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Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6)

Communication Plan

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has directed the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to transition its backbone network from IPv4 to IPv6 by June 2008. In implementing this project, a variety of entities will be involved including VA internal stakeholders, other federal agencies, and vendors. This document outlines the various means of communication for the duration of the project.

2 PURPOSE

Clear and consistent communication is essential to the success of any project. The IPv6 Communication Plan describes how the VA will communicate with stakeholders, external federal agencies, and vendors for the duration of the IPv6 transition project. This plan ensures that the IPv6 Project comprises the methods, means and frequencies of communication are clearly defined.

The purpose of the Communication Plan is to:

- identify and describe all project stakeholders
- describe the communication needs of the project stakeholders
- define how project stakeholders will be kept informed about the project
- identify the communication paths within the Office of Veteran's Affairs (VA)
- ensure all information is consistent, accurate, and timely

A variety of methods will be used to communicate with project stakeholders. Common methods include status reports, correspondence, meetings, and formal presentations. In addition, several tools are being used to encourage collaboration across the teams. This plan describes the reasons and the methods used to communicate with all stakeholders involved with the IPv6 project as displayed in *Table 1 - Reason for Communication and Method Employed*.

Reasons / Methods	Status Updates	Education	Information	Resource Allocation
Meetings				
Meetings	X	X	X	X
Conference Calls	X		X	X
Conferences		X	X	
Workshops		X	X	
Status Reports				
VA Status Reports	X		X	X
OMB Milestones	X		X	

Reasons / Methods	Status Updates	Education	Information	Resource Allocation
Project Documents				
Impact Analysis			X	
Transition Plan			X	X
Test Plan			X	X
Training Plan		X	X	X
Security Plan			X	
Issues Log	X		X	
Project Schedule (Sequencing Plan)			X	X
Collaboration Tools				
SharePoint	X		X	
Groove	X		X	
Information & Training				
Vendor Briefings		X	X	
Video Orientation				
Reference & Technical Data			X	
VA Technical Training		X	X	
Presentations & Briefings	X		X	
Policies & Memos			X	
Email	X		X	
Intranet Site	X		X	
Formal Presentations	X	X	X	

Table 1 - ***Reason for Communication and Method Employed***

3 COMMUNICATION METHODS

This section identifies and defines the various communications methods that will be used throughout the IPv6 Transition project. Since the IPv6 transition requires specific technical background and knowledge, dissemination of technical information through both formal and informal methods is also included in the communication plan.

3.1 Meetings

Meetings & Conference Calls

Regularly scheduled meetings are held between the Transition Office, the Steering Committee, and the technical working groups. Since many of the stakeholders and members of the working groups are not located at Central Office, most meetings are

held via conference call. The purpose of these meetings is to communicate project progress, identify and track issues, and to discuss technical solutions.

In addition to the scheduled meetings, ad hoc meetings may be scheduled with individuals or small groups to discuss specific topics or resolve issues that have been raised in the larger forums. Status and results of off-line meetings should be reported back to the main body. Ad hoc meetings may be held either face-to-face or via conference call.

Conferences

Large, face-to-face meetings, or conferences, may be held infrequently and will focus on high level project scope, progress, schedules, and issues. Conferences will also give the IPv6 working group participants an opportunity to informally discuss IPv6 concerns and share information.

Additionally, members of the working groups are encouraged to attend conferences and meetings held by both governmental and commercial entities.

Workshops

Workshops may be held to focus on a single topic such as addressing or security. Small groups of dedicated participants from affected areas in the VA would meet to concentrate on a specific topic or problem, brainstorm ideas, and ultimate propose a solution or approach. Subject matter experts in these fields are contracted to lead and facilitate these efforts

3.2 Status Reports

Status Reports

Project status will be reported at the regular meetings of the Steering Committee and the individual working groups.

OMB Milestones

In collaboration with the VA Enterprise Architecture (EA) organization, IPv6 milestones and progress toward meeting the milestones will be reported as a part of the EA quarterly submission.

3.3 Project Documents

A number of documents will be produced to communicate transition information to project stakeholders. The documents include:

Impact Analysis

The impact analysis identifies the estimated costs and outlines the project risks associated with making the VA backbone IPv6 capable. Several areas were identified and rated from non-critical to critical status. Mitigation strategies have been put in place to counteract risks.

Transition Plan

The transition plan defines the project scope, governance structure, technical strategy, requirements, acquisition and procurement, deployment and implementation approach. The training plan and security plan may be included in the body of the transition plan.

Test Plan

The test plan defines the testing approach, types of testing to be performed, test environment requirements, test scenarios and scripts. Pilots will be carried out as part as the IPv6 transition. Lessons learned will be acquired and implemented as we move forward with network deployment

Training Plan

The training plan is a part of the Transition Plan and defines the training approach and activities, types of training to be provided and the training resources needed.

Security Plan

The security plan will validate the security integrity of the network throughout the transition. Rules and policies will be implemented in the gateways as a primary mean to control the transit of IPv6 packets.

Issues Log

The issues log is an account of issues and resolutions presented by the steering committee and the working groups. These are discussed at each working group meeting and updates are made where appropriate.

Project Schedule (Sequencing Plan)

The schedule shows a breakdown of the project tasks, timeframes, and resources assigned to each task. The schedule is updated periodically to reflect additional detail and task completion percentages as well as milestones and deliverables.

3.4 Collaboration Tools

Several tools are currently in use or are being proposed to assist the IPv6 transition project team in communicating and sharing information.

SharePoint

SharePoint is a Portal that gives individuals with proper permission access to a large variety of IPv6 and transition related information. The VA IPv6 the SharePoint portal is being used to house IPv6 reference material from both VA and external sources, meeting minutes, final versions of project documents, meeting information, and relevant links

Groove

Groove has much the same functionality as SharePoint and is being used to share documents that are under development by the Transition Office. Groove has been requested as a tool for use by the technical working groups.

3.5 Information & Training

The VA will be using both formal and informal means update the staff about the upcoming impacts of the IPv6 transition.

Vendor Briefings

In order to encourage staff to become knowledgeable about IPv6, the VA intends to leverage its relationships with vendors such as Cisco and Sprint to provide high level technical briefings to interested technical staff.

Video Orientation

Many individuals, including those involved with acquisition and procurement will need to understand at a high level what IPv6 is, the requirements for new devices, and the impacts across the organization. A non-technical video will be produced to provide an overview of IPv6.

Reference & Technical Data

Much information about IPv6 is available on the web and at conferences that VA staff have attended. Links to informative and reliable web sites are disseminated throughout the IPv6 working groups. Internal documents, meeting minutes, reference materials from other agencies and PowerPoint presentations from conferences are posted on the SharePoint site.

Technical Training

Technical training is an essential aspect of IPv6 transition. Therefore, it will be provided to staff across the VA. To achieve successful IPv6 transition hands-on technical training will be available to those staff with an operational focus. At the managerial level, detailed training will be available, but without the hands-on component. A 'train-the-trainer' approach, which has worked successfully at the VA in the past, will be used.

3.6 Presentations & Briefings

Formal presentations may be made to audiences within the VA, other agencies, industry groups, and business partners. These presentations may include a discussion of the OMB mandate, benefits of IPv6 to the VA, the approach being taken by the VA, and the VA roadmap to IPv6 compliance.

Specific briefings to VA executive management are required to discuss the VA IPv6 status, progress, and milestones.

3.7 Policies & Memos

Official policies and memos will be used to communicate information to agency executives and staff. Topics that may prompt the use of these formal communications channels include, but are not limited to:

- Guidelines for IPv6 device connectivity
- IPv6 compliant procurement language

3.8 Email

E-mail is an indispensable method of quickly communicating with project stakeholders. It also allows the Project Managers to exchange various project documents electronically for review. Final versions of important documents may be followed up with an official hard-copy document.

3.9 Intranet Site

The OI&T Office of Telecommunications intranet site (currently being redesigned) contains high level information about IPv6, the project organization, and links to OMB deliverables.

4 PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Early in the project a steering committee was formed comprising representatives from affected areas throughout the agency. The Steering Committee established several technical working groups to leverage technical expertise from throughout the VA. These

working groups, along with the transition office, comprise the core of the project. The stakeholders are described below:

Stakeholder	Roles & Responsibilities of Stakeholder	Vested Interest	Expectations
IPV6 Project Manager	IPv6 Project Manager • Manage the overall project • Ensure timely completion of deliverables • Coordinate and direct project activities • Effective management of project resources • Ensure project stakeholders are kept well informed • Maintain focus on customer service • Follow PMM as it applies to this project	• The project is well managed • All customer requirements are communicated and captured efficiently • Information flows easily among project stakeholders • Customer expectations are well met	• Adequate funding is available • Adequate project resources are available • Customers are satisfied • Project Team members participate when needed • Project Team members contribute to the flow of project information
IPv6 Steering Committee	Executive Oversight • Sets policy and exercises final authority over project • Ensures agency strategies and standards are adhered to • Reviews and approves any project documents brought before them	• Adequate resources are available for the project • Effective project management	• The Project Manager adheres to the agency's Project Management Methodology (PMM) • Receipt of progress reports on a regular basis • Timely notification/resolution of issues • Project is on time and within budget
IPv6 Transition Working Groups (Transition, Registry, Training)	IPv6 Technical Management • Communicate weekly with the Executive Steering Committee • Ensure adherence to OIT policies & procedures • Effective utilization of resources • Maintain focus on customer service	• Customer expectations are met • Project goals & objectives support division strategic plan • Project meets agency's goals & objectives for Web services	• Resources are effectively utilized • Receipt of progress reports on a regular basis • Adherence to the VA Project Management Methodology (PMM) • Timely notification of issues • Project is completed on time and within budget

Stakeholder	Roles & Responsibilities of Stakeholder	Vested Interest	Expectations
VA Network Operations Support	Technical Support • Provide technical input to the Statement of Requirements • Provide technical support for infrastructure • Support the VA network infrastructure • Communicate with Project Manager as necessary	• IPv6 properly implemented and is compatible with existing VA systems and infrastructure. • The IPv6 related hardware is correctly installed.	• Hardware and software conform to agency standards • Ensure that transition will not adversely affect VA operations

Table 2 - IPv6 Stakeholders

5. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activities will be scheduled and disseminated to stakeholders throughout the transition process. Active participation is essential to the success of the project. The following table represents some of the on-going activities.

Activities	Completion
Initial IPv6 letter from CIO in October 2005	October 2005
Establishment of Steering Committee and subsequent formulation of working groups (Transition, Training, Registry, Enterprise Strategy)	October 2005
Regularly scheduled and documents meetings of Steering Committee and working groups	On-going
Orientation Video for general audience (VA wide)	January 2006
IPv6 Briefing by key vendors (Cisco, Sprint) – available to IPv6 team members either in person or via vide/audio conference	September 24, 2006
2 day IPv6 Working Group meeting (training, planning, issue resolution)	January 2006
Week long IPv6 Addressing Workshop (training, hands-on sessions to develop the VA addressing plan, management review)	November 28 – December 1, 2006
Quarterly SMC briefing	Quarterly
2006 Letter of Appreciation to all IPv6 participants	October 2006

5 STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY PARTICIPANTS

Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
Veterans Affairs, Central Office (VACO)
Office of information and Technology
Office of Policy, Planning and Preparedness

Dave Cheplick, Director, Office of Telecommunications, OI & T
Steve Pirzchalski, Steering Committee Chair
Wes Crum, Transition Working Group Chair
John Deltognoarmanasco, Registry Working Group Chair
Sue Hotzler, Training Working Group Co-Chair
Rick Shew, Training Working Group Co-Chair
Michael Adams, Information Technology Specialist, VACO
David Bradley, Technical Advisor, VHA
Hal Haislip, Supervisor, WAN Management
Ann Margaret Howard, CDN Implementation Director, EES
Eric Jurasas, National Administrator, Active Directory and DNS
Steven Kish, Information Security Officer
Sandra Lampo, VHA
Anamaria Matos, Information Technology Specialist, OCIS
Al Zuech, Director, Enterprise Architecture