

TESTIMONY OF
THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF
THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
BEFORE
THE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
APRIL 29, 2009

Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Lungren, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the April 22, 2009 Inspector General's Report No. 2008-PA-105, "Information Technology Strategic Planning: A Well Developed Framework is Essential to Support the Library's Current and Future Needs."

I am Laura Campbell, Associate Librarian for Strategic Initiatives and Chief Information Officer. I am joined here today by Jo Ann Jenkins, Chief Operating Officer.

The report we are here to talk about is an assessment by an Inspector General contractor, A-Tech Systems, Inc. on information technology (IT) strategic planning at the Library of Congress.

We are concerned that the audit minimizes the complex dynamic environment within which the Library must acquire, preserve and make information available. As the institution faces extraordinary challenges posed by technological change, of particular concern to us is the statement in the report that the IT issues the Library faces are "not complex."

Background on the Library and IT Strategic Planning Over the Past Decade

The investment the Library already has made in addressing the frontier challenges of the information revolution have been modest for the tangible results we have delivered to date.

The vision that has driven our Library-wide strategic plan has helped us achieve world-wide recognition. Within this vision our strategic plan, updated continually, focuses on the Library's rapidly-changing needs and goals, identifying emerging technologies to help us meet those needs. It is particularly important to note that while our strategic planning efforts may not be perfect, they have been recognized by our appropriations' committees for their effectiveness in tying goals and objectives to budget requests, and by others in the federal government who seek our counsel on strategic planning.

The role of the Chief Information Officer in too many organizations focuses internally rather externally. It is isolated from the strategic planning process and the management of the overall organization. In the Library's case, we focused our efforts on the needs of the Library's customers and on the changing technologies as we deliver on our mission.

During the last decade, information technology at the Library has delivered many operational improvements and systems. Our strategy has been to transfer the cost savings made by doing away with legacy equipment and systems into an industry best practices' organization as we have tried to keep current with ever changing computer technologies. The most challenging aspect of this work has been to address how to handle the new "digital object" that formerly was a physical object such as a book, a sound recording or even a map. A digital object created on a website, from databases or word processors, requires a whole new way of managing information, now in ones and zeros. Traditionally structured IT operations, isolated from strategic management, do not lend themselves to this new frontier.

Some of the Library's leading edge efforts have included digitizing and making available on our website millions of primary documents that are freely available and historically important and useful in the classroom.

The National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program has developed a national network of partners, including the private sector, state and local governments, non-profits, research and archival institutions to save at-risk born digital content.

Last week, we launched a World Digital Library in collaboration with UNESCO and 31 partner countries and organizations. With commentary in seven languages including cultural examples from every country in the world, the goal of this project is to bring people together, deepen their understanding of each other, and help electronically-oriented young people enjoy what is best in different cultures, using new media.

The National Digital Newspaper Program, a joint project of the Library and the National Endowment of Humanities, will soon put online its one millionth newspaper page. This program provides enhanced access to historic United States' newspapers. Institutions in sixteen states – including universities, historical societies and libraries – now contribute newspaper content.

The Copyright Office has developed an on-line system for copyright registration and now more than half of registrations are being submitted electronically. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is transitioning to new digital machines and flash cards to serve 800,000 Americans. The first 5000 machines are now being distributed across the country for user testing.

Since the mid-1990s, we have provided to Congress unique legislative information through the Congressional Research Service's Legislative Information System and through THOMAS, a public source of legislative documents and information on the work of Congress.

To serve the Law Library customers' – Congress and the American public – need for research and reference capabilities in foreign law, we developed in the early 1990s, the Global Legal Information Network, a public database of more than 150,000 laws,

regulations, judicial decisions, and other complementary legal sources with contributions today from 51 member nations and international organizations.

All of these initiatives have required state of the art technology, have met mission goals of providing access to knowledge and information, and have helped us learn how to manage diverse and fast-changing technical formats for the many types of digital content. These initiatives have helped the Library transform itself taking advantage of new technology.

Strategic Planning Process

We share the Inspector General's recognition of the importance of information technology and the need to ensure strategic planning for IT is a unifying force at the Library. This includes alignment of service unit plans with the Library's, and ensuring technology initiatives and IT planning specifically are linked and understood throughout the Library.

Indeed, the Library is the process of updating its 2008-2013 Strategic Plan to make sure that Library priorities address the needs of its customers, and that synergies across programs are identified and utilized. Over the past year we have been working to refresh and strengthen the Library-wide strategic planning process especially to meet significant challenges we face now and in the future. This will remain an ongoing effort as the Library seeks to address rising customer and Congressional expectations for ready access to our services and collections.

IT Investment Process

The report includes recommendations to inventory and prioritize all Library IT systems that require upgrades and new projects to create an IT portfolio, to develop a plan to review and eliminate duplicative costs, to account for all IT costs – including computer security—as part of the IT budgetary process, to develop a cost-benefit analysis for all IT investment including risk criteria, and to plan for moving through the stages of IT Investment Management.

The Library currently manages significant IT investments in two ways. The Library's Operations Committee reviews and approves IT initiatives. Examples over the past few years include investments in data and voice wireless systems, central management of the Library's workstations, email and the Enterprise Architecture. The other service and infrastructure units have much smaller IT budgets and significant expenditures are reviewed through the budget request process with ultimate investment decisions made by the Librarian and Executive Committee. The Library will move to unify and formalize the process to ensure that smaller investments are included in the oversight.

The Library is completing an inventory of all information technology systems and we do maintain a project registry of a variety of relevant information related to these systems.

All significant upgrades are treated as separate projects and subject to System Development Life Cycle and project management disciplines and controls. Prioritization of projects will continue to occur at the Library-wide level.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will develop a plan to track all Library IT expenses across appropriations accounts to identify duplicative information technology costs. Centralization will continue to occur where appropriate. We note that some functions are more appropriately decentralized to meet the immediate information management needs of the individual business units within the Library. We will develop risk criteria for IT investments. The CFO will also look at opportunities to coordinate purchases.

Organizational Structure

The report includes recommendations to restructure the current information technology functions and reporting lines, reconfigure IT authority and responsibilities, and the establishment of an Office of the Chief Information Officer reporting directly to the Librarian or Chief Operating Officer.

The Librarian reviewed the full report from the OIG, and has concluded, and we agree, that this limited report alone does not provide enough analysis by which fundamental decisions can be made about the Library's internal structure. A decision to conduct such a restructuring will require a broader and deeper analysis.

The Library is looking at these recommendations with the goal of having the best governance structure for the very important IT functions of the Library. As important as "best practices" are, the Library is a one-of-a-kind institution with a mix of businesses, products and services unlike any other public or private organization. Changes to the current organizational structure must be carefully considered, planned and executed in order to continue critical services to Congress and the public.

Enterprise Architecture

The Report includes recommendations for a strong Enterprise Architecture program coupled with a strategy to provide a roadmap for implementing future technology.

As noted in the Report, the Library began the development of an Enterprise Architecture two years ago. It was suspended last year over funding availability but was restarted this past fall. We agree with the IG on the need for an Enterprise Architecture program and contracted with one of the foremost authorities in Enterprise Architecture to guide the Library in standing up this program. This initiative is being overseen directly by the Library's Operations Committee and involves all service and support units' system/business process owners.

We recognize the value of federal guidance on development of an Enterprise Architecture. The GAO's evaluative Enterprise Architecture Management Maturity Framework and OMB's Federal Segment Architecture Methodology are being taken into account as we

move forward. The Library is committed to a usable and informed Enterprise Architecture. It is not the intention of the Library to reinvent the wheel and we recognize the benefit of learning from the experiences of other federal agencies that are developing or have developed enterprise architectures. It has always been the intent of the Library to keep the processes for developing an Enterprise Architecture in line with agencies of similar size to avoid developing a process that is too complex. The Enterprise Architecture team has visited several like-sized agencies, including GPO. The team is visiting GAO on May 1st.

Customer Service

The Report includes recommendations to improve internal IT customer service including the implementation of a formal process for soliciting customer feedback for recommendations, ideas and complaints.

The Library will continue to move forward in a number of areas to improve Information Technology Services (ITS) customer service. We agree that the Project Management, System Development Life Cycle, Security and Help Desk processes need constant updating. In fact, the System Development Life Cycle has been significantly revised twice since issuance of this methodology in FY 2003. The Security policy has also been revised twice and the Security Directives are under constant revision.

We are exploring how best to use service level agreements to set standards for service and for staff evaluation, and intend to incorporate best practices for service management from organizations such as the Help Desk Institute and the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL). We will develop a set of metrics to measure Help Desk performance. Subject to available resources, we will implement a COTS enterprise Help Desk system with capabilities to get customer feedback on calls, reports on the closure rates of calls, types of calls and other metrics. Although very important, the Library's many other critical IT needs have been given a higher priority against available funding.

The Library will re-evaluate its Help Desk contract once the CFO has completed a review of Help Desk costs and any appropriate centralization areas have been identified. And very importantly, ITS will expand on communications and feedback with its customers including regular customer surveys and open informational meetings.

In closing, like every dynamic organization, the Library of Congress continues to look at how it can improve its business processes as it accomplishes its mission critical work. We are transitioning from isolated content-specific applications and information systems to a technology infrastructure that will allow us to build resilient, flexible and scalable systems that can easily adapt to future business and user requirements as well as advances in technology.

I am confident in the Library's ability to create a well-developed framework to support our current and future information technology needs. Our work will be informed by this Report. Thank you.

