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New Internet-based System

Knowledge Management for the Acquisition Community

In the Internet age, information can be found on just about anything. The question is where.

There is an abundance of acquisition knowledge on the World Wide Web, but finding it all can be a challenge. To bring these many sources together, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology & Logistics) (OUSD(AT&L)) is working toward an acquisition knowledge management system – a systematic process for acquiring, creating, integrating, sharing and using information, insights and experiences to achieve organizational goals.

The move toward a comprehensive knowledge management system began as a collaborative effort to improve the Acquisition Deskbook. A cross-functional Rapid Improvement Team (RIT) explored ways to better share knowledge across defense acquisition agencies. As the RIT's findings became clearer, it also became clear that the acquisition and logistics community needed an integrated yet decentralized way to get information from various DoD as well as industry sources. OUSD(AT&L) decided to lead the effort to support existing knowledge communities, create new knowledge management (KM) communities and develop a KM framework from which all of DoD may benefit.

The RIT found that today's Deskbook is a centralized database to which subject-matter experts only reluctantly contribute their expertise. At the same time, the Services and subject matter-experts are voluntarily forming their own Web-based communities where knowledge is shared freely but there is no coherent system for knowledge generation, organization, development and distribution.

OUSD (AT&L) pictures an electronic gateway through which this free-flowing information can be accessed. The gateway would allow other members of the acquisition community to access these "communities of practice." (Communities of practice are groups of defense acquisition professionals both across departments and within the Services and Defense Agencies that have a common need to share and grow knowledge to enable better, faster and more cost-effective deci-

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sion making and performance.) This new KM framework will be a portal specifically designed for the acquisition community.

Featured in the new KM system will be online access to:

- Mandatory Policies and Procedures
- Best Practices
- Lessons Learned
- Electronic Discussions
- Links to Communities of Practice
- Links to Other Relevant, Useful Sites
- Leadership Messages
- Computer-Based Training
- Models and Simulations
- Profiled, Customized Information
- Question-Based Reasoning

The KM framework is entering its pilot phase. During this phase, current communities of practice will be examined and pilots based on important acquisition initiatives or a "lessons learned" database will be established. Follow the pilot phase, a specific approach to make online acquisition information more accessible to everyone will be determined.

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