

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: AUG 17 2012

From: Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005)

Subj: Migration to Open Standard Data Network Protocols (7265788)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. In an effort to create a networking environment where innovation and competition bring about rapid advances in capabilities, OIT has made the decision to migrate away from proprietary protocols to open standard protocols on VA's data networks. This will increase VA's flexibility and ability to interoperate with multiple vendors and will allow us to continue to build a world class enterprise network infrastructure.
2. "Open Standards" are made available to the general public, are developed and maintained via a collaborative and consensus driven process, and are intended for widespread adoption. Leaders in new technologies are constantly changing - improved interoperability will facilitate our ability to select the best solution for VA when evaluating new technologies. This flexibility will make it possible for rapid advances in network infrastructure capabilities through innovation and open competition.
3. Open standard protocols will replace existing proprietary protocols where an open standard exists. The only exceptions that will be considered are those where the open standard does not supply features and functions that VA's determines to be critical. A project will be initiated to evaluate VA's networking protocols and to identify protocols that should be migrated to an open standard. These protocols will then become the official VA standard and incorporated into the VA TRM (<http://trm.oit.va.gov>). Additionally, the necessary design and configuration documents will be updated. An implementation plan and schedule will be published for migration to the new enterprise standards.
4. Only in cases where a feature is required and an open standard protocol does not effectively provide that feature will a proprietary protocol be considered. In that situation the requirement must be justified, and will be validated, and then the best proprietary protocol will be determined and made the interim standard. Any interim standard based on a proprietary protocol will expire when an open standard effectively provides the feature in question. Any implementation of a proprietary protocol will be limited to the absolute minimum possible scope in the environment. For any cases where an open standard cannot be used a waiver must be approved by the Executive Director of Enterprise Systems Engineering.

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5. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 202-461-6910 or have a member of your staff contact Franco Susi at 718-630-3526 or Franco.Susi@va.gov.



Roger W. Baker

cc:

DAS for Information Security (005R)

DAS for Information Technology Resource Management (005F)

DCIO for Architecture, Strategy, and Design (005E)

DCIO for Product Development (005Q)

DCIO for Service, Delivery and Engineering (005OP)

Executive Director for Quality, Performance, and Oversight (005X)

Executive Director for VLER Enterprise PMO (005C)

Deputy Director for Interagency Program Office (005J)

Advocate for Health (005A)

Advocate for Benefits (005A)

Advocate for Corporate Customers (005A)