



Impacting the Future of Process Improvement



This issue of CROSS TALK is focused on introducing the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) project. The Computer Resources Support Improvement Program (CRSIP) office dedicated a significant amount of our resources to the project over the past two years. The former CRSIP Director, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Joe Jarzombek and I each dedicated at least one week per month to its development. We were assigned to the Requirements and Training Integrated Product Teams (IPT), respectively. We participated as authors on the Product Development Team. A reprint of our interview talking about Measurement and Analysis, *Up Close with Lt. Col. (Ret.) Joe Jarzombek and Bruce Allgood*, is on page 4. Our office also sponsors additional Air Force personnel to participate in other IPTs to assist in developing this product suite. This commitment is a reflection of our belief in the value of CMMI's ability to impact the future of process improvement as a true enterprise-wide effort.

A good place to start to understand CMMI is with the article authored by Joan Weszka, Phil Babel, and Jack Ferguson, *CMMI: An Evolutionary Path to Enterprise Process Improvement* on page 8. Joan served on the Steering Group for this project with Phil, who was the co-chairman prior to his retirement from the Air Force. Dr. Jack Ferguson was the project manager for the first 20 months of the project prior to accepting his current position in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Joan (industry), Phil (government), and Jack (academia) represent the three collaborative groups brought together to accomplish this effort. Their article tells the history, motivation, drivers, and sponsors of the collaborative effort as well as how the project and organization of the new model was organized. Anticipated benefits, release plans and transition plans are covered for readers.

Ronald Starbuck's article, *A Configuration Manager's Perspective* on page 12 provides a nondeveloper point of view about how this new model differs in the treatment of one particularly significant process area—configuration management. He comments on some of the more notable changes in the new model as compared to the SW-CMM Version 1.1 release that has wide acceptance and use.

Of additional use is the article by Aaron Clouse and Curt Wells, *Transitioning from EIA/IS-731 to CMMI* found on page 15. They outline what this model means to users of the EIA 731 interim standard that the International Council of Systems Engineering developed. These two Product Development Team members give a good explanation of what is required by systems engineers familiar with EIA 731 to understand and consider as they plan transitioning to CMMI usage.

One notable facet of the evolution of CMMs, and how CMMI will assist the engineering community in transitioning to true enterprise-wide process improvement, is the built-in extensibility of CMMI. This effort was not simply a combination of the existing models to create a single new model. Rather, the project was the creation of a framework in which additional extensions of areas of interest can be added to the model in a straightforward, consistent manner allowing for minimization of overlap and maximum reusability of basic model content. Areas of particular interest being proposed at this time for extension and addition to CMMI are Systems Acquisition and Systems Safety. Proponents for these additional process areas have started the steps necessary to integrate new content into the CMMI framework by proposing new process areas covering these new specific disciplines.

The Air Force CRSIP office will continue to support and champion the development and transition of CMMI as an Enterprise-Wide Process Improvement Tool. I invite you to study these articles, as well as to look for further CMMI-related articles in future issues of CROSS TALK.

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