Drones to test the waters

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Amphibious drones are being developed to collect and test potentially dangerous water samples from difficult to access watercourses.

Dan Squire founded Drones Over Water last year in South Australia and has developed a sensor unit, which attaches to amphibious drones to allow the collection of samples from watercourses. He said the drones were highly efficient and could be used for collecting and testing samples from reservoirs, chemical spills, wastewater plants, tailings dams and ocean oil spills. The drones are capable of flying to a programmed GPS position, collecting a sample from a specific depth, testing the sample onboard and sending the data remotely.

Squire will travel from Adelaide to the United States in April with a group from Flinders University's New Venture Institute to speak with potential investors or business partners. "I'm on the cusp of a couple of trials ... the prototype's pretty much finished," he said. "Then we'll have a product that will be at the point where we've trialed our technology and we'll be looking for investment ... so we can go out to the market and start providing the service to people by operating our own equipment or selling the equipment itself."

The global drones market is expected to reach USD 5.59 billion by 2020, at an estimated compound annual growth rate of 32.22% between 2015 and 2020...

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