

Making IT Be All IT Can Be

A U.S. ARMY SOLDIER TRAINING FOR BATTLE IN IRAQ OR AFGHANISTAN

most likely doesn't spend too much time thinking about the IT systems that allow him or her to enter the battlefield ready to engage in combat. The Army's Office of the CIO, of course, thinks about those systems a lot, and in 2005 the office developed the "500-Day Plan" to outline its strategic vision and mission.

One of the objectives of the plan is to maximize IT efforts to meet both joint and Army IT capability requirements.

In many ways the Army's IT challenges are not so different from those of any large multinational corporation. With a \$6.1 billion IT budget and 2,800 separate systems to manage, it was difficult to track IT projects and make sure they aligned with the Army's ultimate goal: to protect America's freedoms and preserve the peace. "Most complex global organizations have previously been making IT investments on a project-by-project basis



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according to who's been screaming the loudest. These organizations have ended up with a cat's cradle of complexity, and systems that were never designed to interact or share," says Richard Buchanan, managing vice president of enterprise planning and architecture strategies for Gartner.

A Unique Set of Challenges

At the same time, the Army faces certain challenges that set it decidedly apart from the private sector. First, the Clinger-Cohen Act charges the Army CIO with ensuring that the IT strategy is in line with the overall strategic objectives of the Army. At the same time, Congress' budgetary process involves periodic reviews of IT purchasing and procurement. The Government Accountability Office, too, periodically performs audit reports on the Army's IT strategy. And Department of Defense directives charge the armed services with identifying their IT assets and what new procurements provide in terms of IT capabilities.

Finally, the Army is engaged in a continuing drive to ensure that it's taking full advantage of its IT capabilities to maximize the support being given to soldiers and deployed forces. "With ongoing operations in Iraqi Freedom and Enduring



Freedom, one of the most immediate needs is ensuring that the men and women out there serving the country have the best IT capabilities that we can provide them," says Clifford Dickman, Senior IT Portfolio Management (PfM) Analyst for the Army.

The Army IT infrastructure supports the rapid exchange of information among various commands and allows for the accurate depiction of soldiers in the battlefield. At the same time, men and women in Army families depend on the infrastructure to provide them with regular pay, access to medical resources and all the other details that keep a household running when one of its members is deployed. "That's all supported by the network backbone, which aids and assists ensuring the right people get the information to make informed decisions," says Dickman. In the not too distant past, with some pieces of the IT infrastructure coordinated only loosely, it was possible for information in one database to differ from information in another database. "We couldn't guarantee that we were all working from the same spreadsheet," says Dickman.

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Senior IT PfM Analyst, U.S. Army**

Portfolio Management Becomes the Answer

To meet its particular challenges and improve the security and accuracy of the data it depends on to make crucial decisions, the Army turned to IT portfolio management, a process that allows an enterprise to rationalize existing IT systems, approve and govern new projects and manage resources, schedules and costs efficiently. "It involves getting a much more global, long-term lifecycle view of IT projects," says Gartner's Buchanan. And in complex global organizations, he adds, that long-term view is a necessity, not a luxury. "There are numerous instances of absolute failure to deliver on what is needed because of arcane and confusing systems."

With those stakes in mind, the Office of the CIO, together with the Army Financial Management Office, decided that the best path was to formalize and link IT systems to streamline processes, maximize efficiencies and minimize errors. After examining a host of portfolio management offerings the Army chose a tool from Portland, Ore.-based ProSight to inventory and register existing systems and manage the funding of new systems. "We needed a tool that could provide the ability to categorize the data through multiple lenses," says Dickman. "For example, we needed to be able to say, 'Show me the command or component that owns this system,' or 'Show me how this system is funded,' or 'Show me everything that supports a particular warfighting capability.'" Only ProSight offered all those capabilities—and with them the potential to make the Army's operation more efficient — so ProSight became the worldwide enterprise standard for the Army Portfolio Management System (APMS), which Lt. Gen. Steven W. Boutelle, U.S. Army CIO, directed Army IT to embrace in April 2005.

When deployment is complete, capital planning, security management, proper categorization of funding, security and application rationalization and reporting will be part of the Army Portfolio Management Solution. Boiling it down to its barest bones, APMS will locate redundant or inefficient IT systems so IT leaders can decide whether to remove

Business Goals

Goal #1: Enable leadership's ability to rationalize and manage their IT budgets

Goal #2: Gain cross-cutting organizational decision-making and strategic planning through a holistic visibility of IT investments relative to their benefit to the Enterprise

Goal #3: Governance Evolution within a Revolution

- Department of Defense directing a new governance structure
- IT Investments have "Owners" and "Functional" alignments
- IT investments linked to an enterprise capability

Goal #4: Maximize ROI for DoD & efficient use of taxpayer's dollars

or redeploy those systems. New systems that don't meet registration criteria won't receive funding.

Goals

When an organization as mammoth as the Army undertakes a project of this magnitude, its goals are both wide-ranging and specific. "Our main goal is more effective, rational IT investment decision-making," says Dickman. This includes the following steps:

- Identifying best practices
- Identifying redundancies and inefficiencies within the IT infrastructure
- Aligning the budget to new systems
- Giving the enterprise a view of IT systems' capabilities
- Granting senior leadership visibility on what they own and what it gets them for what they're paying for
- Aligning IT investments to the key mission objectives of the Army

One Step at a Time

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was the Pentagon. In the same vein, an implementation as ambitious as APMS doesn't come without hurdles. One of those hurdles was securing buy-in from the very beginning from senior leaders, financial managers, programmers and enterprise architecture leaders. "We had to make sure this wasn't something that was seen as the CIO's big idea that everybody else is going to have to live with; this was something that could collectively support an awful lot of processes within the Army," says Dickman. In early 2005 the Office of

The Army Portfolio Management Solution (using ProSight) unifies the Army's IT PFM strategy. Stakeholders' (bottom row of chart) data is channeled through the portfolio management framework for IT, FIMSA or Capital Planning. Transactions, services, and other processes flow through the framework, which also provides automated reporting tools under Department of Defense and Office of Management and Budget guidelines.

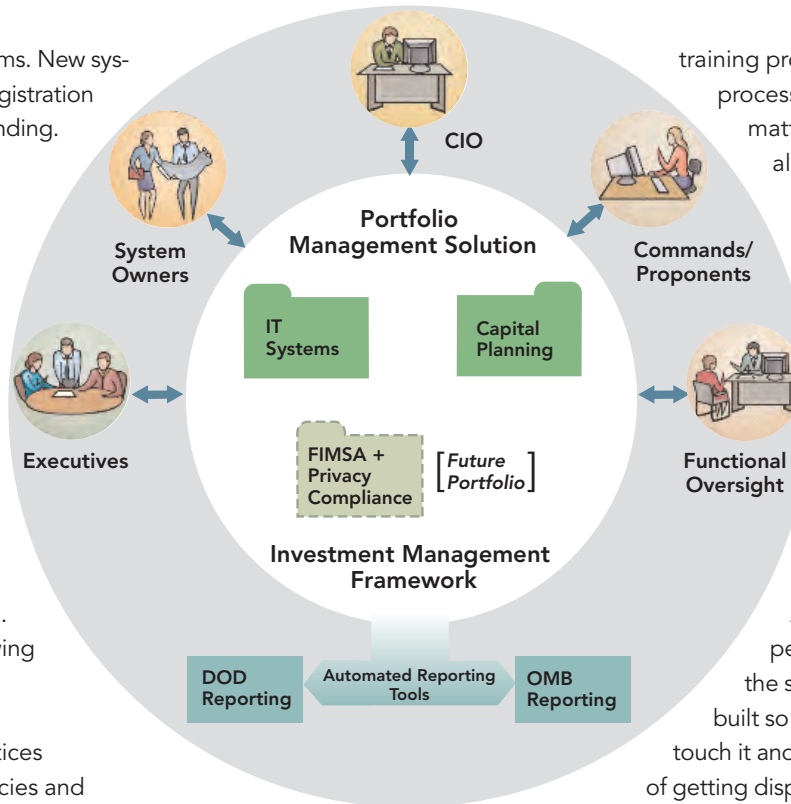
the CIO agreed on the principles that later became APMS. By May 2005 the Army was ready to sign the contract for the technology. While the contract was in the final stages of negotiation, the Army Office of the CIO worked on increasing awareness of portfolio management drivers and benefits for the Army. Then they held configuration and design conferences with representatives from across the Army. "We needed to make sure that the Army solution would be relevant at other levels within the Army command and staff structure," says Dickman. That process, which took about three months, evolved into the

training process. "It's a maturation process," says Dickman. "No matter where you are there's always someone who doesn't know what you're doing and why you're doing it."

"This was a massive marketing communications effort from day one, and it's still ongoing," says Christina Krishnan, who's also a Senior IT PFM Analyst for the Army. "We're briefing people constantly to share the successes we've already built so they can see it, feel it, touch it and understand the benefits

of getting disparate processes talking to each other." Four months after the beginning of the contract, ProSight had become the chief registry for IT systems in the Army — significantly faster than originally planned. The first 12 months have comprised awareness, training and initial use and reporting. After the six-month point, says Dickman, the Army began to see increased use and confidence by the user community. Going forward the goal will be to make maximum use of the application and the increasingly connected user community.

In the Army, when a General tells you to embrace a technology implementation, chances are you're going to embrace it, and hard. In fact, one of the biggest challenges the Army had witnessed since the implementation is the opposite of nay saying or lackluster interest: something that Dickman calls "appetite suppressant." "Once you get a sniff of what this thing is all about you want it all and you want it fast," he says. As a result of the APMS's capabilities, those in charge of implementing it need to make sure



people are trained thoroughly enough to be effective users of the tool—no easy task, with users spread in every corner of the world.

APMS in Action

With APMS still in its infancy, the Army is already realizing some benefits of registering and standardizing IT systems and processes. Having never performed an objective analysis of its IT inventory before, they're learning just how many inefficiencies are hiding beneath the surface. "People are saying, 'I don't need this system—that work is already being done by this system over here,'" says Dickman.

Before implementing APMS, to be sure, the Army had a process in place for managing and tracking IT investments. But it wasn't as stringent and as closely tied to the overall strategy as it is now, and it wasn't married to the overall missions and objectives. If a command wanted to procure a new IT system or investment, the person in charge of IT purchasing for the command would seek funding from the old registry, or look for funding from an outside source. With no mandate to register each system in a central location, it was entirely possible that

the higher-ups in the Army's command would never learn of the purchase, and there was no way to make sure the purchase wasn't redundant.

With APMS in place, any new IT investment needs to be registered with 14 key elements of information. Among them: what the prospective purchaser's role is, what the system does, what's its particular capabilities are and how it aligns with the overall IT objectives. That request goes to the command's senior administrator; if that person agrees with the necessity for the new system, the request then goes to the Army, where the domain and mission areas review it and determine that the system is not only functional and aligned to a specific capability but that its job isn't being performed by another system. From there it goes to the office of the CIO, which grants or denies permission for the system. At that point the original requester registers other key information about the system like security and cost. "Now the Army knows where it is, how we're going to fund it, all of its key security aspects, and we can begin to monitor it," says Dickman.

It's difficult to overestimate the potential effect APMS will have on the way

the Army works. "In essence what we've done is institutionalize the knowledge base of the Army," says Krishnan. Any level within the Army now has a view into the functional capability of existing systems and can potentially piggyback on existing systems before asking for new ones.

Going forward at the Army has its work cut out. The first piece, says Dickman, is seeking true validity of the data residing in existing IT systems. At the same time, IT will seek to tighten and refine its views of what the Army owns, allowing it to trim redundancies and streamline ways of doing business. Pretty soon, when an Army IT worker transfers from Germany to Washington the systems and processes will be same in both places. "We'll be able to truly show the capability provided to the warfighter and the risks that the warfighter might assume if we don't have that capability," says Dickman.

At the command level the benefits will be no less impressive. "If I'm in Ft. Riley, Kansas, and I'm getting ready to deploy a unit to Operation Iraqi Freedom, [I'll be able to see] what it costs me to do that, IT-wise," says Dickman. The result: a more forward-looking process in the way the Army goes about its day-to-day business.

APMS, like any other living, organic organism, needs time to grow and mature. But the Army feels confident it's on the right path, and that path is one that more and more enterprises will likely be looking to tread once they realize the cost of *not* treading it. "The stakes are extremely high," says Gartner's Buchanan. With a robust APMS solution, organizations can tilt the odds in their favor by rationalizing their IT portfolio to reap the benefits of standardization. ■

The Results: A Snapshot

- **Transparency** – enterprise investments
- **Transforming the U.S. Army**, with portfolio management as the catalyst
- **Centralized system of record** – gotten away from spreadsheet-centric
- **Replaced** expensive custom-built system with COTS product
- **World-wide collaboration** via web-based access to ProSight Portfolios
- **Automates** required external reporting
- **Rationalized** over 2,500 systems with eye towards over 6,000 by year's end