



Photo courtesy of US Army.

Knowledge is power

The military is moving further towards a network centric approach everyday. An interesting programme that is being driven by the US Defense Information Systems Agency is NCES. GMC learns more about it.

For all of those involved in the defence department of any country, access to information is probably the most important requirement. Without it, decisions cannot be made on many different levels. The US Department of Defense is attempting to truly drag information sharing into the 21st Century with a global network of information entitled Net-Centric Enterprise Services or NCES. The programme has been created in order to promote information sharing by connecting people and systems to those who require that information. It seems to be such a simple idea but this will help to create better access to information and also to help encourage better decision-making within the DoD itself putting the department at a great strategic advantage.

Deployment begins

In June, an important benchmark was reached when the NCES programme successfully achieved a critical acquisition milestone, Milestone C. In the Acquisition Decision Memorandum dated June 13, 2008, the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) was granted

the authority to enter the production and deployment phase of Increment One of the NCES program. DISA is a combat support agency for the Department of Defense and provides real-time information technology (IT) and communications support to the president, vice president, secretary of defense, the military services, and all combatant commands.

Air Force Lt. General Charles E. Croom, Jr., Director of DISA remarked: "The capabilities enabling information sharing provided by the NCES programme are central to allowing our warfighters and those who support them to better share information for mission success. I'm proud of our DISA professionals who made this happen."

NCES allows users to get more information, more quickly, and with a smaller footprint. It provides collaboration in real-time voice, text, and video sessions, provides the whole organization access to shared/stored data, and uses an efficient service-oriented architecture (SOA). This allows NCES services such as security applications to be distributed over a network and then combined and re-used to create business applications that communicate and coordi-



CSC Selects BEA To Help Build Service-Oriented Architecture Foundation For Department of Defense Net-Centric Enterprises Services

BEA Systems was selected by Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) to join the solution delivery team for the Defense Information Systems Agency's (DISA) Service-Oriented Architecture Foundation (SOAF) programme. CSC, in partnership with BEA, Raytheon, and Sun Microsystems, was awarded the SOAF contract under the US Army's ITES-2S contract to support the Net-Centric Enterprise Services (NCES) program. CSC estimates the value of the task order, which has two base years and five one-year options, to be in excess of \$89 million if all options are exercised. The value of this agreement is included under the U.S. Army Information Technology Enterprise Solutions-2 Services contract, which CSC originally announced on July 31, 2006.

The NCES programme is designed to deliver SOA foundational services to Defense Department Services, Agencies and Combatant Commanders at all echelons. These services include service discovery, enterprise service management, machine-to-machine messaging and mediation. The agreement calls for the CSC team to deploy an SOA solution built using BEA's WebLogic® and BEA's AquaLogic® products and for the SOA solution to be made available worldwide via DISA's Defense Enterprise Computing Centres (DECCs). Both classified and unclassified production environments are to be supported and CSC is to provide these SOA capabilities as a managed service to all Defense Department entities.

"BEA is excited about this opportunity to demonstrate our expertise in enterprise infrastructure technology by helping provide critical components required by the Department of Defense as they move forward with their transformation efforts," said Joe Dvornicky, Vice President and General Manager of Government at BEA Systems. "CSC is a highly valued partner for our commercial and government business worldwide and our gratitude extends to CSC's ability for building a strong and innovative team that made this opportunity possible."

Under the agreement, the CSC team will implement the four SOA foundational services based on a combination of BEA WebLogic® and AquaLogic® products and the award-winning BEA AquaLogic® Service Bus will be deployed in the SOA Foundation as a comprehensive, light-weight SOA backbone and has been designed to help organizations create configuration-driven and reusable service components, service enable existing legacy applications and quickly build new SOA-based applications for improving enterprise agility.

nate efficiently with each other. This has great potential in solving difficult, expensive and time-consuming problems in military command, control and planning.

"Milestone C is a key step forward in the Defense Department's strategy to deliver core information-sharing services on the Department's networks not unlike those available on the Internet," explained Denise Gentile, NCES Programme Manager. The milestone decision was based on NCES successfully achieving all required criteria, including early user testing and evaluation, as well as successful operational assessment of managed service providers." NCES is already enabling warfighters, defence intelligence professionals, and department business organisations to effectively realise and employ the power of information sharing to support national objectives," Gentile said. "Reaching Milestone C allows DISA to expand NCES offerings even more."

NCES: the different pieces

So how will this programme work? The NCES will provide a secure, collaborative information sharing environment and unprecedented access to decision quality information. NCES will enable decision-making superiority that results in increased mission effectiveness. It is based upon a concept in the DOD called "Net-Centricity," which we at Global Military Communications are becoming increasingly aware of and it enables systems to provide the right information to the right person at the right time.

NCES will support new capabilities in all DOD domains, bringing together Internet technology with the power of the DoD. NCES enables the creation of a marketplace of information sources and services - a virtual "PX" for Defense information. It represents a different approach for DOD: market-based, enterprise-wide and joint by design. NCES customers are the Warfighter, Intelligence and Business domains - anyone within the DOD environment that needs to share and retrieve information.

The NCES programme provides four product lines:

- **Enterprise Service-Oriented Architecture Foundation.** This Enables DOD transformation by providing the core infrastructure that supports: information discovery, data and application interoperability, secure collaboration, assessment of service and

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data utilisation, reduced complexity of DOD's information technology environment, reuse of existing information technology capabilities.

- **DOD Enterprise Collaboration.** Provides collaboration and messaging services such as white board sessions, conferencing sessions, messaging and a variety of collaboration tools.
- **Content Discovery & Delivery.** Supports information advertisement, discovery and efficient delivery.
- **Defense Online Portal.** The Defense Online Portal product line provides personalised, user-defined, web-based presentation that allows for secure access to various enterprise services, including retrieval and posting of information, collaboration tools, instant messaging, and workgroups.

Each product line represents a "bundle" of related functionalities that can be leveraged throughout the DOD Global Information Grid to prevent the need to build similar or identical functionality.

NCES will eventually support the Global Information Grid and will provide greater situational awareness to all those who have access to it. In fact, the NCES really does define what net-centricity is all about. It is about the user being able to access the information they need easily and quickly to equip them with critical facts in order for them to make a decision. It is important that the service architecture is flexible so that the system may be augmented as and when necessary and these are the crucial elements that NCES will deliver to the Department of Defense. ■