GCN Award Winner for Government Agency IT Achievement – 2008

Agency: Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Project: A suite of Intelink services, including Intellipedia, A-space, and the Library of National Intelligence

Nomination Submitted by: Intelligence Community Enterprise Solutions - Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Following is the nomination letter submitted for this project, summarizing the project's accomplishments, the technologies used and innovative steps taken to achieve them, and the resulting impact the project had in improving the agency's efforts.

Accomplishments:
The Office of the Director of National Intelligence is piloting a new electronic work environment for the Intelligence Community's analysts. This collaborative analytic enclave, called A-Space, will connect analysts to data, expertise, and each other. A-Space is an environment that equips analysts with tools that speed discovery and exploitation of data and expertise, techniques that enhance tradecraft, and technologies and business processes that optimize their collective strengths. Featuring a number of embedded collaborative tools (e.g., wikis, blogs, forums, etc); A-Space will become a haven where analysts can post their research as a work-in-progress and identify alternative hypotheses far earlier than the formal coordination process. By creating a connected work environment across the Intelligence Community, A-Space will help analysts with identifying and sharing useful tools and successful analytic strategies. It is a place where analysts will receive credit for developing new insights, not just producing reports. ASpace is a new way of doing business; it is not a destination. Users from all 16 agencies in the Intelligence Community are now online and testing this new and innovative analytical strategy.

Technology:
A-Space offers easy connections to analytic tools, a personalized Really Simple Syndication (RSS) reader, and robust search and discovery capabilities. It provides a tool to search internal content – such as that found in the forums and wiki workspace – and a navigation tool that searches other Intelligence Community data files. The first phase of A-Space will provide a baseline of tools to allow analysts to conduct research, find expertise, share and consolidate analytic findings, and collaborate synchronously and asynchronously.Iterative spiral development will allow ASpace to incorporate additionaldata layers and tools, and will open enclaves that are open to collaboration by intelligence collectors and other Intelligence Community stakeholders.Over time, A-Space will be enhanced by the addition of tools that will improve the ability of analysts to search and

discover information, collaborate with others working on the same or similar problems, organize and visualize large volumes of data, and apply analytic methodologies and critical thinking techniques to improve the quality of analysis. In addition, the tools will be integrated together in such a way as to allow analysts to transition their thoughts seamlessly to formal products.

Impact:
A-Space will fundamentally transform how analysts do their jobs. Taking design cues from social networking sites, and other commonly used browser enabled Web 2.0 tools, A-Space will provide analysts with innovative, integrated tools that facilitate collaboration and information sharing. ASpace will improve the discovery and analysis of intelligence information by exposing new information sources and the insights and experience of new analysts and collectors to A-Space users. Changing the business model to one in which analytic research is posted as work in progress will require changing the habits of thousands of individual analysts across the Community -- in a process that must be one of collective adaptation to new systems, rules, and norms. A-Space will strengthen analysis by ensuring that analysts across the Intelligence Community can each contribute their views and share information, consistent with security requirements, so that alternative perspectives are readily expressed, assumptions are challenged, and judgments are informed by all available data. New information sharing, technologies, web-based tools, and structured analytic tools—such as red teaming, analysis of competing hypotheses, and simulation exercises can help analysts avoid groupthink and other problems that can inhibit analytic reasoning.