

## HYDRO INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEWS ALLAN CARSWELL

# From the Depths of the Ocean to the Surface of Mars



Canadian Lidar company Teledyne Optech originated in 1974 as a spin-off from Allan Carswell's research at York University in Toronto, where he had initiated one of the first Lidar research programmes. Hydro International recently took the opportunity to interview the founder and chairman, who can be described as a true Lidar pioneer. Here, he talks about Teledyne Optech's 40 years of leadership in transforming Lidar systems from virtual obscurity into systems that are revolutionising diverse fields such as surveying, 3D imaging and active and passive optical remote sensing.

***Can you tell our readers about the start of your career and the foundation of your company?***

I joined the faculty of York University in 1968, and started an atmospheric Lidar research programme to combine my previous laser experience with York's strong atmospheric science programme. Ontario Hydro was supporting the use of the York Lidar to map the smoke plume from a new coal-burning power station equipped with the latest pollution controls which made the plume invisible to the eye. These studies were so successful that Hydro decided to purchase a Lidar of its own in 1974. Since I was unable to respond via the university, my wife Helen and I decided to set up Optech instead. Our bid was accepted, we hired a couple of former York colleagues, and Optech was on its way. When the Lidar was delivered, it was probably the first commercial sale of a Lidar ever made.

[Read the full interview in the May/June Issue of 2015, page 13](#)