USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

OCIO CHRONICLES

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OCIO GOALS FOR USAID

- **Information on Demand**
- **Innovation and Process Efficiency**
- **Effective and Efficient IT Service**
- **Enhanced Workforce Management**

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Google Updates!

This summer has proven to be an exciting time of change and transition for the Office of the CIO. On May 2nd Google Apps Collaboration Tools and Services was deployed to the entire agency as boundaries of geography were broken down and brought our agency closer together. Thanks to the deployment of Google Apps, users in Nairobi are now free to collaborate with their colleagues across the room and across the Atlantic from their desk or their local Internet Café. Google Docs allows users to easily create, share and edit documents, presentations, spreadsheets online. Collaborating further with Google Sites allows users to create, update and share their Google Docs on their own team website while exchanging thoughts and ideas via GChat. Users are discovering new ways to use Google Apps to come together with their colleagues.

On June 20th Google Messaging (Gmail, Calendar and Contacts) was deployed to the Office of the CIO to begin taking full advantage of combining Google Apps Tools with Google Messaging Services. To assist in the transition, training was provided through many venues to aid our users on the road to change. Through informal Brownbag Workshops, formal CIO training and personal support from the Google Team, users were provided the means to take advantage of the new tools and services afforded by the Google collaborative suite.

The Office of the CIO continues to move forward with Jerry Horton's vision of bringing collaborative services to USAID to empower our colleagues to work from anywhere at any time. We are striving to help take technology out of the missions and into the field. Our next step is piloting Google Messaging Services at the following missions; Lima, San Salvador, Guatemala, Kabul and Nairobi. The OCIO is very excited to continue to bring the rest of the agency to Google and are working hard to achieve our vision of one united USAID.

Bits and Bites: An OCIO Blog

The Bits and Bites blog continues to provide you with up-to-date information about what's going on at the CIO. Our conversations carry on each month about IT Strategies, policies and guidance.

You can reach us at:

http://blogs.usaid.gov/bitsandbites/2011/03/22/welcome-to-bits-and bites/.

Come check it out!

Browsing AIDNet

Google Chrome

In 2010, the CIO took action to permit the use of Mozilla Firefox on Agency workstations, giving users a choice of Internet browsers, after many years of only allowing the use of Microsoft Internet Explorer (or IE, as it is commonly called). Since then, the USAID CM Manger has been responding to questions about how and when these browsers can be used, as well as requests to add another popular browser, Google Chrome.

At this time, use of the Chrome browser is restricted to specific CIO-approved evaluation environments. That restriction has led to some frustration for those who use Chrome on their home computers and are eager to use it on AIDNet. As a reminder, users are prohibited from downloading Chrome to their workstations. However, testing is now underway to deploy a centrally managed version of it, Google Chrome for Business, to all Agency workstations later this year.

For the most part, these three browsers, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, and Google Chrome perform similarly when accessing most web sites, but each will prove to have its own strengths and weaknesses. Users who prefer the high level of customization available in Firefox can choose that browser for web browsing tasks, but at least in the short term, most of our "corporate" applications, such as Phoenix and GLAAS, as well as E2 Travel, WebTA, eRoom, ASIST, etc. are only certified to work within Microsoft Internet Explorer. For that reason, users should click the desktop "shortcut" icons to access these applications, rather than trying to initiate them from within an already-open browser window. The desktop icons are programmed to automatically start the most appropriate browser for the selected application.

Our impetus for adding Chrome as yet another browser comes from our recent experience piloting the Google Apps and Google Mail applications. These products are envisioned as a more economical alternative to the existing Microsoft Office and Microsoft Outlook software; since Chrome is a Google product, it will provide additional services when used with Google Mail. The current recommended browser for use with Google Apps and Google Mail is Mozilla Firefox.

For now, the only browsers that are approved for general use are Microsoft Internet Explorer version 7 and Mozilla Firefox version 3.6. If there are any other browsers (or other versions of those browsers) present on your desktop, contact the Helpdesk to have the outdated or nonconforming browser removed. Once Chrome is fully deployed and all corporate applications are retooled to be "browser agnostic," users will have the flexibility of selecting the best suited web browser for each work task.

Please contact the USAID CM Manager, Steve Polkinghorn, if you have any questions about the current or future use of browsers on AIDNet.

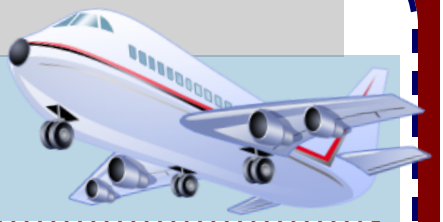
CIO Helpdesk Improvements

The CIO helpdesk has made some improvements over the past couple of months on how to make incoming calls more efficient. Based on a review of work flow and process that was performed it has resulted in an improved streamline process with a re-alignment of support personnel. The agency staff will notice a live person is now answering the phone more often and can answer questions with just one call.

The Help Desk contact information is:

Main phone number, 202-712-1234 or people can dial extension 21234 for folks in RRB, SA44, PY2. The email address is CIO-Helpdesk@usaid.gov.

Worldwide Deployment of E2i is Happening!



We have started worldwide deployment of the E2 Interface (E2i) with Phoenix for "Travel Authorization, Travel Voucher and Open Authorization".

This new interface offers many advantages:

- It allows simpler, faster voucher processing.
- It prevents duplicate entry of information in E2 and Phoenix, thus permitting fewer errors.
- It automatically liquidates and closes outstanding advances when a travel voucher is submitted.
- It automatically obtains updated vendor bank information.
- It automatically delivers data to Phoenix

The following benefits are coming soon:

- Certifying officers will approve vouchers in both systems at the same time, thus saving them time by only needing to approve vouchers in a single system.
- Users will be able to see error messages immediately.
- Users will no longer need to manually create invoice documents, print vouchers or scan documents into the ASIST filing system. These improvements will reduce workflow steps and save resources, since each voucher will be found in E2.

Some tips for those who use E2:

- New users, have confidence in the interface! The more you work with it the more you will realize the benefits of its new functions.
- Travelers:
  - ◊ To avoid voucher rejections and amendments to travel authorizations, budget your trip with sufficient funds to cover all expenses.
  - ◊ Be very precise in selecting disbursing information type. E2i will automatically send your travel reimbursements based on that selection, so if an improper address code is selected, the payment will get rejected or sent to another bank.

Worldwide deployment of the new interface will take place on a phased basis. Agency rollout began with select missions that use Open Authorization (also known as blanket travel authorization) on July 19, 2011. USAID/Washington will begin using E2i in October, and rollout to the remaining missions will take place from November 2011 through February 2012. All missions are scheduled to go live on E2i from mid-July to September 2011.

The E2i deployment schedule and other E2i information can be found on the E2 website at: http://inside.usaid.gov/M/AS/TT/e2/e2i_schedule.html.

Please contact Hung Vu (M/CIO/BSE), E2i Project Manager, at hvu@usaid.gov for more information.

Increased Use of Virtualization: OCIO Moving to a new Telecommunications Operations Center

A project to move the Telecommunications Operations Center (TCOC) in Ronald Reagan Building (RRB) to a Managed Data Center (Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) provider) is currently under way. The current phase of the project, which will run from mid-July to late August, includes designing the migration strategy for the network infrastructure, support servers, Pre-production Lab (PPL), the CISO Lab and corporate application servers. (OCIO will not start any cutover activities before October 15 to mitigate any impact to year-end financial work.) The project scope also includes defining the TCOC services and resources that will be virtualized at the new managed Data Center. The new data center for the TCOC is expected to be at the Terremark facility in Miami, FL.

The move to this new IaaS Managed Data Center provider will provide OCIO great benefits. It will reduce our data center footprint, including space, energy, hardware, software and support; reduce our long-term cost of providing IT services and shift our IT investments to more efficient computing platforms and technologies; reduce our long-term infrastructure support costs; and improve the performance, reliability and availability of shared services.

New Phone System for RRB

This coming fall, the CIO will be replacing the 14 year old phone system in the Ronald Reagan Building. All the phone sets will be replaced with Cisco sets such as the one shown here. The change will not require RRB staff to change their phone number.

The new Cisco phone system will be merged with our other agency buildings to create an integrated Cisco phone system for all of USAID/W. The new phones will have new features that have access to an USAID/W directory, log of calls, and remote forwarding of your phone. In addition, the system will have valuable management features that will simplify support and improve management of a phone system.

The system also supports “hoteling” in which a person can go to a vacant desk, log into that particular phone, and immediately have his/her individual settings (phone number, voicemail light, etc.) activate on the phone. The system also has other mobility features that will help telecommuters.

TechStat 2011 Now Playing in your Neighborhood!

The US Office of Management and Budget recently provided the following statement to Federal agencies and the public:

"In December of 2010, the Federal CIO launched a 25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal IT that called CIOs to stand up the "TechStat" model at the departmental level by March 2011, and at the bureau level within 18 months, in order to turn-around or terminate at least one-third of poorly performing projects in their portfolio. As the IT Dashboard continues to provide unprecedented insight into Federal IT investment performance, agency TechStat sessions allow us to take action and turn around these poorly performing programs across the government."

Flickr Photo: brothergrimm

What is TechStat?

- A face-to-face, evidence-based accountability reviews of IT programs
- A forum for identifying lessons learned to better manage Federal IT investments

What does TechStat offer?

- Concrete actions to address weaknesses
- Reductions in wasteful spending by turning around troubled programs and terminating failed programs sooner

If you're a Project Manager (PM) and not already an expert in TechStat, most likely you will be soon. USAID has been developing its version of the TechStat process and has applied it to two projects already. In both cases, the outcome of the TechStat reviews (which could have included advising USAID to halt the investment; to continue with the investment with modifications; or to continue the investment with minor corrective actions) resulted in identifying corrective action that the PMs were able to implement effectively and in a timely manner.

Although we have conducted a few TechStat Sessions, the TechStat process will continue to mature and change based on lessons learned. For example, the process to recognize a project as a TechStat candidate depends on data supplied by the Project Management Office (PMO). Two critical data sources that will be used -- once they have been completely designed and approved -- include the PMO Weekly Status report and the PMO Status Assessment.

The PMO Weekly Status report summarizes a project's health on a weekly basis. The report provides data on indicators such as the PM's rating of project progress, as well as data on the project's compliance with schedule, cost, and risk baselines established either before the project began or early in its lifecycle. The PMO Status Assessment is a more detailed compilation of schedule, cost, acquisition, risk, earned-value, milestones, and performances data. Formats for both of these reports are in development and will be rolled out soon.

How does a project become a candidate for TechStat?

The current "triggers" for identifying a project that should be reviewed by the TechStat process include:

- When the project scope changes and change requests (CR) are not being implemented
- For EVM projects, when over a period of one quarter (3 months), the project is 5% above or below the baselined cost or schedule performance
- If the PM rates a project as "yellow", meaning that is at moderate risk, based on the PMO Status Assessment
- If the PMO Weekly Status report status declines in two or more areas (e.g., cost, schedule, technical performance), moving the risk level from yellow to red (serious risk of project failure)
- When critical resources change, such when a new PM, team lead, SME, etc. is assigned to the project
- A combination of issues that on their own would not trigger any action, but collectively indicate a review may be warranted. For example, a project that has problems with test procedures, inadequate or incomplete test cases, missing work packages as defined by the WBS, and insufficient design documents would likely be a candidate for a TechStat review, even if all cost and schedule requirements are otherwise met.

Of course, meeting some or all of these criteria does not automatically select your project for a TechStat review. The TechStat Team (a subcomponent of the IT Governance Team) will gather data and engage key project and OCIO resources before determining whether to conduct a TechStat Session on any project.

So get ready, be engaged, and help us make your project successful when we visit your neighborhood!