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# ArmyCoCreate

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## **U.S. Army Rapid Equipping Force Launches Website to Support Soldier Innovation**

Army CoCreate is a proof-of-concept effort exploring the utility of crowdsourcing for Army requirements and solutions

FORT BELVOIR, Va. – October 11, 2013 – The U.S. Army Rapid Equipping Force (REF) announced Friday the launch of [ArmyCoCreate.com](http://ArmyCoCreate.com), an online platform to connect Soldiers, civilians, enthusiasts and scientists in the real-time development of Army solutions. Community members will collaborate to identify Soldier problems, suggest solutions, tackle an in-depth challenge and build prototypes.

The Army CoCreate platform and its community will provide the inspiration for two workshops called “Make-a-Thons,” where Soldiers from the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate (CDID) will bring virtual blueprints to life by manufacturing 3D prototypes using REF Expeditionary Lab (Ex Lab) equipment.

### **Soldier-focused**

The REF officially partnered with Local Motors in August 2013 to deliver a groundbreaking, open-source platform for driving Soldier-focused innovation.

“Soldiers are living and breathing the fight, day-in and day-out, so they have the best ideas for new capabilities to solve their most urgent challenges,” said Sergeant First Class, Adam Asclipiadis. “We need to connect those ideas with the people who can make innovations a reality.”

The Army CoCreate proof-of-concept is a natural evolution of the REF mission to rapidly develop solutions and quickly get them to Soldiers on the battlefield.

“When you have a situation where you need good solutions in a time-critical manner, it is important to tap into the expertise of those closest to the problem,” said Colonel Steven

Sliwa, the REF Director. “As the rapid response organization for the U.S. Army, REF must work closely with Soldiers to understand urgent requirements and to get the right solution into the hands of the warfighter as quickly as possible.”

Local Motors has developed similar platforms for the automotive industry and previously supported the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) on defense-related challenges.

“We are excited and honored to be providing a platform that will give a voice to the Army’s dedicated Soldiers,” said Local Motors CEO Jay Rogers. “The ability to drive real-time design and the development of solutions like the ones I needed when I deployed to Iraq as a United States Marine is extremely rewarding.”

### **How It Works**

The Army CoCreate process will have four distinct lines of effort:

#### **1. Identify Problems. (Ideas page)**

Big or small, ideas are the foundation for innovative projects. Participants will identify specific Soldier challenges for the community to address. Community members will vote or comment on their favorite Soldier challenge idea. The more votes an idea receives, the more likely it is to be selected as the main Army CoCreate project.

#### **2. Suggest Solutions. (Design page)**

Participants will upload sketches, graphics and renderings for a Soldier solution. Solution designs may or may not directly relate to a problem identified on the ideas page. Users can like, comment or follow updates for their favorite designs. Designs can inform the main Army CoCreate project or inspire people who can make the idea a reality.

#### **3. Tackle a Project. (Projects Page)**

Based on the community’s ideas, designs and feedback, REF will select a main Army CoCreate project for in-depth collaboration. The moderators will post detailed Soldier challenge information such as the size, weight, power, operation and endurance guidelines. Community members will select and contribute to the part of the project that interests them the most. From the projects page, participants can start a conversation thread on any topic within the project area.

#### **4. Build Prototypes. (Make-a-Thons)**

In the final phase of Army CoCreate, MCoE Fort Benning will host two, week-long innovation workshops called Make-a-Thons where the resulting virtual designs from the online community will be prototyped using 3D printing capabilities and the REF expeditionary lab. Make-a-Thons will take place December 9-13, 2013 and January 13-16, 2014.

The Army CoCreate effort demonstrates REF’s commitment to include Soldiers in the solution development process. The emphasis for this six-month effort is to capture the ideas of Soldiers with recent combat experience.

"Right now, the Army is filled with resources, the Soldiers returning home from Afghanistan rich with operational experience from that conflict. It is important to maintain institutional knowledge of what we have learned," said Sliwa. "Though the problems addressed by the CoCreate community may not be theater-specific, we want to determine if this technique can assist Soldiers in refining requirements and developing solutions."

Membership in the Army CoCreate online community is free and is open to the public. Visit [ArmyCoCreate.com](http://ArmyCoCreate.com) to join the community and help drive the next generation of Soldier-focused innovations.

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### **About the U.S. Army Rapid Equipping Force (REF)**

The REF harnesses current and emerging technologies to provide immediate solutions to the urgent challenges of U.S. Army forces deployed globally. The Department of the Army formed the REF in 2002 to support warfighter requirements in Afghanistan, and during the past ten years, the REF has met challenges as diverse as defeating improvised explosive devices, increasing Army contingency operational energy efficiency, gathering blast effect data to better understand traumatic brain injury and improving intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance capabilities in austere locations. The REF enables Army units of all types, Combat, Combat Support and Combat Service Support, to rapidly adapt to changing battlefield conditions and enemy tactics. We provide immediate in-theater engineering capabilities that connect scientists and engineers with Soldiers.

### **For more information about the REF, please contact the REF PAO:**

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