



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

December 19, 2008

MEMORANDUM

FROM:

Chief Information Officer 

Director, Program Management Group 

Chief Technology Officer 

Director, Systems Development and Maintenance Group 

Director, Enterprise Systems Services Group 

SUBJECT:

Systems Development Life Cycle 3.0

OCIO began in 2008, a series of coordinated efforts to strengthen the IT infrastructure at the USPTO and to ensure that OCIO is positioned to provide our internal and external USPTO customers the best and most reliable infrastructure and services possible. An initiative to revise and sharpen our Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC) process started in the spring and is now incorporated into the Process Standardization Initiative of the OCIO Transformation Road Map. This effort resulted in the rollout of SDLC 3.0 in September. SDLC 3.0 brings more discipline and transparency to our processes and helps us ensure that the USPTO's limited resources are used most effectively to support the achievement of agency business goals and objectives.

The most significant changes in SDLC 3.0 are better specification of roles and responsibilities and providing more attention to entry and exit criteria for each phase. SDLC 3.0 has been designed to help make sure that the appropriate people follow the right set of activities, adhere to proper standards, and the agency delivers products that meet expectations.

We are asked to execute a very wide range of projects—from very small to very large, from fairly routine to very innovative, and from simple architecture changes to complex. In response to this variety, SDLC 3.0 was designed to be flexible and adaptable, without losing the basic rigor that is a key benefit of a standardized process. SDLC 3.0 provides criteria to determine the project sizes, ranging from very small to very large, based on several scope and complexity factors. The specific artifacts needed for each project must be tailored by project teams. This tailoring effort includes needed flexibility for creating only documentation that is essential for project success so that we can achieve maximum efficiency. Project teams are being empowered to make these and other key decisions under SDLC 3.0 and are expected to assume a corresponding level of accountability for their determinations.

We have already seen eight successes beginning with the rollout of CFC e-pledge, the first SDLC 3.0 very small project to be delivered. Of the other seven projects, three were very small, three were small, and one was a medium sized project. Training of technical and program staff in SDLC 3.0 is advancing rapidly with more than 75 percent of project team members attending classes to date. OCIO has established an on-line repository of SDLC 3.0 reference materials, guidelines, and templates as aides to project teams (located on the OCIO Intranet). We will continue to add to these materials as teams gain experience with SDLC 3.0 and we expect that SDLC 3.0 itself will evolve continuously based on your experience and feedback.

USPTO Policy for Following SDLC 3.0

Effective immediately, all new USPTO IT projects, including all projects in the OCIO Transformation Road Map must follow SDLC 3.0.

Non-Emergency Maintenance Projects:

All maintenance efforts, except emergency maintenance, are considered projects and must follow SDLC 3.0.

Emergency Maintenance:

Emergency maintenance efforts are exempt from SDLC 3.0 but must be approved by the originating entity's direct report and the Deputy CIO before implementation, to the maximum extent possible. There will be times when the discovery of an issue requires an emergency maintenance fix during evenings or weekends. Approval of these efforts must be sought after the fact. CPNs are no longer to be used as the sole justification for emergency maintenance projects.

Projects Started Before October 1, 2008:

Projects that had a formal kick off before October 1, 2008 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine where they may benefit from the requirements of SDLC 3.0 and the project teams will be asked to incorporate the necessary elements into their existing project plans.

The success or failure of the potential performance improvements available to us through the improved SDLC will be the result of your cooperation and support in adopting SDLC 3.0. We expect that there will be a learning curve and some challenges as the process is implemented. Please let us know if you have questions or suggestions to further improve this process.