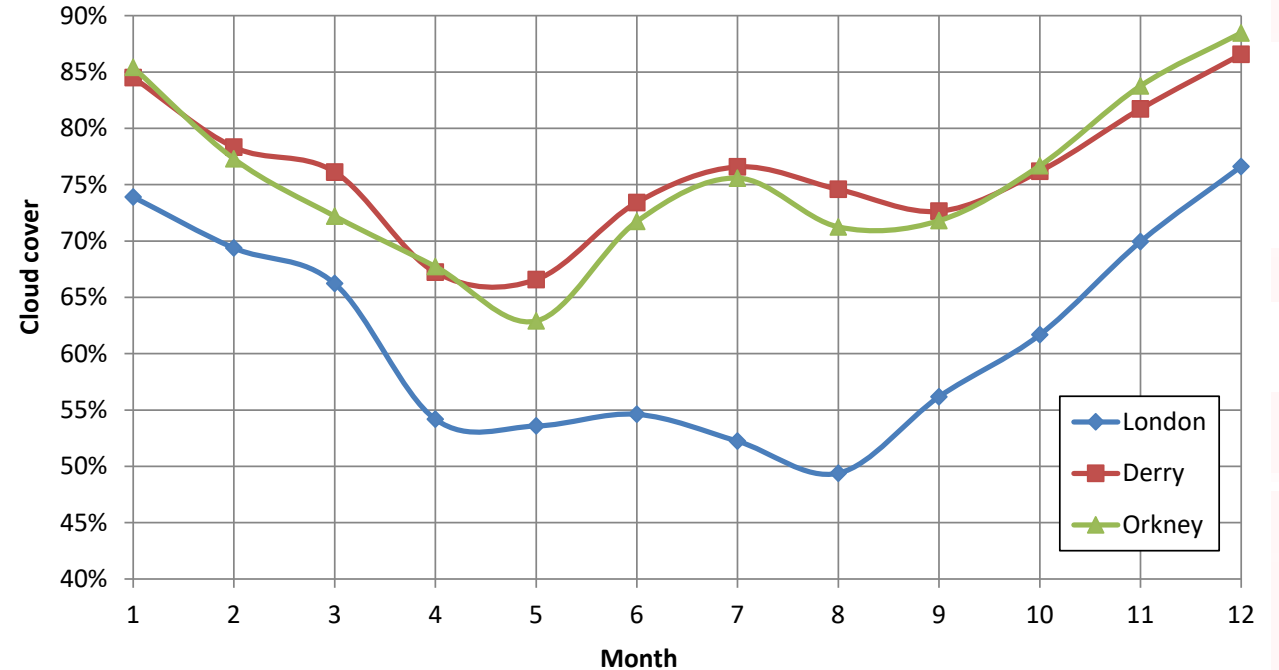
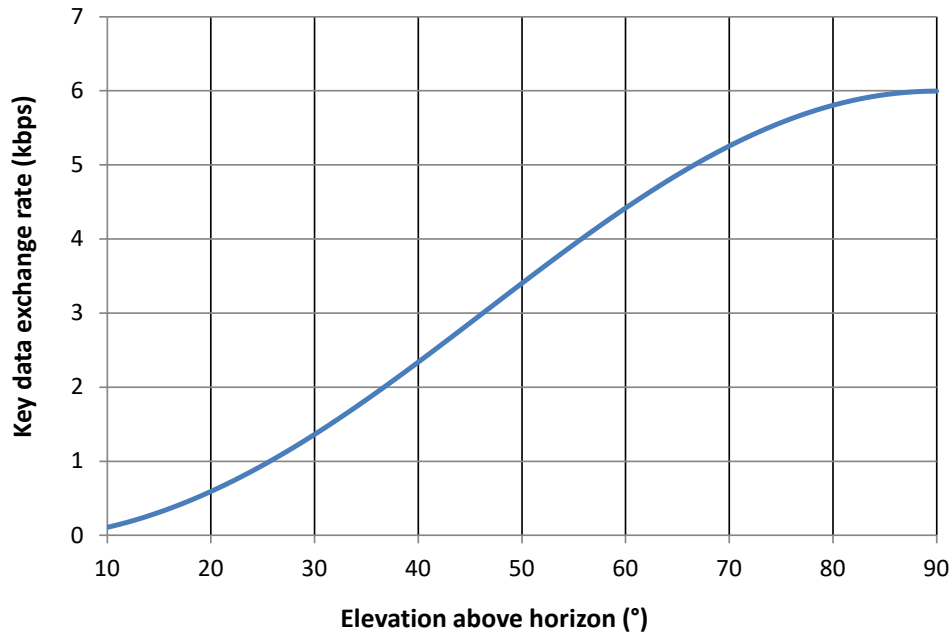






# Key rate and ground visibility

Key exchange rate as a function of elevation angle (optimal conditions)



Cloud cover data inferred from Met Office derived Sunshine hours data



# Using AI for informing onboard

Using developed software and FLI to deliver a responsive operations



# Summary

- Overall **framework for autonomy** and enabling algorithms presented for COBRA
- **Forwards looking imager** EM on flight representative hardware, with 1-2 min look-ahead
- Acceleration of enabling algorithms embedded into FPGA **300x faster** (PS vs PS+PL)
- Toolchain to rapidly develop and test from **high level languages to embedded** prototyped
- **Real time feature detection** for the area access rates in LEO demonstrated at < 2 W
- Application and training optimisation of deep learning for **cloud detection** case
- **System-in-the-loop** simulation developed to allow end to end testing of the imaging system
- Flight ready variant now in development and to environmental test in 2019
- Towards flight opportunity in the **Responsive Operations for Key Services** IOD



# Acknowledgements



Centre for  
EO Instrumentation



“Onboard Data Autonomy for Next Generation of EO Nanosatellites”



# Innovate UK



“Augmenting Emerging Quantum Key Distribution Networks with CubeSats”

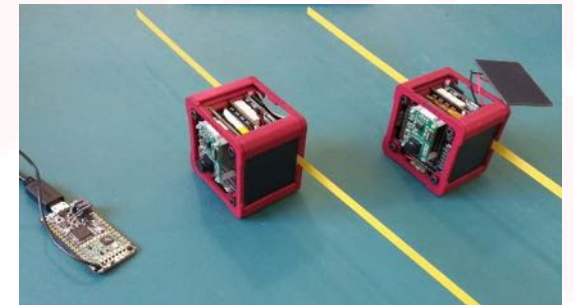






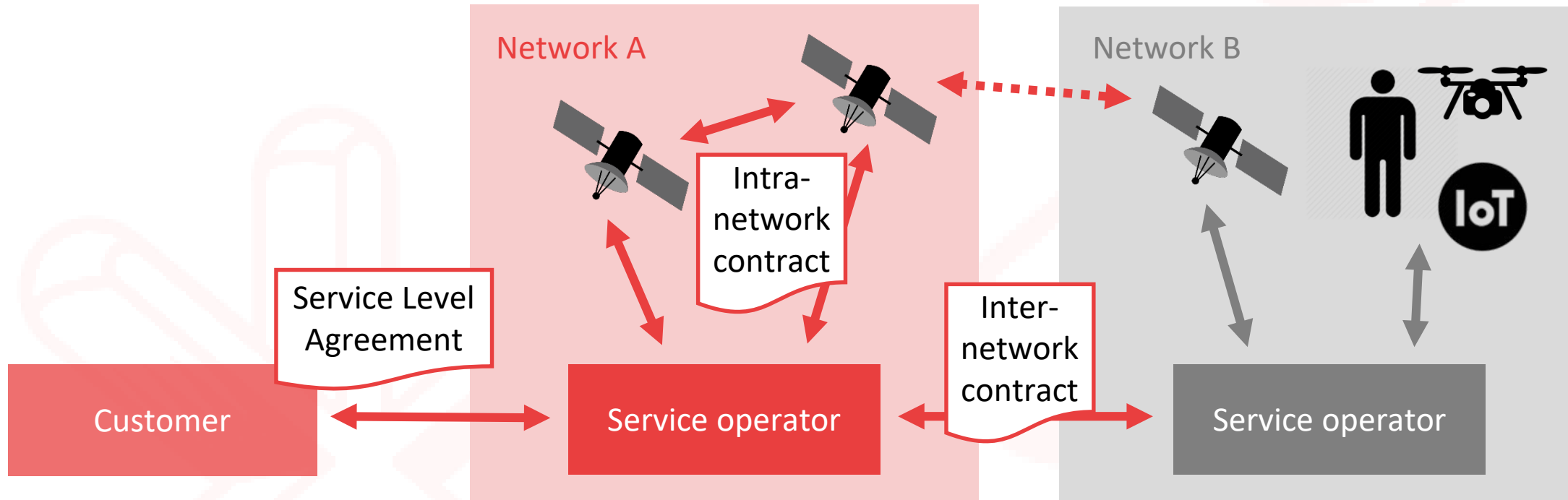
# Smart Contracts for Responsive Operations

- As AI-enabled automation and autonomy become standard and multiple networks of satellites emerge...
- Automatic tasking of assets
- Enable trading of satellite onboard resources
- Tracing and verifying workflows
- Attribution in multi-sourced products
- Non-homogenous intelligent CubeSats to augment wider EO or telecoms networks in Space 4.0





# Maximising return from assets





thanks



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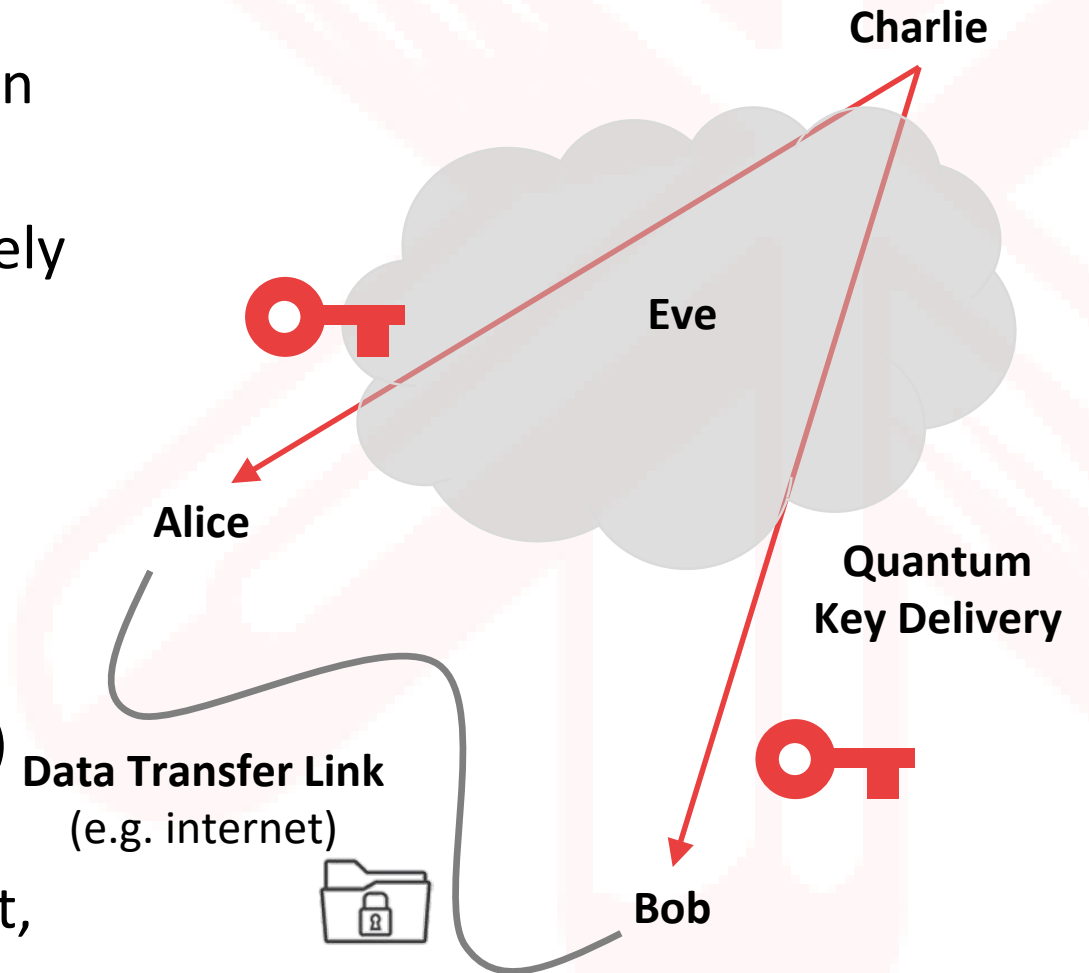






# Quantum Keys for Cybersecurity

- Secret keys are an essential tool for encryption and authentication
- Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) is a completely alternate way of creating a key
- Instead of mathematical complexity it uses fundamental physics
- It relies on the physical properties of photons for security
- It may be distributed by a third party (Charlie) to Alice and Bob
- Even if Eve intercepts part of the key in transit, and that part is not used

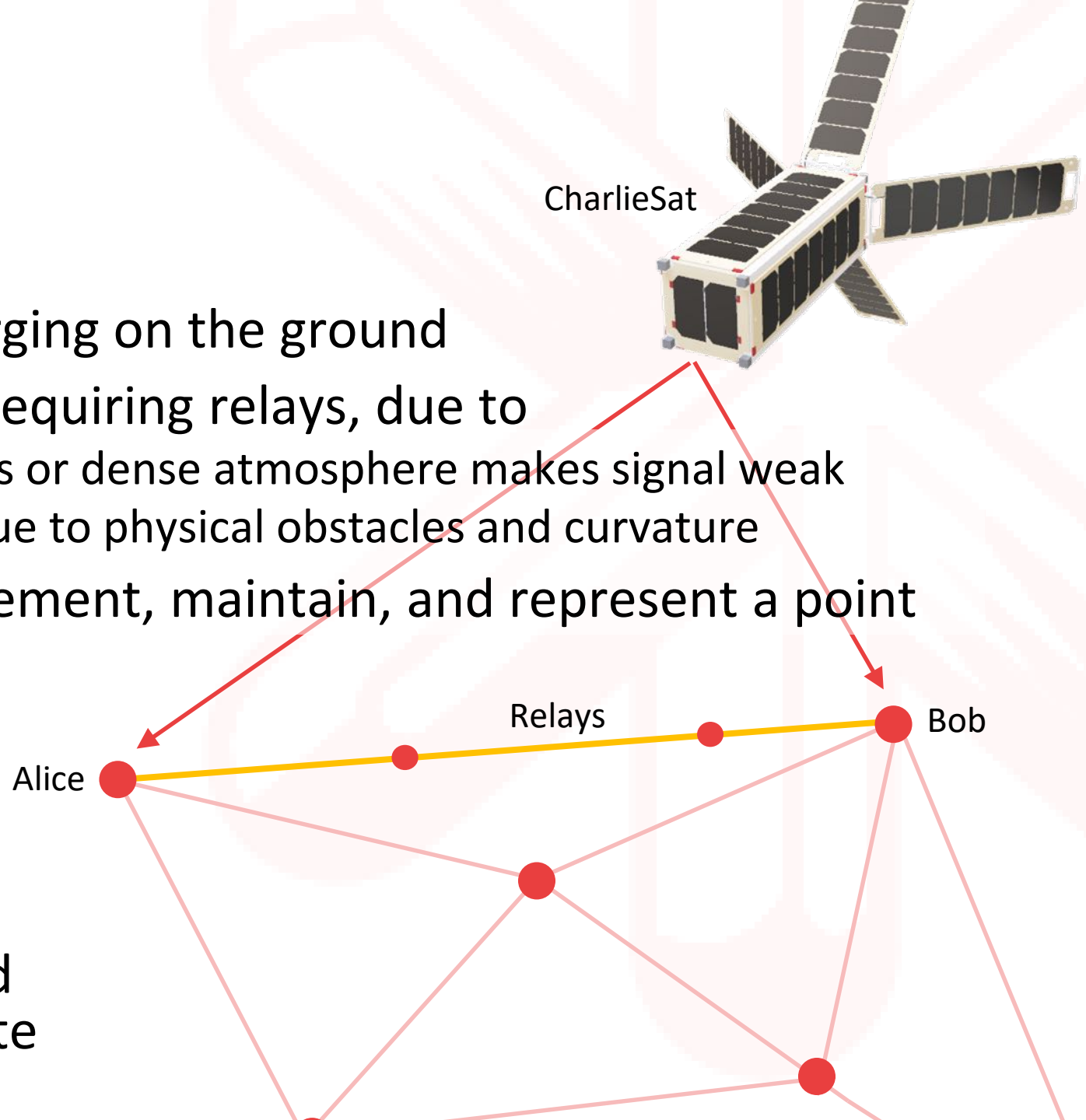






# Why Space?

- QKD networks are now emerging on the ground
- Photons have limited range requiring relays, due to
  - Attenuation within fibre optics or dense atmosphere makes signal weak
  - Line of sight if in free-space due to physical obstacles and curvature
- Relays are expensive to implement, maintain, and represent a point of weakness for attack
- Space assets can deliver keys as independent channel for point to point key delivery
- Negates need for widespread relay infrastructure to operate





# Why CubeSats?

This is the first time a new global multi-domain service and market has emerged with CubeSats able to augment from the outset; how does that change its delivery and deployment?

## Phase I: during initial deployments

- Provide test services to **characterise the service** against emerging standards
- **Derisking infrastructure** upgrades and deployment in critical systems
- Develop **operational understanding** to deliver a QKD Service satellite network
- Supporting the **rapid deployment** of assets and new technology

## Phase II: as key services emerge

- **Smoothing of demand** where networks experiences elevated key requests
- **Gap filling capacity** where infrastructure unavailable or not yet deployed
- **Alternate key channels** where it does not meet minimum security requirements
- **Responsive key delivery** to locations outside of emergent infrastructure



# Not every cloud is equal...

Credit: earthobservatory.nasa.gov

