DIFI PlugFest 2026 Doubles in Scale, Demonstrating Rapid Growth in Digital IF Interoperability

Record participation and expanded device testing highlight the growing ecosystem of DIFI-compliant products as the satellite industry accelerates its shift toward virtualized and digital ground infrastructure.

The **Digital Intermediate Frequency Interoperability Consortium (DIFI)** successfully concluded its annual PlugFest earlier this month at the offices of **Keysight Technologies** in Santa Clara, California.

Over four days (5-8 October), DIFI member companies conducted intensive interoperability testing of Version 1.2.1 and 1.3 of the DIFI Standard (IEEE-ISTO Std 4900-2021). The The Showcase Day opened the event to the broader SATCOM community, nearly doubling in size with close to 80 attendees from across the space and telecom industries. The program featured keynote presentations, live demonstrations, and an interactive industry panel, highlighting growing industry interest in DIFI interoperability and the shift toward digital and virtualized ground systems.



Speakers included:

- **Scott Register**, VP Enterprise Network Performance and Security, Keysight
- **Marc Witteman**, Senior Director, ASIC and Device Security, Keysight
- **Aaron Fletchersmith**, Systems Integration Engineer, Viasat
- **Annmarie Stanley**, Technical Lead, Kratos
- **Jinno Magno**, Vice President of Operations / System Engineer, Welkin Sciences
- And a Panel featuring: **Simon Swift, Kieth King, Stuart Daughtright, Aaron Fletchersmith**.

DIFI 2026 PlugFest Results



Welcome and Opening the PlugFest
Keysight Santa Clara campus



Annmarie Stanley, Kratos Defense
Chair, Certification Working Group

The program highlighted real-world progress in interoperability and the role of the DIFI Standard in enabling modular, virtualized ground systems that reduce costs and increase agility. Live demonstrations showcased vendor equipment operating seamlessly together, underlining how interoperability is advancing from concept to operational reality.

“DIFI’s PlugFest 2026 marked a significant step forward for digital interoperability in the satellite industry, with twice as many companies participating this year. That growth reflects the increasing recognition that open standards are essential to building a more flexible, scalable, and cost-effective satellite ground segment. The results of this year’s testing demonstrate that multi-vendor interoperability is not just a goal for the future—it is a practical reality today. By bringing more companies together to test implementations, share expertise, and demonstrate working solutions, we are accelerating the industry’s transition toward virtualized ground systems and making it easier for satellite technology to integrate with the broader telecommunications and IT ecosystems.” said **Stuart Daughtridge**, DIFI Chairman and Head of Advanced Technology at Kratos Defense & Security Solutions.

“Hosting DIFI PlugFest 2026 at Keysight was a valuable opportunity to bring together industry experts and technology providers to demonstrate how open standards are advancing interoperability across satellite ground systems. Over four days of testing and analysis, participating companies worked to validate implementations of the DIFI Standard and demonstrate the practical benefits of equipment from different vendors working together.” said **Phil Lorch**, Sr. Director, Space and Satellite Business Segment Aerospace, Defense and Government Solutions Unit, Keysight Technologies *“The Showcase Day extended that collaboration to the broader SATCOM community, highlighting how digital IF interoperability can help reduce*

costs, increase flexibility, and accelerate the transition to virtualized ground infrastructure. The progress demonstrated this year reinforces the importance of industry collaboration in turning open standards into real-world capabilities for the next generation of satellite networks."

The Showcase attracted a diverse mix of satellite operators, service providers, equipment manufacturers, and government representatives, reflecting growing recognition of the DIFI Standard's importance in the global SATCOM ecosystem.

ABOUT DIFI

The Digital Intermediate Frequency (IF) Interoperability Consortium, or DIFI, has created a standard that enforces interoperability on digital IF/RF technology. Digital IF was developed to overcome the limitations of analog systems but, today, vendor lock-in prevents it from delivering seamless interoperability and severely limits its adoption. A truly interoperable digital IF, on the other hand, will enable transformation to a virtualized ground segment, reducing the total cost of ownership and significantly boosting network and terminal agility and scalability. Compliance with the DIFI standard will ensure that satellite ground segments can seamlessly adapt to rapidly changing space-layer payloads, orbits, and constellations. Ultimately, DIFI promises to elevate the resilience, performance, and capabilities of satellite networks and enable a digital transformation that integrates satellites seamlessly into the larger telecom, IT and GIS markets.

A full list of DIFI members and information about membership can be found at https://dificonsortium.org/members/

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ABOUT KEYSIGHT TECHNOLOGIES

Keysight Technologies, Inc. (NYSE: KEYS) helps enterprises, service providers, and governments accelerate innovation to connect and secure the world. Keysight's design, emulation, and test solutions help bring digital innovations to market faster and with less risk throughout the product lifecycle. Learn more at www.keysight.com.

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