

Connecting People and Information: Insights from Victor Gavin, Program Executive Officer, Enterprise Information Systems, U.S. Department of the Navy

By Michael J. Keegan



Information and technology are key strategic assets and are integral to the U.S. Department of the Navy's (DON) information dominance efforts. Today's warfighter depends on the availability of and

access to high quality, timely, and reliable information, and the technology that makes it all possible. The Navy's Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems plays a significant role in ensuring that the service develops, acquires, fields, and sustains enterprise network, business and fleet support information technology systems for the warfighters. What are the strategic priorities for the Navy's Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems? How is the Navy balancing cost with systems capability? What is the Navy's Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems doing to realize greater operational efficiencies? Victor Gavin, Program Executive Officer for the Enterprise Information Systems within the DON, shares his insights on these topics and more. The following is an edited excerpt of our discussion on *The Business of Government Hour*.

What is the mission of the U.S. Navy's Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems (PEO EIS)? How do you connect people and information?



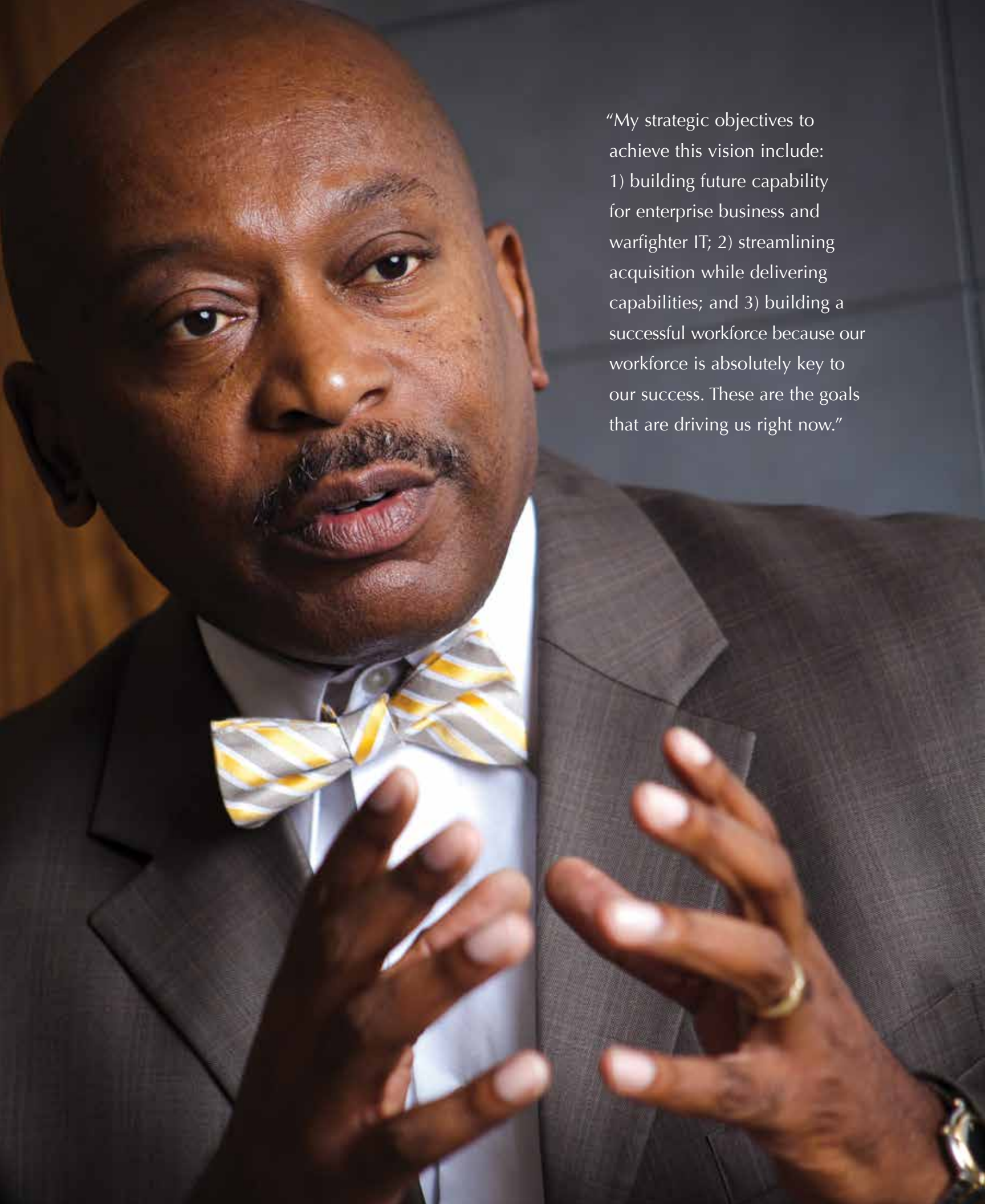
Victor Gavin: The PEO EIS's mission is to: *provide capable and cost-wise enterprise network, business, and fleet support information technology to the DON.*

As we all became more and more reliant on information management and information technology to perform routine activities, there's also been a growing need to oversee the acquisition, development, program management, and

operations of these capabilities that are on our ships and in the hands of our sailors. We need to do this similarly to the way we manage ships, aircraft, and weapons systems. In 2006, PEO EIS evolved from what was initially called the PEO for Information Technology; which, when it was first established oversaw a number of critical HR and business-related IT systems, as well as the initiative for what today is the largest purpose-built intranet or NMCI, and a collection of other information systems. Once that core competency for IT program management was established, the portfolio of programs that required similar oversight grew, leading to the establishment of the PEO for Enterprise Information Systems, hence the name change.

At the time it was established, PEO EIS was set up around the NMCI network, Navy ERP, and personnel and pay systems. Today, though, we provide a wide range of business information systems, applications, and networks that sailors, Marines, and the civilian workforce depend on every day, around the globe, and around the clock. These systems, applications, and networks provide e-mail, Internet access, supply, logistics management, and personnel and pay solutions, training, education tools, and knowledge and record management, and much more.

Currently, we oversee about a \$2 billion portfolio that provides program design, enables common business processes, and provides standard IT capabilities to nearly 1 millions users across the DON. Right now, there are six separate program offices within the PEO who manage more than 900 people in the military, civil service, and contractor workforce. Personnel are located in dozens of states, reaching from Washington, DC's metropolitan area, through the Midwest to Oklahoma, west of California, south to Louisiana and Florida.



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Every day when sailors, Marines, government civilians, and support contractors from the most junior to the highest ranking people log onto their computers, they are most likely running software and applications and services, such as e-mail, that are acquired by PEO EIS. The mission, day-to-day business, and accomplishments of the DON are dependent on having the network access and functionality that we provide.

What are the top three challenges that you face?



Victor Gavin: I'll outline those challenges:

Network and Data Security—By far, the number one challenge we face is network security. We work very closely with our partners at Fleet Cyber Command to address those issues, using and leveraging the technologies that are available in industry today, as well as developing architectures ourselves.

Budget Realities—Second, as in most government organizations, budget realities continue to be a challenge. We continue to do fairly well at, again, leveraging our industry best practices in delivering this capability. As you know, industry has some of the same challenges we have in government in protecting data and bringing down costs. Our ability to leverage those has also resulted in, I think, a positive trajectory on addressing some of the budget challenges we have today.

Speed to Market—Unlike what industry does, we are challenged through our reporting and acquisition processes to maintain that speed to market of getting those technologies into the hands of the sailors and Marines whom we are here to support.

I would like to get a sense of your key priorities and drivers. Would you elaborate on the key priorities that frame your strategic vision for your office? What is driving those priorities?



Victor Gavin: The PEO EIS priorities are aligned with and support the achievement of Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, as well as the Chief of Naval Operations' goals. The vision of the PEO, as I said earlier, is to lead the Department of the Navy as the premier, acceptable, and sought-after enterprise solution provider for secure, affordable, integration of enterprise network, business, and fleet support IT systems.

My strategic objectives to achieve this vision include: 1) building future capability for enterprise business and warfighter IT; 2) streamlining acquisition while delivering

capabilities; and 3) building a successful workforce because our workforce is absolutely key to our success. These are the goals that are driving us right now.

Your programs and services are foundational to the daily running, business, and operations of the Navy. Would you tell us more about the Naval Enterprise Network (NEN) initiative and its portfolio? Perhaps you could give us an update on the current status of this initiative?



Victor Gavin: The NEN Program Office provides program management of the Navy Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI), which, as I said earlier, is the largest purpose-built network in the Department of Defense, and perhaps the world. What started in 2000, with the consolidation and standardization of Navy and Marine Corps networks, has become the model for future enterprise networks. We leverage the expertise of industry to bring us the computing power for this contractor-owned-and-operated network.

Today, we have transitioned to a government-owned, contractor-operated business model that we call The Next Generation Enterprise Network Engine (NGEN). The award of that contract moves us to a position of increased command and control and has resulted in more than \$1 billion of real savings over a five-year period, based on the natural forces of competition. Moving forward, we are starting to view NMCI as the highway, and all the applications that need to run on it as the cars.


Additionally, NEN acquired One-Net, which is a Department of the Navy initiative to deliver comprehensive, end-to-end information band telecommunication services to Navy shore commands outside the continental United States (OCONUS) by using a common computing environment for both the nonsecure IP Router Network (NIPRNet) and Secure IP Router Network (SIPRNet). An additional 30,000 users are part of that network. Our objective here is to pull together a common business model that allows common command and control and increased security with both of those networks.

Overall, it's going very well. As you may recall, there was a protest following the award of the NGEN contract, which delayed the start of our ability to begin transitioning services from the NMCI continuity of services contract to the NGEN contract. Working closely with our industry partners, the team was able to develop a transition plan that would shave nearly 90 days off the approved timeline. The transition went rather smoothly, with no disruption of service for our end-users.



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I’d like to discuss “the business” of running the Navy and efforts to modernize and standardize financial, workforce, and supply chain management across the naval enterprise. Would you tell us more about the Navy Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program and how it seeks to enable Navy leadership to make sound strategic and operational fact-based decisions to shape readiness?

 **Victor Gavin:** We actually have two primary ERPs in our portfolio, both of which help to streamline and manage the supply, repair, and logistics of the Navy and Marine Corps. In addition to the Navy ERP, one of the other ERPs in our portfolio of programs is the Global Combat Support System–Marine Corps.

The Navy ERP system has modernized business systems and processes for all of the Navy acquisition commands and has more than 72,000 users, providing a powerful business system for financial acquisition, workforce, and supply change management. Fifty to fifty-one percent of the Navy’s total obligating authority is executed through this tool. Savings to date have come primarily through inventory savings because of the changing of our management process inside the department. The Navy can now order and have visibility into the entire inventory, thus saving dollars on acquiring and stocking supplies as we’ve done previously. In FY2011, the Navy saved about \$280 million, with another \$200 million returned to the Navy to date, due to better inventory management.

Additionally, the Global Combat Systems Marine Corps is an enterprise resource planning tool and provides better resource planning, logistics change management, and increased visibility and accountability. It also improves operational readiness for all Marine assets. When fully deployed, GCSS Marine Corps was reporting about 40,000 additional users in 70 locations worldwide.

Would you tell us more about the Navy’s Sea Warrior program and its portfolio?

 **Victor Gavin:** The Navy Sea Warrior Program Office is a program of programs in which individual business applications and assets are aligned to capability portfolios, providing a “big picture” to analyze and inform IT investment decisions. There are some 60 programs inside that program office, which are primarily focused on the management of the personnel inside the Navy. Specifically, our personnel modernization efforts are designed to improve sailors’ self-service interfaces with the systems in the SWP portfolio.


The Personnel and Modernization (Pers Mod) effort is designed to enable sailor self-service and automation of high-volume, routine transactions, enable legacy system consolidation, and develop interoperable capabilities that can be leveraged across the portfolio of Navy personnel systems. For example, in the current retirement and separation processes, service members and personnel administrators perform a number of manual activities within multiple unintegrated systems. This results in data entry discrepancies, an inability to track requests, and an overall inefficient and challenging process. In addition, requests are often delayed due to the number of errors within the manual inputs currently required.

This first modernization effort provides an automated personnel retirement and separation process for officers and enlisted service members serving in the active and Reserve components. It starts with the submission of an initial retirement or separation inquiry and ends with strength-loss processing and submission of documentation to trigger final pay transactions. Pers Mod will save the Navy millions of dollars a year in processing retirements and separations by decreasing average processing time, increasing service member accessibility, reducing data errors and manual data entry requirements, and improving request visibility, tracking, and reporting. Additionally, we have a portal, My Navy Portal, which is a sailor interface to his or her personnel record; it will serve the Navy’s more than 400,000 active and reserve sailors.

We also have the DON Tasking, Records, and Consolidated Knowledge Enterprise Repository (TRACKER), which is a single-enterprise solution to replace multiple legacy Navy and Marine Corps task management (TM) and records management (RM) applications and processes. Currently, the DON is using more than 20 different task and records management systems, including five large-scale stand-alone IT solutions. While this approach may serve individual commands and directorates, it is no longer viable for the DON enterprise. The DON's need to reduce cost and increase operational efficiency necessitates a unified and scalable solution.


TRACKER is a single, Web-based solution composed of enterprise information services, common business rules and processes, consistent task and record terminology, user training aids, and Common Access Card (CAC) authentication.

With rising cyber-threats, what is being done to strengthen your IT security posture across the enterprise?

 **Victor Gavin:** As I noted, the security of our system, applications, and data is a top priority. We must constantly weigh the need for improved performance against increased security. While I can't discuss specifics, when it comes to the threat environment and maintaining security, we have a variety of tools and processes in place to track the health of our networks and to identify adversarial activity. We continue to develop and refine extensive capabilities to defend our networks, which include both tools and personnel. We continuously make adjustments to infrastructure; the new norm in which we operate requires we constantly stay ahead of the adversary in the cyber arena.

One example of how we are adjusting to manage the threats is the recent establishment of Task Force Cyber Awakening. The Chief of Naval Operations established the task force to deliver a fundamental change to the Navy's organization, resourcing, acquisition, and readiness by extending our cybersecurity apparatus beyond traditional IT to our combat systems, combat support, and other information systems, while aligning and strengthening authority and accountability. Task Force Cyber Awakening will forge a holistic view of cybersecurity risk across the Navy and address the fragmented and uneven efforts across our platforms and systems.

Would you tell us about any recent accomplishment you are most pleased with and perhaps what are some of the major opportunities and challenges your organization will encounter in the future?

 **Victor Gavin:** When we talk about accomplishments in the context of PEO EIS, it is natural to look at milestones such as holding a very successful competition and award of the Next Generation Enterprise Network contract. This contract is saving DON and taxpayers more than \$1 billion of real savings. Another example is reaching full deployment and sustainment of Navy enterprise resource planning.

However, it may be what you don't necessarily notice that I am most proud of, and that is the way our PEO EIS team performed and continues to perform during this period of fiscal uncertainty. In recent years, the team remained focused during continuing resolutions and sequestration. They worked through the complexities and uncertainties to keep the ship on course—and continued to ensure our systems, applications and networks were accessible to the Navy and Marine Corps. They also continued to find ways to achieve savings that can be returned to the DON for other priorities. This was only possible due to our talented and dedicated workforce. That is why, when the chips are down and the money is tight, the best thing we can do is to invest in our people to ensure they are equipped and ready to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities. We have worked hard over the past year to increase the amount of training and knowledge transfer opportunities across the PEO. I will not be surprised in meeting the challenges ahead that our team will find ways to improve on delivering solutions to the Naval Fleet and Marine Forces. ■

To learn more about the Navy PEO EIS, go to www.public.navy.mil/spawar/PEOEIS/Pages/default.aspx



To hear *The Business of Government Hour's* interview with Victor Gavin, go to the Center's website at www.businessofgovernment.org.



To download the show as a podcast on your computer or MP3 player, from the Center's website at www.businessofgovernment.org, right click on an audio segment, select Save Target As, and save the file.



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