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SWIR Camera Test – The New Swux Unit

SWIR imaging technology based on InGaAs sensor products has been a staple of scientific sensing for decades. Large earth observing satellites have used InGaAs imaging sensors for applications that have proven benefits in markets like agriculture, geology, weather prediction and atmospheric science. As in the case with most technology, these very expensive early systems paved the way for much smaller, faster and cheaper imaging products that are proliferating and creating new commercial market opportunities. High-performance cameras for SWIR applications are now available for under \$5,000. However, there is not a clear set of test specifications, testing methods or industry language that allows consumers to be able to quickly compare or validate performance of these products. The result of the lack of this clear internal communication on the products is some degree of chaos as companies try to move these products and consumers find the resulting product performance confusing, tough to validate on manufacturer specifications, or, in the worst case, find that the camera will not meet the application requirements. If SWIR sensor testing is going to proliferate, then some basic level of performance needs to be defined, new test methods and units need to be presented to the user community, and SWIR test equipment needs to be uniformly accepted and used.

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