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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Information Technology

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FROM:

[Redacted]

Director of Communications

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SUBJECT: Strategic Plan for Information Handling

[Redacted]

REFERENCE:

DA Strategic Plan for Information Handling
(DRAFT)

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As requested by members of your staff, the Office of Communications reviewed the Draft Strategic Plan for Information Handling and has provided our comments and suggested revisions. These comments/suggestions address both the general structure and those stated goals particularly relevant to the Office of Communications (please see the attachment). Putting together a Strategic Plan is an arduous task and your staff's initial draft was a good effort in attempting to bring the entire Directorate's Information Handling goals and plans into focus for the nineties. If you have any questions or if we may be of any assistance, please call

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Attachment

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SECRET COMMENTS ON DA'S STRATEGIC PLAN FOR INFORMATION HANDLING

I. General Structure

a. The goals set forth suggest an implementation independent of Information Management Staff's (IMS) and other Directorates' coordination. Therefore, suggest that those goals which relate to the DO and other customers be written reflecting their requirements and in conjunction with their authority for establishing information handling policy. For example, Worldwide Universal Access, Records Management, Electronic Mail goals, etc., should all should be written: "the DA, in conjunction with IMS will....."

b. There seems to be a mixture of apples and oranges in the establishment of Directorate's goals; e.g., those of a global/strategic nature: "Worldwide Universal Access", with those of a tactical nature: "Reliable Word Processing." This occurs repeatedly, e.g., Section VI Long Term Goals - "Secure Worldwide Multiple Access" and "get rid of remaining Delta Data terminals."

c. This plan seems to ignore a number of overseas aspects. The Information Handling (IH) requirement is certainly much broader in scope.

d. Four goals which need to be addressed or added are (1) providing a modern integrated telecommunications/ADP system (2) enhance responsiveness to meeting existing and new IH requirements, (3) database management, and (4) the establishment of practical qualities of service for all the information categories defined.

e. Goals should be put into their priority order and therefore believe a revised Enhanced Telecommunications Capability (Goal 12) should be moved to say Goal 2; e.g., it is more global in nature than many of the other stated goals and it provides the essential networking element for IH.

f. Worldwide Universal Access and Secure Access should be combined into one goal. This goal would include both secure and non-secure access. Current structure is ambiguous.

g. The 13 goals should track between the various sections. However, some track to non-sequiturs. For instance, in Section III, Goal 2 is secure information access through gateways. In Section V, this is interpreted as wanting to have fiberoptic links in 1993, and in Section VII to decentralized services, standard protocols and stand-alone PCs for commercial databases.

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h. Although "information" is defined to include "voice" in Section II, none of the 13 Strategic Plan goals relate to voice, Secure voice in particular. Currently there is a secure voice capability [redacted] By 1993 there should be well [redacted] with a secure voice capability. Hence, this plan should include overseas voice service.

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i. The workstation in the nineties is to include voice, data, images, etc. The present text describes a much more modest workstation and should be expanded or clarified.

j. The EXDIR's memo (paragraph six) requests that this Strategic plan identify: "how our existing communications systems are expected to fall short in providing the necessary connectivity and capacity within Headquarters, within the metropolitan area, and within the foreign and domestic field." This draft plan does not explicitly describe or address his request; it only implicitly describes shortfalls.

k. Once plan has been agreed to, the EXDIR, etc., have suggested that a senior group from the private sector review and comment. This outside review may be beneficial and, if desired, it needs to be incorporated into "how we get there." Further, Section VII seems to apply to V. Therefore, suggest revised order of VI and VII.

1. Of the stated goals, those especially relevant to OC are:

1. Worldwide universal access
2. Secure access
5. Interface standards
6. User friendly DA processes
10. Electronic mail
12. Enhanced telecommunications capabilities
13. Career management system for information technologists

II. Comments/Suggestions Associated with Relevant OC Goals

Goal 1: Worldwide Universal Access

Comment

General: This goal is interpreted mainly as the multiple terminal problem. This is certainly a key problem, but not the only one. A major issue, not given enough emphasis throughout the plan, is a universal networking design. In OC, this is primarily the packet network and interconnectivity of information services. In OIT, this concern tends to get lost on the "PBX is the solution to the networking" approach. This goal needs a broader emphasis.

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V: Why not note an objective of having access from overseas? This paragraph cites only domestic access being available.

VII: Mentions only the PBX solution. Nothing about networking.

Suggested Revision

IV: Add: ...Current network access is via an automatic message relay switch which has been principally designed to satisfy cable traffic requirements. Other desired services have to be manually set up. The MERCURY packet switch development is intended to improve circuit access for a variety of services and interactive transmissions.

V: Change: To provide some foreign and all domestic field and Metropolitan D.C.....

VII: Add: ...OC will install packet terminal equipment at all overseas field stations, upgrade the associated message relay equipment and develop enhancements to increase transmission speed/capacity.

Goal 2: Secure Access

Comment

V. "Having fiber optic transmission in Metropolitan Area" has little to say about secure access among computer systems.

VII: Says little or nothing about how to achieve secure access.

Suggested Revision

III. Revised: Secure information Access, through the use of protected gateways, to multiple domestic and foreign automated systems.

IV: Add: ...A number of special access systems have been deployed in the field for the DO, e.g., CRAFT, PIRATE, DESIST.

V and VII: Revision needed to reflect secure access theme, i.e., Pursuit of technology that will provide the control and protection of our information, etc.

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Goal 5: Interface Standards

Comments

General: The basic thrust is fine, although the emphasis is on compatibility "between systems" i.e., meaning between different hosts. Again, protocols at the network level also need to be emphasized. One of our biggest problems is satisfying the array of various Community formats. Community standardization would be most beneficial.

Suggested Revision

IV: Add: Network will utilize X.25 packet switching protocol for interactive data transmissions.

Goal 6: User Friendly Automated Methods

Comments

General: The seeming thrust of this point is administrative processes which support Agency components (payroll programs, logistics requisitioning process, etc.). The OC portions tend to describe systems rather than processes, and the OC information is repeated in Goal 12. Section VII reads as if it is system access goal, e.g., Goal 1.

VII: Goal 6 and Goal 12 have similar tasks. These should be in Goal 12.

Suggested Revision

IV: Revised "a": The Office of Communications, in conjunction with other offices, is reducing its dependence on paper and paper tape systems. In addition, the MERCURY Program will enhance overall network connectivity such that Headquarters services can be more easily distributed to the field.

VII: OC will continue to enhance network and interface capabilities to stay abreast of the demands for existing and new services.

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Goal 10: Electronic Mail

Comment

VI: By 1993, OC could be providing an initial electronic mail function for overseas stations. We will be providing it for OC Area headquarters before that time. In any case, to neglect to include electronic mail as something that the DA would like to provide overseas by 1993 seems overly conservative.

VII: The paragraph leaps from the notion of a separate electronic mail service to a notion of a paperless environment. Somewhat mixing apples and oranges.

Suggested Revision

VI: Electronic Mail in the domestic and foreign areas will continue to be expanded and enhanced to.....

Goal 12: Enhanced Telecommunications Capabilities

Comment

General: This is implicitly defined as transmission capacity and the OC portions address only transmission programs (HF, satellite, lease). For the information handling program, an equally more important aspect is the telecommunications network system's connectivity, i.e., the packet and circuit switched networks.

Suggested Revision

III. Revised: Enhanced Telecommunication capabilities to dynamically adapt its capacity to provide error free, internetwork connectivity for the various information transfer services.

V. Revised: Increase communications speed, capacity, connectivity, and automated network control will be required both domestically and in the foreign network. Additional satellite and interactive switching capacity will be obtained to support the increased online real-time interactive information handling workload.

VII: Revised: OC and OIT will propose upgrading the speed, data-transfer, message switching and control capacities in

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the foreign and domestic network to support the real-time interactive information handling workload. OIT will continue with the Domestic Network Program (DOMNET). OC will continue upgrading all of its transmission modes, X.25 packet system, automating service interconnectivity and network control, as well as pursue increased DoD and commercial satellite capacity.

Goal 13: Improve Career Management System

Comments

None

Suggested Revision

None

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