

GSA crafts EA through modeling

BY JASON MILLER | GCN STAFF

It would have been easy for Chris Fornecker, the General Services Administration's chief technology officer, to get the Office of Management and Budget off his back.

He could simply have developed an enterprise architecture that met the administration's requirements and earned GSA a green mark on the President's Management Agenda scorecard.

But Fornecker sought to do more than merely satisfy the requirements. Instead, he developed the concept of One GSA Enterprise Architecture, which when finished in April will change the way the agency manages its nine lines of business. The new architecture will not only meet the PMA's requirements but will give GSA a more useful, flexible EA.

Making EA meaningful

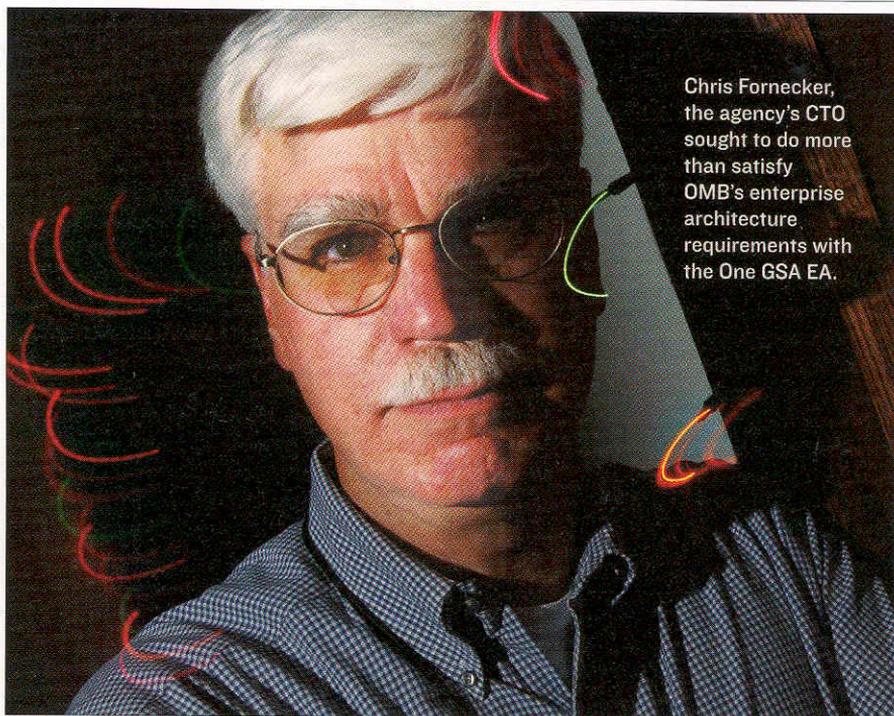
"It is not hard to generate something that is acceptable to OMB," Fornecker said. "But it would not be useful for the business lines. I resisted the temptation to get them off my back" and instead found a way to do EA that is meaningful for GSA.

Fornecker said he wanted to go beyond generating paper and documenting unstructured data, as the agency's past EA efforts did. Instead, GSA used the Model-Driven Architecture approach to assess its current architecture, its ultimate EA goal and the plan to get from one to the other.

MDA separates the business or application process from the underlying technology, according to the Object Management Group Inc. of Needham, Mass., a nonprofit consortium that produces and maintains computer specifications for interoperable enterprise applications.

This approach is based on open standards and is not dependent on any specific technology platform, using standards such as Unified Modeling Language, Extensible Markup Language Metadata Interchange and Common Warehouse Metamodel.

"This methodology would allow us to more quickly implement changes in our business



Chris Fornecker, the agency's CTO sought to do more than satisfy OMB's enterprise architecture requirements with the One GSA EA.

Enterprise architecture, the GSA way

Once finished, the agency will view its business processes across nine lines of business:

- ▶▶ Acquisition
- ▶▶ Finance
- ▶▶ Human resources
- ▶▶ IT
- ▶▶ Marketing
- ▶▶ Policy
- ▶▶ Federal Technology Service
- ▶▶ Federal Supply Service
- ▶▶ Public Buildings Service

processes," Fornecker said. "We want to put the business processes in the model so their descriptions have meaning and the information that flows between them is defined."

Fornecker expects GSA to move to green from yellow under the E-Government portion of the PMA scorecard by next summer.

"We will go to OMB and show them our products and see what happens," he said.

"We think using the MDA methodology will make it easier for other agencies to repeat our processes."

Before moving to the MDA approach, Fornecker said, each office of GSA developed its own EA using different methodologies. Most of the blueprints were limited to technology standards, not business and data models.

While Fornecker doesn't expect to finish assessing the current architecture, the target blueprint and the transition plan for another six months, his team, including prime contractor LMI of McLean, Va., and subcontractors Data Access Technologies of Miami and Unisys Corp., is validating parts of the modernization blueprint.

"Business line experts will be able to talk about delivering services to the customer, no matter what business line they are in," Fornecker said. "We will be able to identify the processes that make sense to share services." ■

GCN associate editor Joab Jackson contributed to this story.

Major programs

▶▶ **GSA Preferred:** The Federal Technology Service started implementing its new commercial procurement for IT, network services and professional services last summer in two regions. The program is intended to provide vendors and agencies with better project management and financial data. Vendors have raised concerns since the implementation started because they are not getting paid in a timely manner and contract opportunities are not being sent to the right people.

▶▶ **Integrated Acquisition Environment:** One of the 25 e-government initiatives, the project team has implemented 17 systems that fall under three categories: Business Partner Network, Acquisition Information Reporting and e-Marketplace. The project also launched a pilot with four agencies for intragovernmental rent transactions and IT services greater than \$100,000. The Office of Management and Budget is reviewing the test run to determine a schedule for govern-

mentwide rollout. GSA also will develop a one-stop portal for vendors and agencies to access all the acquisition tools.

▶▶ **Network:** This multiple-award follow-on to FTS 2001 for voice and data telecommunications services is potentially worth \$20 billion. Agencies and vendors submitted comments on the draft request for proposals in December, and the final RFP is set for release in April. FTS plans to award the contract by April of next year.