



eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, June 28, 2005
Time: 9:00–10:00 a.m.
Location: Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room
Chair: Tom Boyce (in Izja Lederhendler's absence)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 12, 9:00 a.m., Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room

Presentations

- [OERRM Transition Update](#)

OERRM Transition Update

Tom Boyce

[OERRM Transition Update](#)

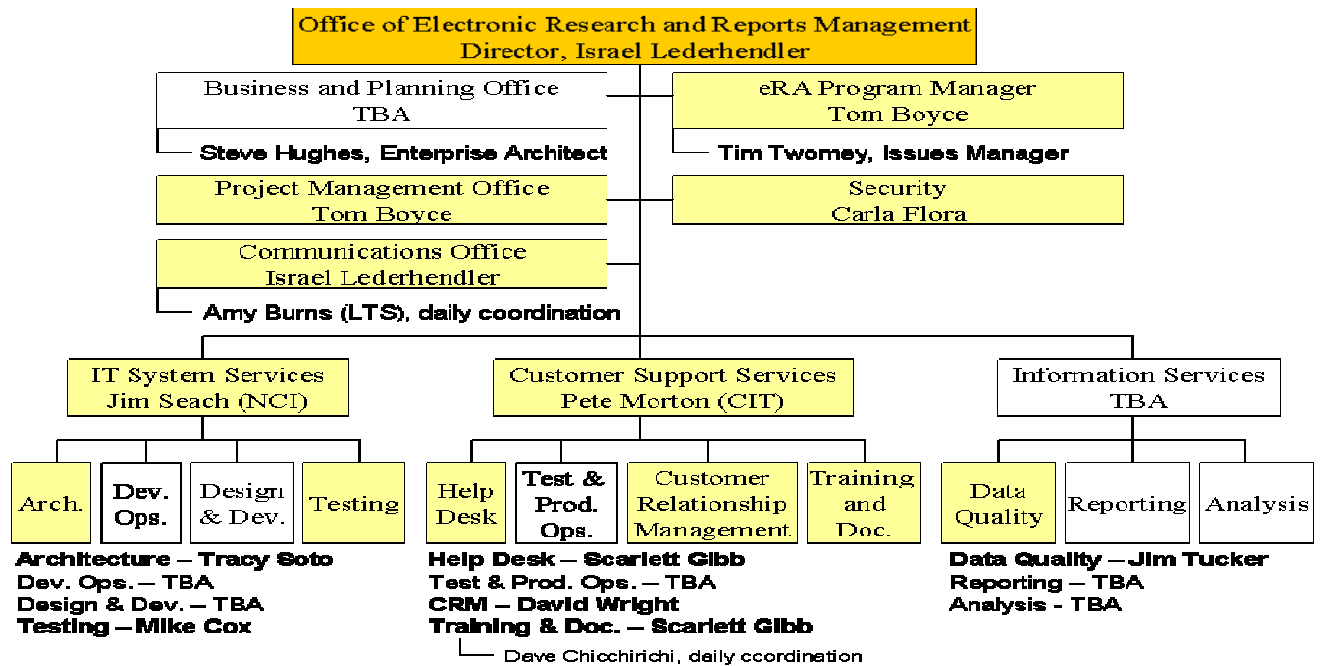
Overview—Tom Boyce, in his first public remarks after being appointed interim eRA Project Manager, gave an overview of the major changes occurring within the Office of Electronic Research and Reports Management (OERRM) and a preview of the work that lies ahead. He said that eRA had a lot of good people on staff who have been very supportive of his move from the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality (AHRQ). Tom noted that an outside review group, the Gartner Group, had provided eRA with recommendations on the changes that need to be made within the organization. Armed with a template for moving forward, OERRM is tasked with not only placing people in the right boxes and tweaking those roles where necessary, but also keeping the organization functioning amidst this transition.

Tom noted that OERRM director, Izja Lederhendler, was keen on standing up the new organization and not waiting until the management positions are permanently filled; therefore, an interim management team will be in place by July 5 even as the hiring process for permanent managerial heads begins. Meanwhile, on July 6, Izja will seek the okay of the Extramural Program Management Committee (EPMC) for the formal staffing/hiring process. He is also having a series of individual meetings with key stakeholders to brief them on the changes. The formal process of advertising job openings is slated to begin July 11, with postings both internally and on the USA Jobs website (<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>), the official job site of the federal government.

Interim Management Team— Tom noted that Izja has named interim heads for most branches, except that of the Business and Planning Office and of Information Services. He emphasized that these are temporary assignments and that many interim leads had assumed the responsibility knowing that they did not plan to apply for the jobs. The interim managerial heads announced are:

- Tom Boyce as eRA Program Manager and as head of the Project Management Office.
 - Tim Twomey as the Issues Manager. Tom noted that often, technical or policy issues that crop up do not fall to one person; now, Tim will be the go-to person for these issues. Tim will also be in charge of development and operations for now.

- ❑ Izja Lederhendler as head of the Communications Office.
 - Amy Burns responsible for daily coordination.
- Tom noted that his plan is to weave communications throughout eRA. The idea is to have triggers within the overall Project Plan to remind people that certain issues need to be communicated out.
- ❑ Carla Flora as head of Security.
 - ❑ Jim Seach as head of IT System Services.
 - Tracy Soto as head of Architecture
 - Mike Cox as head of Testing
 - ❑ Pete Morton as head of Customer Support Services
 - Scarlett Gibb as head of the Help Desk and Training & Documentation, with Dave Chicchirichi responsible for daily coordination of the latter.
 - David Wright as head of Customer Relationship Management
 - ❑ In addition, Steve Hughes will assist the Business and Planning Office as an Enterprise Architect. Jim Tucker will head up Data Quality.



Looking ahead— Five working groups will be formed to discuss processes in these key areas:

- ❑ Data Quality
- ❑ Reporting
- ❑ Customer Support Services
 - Help Desk
 - Operations
 - Interactions and process flows between Customer Relationship Managers, Project Managers, Business Modelers and IT Leads
- ❑ Business and Planning Office/Project Management Office
- ❑ Software Testing

These working groups will begin meetings in mid-July. Tom urged people to volunteer to participate in these groups.

Master Schedule—Tom noted one of the major tasks he initiated after joining eRA is compiling one project plan, a master schedule that will detail software development, progress on OPDIV integration, etc. to give a sense of when users can expect changes. The schedule will be put together hopefully by the end of August and communicated to users through the eRA website and other means.. Tom noted that it is very important to communicate to users what eRA is doing and when eRA is going to accomplish it. He also planned to reexamine eRA's handling of software development. For instance, a lot of defects are bundled into one maintenance plan and he plans to analyze whether that is the best approach.

OPDIVs—Tom noted that AHRQ had been using IMPAC I and later IMPAC II for years and the U.S. Health and Human Services division had made it clear that NIH is the processing point for the grants process, to the extent possible, for other federal Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) like SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) and CDC (Centers for Disease Control). For eRA, the key would be to integrate the OPDIV focus without diluting the work underway for NIH. Tom noted that eRA had asked for money for OPDIV integration and had received the okay from the IT Investment Review Board for this funding. A lot of issues lay ahead in terms of integrating the OPDIVs, such as bringing SAMSHA and HRSA's business processes and grant processes on board. Tom noted that the OPDIVS had put a lot of support and trust in eRA; it is up to eRA to repay that trust by doing a good job in pulling off this integration.

A long, hard look—Pete Morton noted that eRA had realized it was time to take a long hard look at itself and is serious in its approach. He viewed his interim role as an opportunity to help facilitate their thought process through this transition. While eRA has an extraordinarily dedicated staff, over time any situation needs to be reexamined —are all the processes still needed, are they focused in the right direction, are their priorities right? Pete noted that there had been a lot of disgruntled users at various levels, not because of eRA's lack of a good system but because of eRA's lack of direct focus on customers. He said he welcomed eRA's new customer-focused approach. eRA needs to be responsive and efficient with minimal overhead. Pete noted that communications is key for an organization to succeed. A lot of the perception of what goes on within eRA is what people see; if communication is not going to the external world, it is lost. Izja had all the right ideas and goals; it is now also up to the external community to chip in. While eRA had undergone changes before, Pete said he sensed a huge commitment this time around that would surely reward eRA's users.

Discussion—Everett Sinnett noted that people are used to dealing with a certain set of people within eRA and wondered how they would know whom to go to now for certain issues. Tom said that they should continue dealing with the same people they have previously until they are told otherwise.

Table Talk

Grants Management issue—Skip Moyer noted that AHRQ staffers had been having problems with the client-server module of Grants Management (GM). They were unable to save the attachment of terms in the client-server module and had to save those terms in the J2EE pilot

version of GM before reverting back to the client-server to finish the award process. Skip noted that this issue needed to be solved, given that the last quarter of the federal fiscal year (July to September) is a busy time for GM users. Tom said the issue is being discussed internally and he would get back to Skip. No date has been set for retiring the client server GM.

Retreat —Danielle Bielenstein noted that with all the changes afoot, it may be a good idea to hold a retreat to give the team a good grounding in the new OERRM. Tom Boyce noted that eRA had held retreats in years past and agreed that it was a good idea.

Attendees

Ashley, Rich (RNS/OERRM)	Flora, Carla (OERRM)	Patel, Kalpesh (Ekagra/OERRM)
Bielenstein, Danielle (NIH/FIC)	Gaines, Patti (OERRM)	Porter, Yvette (OERRM)
Boyce, Tom (OERRM)	Gibb, Scarlett (OERRM)	Simms, Sophonia (OERRM)
Bukowski, Maria (OD)	Goodman, Mike (OERRM)	Sinnett, Everett (CSR)
Burns, Amy (LTS/OERRM)	Hahn, Marcia (OER/OPERA)	Soto, Tracy (OERRM)
Cox, Michael (OERRM)	Horton, Marcia (HRSA)	Subramanya, Manju (LTS/OERRM)
Cummins, Sheri (LTS/OERRM)	Ikeda, Richard (NIHMS)	Tatham, Tom (CSR)
Diggs, Lana (OERRM)	Imrie, Anne (SAIC)	Tipparaju, Suryarao (ACT/OERRM)
Dutcher, Sylvia (Mitretek/OERRM)	Jordan, Craig (NIH/NIDCD)	Tucker, Jim (OERRM)
Evans, Brian (IBM/OERRM)	Karen, Sandra (HRSA)	Wehrle, Janna (NIGMS)
Fadeley, Vickie (OERRM)	Kinley, Teresa (CDC)	Zhen, Changqing (IBM/OERRM)
Faenson, Inna (OERRM)	Lynch, Peggy (IBM/OERRM)	
	Moyer, Skip (AHRQ)	
	Nastea, Sorin (IBM)	