

# Lowering the Cost of IUID: Two Elements to Low-Cost Business System IUID Enablement

Nancy Wallace

*DASN (A&LM) provides information about its strategy to accomplish rapid, low-cost IUID implementation within automated information systems (AISs) across the DON.*

The Department of Defense (DoD) is committed to using Item Unique Identification (IUID) as a key technology in the global management of DoD assets. Despite this commitment by the DoD, as well as the mandate issued by OSD in 2004 requiring IUID implementation, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) reports implementation delays and resourcing constraints.

One aspect of IUID implementation that has been especially constrained by a lack of dedicated funding has been the modification of existing automated information systems (AISs) to enable them to, at a minimum, read, store, and forward the Unique Item Identifier (UII) associated with items tracked by those systems. There are approximately 160 AISs across the Department of Navy (DON) and the Marine Corps that must be IUID-enabled in an efficient and effective manner.

Understanding the enormous challenge this presents, DASN (A&LM) developed an AIS implementation strategy that uses existing Government-owned tools coupled with an innovative approach to data sharing. This strategy accomplishes a rapid, low-cost IUID implementation within AISs DON-wide.

The first element of the strategy is based on the use of Government-owned application programming interfaces (APIs). These APIs offer three critical capabilities: 1) the ability to use tethered scanners to read IUID marks; 2) the ability, using data from the IUID mark, to assemble the UII from the individual data elements contained in the mark; and 3) the ability to register new IUID marks with the DoD IUID Registry and validate mark compliance with OSD standards.

One of the business systems that has recently implemented the API approach is the Product Data Reporting and Evaluation Program/Product Quality Deficiency Reports (PDREP/PQDR) system, managed by the Naval Sea Logistics Center (NSLC). This AIS, which handles deficiency reporting across the DoD services, implemented IUID for \$54,000 using the DASN (A&LM) APIs. PDREP/PQDR now has the ability to auto-populate most fields in a deficiency report based on the item's scanned UII.

In addition to being able to scan and decode an IUID mark, each AIS must be able to include the UII as part of the data being transferred in its interfaces with other systems. Unfortunately, modifying system interfaces

requires that all systems sharing an interface must implement the changes simultaneously. The result has been that although many systems can send the UII within their interfaces, few do so because one or more interface partners are not currently IUID capable.

Addressing this problem is the basis for the second element of the DASN (A&LM) AIS implementation strategy. By establishing a central integrated platform for IUID data exchange, DASN (A&LM) will enable all systems to communicate through a single interface for IUID-related data. This central integrated platform will allow non-IUID enabled systems to communicate with IUID-enabled systems and automatically adjust the data as required for each system.

The central integrated platform demonstration will be developed as a joint effort by DASN (A&LM) and OPNAV N40. The Naval Tactical Command Support System (NTCSS), which is comprised of a family of AISs, has been identified to participate in the demonstration.

Once the demonstration capabilities are available, a team comprised of OPNAV resource sponsors, DASN (A&LM), Navy ERP, and SYSCOMs will review the technical and financial

## About the Author

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*continued on page 2*

## Lowering the Cost of IUID: Two Elements to Low-Cost Business System IUID Enablement

continued from page 1

feasibility of using the central integrated platform enterprise wide. The team will use the IUID-enablement of the selected NTCSS AISs to estimate the cost of implementing the approach across the DON.

Contingent upon successful demonstration of the approach, OPNAV and DASN (A&LM) will consider

incorporating it into the larger OPNAV Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) for consolidating the maintenance and logistics systems in the Department of Navy.

Based on the current IUID implementation status for the majority of DON AISs, it is obvious that the way forward to successful IUID

implementation requires a more cost-effective approach. If the DASN (A&LM) strategy holds true to its promise, it will be possible to implement IUID within DON AISs much more quickly and much less expensively than has previously been thought possible, thereby allowing the DON to meet the DoD IUID mandate as intended.