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## Final Copy of Case Study

**Year:**
2013

**Status:**
Laureate

**Organization Name:**
U.S. Pacific Command

**Organization URL:**
www.pacom.mil

**Project Name:**
All Partners Access Network

**Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry.**
Collaboration

**Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)**

The All Partners Access Network (APAN) is a global online information-sharing platform created by the U.S. Department of Defense Pacific Command and supported by the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA). Initially created to facilitate information sharing between the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and non-traditional partners, the APAN platform quickly became the de facto online community to coordinate crisis response during the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Since then, APAN has been used for a wide variety of functions including international military exercises, interagency work groups, and scientific research. APAN uses a variety of social media tools like blogs, wikis, groups, forums, profiles, and file sharing to create an online community outside the military firewall (hosted on a

.org instead of a .mil) where the Department of Defense can collaborate freely and securely with non-traditional partners like non-governmental organizations, academia, private organizations, and international organizations. Rather than creating an online community where all of the information is access-restricted to individual agencies, APAN was created to encourage communications and collaboration across traditional administrative, organizational, and geographical borders. Previously, this sort of collaboration and communication would have taken place via closed channels like phone and/or email, but with the APAN platform, this information can now be captured, shared, stored, and improved upon over time. Currently, the DoD Chief Information Officer has designated APAN as the official platform for the DoD Unclassified Information Sharing System (UISS). APAN uses the Telligent Community platform as a base and uses custom development to expand its capabilities. Telligent Community is commonly used for one organization to create a single community online, but APAN uses it to create hundreds of independent, customizable, online communities for a multitude of different organizations. APAN's use of Telligent Community was the first of its kind.

**When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)**

The APAN program was originally established in 1999 by Admiral Blair, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command. The Telligent platform was deployed in January 2010 to support the U.S. Southern Command's task force leading the U.S. response to the earthquake in Haiti. APAN's recent major expansion is the incorporation of SharePoint 2010 as an additional platform for creating online communities. SharePoint 2010 was added to APAN's tool set in June 2012 to create a new home for 42 online communities on another platform slated for decommission. Since then, APAN has created dozens of online communities on SharePoint for a growing population of organizations needing specialized collaboration tools. Numerous communities have been created using SharePoint to serve various DoD entities working in Afghanistan and other active theaters. The new SharePoint platform has also allowed APAN to significantly expand its GIS capabilities. APAN's GIS tools now enable users to create custom maps, display maps and layers from outside sources, and compile geographic information from community members.

**Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)**

The SharePoint expansion is technically complete. Organizations continue to come to APAN for creating their online collaboration space, and as they do, the

creative use of the myriad of tools on SharePoint displays a constant stream of new ways APAN communities can be implemented.

**Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)**

APAN supports the U. S. Department of Defense's program of "Endeavor" exercises: Pacific Endeavor, Africa Endeavor, and Combined Endeavor. These exercises bring together military representatives from various nations in a region to practice communications in a crisis scenario. Hundreds of communications officers and technicians from around the globe gather at these annual events to not only practice communicating before a crisis strikes, but also to build relationships and reach across cultural boundaries. NATO and other regional partnership organizations also join in these exercises as supporters and participants. The Endeavor exercises especially involve nations with limited capabilities. Due to financial constraints of young governments and small militaries, many of the participating nations rely heavily on these U.S.-sponsored events to reach out and work with their neighbors on crisis management. Combined Endeavor takes place in Eastern Europe and involves over 40 nations and organizations including NATO. Combined Endeavor has historically used another collaboration platform, which is now being decommissioned. The APAN SharePoint expansion has enabled APAN to provide Combined Endeavor the global collaboration tools it needs without interruption and improve support at the exercise. Through APAN's new SharePoint platform, Combined Endeavor participants now have extensive document management controls including unlimited storage space and access controls that can be fine-tuned to folders or specific documents. They also have access to APAN's language translation capabilities, extensive GIS tools, and online meeting rooms. Without these tools, the hundreds of participants from dozens of nations would be restricted to using email and free public information-sharing tools. In addition to the technical tools APAN provides, the participants of Combined Endeavor receive in-person training and support. APAN provides Knowledge Management support online throughout the year and in-person guidance at the planning and exercise events.

**Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)**

Organizations of any kind can create a custom, online collaboration space on APAN if they have a demonstrated need to collaborate with any U.S. Department of Defense entity at any level. APAN's example of how to use the Telligent and

SharePoint platforms in conjunction with custom software development can also serve as a model for other organizations. Telligent Systems Inc. has often used APAN as an example of how to implement the Telligent platform. APAN's innovative combination of Telligent and SharePoint is a repeatable method that could be implemented for any organization needing expansive and customizable collaboration tools.

**If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)**

APAN is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Defense and made available to the global community at no cost. To create a community on APAN, the requestor must have a U.S. DoD sponsor, but there are no financial requirements. Also, any person with an email account can get an account on APAN and become a user. Security is controlled at the community level by the community managers. This allows each community to reach out as far as is appropriate for that community. APAN is especially well suited to support Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) efforts in an international crisis. APAN was used to coordinate between the U.S. military and other organizations during the responses to the earthquakes in Haiti and Japan. An APAN community can be created in minutes and open the door to organized international communication faster than any other tool. The new SharePoint expansion has in turn made the expansion of APAN's GIS tools possible. APAN's GIS tools on SharePoint now enable users to upload information connected to a geographic location on a map or as part of a map layer. This function will allow HA/DR responders to compile data from the ground immediately and share that information with military and non-military decision-makers. APAN's capability of sharing information online and crossing organizational, cultural, and language barriers is unique in the world. APAN's new SharePoint expansion has also empowered the thousands of SharePoint experts the U.S. DoD currently employs. Most U.S. DoD entities use SharePoint already on restricted networks and have employed or trained SharePoint experts to support those tools. With SharePoint on APAN, those experts can help the DoD reach more people than ever before.