



2003 U.S. Government's Top 5 Quality Software Projects



For years, the department's acquisition community has recognized software as a key parameter for enabling the performance of our defense systems. That is an understatement to say the least because of the significant role that software plays in making it possible to undertake the acquisition of complex systems to meet our dynamic defense needs. Software helps us address the complex command, control, and communication issues relating to a network-centric battlespace; increase the effectiveness of our information and intelligence systems; improve the efficiency of our logistics systems; and provide the joint, multi-mission capacity required to meet evolving warfighter capability needs.

The award-winning projects highlighted in this issue of *CROSSTALK* demonstrate the continued ability of industry to meet the department's acquisition needs. They are a testimony to our combined ability to successfully conceive, design, field, and sustain complex defense systems. I congratulate the program managers and their government, industry, and academia teams for their achievement of this award.

Our strong reliance on software as a critical performance driver has significant implications within the acquisition community. More often than not, poor system performance is blamed on software; but at times, software is called upon to compensate for system performance issues attributable to non-software components. In either case, it is clear that software bears a significant responsibility for a system's ability to perform its intended mission, which is why the department is emphasizing the acquisition of software in a systems engineering context.

Within the Department of Defense, a major focus on improving defense systems acquisition is derived from the Honorable Michael W. Wynne (acting under secretary of defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics) who said that it is imperative to "... help drive good systems engineering practice back into the way we do business." In the context of software, this sends a clear message to the community that we must continue to embrace software engineering as a critical and integral part of a comprehensive, capabilities-based systems engineering approach to acquisition.

Again, I congratulate the program managers and their industry partners, and encourage them to share their lessons learned and best practices to further promulgate the successes of these five projects across the greater acquisition community.

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