BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

REMOVING STOVEPIPES OF INNOVATION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to provide a solution that enables open communication enabling faster innovation across all levels in the Air Force.

BACKGROUND

- Upon taking office, SECAF Wilson ignited dialogue on a more innovative Air Force, no longer focusing solely on readiness and modernization--"we have to get from concept to warfighter faster"[1]--the question still remains, how?

- Airmen separated geographically both in the same AFSC and across different AFSCs don't have the ability to share information in real time, preventing communal building of a rapidly accessible knowledge-base for education, training, and collaborative innovation

  -- An online experience will bring AF-wide information to one convenient platform, accessible with the click of a mouse, by limitless individuals for immediate learning and collaboration

    --- Tailored for the current and future workforce generation (those who grew up with the Internet and are accustomed to using it for research and collaboration); products like Wikipedia, Reddit and YouTube get millions of participants daily who are looking for information and collaborative solutions.[2, 3] We should adopt products like these to enable our own information-sharing and real-time collaboration

DISCUSSION

- Proposed Solution: develop and implement a web-based, open-source collaboration platform with components similar to Wikipedia, Reddit, and YouTube that are accessible to all Airmen, enabling faster communication of ideas and innovations

  -- Data:

    --- Wikipedia stats: about 10 edits per second committed for over 5.6 million articles[4]

    --- Reddit stats: about 1.7 billion visitors on average for January 2018; average of 7.5 threads viewed per visit[5]

- How: consists of a web page with links to up to five online services within a platform-wide search engine

  -- Platform links any user search for topics and shows all results; components would include:

    --- Wikipedia--where anyone can edit an article or start a new article

    --- Reddit--less formal forum where conversations start as a springboard to build data for a Wiki page

    --- "BlueTube"--anyone can post videos (education, how-to, etc.) and/or comment on them

  -- The best articles or questions will receive the most views and responses; the best information will be recognized by the Air Force community and will rise to the top

    --- HQ AF/A3O vision--this would allow tactical "depth" to permeate across domains, eliminating stovepipes of information; initial step towards synchronized operational execution

Eagles/Think Tank/908-635-7472/va, ib, jc, zf, sg, hm, rm, th, kp & js/27 Mar 18

--- Could be used to eventually enable multi-domain, joint combat and control (the Air Force's collaboration platform could be extended to joint partners)

-- Risks and Solutions:

--- Use of unvetted methods/processes which deviate from approved Technical Orders. Solution: each Airman attached to their office's account--supervisors notified of "reported posts" which are deemed to be inaccurate or offensive (similar to Facebook). This method of policing relies on the aggregate users; information becomes more reliable over time

--- Information on site may be disjointed--difficult to tell which information is based in a reliable source and/or is an effective solution. Solution: allow users to hyperlink source to post; "like"-function to increase visibility; pages without action fall off; group collectively identifies reliable info and reports bad gouge

--- Highly effective communication platform may serve as vulnerability for enemy infiltration. Solution: proper cyber security levels (NIPR, SIPR, JWICS--need CAC card to get into; unit tech person equips individual's phones to access NIPR (BYOD model) for instant access

--- Although the risks identified above present challenges to the idea of an open source platform where anyone can contribute it does not go without saying that many Airmen already share information in the manner that this platform would enable. This new platform organized within the Air Force network can only improve and add further security to the free sharing of ideas from all levels

- Why is this different from what has been tried before?

-- AFSO-21 CPI database, conferences, SharePoint, IDEA Program are all examples of information-sharing efforts that existed in a stovepipe; the ideas never made it out to the entire Air Force or they were filtered out before the raw ideas were published

- Where do we start?

-- An organic solution already exists on a small scale via Cyberspace Protection Teams (CPTs); a team of that scale is not able to provide support for a system that would span across the entire Air Force

-- The vehicle to make this vision a reality is already available. AETC/A5T point of contact Mr Tommy Giattino is working on developing a cloud based service with fast and easy means to include this platform. SOS Think Tank can determine the requirements of the system and forward those to make this a reality

CONCLUSION

The Air Force does not have a communication platform that allows any idea to be shared with the entire service community in real time. Utilizing a platform that allows total force collaboration to spread information and develop solutions is adopted by many private sector businesses. CPTs have organically developed this method of communicating innovations out of necessity in order to perform their mission. This new-age method of communicating must be adopted by the entire Air Force to allow its innovative Airmen to share and collaborate ideas.

End Notes

1. USAF Secretary Calls for More Research and Innovation (Carberry, 2017).

2. "Statistics." Wikipedia. March 15, 2018. Accessed March 15, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/wik i/Wikipedia:Statistics.

3. "Reddit.com Traffic Statistics." SimilarWeb. Accessed March 15, 2018. https://www.similarweb. com/website/reddit.com#overview.

4. "Statistics." Wikipedia. March 15, 2018. Accessed March 15, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/w iki/Wikipedia:Statistics.

5. "Reddit.com Traffic Statistics." SimilarWeb. Accessed March 15, 2018. https://www.similarweb.com /website/reddit.com#overview.