Enterprise Shared Services (ESS)

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Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) is a suite of development aids, platforms, and applications that facilitate USDA's department-wide effort to deliver citizen-centric, online information and services. USDA developed ESS to leverage business, technology, and data principles to provide agencies the capability to maximize efficiencies and reduce costs while improving customer service. The business applications are hosted in a shared environment at the National Information Technology Center (NITC) using controlled IT hosting and operations procedures designed to support applications on the Enterprise Shared Services infrastructure.

ESS allows customers to develop and implement new or existing applications with development aids, different platforms and various application integration options. Procedures are in place to assist and improve USDA application stability, efficiency and quality of service.

Development aids are also available for use, such as, templates, Web Standards and Guidelines, and a developer library. Using Web Standards and Guidelines improves site usability, increases consistency in look and feel, and creates a professional and engaging online presence. Developer Library allows access to reusable components and frameworks to reduce time, effort, and costs while developing an application using ESS.

Information Technology (IT) platforms are available for different development requirements. ESS uses Stellent's Web Content Management solution to streamline Web content delivery using reporting and workflow capabilities. IBM's WebSphere Hosting Platform is utilized to support non-portal specific application development. The IBM WebSphere portal configured J2EE Application Development platform is used to improve efficiency and reduce costs of application creation using portal technologies. Stellent's document management solution is used to create, edit, and publish documents and content to web sites and applications using document management and workflow capabilities.

ESS Guiding Pinciples

Deliver information and services around customers.

Leverage investment in IT to eliminate duplication.

Business Principles

Enables greater cross-agency, collaboration, use of shared solutions and best practices.

Technology Principles

Promotes consolidation and standardization of technology where appropriate.

Data Principles

Maximizes data sharing and minimizes cost associated with duplicate management efforts.

NITC

ESS Service Offerings

- WebSphere Portal Hosting
- WebSphere Hosting
- Web Content Management
- Document Management
- Google Search Engine

ESS Planned Offerings

- Records Management
- Business Process Management

ESS Benefits

- Reduce Development Costs
- Reduce Operations Costs
- Economies of Scale
- Product Standardization
- Avoid Redundant Efforts
- Minimize Infrastructure Investments
- Increased Efficiency

Application Integration Options are available through the use of eAuthentication, Common Employee Database, Google Search Appliance, and AgLearn. eAuthentication is the single, centralized authentication service for web-based applications throughout USDA. The Common Employee Database (CED) is the centralized meta-directory of employee information for use by USDA agencies and systems. Google is available to integrate search engine capabilities with agency applications. USDA's learning management system, AgLearn, provides the capability to create and host a training course for an ESS application.

ESS Infrastructure

Applications Integration Options

- AgLearn
- eAuthentication
- Common Employee Database
- Google Search Appliance

Platforms

- Document Management (Stellent)
- J2EE Portal Application Server
- J2EE Application Server
- Web Content Management (Stellent)

Development Aids

- ESS Support Site
- Web Style Guidelines
- Design Templates
- Developer Library

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