

EIS Brings Velocity to the Digital Aerospace Project

by Wendy O'Dea
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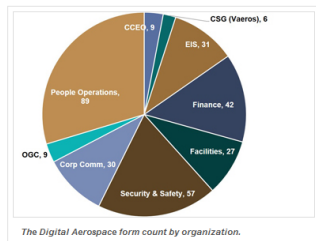
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With a goal of increasing the velocity of business processes, Enterprise Information Services (EIS) has been making steady progress toward digitizing a number of Aerospace's most-used forms. The project is known as Digital Aerospace. It kicked off in March and is expected to continue through FY18.

"Ultimately, we're trying to improve business process consistency, modernize the user experience, and encourage more innovation," said Jennifer Halford, director of the EIS Applications Development Department (App-Dev) and lead for the project. "The goal is to reduce the pain points for both our employees and customers through automation, streamlining, and eliminating the corporations 300-plus paper forms."

Because digital processes can access data sources from around the company, they can eliminate time-consuming and error-prone duplicate data entry. How many times have you had to fill out your mail stop or cost center on a paper form? In a digital process, those can be pulled automatically from Aerospace's identity databases. In addition, digital processes are easier to measure and improve – when data is collected digitally, reporting tools can provide much more insight into the business process and where optimizations might be made.

In June, EIS rolled out the first version of the Electronic Procurement Information Center. This tool eliminates the need to maintain unwieldy procurement binders of information about each contract, and enables improved information sharing among buyers. In the first two weeks of operation, more than 136 electronic binders were created, with 33 now complete.



In July, EIS digitized the process for requesting and approving Extended Work Week (EWW) authorization. This process is used by hundreds of employees and managers every year. Other automated business processes include Direct Deposit for Employee Business Expense Reimbursements and service requests for the creation of new intranet websites and databases. These processes are accessible via the Workspace application, and more forms and business process endpoints will be made available through this portal as they are developed.

The velocity of these efforts has been increased by the teams' adoption of agile methods. In particular, development and analysis teams have adopted the Scrum framework, which is a specific agile approach for improving team effectiveness. This has helped improve EIS's ability to prioritize and visualize the extensive

backlog of work for this broadly-scoped project. Due to strong interest from around the company, Halford will present an EIS forum in the fall on agile methods that will be open to the entire company.

"We've changed the way we work from project-based teams to standing teams," Halford said. "Teams used to be assigned to specific projects, whereas we now have standing cross-functional teams organized around skill-sets, where each team can support multiple projects. This helps optimize our work." Ten teams have gone through this agile transformation, with more scheduled for sessions in future months.

Business analysts are a key part of the Digital Aerospace team. These individuals meet with the customer, determine what is needed and translate those needs back to the developers working on that specific team. One part of the strategy is to assign business analysts to specific business units, so those analysts can build long-term relationships and domain understanding within those units.

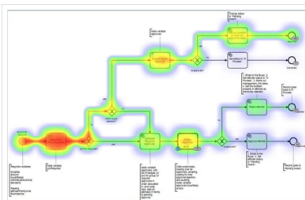
To improve efficiency in digitizing business processes, EIS invested in a new architecture based on an off-the-shelf, open-source-based workflow engine. Workflows in the tool are designed using industry-standard notations, and these can be designed and modified by both business analysts and software developers. The notations are graphical, so the workflow is modeled in a diagram showing the process steps and what occurs at each step (such as a review or an approval). Because the engine is an integral software component, changes to the workflows change how the application operates. "That's a game-changer for us," Halford said, "when a business process changes, rather than change all the code, we just need to change the diagram."

Prioritizing the forms and business processes has been a challenge. In general, the highest-priority processes are the ones that have the greatest impact on the most people. Available development resources, complexity of the process, and other factors also impact the decisions. Processes currently in work include foreign travel and contact reporting, food and beverage service orders, different types of cost transfers, vanpool/mass transit forms, and the telecommuting memorandum of understanding.

"We call Digital Aerospace a collection of projects," Halford added. "Some of these are outsourced to vendors with the remainder being developed in house by our creatively named teams." After being encouraged to name themselves, App-Dev teams now include Deadpool, Hydra, Viper, Inferno, Falcon, SHIELD and Rocket. The business analyst team is "Team Fierce." No explanation necessary.



Some members of EIS's Team Fierce: (Front Row) Ella Johnson, Jennifer Halford, Stephanie Charonault, and Ginni Machamer. (Back Row) Kelly Lynch, Aditi Crosby, and Satish More. (Photo: Eric Hamburg)



A heatmap, generated via EPIC, provides data used for process improvements

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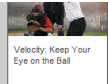
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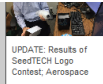




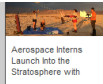
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