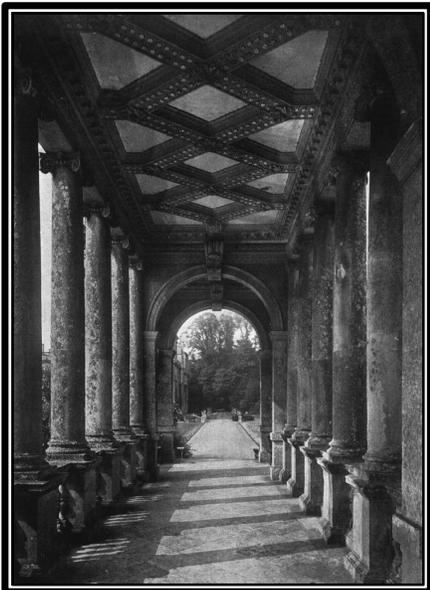


# The AMG Quarterly

A Publication of the NIH Architecture Management Group

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## Special Edition – Minutes of Fall Quarterly Meeting



### The AMG: What's Next?

**T**he focus of the Fall Quarterly Meeting was to begin discussions to re-invent the AMG and its role in NIH information systems management and architecture. Twenty-one ICs and Offices were represented: CIT, FIC, NCI, NCRR, NHGRI, NIA, NIAAA, NIAID, NIAMS, NICHD, NIDA, NIDCD, NIDDK, NIEHS, NIGMS, NIMH, NINDS, NLM, OD, OMA, and ORS. The agenda included three primary discussion topics: updates from the AMG working groups and other groups, an update from NIH CIO Al Graeff, and a proposal to re-evaluate the role and organization of the AMG. Facilitator Alan Harbitter opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. on October 21, 1998. ❖❖

### Working Group Updates

**P**erry Plexico (CIT) provided an update on the HHS IT architecture, and Keith Gorlen (CIT) described the AMG Technical Subcommittee's progress toward a centralized directory to support NIH's enterprise business processes. For the Electronic Document Management Working Group, Donna Wicker (NCI) presented developments regarding electronic records management, and Jaren Doherty (CIT) summarized progress toward Y2K initiatives. Roy Standing (NLM), chair of the World Wide Web Working Group, spoke of the impact that AMG's recommendations and the IT architecture have on NIH application system developers and managers.

#### HHS IT Architecture

Perry Plexico summarized activities of the HHS architecture development effort:

- The HHS architecture effort consists of two phases. The first phase focuses on documenting the baseline of OpDiv information systems and technologies and identifying interoperability enhancement opportunities. The second phase recommends specific enhancements to HHS/OpDiv interoperability. Phase 1 is near completion; Phase 2 is not currently funded.
- The currently defined HHS interoperability opportunities align with NIH's IT priorities: electronic messaging, electronic directories, and Internet security. The current HHS standards profile in each of these areas also aligns

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### CIO Update

**A**l Graeff provided updates on a varied list of topics related to his roles as CIO and director of CIT:

- The Board of Governors meets every month to provide the CIO recommendations and direction. The Board is currently defining guidelines for the IT investment and portfolio review process. CIT will be the test-bed for this process.
- Al is actively developing an approach to coordinate, and potentially to restructure, NIH's array of IT-focused working groups and committees. He has a high-level model that he will continue to refine in preparation for review by the Board of Governors.
- The HHS software buy has generally been well received. Al would like to review and adjust the mix of products to make sure they meet the needs of the ICs.
- Larry Smarr, director of NCSA and an active member of the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director, is forming a working group on the computing needs of the biomedical research community. The interim report for this working group will be produced in December; the final is expected in June.
- The core of NIH's enterprise business information system—the ADB (Administrative Data Base)—is aging and due for a technological refresh. Al has looked at options for maintenance/upgrades and redesign/replacement. His preliminary conclusion is that a redesign/replacement would be more cost-effective in the long run. His office, in partnership with NIH business areas, is exploring options that leverage COTS. Given the magnitude of this program, the new system will take from 2 to 3 years to implement.
- CIT's four core values are customer service, honesty and integrity, creativity and innovation, and a passion for excellence. Al asked all IC representatives to communicate areas in which CIT could improve adherence to these values. ❖❖

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## Group Updates...

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with NIH direction: the IMAP protocol for email portability, the S/MIME protocol for email security, the LDAP protocol for directory services, and PKI for enterprise-wide security services.

### **AMG Technical Subcommittee – Central Directory Project**

Keith Gorlen described the AMG Technical Subcommittee's progress toward a centralized directory supporting NIH's enterprise business processes. The Technical Subcommittee is working with 11 major stovepipe "people databases" on campus to provide a consistent, integrated directory.

Keith reported the results of an outside expert's review of the current technical approach to building the directory. The review endorsed all NIH plans and noted that NIH was a leader in terms of progress toward enterprise-level directory services.

The AMG discussed the wisdom of trailblazing technology in this area. Keith responded by noting that most of the challenge in planning and implementing the directory would come from the organizational and management areas. As a result, even if the technology approach had to be modified as the project progressed, most of the activity would not be wasted.

Keith reported that the next major steps are implementation of a "proof of concept" to demonstrate the feasibility of the current design and integration of the necessary COTS tools.

### **Electronic Document Management Working Group**

Donna Wicker, chair of the Electronic Document Management Working Group, focused on electronic records management (ERM). Several recent legal developments will determine the approach and schedule to ERM at NIH. Most recently, the December 30 deadline for the NARA to develop policy on electronic records management was lifted to allow Federal IT managers to focus on preparing for Y2K. Pending appeals and other legal actions will further affect ERM scheduling in unpredictable ways.

Because of the likely schedule pressure and the amount of work involved, the Electronic Document Management Working Group recommends that NIH start preparing to meet potential ERM policies now. The working group is researching COTS products to address this problem. The working group recommends a centralized approach to a records repository that services all ICDs. AMG members discussed the feasibility and advisability of a centralized approach.

### **Y2K Initiatives**

Jaren Doherty provided an update on progress toward preparing for the year 2000, indicating that 79 percent of NIH applications and 50 percent of mission-critical applications are compliant. This is slightly behind the initial schedule, which called for 80 percent of mission-critical systems to comply by the current date. The target date for full compliance remains at the end of this year.

Jaren reported on CIT initiatives to ensure desktop computer compliance, and several other AMG members provided informal reports on progress within their ICDs. NIH has several services in place to assist ICDs in compliance activities: for example, CIT runs a 7x24 four-person hotline for Y2K support, and the Y2K "clearing house" web site for biomedical research equipment, which is available within NIH ([oirm.cit.nih.gov/biomedical](http://oirm.cit.nih.gov/biomedical)), will soon go public.

Current Y2K activities focus on the development of contingency plans in preparation for infrastructure shutdown circumstances, such as loss of power, at the turn of the millennium.

### **WWW Working Group**

Roy Standing chairs AMG's WWW Working Group. Rather than limit his presentation to specific WWW architecture recommendations, Roy addressed a more general topic: the impact of AMG's recommendations and the IT architecture on NIH application system developers and managers.

Roy expressed frustration that—after he, his fellow working group members, and the AMG had invested a significant amount of time—there is limited awareness of and compliance with NIH architecture standards and recommendations, largely due to the absence of a process for communicating AMG recommendations to the NIH community. For example, he noted that IMPAC II, about which the AMG received a briefing at the previous quarterly meeting, does not comply, largely because its developers are unaware of many of the standards and guidelines that affect them and the ICs.

Speaking on behalf of the members of the WWW Working Group, Roy recommended a "carrot" approach to encourage compliance with AMG standards. The approach includes providing central support (through CIT) for those development projects that do adhere to the NIH tactical and strategic architecture. During the ensuing discussion, several AMG members voiced the opinion that this type of support would not be sufficient to achieve compliance—that most NIH system developers would not be inclined to transfer support or training to a central organization.

Other mechanisms for improving compliance were discussed, among them the recommendation that a requirement for NIH architecture compliance be incorporated into NIH contracts. Another suggestion was to use the NIH architecture in the manner required by Clinger-Cohen legislation: as a part of the IT investment review and funding decision process. Al Graeff and other AMG members observed that several steps would be required as a prerequisite to these actions:

- The NIH IT architecture would have to be "fleshed-out" so that it would be suitable as the basis for judging compliance in the IT investment decision process.
- Recommended procedures for using the architecture in IT investment review would need to be developed.
- Appropriate contractual wording would need to be developed to require NIH contractors to adhere to the architecture.

The discussion closed with a proposal that an AMG working group be formed to further develop each of these action areas for discussion and adoption by the AMG.

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# AMG Re-evaluation

**B**efore the fall AMG quarterly, Harvey Karch (NIDA) convened an ad hoc discussion group of interested AMG members to discuss the future role and organization of the AMG. He presented a proposal from that discussion group and opened the floor for further AMG discussion and comments. The proposal included the following major points:

- The AMG would be renamed the "Information Technology Management Board (ITMB)." It would provide input to the CIO on the "what" and "how" of IT and would report directly to the Board of Governors.
- The working groups of the ITMB would include a permanent Technical Subcommittee and temporary ad hoc subcommittees formed as technology issues arose.
- The ITMB chairmanship would rotate among the ICs (excluding CIT). Each IC, including CIT, would have a representative. Formal voting (one vote per IC) would be conducted, and majority and minority opinions would be documented. The ITMG's recommendations would be passed, unedited, to the CIO and the Board of Governors. The CIO would assign the ITMB specific issues to consider, a schedule for resolution, and logistical and other support as appropriate.
- The ITMB technical and ad hoc subcommittees would coordinate with and draw from existing groups for input to recommendations.

The following discussion points were raised in response to this proposal:

- There was mixed reaction to the concept of a direct connection between the ITMB and the Board of Governors. The AMG consensus was that the CIO, as a trusted representative of the ICs in matters related to information technology and management, could provide the link to the Board of Governors.
- The idea of each IC having one representative was discussed. Many thought that appointing a single representative did not provide enough flexibility, while others felt that it would be suitable to have one formal representative, with other IC people participating as necessary.
- There was discussion concerning the basic function of the ITMB: Should the focus be on management issues or technology issues? The consensus was that the Technical Subcommittee would address the technical issues and the main ITMB body would focus on management issues. Several AMG members expressed the opinion that it is important to have a forum in which IT technical and management issues come together.

While there was consensus on many of the ideas presented by Harvey, it was clear that the importance and complexity of this issue require that it be discussed further.



# Meeting Close

The meeting was closed at approximately 3:15 p.m. The next quarterly meeting will be held on a date near January 20, 1999. In addition, the AMG will reconvene in approximately 30 days for a half-day session to achieve consensus on the AMG re-evaluation recommendations.




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## *The AMG Quarterly*

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The purpose of the report is to communicate important information discussed, decisions made, and actions taken during the AMG quarterly meeting.

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