TRANSFORMING DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PROCESSES IN DoD

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

GOVLOOP
POCKET GUIDE
2019

BECOMING A PEOPLE-CENTRIC DOD REQUIRES AN END-TO-END DIGITAL EXPERIENCE THAT CARRIES WARFIGHTERS FROM RECRUITMENT TO RETIREMENT.

FOREWORD FROM ADOBE

The world is changing, and technology is powering the revolution. College degrees are earned online, people talk and share their stories via the internet, and news is delivered to your desktop – not your doorstep. The fundamentals of human interaction have changed and digitized, and the Defense Department (DoD) is no different.

Inside DoD, communication is critical for both active duty and civilian personnel. In order for DoD to achieve its mission, employees need to understand complex instructions and be able to navigate a multidimensional environment. The department must deliver personal experiences to its warfighters to ensure informed intelligence and real-time accessibility in the field.

At Adobe, we equip DoD with the tools and technology to ensure best processes for warfighters and civilian personnel, helping achieve the best outcome for the military. From recruitment to retirement, DoD employees deserve the ease of technology-enabled communication.

In DoD, personnel are situated across the world, and the entire organization must be able to reach, onboard, enroll and inform its members no matter the location. Having the capabilities to successfully recruit, engage and interact with DoD members and their families throughout their service is a necessity. As well, delivering engaging digital experiences will maximize range, and impact is essential.

Technology solutions for DoD need to be cost-effective and produce immediate results. They also need to be consistent, reliable and available whenever they're needed throughout a warfighter's time in the military. At Adobe we can provide the framework for growing new recruits into prepared warfighters – who have the wherewithal to adjust to all that is happening. For onboarding, instead of templated lectures, recruits should be met with personalized, engaging online instruction. We can also help take the paperwork out of these processes.

Adobe is proud to offer a full lifecycle of capabilities, preparing America's warfighters and their families with the skills and resources they need to be successful.

Karen Terrell
Vice President,
Public Sector, Adobe

The customer *experience* is always right.

For the Department of Defense, a great digital experience can mean a more prepared warfighter—and a more efficient workforce. Only Adobe brings together data and content to deliver amazing experiences across web, mobile, and any other channel. Just what you'd expect from a leader in customer experience management.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DoD is a massive organization with plenty of moving parts. In fact, DoD's IT budget makes up 44.4 percent of the federal IT budget, almost triple that of the next closest federal agency. It is also the largest employer in America, with 2.87 million civilian and service employees.

There are more than 2 million active, guard and reserve service members, and DoD has at least 4,000 personnel in every U.S. state and many more abroad. Managing the digital experience of each member is paramount for success, but difficult.

To operate efficiently across the enterprise, DoD needs integrated and comprehensive communications and content solutions. By managing messaging and delivery, DoD can optimize its reach, enrollment, onboarding and information to attract new recruits, train employees and promote long, successful careers.

Mission outcomes are also dependent on collaboration among prominent lawmakers, bureaucrats, military leaders and those on the ground. Understandably, questions arise about everything from benefits to direct orders.

Where can warfighters and civilian personnel find answers?

Answers need to come from the right source bearing the right information at the right time, which can be a tricky balance. Without improving the people side of military operations, DoD will struggle with recruiting, retention and training.

In fact, some shortcomings have already materialized.

"To address the scope and pace of our competitors' and adversaries' ambitions and capabilities, we must invest in modernization of key capabilities through sustained, predictable budgets," read the **Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy**. "Our backlog of deferred readiness, procurement, and modernization requirements has grown in the last decade and a half and can no longer be ignored."

That's why integrated solutions are key for DoD personnel. They can personalize recruitment, education and even retirement for each soldier – removing expense and time for a mass of DoD departments. Additionally, with a unique digital experience, users can take advantage of educational communities of practice, personalized career improvement courses and individual user profiles.

GovLoop and Adobe partnered on this pocket guide to explore the experience of warfighters and examine how digital services and moving from paper to electronic processes can enable a more streamlined and positive experience for DoD.

In this pocket guide, you'll learn about the military lifecycles of DoD personnel and what current technology offers them. We'll then explore where digital services can improve each stage of their career and see what a streamlined military can look like from the perspective of the people involved.

DOD REACH AND RESULTS: THEN AND NOW

The Defense Department has embraced new technological capabilities to keep up with the advancement of other militaries around the world but, like other federal agencies, has struggled with reach, tangled legacy IT systems and personnel management.

BY THE NUMBERS

66%
of DoD's business systems that are certified and approved come in the fields of human resources management, logistics and material readiness.

44.4%
of the 2018 federal IT budget is occupied by DoD, nearly three times that of any other agency.

75%
of DoD personnel cite too much change or not enough time, effort and money as reasons to not implement paperless processes.

$42.5 BILLION
was DoD's IT budget in 2018.

2.87 MILLION
civilian and service employees make DoD America's largest employer.

$49.6 BILLION
was the increase in operations and maintenance from 2000 to 2014, a 34 percent rise.

$4.5 BILLION
was how much the annual DoD IT budget rose from 2016 to 2018, compared with less than a billion-dollar increase across non-Defense federal agencies.

1,191
social media sites are managed by the Air Force.

24%
was the increase in engagement the USMC saw on their website after implementing Adobe Experience Manager.

Sources: **Air Force**, **Congressional Budget Office**, **DoD**, **Government Accountability Office**, **White House**, **Naval Postgraduate School**

IMPORTANT LANDMARKS

2008

Army Knowledge Online records its one-billionth login. Army Knowledge Online is a web-based information-sharing system for DoD personnel that includes email, discovery and directory capabilities. There have since been other DoD spin-offs.

2014

The Army establishes communities of practice for science, technology and engineering services that can address critical and chronic technology challenges internally. The U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command launched eight communities of practice in 2014.

2016

Marine Corps launches recruiting advertisements that feature more women in ads as part of a new campaign designed to attract recruits. The Marines also focus on social media advertising and, shortly after a Nov. 20 campaign, become the first Armed Forces branch to reach 1 million Instagram followers.

2017

Air Force acquires Advanced Pilot Trainer (T-X) education system designed to bridge training gaps between fourth- and fifth-generation fighter aircraft capabilities. The T-X aircraft replaces the T-38C aircraft at air bases in Texas, Mississippi and Oklahoma.

The Modernizing Government Technology Act is announced, offering federal agencies new tools for replacing legacy IT systems with innovative solutions. Programs are also launched to offer agencies money for solutions – with a focusing on CX and emerging technologies.

2018

Navy premieres "Ready, Relevant Learning," that formally replaces the Navy "A" School training program with block learning. Block learning means that warfighters will study specific subsets throughout their initial enlistment period, and education will be delivered at different points throughout. The overhaul is expected to take more than five years.

The Army misses its recruiting goal for the first time since 2005. Despite attempting to attract recruits with an extra $200 million in bonuses and approving more waivers for bad conduct and health issues, the Army finished the fiscal year with 70,000 new recruits. It had sought 76,500 recruits at the beginning of the year.

TODAY'S WARFIGHTERS AND THEIR JOURNEY TO SERVICE

Across vast geographies and with the scope of millions of people, DoD needs to individually serve each warfighter. That's difficult to manage, but across the organization, there are some similarities that allow for consistent engagement and personalization. **DoD must look for ways to consolidate IT across the four commonalities of every warfighter's lifecycle: reach, onboarding, enrollment and information.**

As it stands, DoD branches are stuck with a hodgepodge of technologies that serve limited purposes. That leads to complications, as what works for the Air Force might not work for the Navy, and what works for one Navy recruit might not apply to another.

These scattered systems aren't a surprise. To manage all of the people involved, DoD has tens of thousands of operational systems and servers, which can make for a siloed workforce. Time-consuming and disparate systems are a strain on the community and detract from larger, critical mission goals. DoD, being the nation's largest employer, has backlogs of forms and paperwork behind every decision.

Many legacy systems revolve around paper, an outdated medium that creates obsolete workflows. Paper slows down governments nationwide, and manual labor begets human error. Processes involving paper routinely cost more and take more time than the digital alternative.

DoD needs 21st century technology solutions that can integrate with one another throughout the lifecycle of military personnel.

In recruitment, military branches must first reach potential enlistees – a challenge of its own – and from that point must pique their interest. For future warfighters to be effective, they also must receive accurate and consistent messaging about the demands of the job. For success in the modern day, this means reaching recruits through any channel, on any device, at any time with relevant, personalized content and digital experiences. To do so, DoD must utilize industry-leading solutions and technologies to attract, acquire, manage and deliver experiences throughout the timeline of recruitment.

Once a part of DoD, recent recruits must have the information necessary to settle in and excel at their jobs. Military bases represent dramatic shifts in lifestyle, and for recruits to be successful, they need to access channels that will help them through the transition. As DoD spans the globe, it needs a technology-hosted solution that can travel online via intranets.

These same challenges crop up in training. Far more than physical exertions, DoD training requires esoteric understanding and hands-on application. Traditional learning programs fail to take advantage of modern education practices, and oftentimes exist only as online lectures and redundant skill checks. Instead, military personnel need engaging activities that will teach and evaluate readiness from a laptop on a military base.

Finally, external communication is crucial for DoD. Even outside of recruiting, DoD messaging is key for securing funding, connecting with communities and gaining public support and trust. This communication is paramount when it comes to outreach to military families. As such messaging must be selective, DoD needs content management systems and online communication platforms that allow for secure and productive briefings of members of the public.

"DoD needs to be careful to avoid destroying its strategic communication process with the very bureaucracy it is building to create it. While the strategic goals and priorities delivered through the strategic communication process may serve as guideposts for the desired outcome, information tactics and communication strategies at the tactical and operational levels must be agile and creative."

– Lt. Col. Lindsey J. Borg, U.S. Air Force.

To provide the best experience for those in the field, DoD needs to optimize four stages of the employee lifecycle: recruitment, onboarding, enrollment (documentation) and information (communication).

REACH

DoD recruitment has often been conducted with old-fashioned advertising wisdom – bombard consumers with TV advertisements and mass-messaging. As people encounter new technologies, however, DoD marketers have to become increasingly creative to reach their intended audience. For the most finely tuned messages, recruiters need personalized material.

Armed services recruitment exclusively focuses on younger crowds, and large population cleavages can offer immediate hints of who might or might not be interested. Even as commercials and campaigns have been tailored to younger audiences, DoD has still lacked the measurement capabilities to evaluate real-time success of campaigns – which can complicate innovative ideas, such as video game advertisements.

Solution: DoD recruitment is dependent on several factors: targeting interested parties, personalizing messaging and responding to determinative feedback. Therefore, DoD needs to find ways to access and personalize a unique recruiting approach for its diverse audience. In order to see the potential benefits, there need to be consistent analytics on content and experiences across channels that can be tailored to the audience and further personalized, allowing for optimization throughout.

In real time, that means evaluating whether social media posts are more effective and cost-efficient than TV ads for reaching 18- to 24-year-old recruits – who can further be analyzed on demographic lines. As DoD has seen, social channels indeed often outperform TV counterparts.

Then, DoD needs to ask what images, graphics and messages can be used to maximize the impact of the message. Content and analysis solutions can help craft, disseminate and measure these ideas, and A/B testing can fine-tune messaging.

EDUCATION

To prepare DoD personnel for success and a long, strong career path, training and education are indispensable.

Traditionally, learning management systems have governed the way DoD can deliver training by limiting content availability. Frequently, education is one-way communication that fails to immerse recruits in relevant information. Learning management systems are often also limited by device, and don't offer the support necessary for remote DoD personnel.

These learning management systems also didn't cater to discussion and information-sharing, which are direct needs for warfighters who go to training but have no place for collaboration and discussions. The systems failed to capture the important insights and informal knowledge, leaving many questions to be asked over email.

The need for knowledge management alongside training and education is crucial for modern warfighters and future generations.

Solution: DoD needs new learning solutions that centrally and practically communicate DoD teaching. These solutions should be tailored to the interests and skills of soldiers, medics, pilots, sailors and any class of personnel. Engaging the warfighter with lessons based on experience can remove traditional obstacles to learning new skills and information.

As opposed to traditional learning formats that offer little room for interaction and as much individual attention as a college lecture hall, Experience Driven Learning (EDL) can provide hands-on examples of practical applications. These digital solutions travel across the globe, across devices and can be regularly updated to match the current state of a warfighter's career.

EDL also brings a holistic education system that incorporates omnichannel information-exchange, knowledge management, training and education. With a single platform for education, DoD can educate warfighters only on what they need, track progress and offer a forum for educators to learn from one another. Smaller communities of interest can also be built around subject areas and personal interest – further personalizing the experience – and all progress is quantifiably tracked.

ENROLLMENT

In DoD, information often needs verification, authorization and clear communication. Higher-level personnel need to make sure that direct policies reach the ears of those affected by them, and that sign-offs are quick and immediate.

Forms management is complicated by the size of DoD. Therefore, traditional paper-based processes can take too long to make their way through the large organization.

Solution: DoD requires immediate channels for communication, and these channels must operate in multiple directions. Forms management protocols need to ensure that documents wind up in the right hands, and that messages are received in real time. In order for this to happen, digitized processes must take hold.

Going paperless and implementing e-signature technology saves time and money immediately. It is also a more secure solution that reduces errors. In DoD, these practices should be even more of a priority, considering the scope of operation.

INFORMATION

Sometimes the most difficult part of informing and communicating is arranging content in a cogent and understandable way. At DoD, warfighters are inundated with information surrounding themselves and the military as a whole.

It can be difficult for them, and their family members, to keep track of the most important messages they've received. Therefore, warfighters can lose direction and have to find their own ways of obtaining information, often placing the burden on senior personnel and experienced colleagues.

Solution: Everything warfighters need to know should be available at their fingertips, irrespective of device or location. Whether with files, forums or handbooks, intranets such as Army Knowledge Online can guide recruits through everything they need to know.

These portals can also offer communities, connecting those with similar interests and responsibilities to provide assistance and resources. Intranet portals can offer the flexibility of forums, file-sharing platforms and social networks.

TOOLS THAT CAN HELP DOD DIGITIZE EFFECTIVELY

- **E-Signatures:** E-Signatures allow users to insert a digital copy of their signature into documents, removing printing and delivery costs and saving time.
- **Social media management:** Social media management tools allow users to customize their pages and posts across platforms, as opposed to having to go into each service one by one.
- **Marketing and analytical tools spanning email, internet and social media:** Marketing tools allow departments to measure engagement, such as open rates, demographics and click-throughs, which can be used to refine and target content.
- **Digital intranets and communities of practice:** Digital intranets and communities of practice are web-based platforms that allow for shared forms, interactions and forum spaces.
- **Forms management:** Forms management services can update and control access to forms, meaning that agencies can ensure that forms and access permissions are current.
- **Experience Driven Learning:** Experience Driven Learning offers a new and versatile approach to traditional learning services – with measurable and personalized results.
- **Content generation and management:** The graphics, videos and layouts that go behind websites and advertisements have to be created on content management platforms. Then, content management services place content creations onto outward-facing services, such as websites and advertisements.

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

HOW DIGITAL INTEGRATION CAN IMPROVE THE WARFIGHTER EXPERIENCE

An interview with Andrew Sullivan, Vice President for Adobe's DoD Digital Experience, and Yasir Saleem, Senior Solutions Consultant at Adobe

Battles have long served as metaphors for sports bouts. Watch a football game, and listen to a coach motivate his team. "We're at war," "this team is a family" and "have your teammate's back" are common examples of coach-speak, and they are derived from the non-strategic tenets of success on the battlefield: trust, communication and chemistry.

On the battlefield, military operations need the utmost precision to be executed properly. But before that point is ever reached, DoD must establish the right lines for communication, collaboration and growth – just like a championship-winning team.

To gain a better understanding of how DoD can modernize solutions to improve the employee experience for DoD personnel, GovLoop interviewed Andrew Sullivan, Vice President for Adobe's DoD Digital Experience, and Yasir Saleem, Adobe Senior Solutions Consultant.

"At Adobe, we do have the ability to provide the full end-to-end lifecycle," Saleem said. "From attracting a recruit to getting them into the services and onboarded, we can continuously educate and train them for their lifecycle, as well as provide them the

ability to communicate and have that mass reach, all the way to retirement."

To prepare military operations for success, DoD first needs to attract the attention of recruits and then convince them the military is the right step. That means finding the ideal channels of communication to reach quality leads and having the content in place to follow up with intriguing products.

The right technology solutions can put practice into play and remove the guess-work from recruiting. The Adobe Creative Cloud offers DoD the ability to create cutting-edge advertisements and content for attracting recruits. Then, Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) lets officials manage content across channels, to ensure that the right message is getting to the right place.

But it can be tricky to know how successful a campaign is until the final results – in this case, qualified leads – are released. Adobe Analytics and Adobe Target allow recruiters to see in-depth stats based on demographics and advertising choices, and then follow up with A/B testing to track the effectiveness of editorial decisions.

> *"You're not just limited to email. You're providing a web experience where people can come in at any time, gain knowledge, learn things, share information and also connect with their other peers."*
> —*Yasir Saleem, Adobe*

"It's a workflow," Sullivan said. "It's about being able to identify and retain information on the people that either come to the website or show interest, and then presenting them with relevant information that they care about if they're a recruit."

In education, Adobe Experience Driven Learning can personalize the education experience for recruits. The same content management systems mentioned beforehand, such as AEM, can create the content for EDL courses. These interactive courses also produce measurable results – and analyses to match – so that agencies can reflect on the success of courses.

Once in the military, recruits also need to access information and resources. AEM can be used to manage and target mass emails and content on inward websites. Intranets such as Army Knowledge Online can offer recruits a network of resources and assistance.

"Having this community, people can come in and share ideas with each other, have provided discussions," Saleem said. "There could be blogs. There could be an area where you can share files with each other, so if you think about it from that perspective, it opens the doors to having these communication channels.

"You're not just limited to email. You're providing a web experience where people can come in at any

time, gain knowledge, learn things, share information and also connect with their other peers."

DoD can use these same capabilities to communicate with military families, and services like Adobe Campaign can help finely tune the skill of connecting with a wide range of people.

Finally, the full potential of DoD can be unlocked when the agency moves toward e-signatures and modern forms management processes. Solutions like Adobe Digital Rights Management can establish access controls for internal documents, as well as alert users when forms are out of date or updated.

While each of these solutions can help DoD hone its content and communications, together they can allow DoD to offer a digital experience that saves the agency money and establishes a profile for warfighters. The same information that is gathered during recruitment can populate files or EDL courses and place recruits automatically in the right communities of interest.

"All of that can be connected together to help build a profile," Saleem said.

With a fluid and adaptable digital experience, DoD can progress recruits into long-serving personnel and maximize the readiness of U.S. forces.

LEARNING FROM OTHERS: ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MARINE CORPS RECRUITS

Mirum and Wunderman Thompson partner with Adobe to help Marine Corps connect with digital-native recruits.

With nearly half of the Marine Corps' target audience accessing the website on mobile devices, how could the Marines more effectively manage content and quickly capture every click, like and response of prospective Marines?

Less than 10 years ago, it could take the Marine Corps several days for lead delivery. The Marines, with their wealth of information about the diversity of potential recruits, needed to use data and analytics to quickly connect relevant content with prospects and deliver qualified leads as soon as possible.

To help the Marine Corps achieve its targeting goals, Mirum and Wunderman Thompson built an ecosystem using Adobe Experience Cloud to quickly capture and respond to every multichannel interaction with potential recruits.

Marines.com utilizes strong imagery with a user experience that focuses on scrolling to access content on mobile. For the site's content management system (CMS), Mirum and Wunderman Thompson implemented Adobe Experience Manager, which streamlines the content management process with features such as in-line editing, and real-time copy and image updates on the pages themselves.

The results speak for themselves. Marine Corps website saw a 24 percent increase in engagement, with a richer user experience resulting in more time spent on each page. Bounce rates have reduced, attributed to new site content and improved engagement. Conversion rates too, have improved, as those submitting Request More Information (RMI) forms increased by 8 percent.

Mobile visits were up 22 percent year over year, with desktop seeing a 21 percent decrease. Mobile lead form visits increased 25 percent, versus an 18 percent decrease in desktop.

By partnering with Adobe, Mirum and Wunderman Thompson have helped the USMC develop a more engaging user journey for digital natives that better captures the intentions of recruits, centered around the unique story of the United States Marine Corps and what Marines do.

"Having moved marines.com to Adobe Experience Manager gives us access to all of the services of a modern marketing cloud. Adobe is also FedRamp-compliant, which helps significantly with our security management."

— Bret Otzenberger, Mirum North America CTO

CHEAT SHEET

This takeaway section will provide actionable ways to evaluate your digital experience and offer best steps forward, as well as more information about how DoD can incorporate digital experience technologies.

Current Challenges DoD Faces in Providing an Integrated Digital Experience

- An entanglement of IT infrastructure that varies across and within armed service branches for service portals

- Difficulties in connecting with warfighters, recruits and families on practical, accessible platforms

- A lack of data sharing and visibility between applications that require frequent re-entry and cumbersome logging

- An antiquated forms management process that relies on paper-based processes and is not time-sensitive

- Old learning systems that fail to support the full suite of content that DoD would like to showcase and teach

How to Evaluate Specific Technology Systems

1. Look for paper-based processes that could be digitized and immediately generate cost savings. Technology such as digital signatures can expedite efficiency and allow for the widespread digitization and access of forms from anywhere.

2. Scan for processes with similar functions and see what platforms they operate on. If processes should be similar, such as requiring a content management or creative application portfolio, see if they can be consolidated with one vendor to optimize the functionality of each system.

3. Explore training systems to see what features they hold. As the warfighter lifecycle requires constant change, these systems should be compatible with other features that DoD uses for content generation and management.

4. Survey the community benefits. If a program will not help warfighters in day-to-day life, it likely may not help DoD. Benefits can be tangential to warfighters, however, such as connecting with families and future recruits.

5. Implement systems with data visibility and analytics that can offer real-time feedback. If DoD is unable to judge the effectiveness of an ad campaign or a training course, objectives are hard to accomplish – and failed objectives are harder to repair.

An End-to-End Digital Foundation

- **Execute:** Perform function and collect data

- **Measure:** Analyze data and systems

- **Optimize:** Integrate systems to maximize engagement and improve customer experience

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Experience Driven Learning: Where traditional learning systems fail to capture user interest, there are many reasons why. Experience Driven Learning is collaborative, measurable and personalized, and it's the way forward for government.

Adobe Software Solutions: Adobe Experience Manager Forms, Adobe Acrobat Document Cloud and Adobe Creative Cloud are all in parts of DoD. Learn how to best use them.

Adobe Experience Manager: Adobe Experience Manager means that you can provide adaptable experience and acutely tailor digital offerings. Rethink digital content.

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For more information about this report, please reach out to **info@govloop.com**

*Modern digital
capabilities can
allow warfighters to
pass through their
military lifecycle
in a connected,
streamlined digital
environment – one
that equips them
to excel in a life of
service.*

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