# ACQUISITION PIONEERING–A CASE STUDY OF APPLYING VIRTUAL OFFICE IN A COMPETITIVE SOURCE SELECTION ENVIRONMENT

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout corporate America, geographically dispersed workers and collaborative teams that form and disband on a project-by-project basis are growing at a rate expected to exceed 30 million by 2004. With the enhancement of telecommunication technologies; companies have been able to exploit the virtual world, find innovative ways to maintain their competitive edge, recruit and retain key individuals, and enhance the quality of life by removing the requirement that tied workers to a particular office building.

The notion of virtual office was addressed in a study conducted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, acknowledging that telecommuting will increase and remote locations may be the hallmark of the early 21st century in private industry and Government. This suggests a need for the Air Force to search for ways to allow its people (both military and civilian) to work effectively and efficiently from remote, home-station locations while involved with centralized acquisition locations.

This paper addresses the feasibility and issues associated with one of the first Air Force source selection that utilized the concept of telecommuting with multiple users at multiple remote locations. It describes the F-16 Modular Simulated Aircraft Maintenance Trainer (MSAMT) team's streamlined selection processes that exploited the newly automated capability of the Acquisition Support Division. The need for a progressive acquisition approach stemmed from significant decreases in Government funding, specifically for F-16 training systems. The networking of four (4) remote locations to a centralized acquisition facility saved TDY (travel) time and scarce funds. This advancement in telecommuting allowed participants to continue day-to-day operations at their primary duty station while continuing to integrate their assessments and periodic interaction with the selection decision process. This allowed the project manager to use the expertise of key, off-base Government personnel (users from the Air Combat Command, the Air Education and Training Command, and the Air Logistics Center).

The proven success of the F-16 MSAMT source selection process is one demonstration of Government telecommuting. With further consideration, the results of this approach could have application for future Air Force source selections as well as throughout the Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition community.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## INTRODUCTION

With the enhancement of telecommunication technologies, companies have been able to exploit the virtual world, finding innovative ways to maintain their competitive edge, recruit and retain key individuals, and enhance their quality of life by removing the requirement that tied workers to a particular office building.

### Description of the Problem

The need for a progressive acquisition approach stemmed from the significant decreases in Government funding, specifically for F-16 training systems. The F-16 Modular Simulated Aircraft Maintenance Trainer (MSAMT) was designed as a cost-effective approach intended to replace the existing, non-current maintenance trainers and will be used to educate technicians to fault isolate systems more efficiently.

Faced with a fixed travel budget of $98,000 for the following fiscal year, the MSAMT team brainstormed methods of reducing travel expenditures. As the overall acquisition strategy and subsequent source selection plan was derived, initial estimates cited that in excess of $65,000 would be needed in order to conduct the competition. Over 66% of the MSAMT's initial budget was tied to travel costs associated with sending team members to Dayton Ohio for over 12 weeks. Thus, the team sought methods to reduce this significant cost-driver.

Working with the Acquisition Support Division (ASD) office at the Aeronautical Systems Center (ASC) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the concept of telecommuting during source selection was instituted.

Telecommuting from multiple locations is a concept that had not been tested during a United States Air Force source selection conducted at the ASC. Could the MSAMT Team use this concept of telecommuting for this selection? The team's goal was to apply this concept successfully in order to keep the program within budget.

### Defining Telecommuting, Telework, Flexiplace, and Virtual Office

Throughout this paper the terms telecommuting, telework, flexiplace, and virtual office will be used interchangeably. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) defines telework as "a work arrangement in which an employee regularly works at an alternate worksite such as the employee's home, a telecenter, or other worksite."[1] However, the International Telework Association Council (ITAC) contends that telework is a "much broader term that means using telecommunications to work whenever you need to in order to satisfy client needs."[2] While several definitions and interpretations of these terms exist, the terms herein refer to rapid communication and common data availability to all members of an integrated process team, allowing them to be dispersed geographically.[3]

Whereas the options for remote work vary and offer tremendous flexibility, for the purposes of this paper, the remote work referred to is the non-home-based type. This is defined as working from a location closer to home than ones' primary office. The work conducted during this particular source selection was conducted by networking evaluators from four remote locations (Hill, Langley, Luke, and Sheppard Air Force bases) to a centralized acquisition facility located at Wright-Patterson AFB (see Figure 1).

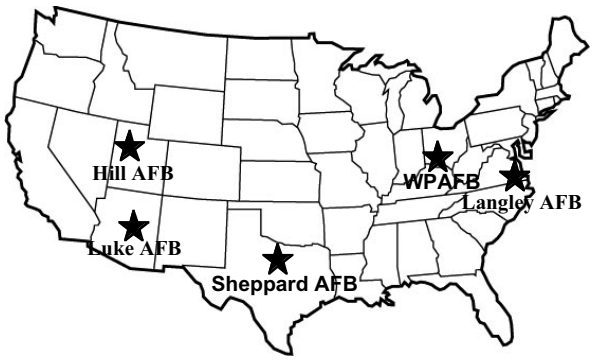



Figure 1 – Telecommuting Locations

However, do not overlook the idea that one could extrapolate the results obtained from this case study across other dispersed locations.

**Method of Approach**

There have been many studies and analyses done in regards to telecommuting, both by the Government (the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the GSA, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense) and the private sector. However, none focus specifically on Government source selections. The focus of this paper is to help identify the successful and unsuccessful implementation of telecommuting observed by one project team within ASC who were the first to exploit this concept during the initial phase of weapon system procurement. This paper is based on historical data on both Government Source Selections conducted within ASC and current data derived from industry regarding the implementation of telecommuting.

**Key Drivers for Integrating Telecommuting during Source Selection**

Having defined telecommuting, it is now important to discuss some reasons, at a macro-level, why the workforce is gravitating toward this trend.

The advantages from telecommuting touch upon three sectors of life: the workplace, the individual, and the environment.[4] A summary of the benefits taken from a U.S. GSA Interim Report of Federal Interagency Telecommuting Centers include[5]:

- Improvements in employee morale and effectiveness.
- Reduction in individual and family stress by fostering a more family-friendly workplace.
- Reductions in transportation costs including car insurance, maintenance, and wear.
- Retention of skilled employees and reduction in turnover due in part to increased job satisfaction.
- Accommodation of employees with short or long-term health problems or family responsibilities, such as problems associated with elder care and latchkey children.
- Cost savings in regard to office space, sick leave absences, and energy conservation.
- Reductions in automobile-created air pollution and traffic congestion.
- Potential for increased productivity.
- Improved work atmosphere due to fewer co-worker, non-business interruptions.

While telecommuting could offer a means of decreasing these costs to the Government as a whole, the MSAMT team sought to use the virtual office primarily as a strategic tool to stay within budget. The potential for increased productivity, flexibility, and morale factored favorably into the decision process as well. Ancillary benefits such as employee retention and energy conservation were not taken into consideration since the working arrangement was temporary.

**Federal Initiatives: The Concept of Telecommuting in Government Work**

The roots of telecommuting originated from a former rocket scientist performing consulting work for the U.S. Air Force Space program. His experience stemmed from teleworking from Los Angeles to Washington D.C. in the early 1960s. Following his work with the Air Force, Dr. Jack Niles became a University of Southern California researcher, focusing on telecommunications-transportation tradeoff. Dr. Niles eventually became known as the “Father of Telecommuting” and helped establish the foundation of this concept today.

The federal government has been experimenting with flexible workplace arrangements and telecommuting for the last eleven years. Between June 1990 and June 1992, the OPM and the GSA operated and evaluated a home-based, flexiplace pilot program that included 15 separate agencies and one thousand participating employees nationwide. The overwhelming majority of employees and supervisors judged these “flexiplace” arrangements to be a desirable workplace option.

Former President Clinton’s Climate Change Action Plan identifies telecommuting as one solution to accommodate the demand for increased mobility and to enhance worker satisfaction.[3] In a July 1994 memorandum, Clinton directed federal agencies to support telecommuting and satellite work locations as a way to expand family-friendly work arrangements throughout the Executive Branch.

In 1996, the President’s Management Council implemented the National Telecommuting Initiative (now called National Telework Initiative) led by the U.S. Department of Transportation and

the GSA. The mission of the NTI was to boost use of telework by all U.S. employers (public and private sectors) with special emphasis on Federal agencies.

In April 2000, a study conducted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense projected that the defense acquisition and technology workforce will continue to shrink with continuing constraints on the federal budget. With an increased focus on competitive sourcing, more commercial-compatible contracting practices and interoperable systems, the role of non-federal individuals and organizations in performing appropriate acquisition functions will increase. In addition, the study reported telecommuting will increase—remote locations may be the hallmark of the early 21st century in private industry and government[3]. The trend towards paper-less contracting will accelerate, as electronic media become more versatile in creating, storing, displaying, retrieving, and modifying contractual material such as solicitations, proposals, contracts, and modifications.

Further evidence of the gravitation to telecommuting can be observed from a current Air Force program being conducted at Wright-Patterson AFB. The Aeronautical Systems Center's Human Resources Directorate is expanding a pilot program in which 200 employees are telecommuting between one and three days per week. Basic parameters are established; outlining both the Government's as well as the employees' responsibilities under this Alternate Workplace Agreement.

As part of the fiscal year 2001 Transportation Department appropriations bill, executive agencies are now required to establish policies on telecommuting.[6] The OPM must assure that 25 percent of the total Federal workforce is covered by such policies by April 2001. This requirement is contained in Section 359 of Public Law 106-346, dated October 23, 2000. The GSA and OPM now have a joint web site on Telework/ Telecommuting (http://www.telework.gov) designed to provide access to guidance for establishing telecommuting policies.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF TELECOMMUTING INTO THE SOURCE SELECTION ENVIRONMENT

Before continuing into the development of how the virtual office was constructed, here is a discussion of the F-16 MSAMT.

### F-16 MSAMT System Overview

The existing F-16 maintenance trainers have 1980 and early 1990 vintage technologies and include the standard computational system to house system simulation and hardware control/integration software and a separate environment to represent the system being trained. Updates to these training devices were planned periodically, based on the impact of changes to the F-16 aircraft to the required training and training equipment. Unfortunately, funding for these updates is often below the funding line and the F-16 maintenance training community was forced to develop training work-arounds, which often require more use of the aircraft. This work-around became more limited as the operational tempo of the F-16 fleet increased and access to the aircraft for training purposes was restricted. A less costly, both initial and life cycle, solution was necessary.

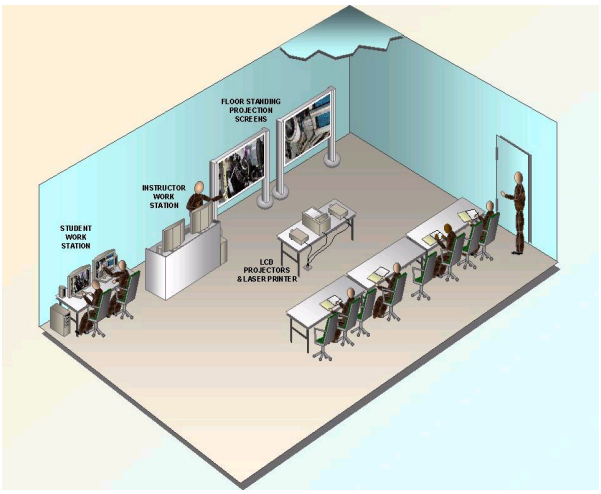



Figure 2 - F-16 MSAMT concept

The overall system design concept for the F-16 MSAMT presented (see Figure 2) is based on a commercially available open architecture solution. The hardware system utilizes PC based Intel Pentium computer technology, peripherals, and support equipment. The hardware solution requires no developmental activities.

**MSAMT Concept of Operations**

The MSAMT supports technician classroom training on four F-16 systems (Electrical, Environmental, Pneumatic/Hydraulic, and Propulsion systems) and associated ground support equipment, and also augments the instructors' ability to convey system knowledge to the students. The modular architecture is designed for expansion and to readily support training/education of other potential aircraft systems such as avionics functions.

Two features of the MSAMT design relate to the telecommunications aspect of this paper. The availability of secure web-based data and the remote trouble shooting capability of the MSAMT contribute to the telecommuting advantages of this program.

The F-16 MSAMT contractor has implemented a secure web-based data delivery and access system, which makes all deliverable data available to the Government in real time. This system is not only for delivery of contractual data, but also forms the storage/filing location of all of their on-going work efforts and activities. The system is used to file the immerging design, management documentation, and the presentation media for all meetings. This system is based on *Lotus Notes* and can be viewed by anyone with an authorized password. If necessary, meetings may be accomplished through videoconference or voice conference calls with the participants viewing the presentations on the desktop computer in their home office, thus reducing travel to and from home stations.

The other telecommuting-related advantage of the trainer design allows for modem connection of the training equipment for remote trouble-shooting from the contractor's logistics support center. This capability will allow direct interaction with the training devices and the instructor during troubleshooting and may eliminate travel by the company technician. Spare components that can be installed by the USAF instructor can be shipped to the sites for a fraction of the cost to send the technician to the site.

**Steps Taken to Develop a Virtual Source Selection Facility**

Before the team could commence with the source selection, two actions were necessary: conduct in-house source selection training for the remote evaluators and establish agreements with the evaluators and their immediate supervisor to work remotely.

*Training*

In-house training was conducted by the program office and the Acquisition Support Division. It consisted of a two-day seminar that gave all members training in the source selection process as well as in the new source selection application software (EZSource). The team was instructed on how to fill out the analysis worksheet, initiate exchanges with offerors, and document their evaluations. The reporting requirements, expected outcome, and the nature and frequency of communication were also defined.

The notebook computers were configured with database replicas in the secure source selection facility at Wright-Patterson and they were hand-carried to the evaluator's home duty stations. When connected and synchronized with the host, each site was able to send and receive documents in near real-time. The remote MSAMT team members, located at Luke, Langley, Shepherd, and Hill Air Force Bases, were electronically tied to the main source section host server at Wright-Patterson AFB via the modem of their notebook.

*Managers' Willingness to Participate*

In addition to training, the remote participants had to obtain permission from their senior management in order to participate remotely in this source selection. The issue of working remotely was not the problem since the team members originally planned and anticipated traveling to Wright-Patterson AFB for the duration of the competition. However, the problem arose from acquiring a work location at their duty station that was not readily accessible to non-source selection personnel. Since the material the team was dealing with was Source Selection Sensitive information, it had to be protected from the casual on-looker.

During training it was stressed that the information located on their notebook computers was sensitive and precautions should be made to keep it in their control at all times. While there was no secret or other classified information, precautions still had to be made in order to keep the information protected. To preserve the integrity of the source selection, the telecommuters were able to access areas and rooms that were free from interruptions.

Source selection integrity was also maintained through a series of passwords and encryption capability. To login, each user was given a unique Windows NT and *Lotus Notes* password. In addition, *Lotus Notes* uses a 128-bit encryption for the transfer of data, satisfying source selection requirements.

**Origin of EZSource**

The Acquisition Support Division at the ASC initiated a project to automate its source selection processes and facilities in 1993. This project was undertaken to help source selection teams that had been having difficulty tracking and organizing the large quantities of information received and generated during the lengthy source selection process.

With today's ever-changing technology, source selection processes previously accomplished using paper and pencil are now accomplished in an electronic medium. At ASC, several large projects currently are in place within the Air Force's "paperless acquisition" initiative. EZSource, a *Lotus Notes* software application, is one of these projects. The ASD's Computer Resource Group, with the guidance of ASC's Source Selection expert advisors, developed this software tool. The group has worked closely with numerous source selection teams to facilitate development of this computerized application within every stage of the source selection process.

The EZSource Source Selection project is a government-owned software package developed for the Air Force and used throughout the Department of Defense. EZSource was designed as a GroupWare application for electronic transaction of government source selections. This application provides standard forms, linked documents, workflow control, security, document routing, electronic signature, and many other built-in features, which streamline the source selection process.


Figure 3 - EZSource Main Menu

Built on a *Lotus Notes* platform, EZSource allows each member of a source selection team to compose his/her analysis worksheets, evaluation notices, and a host of other forms in a document database. The F-16 MSAMT Main Menu is presented at login (see Figure 3).

**Benefits of EZSource**

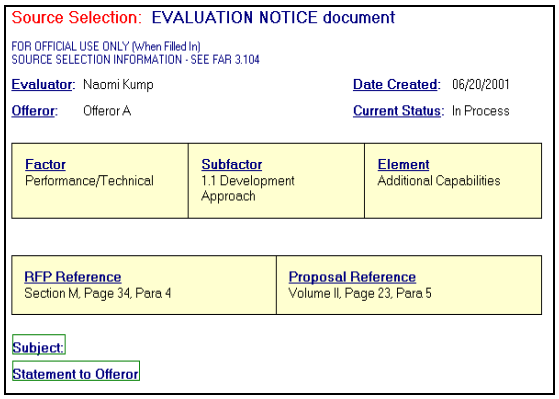
Prior to availability of this electronic source selection tool, source selection evaluation teams spent significant resources (time and people) completing the paper intensive process of proposal evaluation and communication to senior management (evaluation documentation, reports, briefings, etc.). Upon Request For Proposal release, preparing the evaluation documents required the user to summarize the documents' contents. This was tedious, time-consuming, and, at times, inaccurate. As offerors began submitting electronic versions of the proposal documents, this process become easier, but there were still problems. The team members had difficulties locating and using the electronic documents.

EZSource significantly reduced the labor-intensive tasks associated with this portion of the source selection process as well as significantly cut the time spent generating the arduous Evaluation Decision Briefings. This briefing, typically over 200 slides, took several weeks to prepare manually and required considerable time and effort on the source selection team's part to ensure accuracy and proper formatting.

The new automated enhancement was made to generate this same briefing in only 27 minutes. The main navigation menu is divided according to team functions, and information is then sorted to the team functional role.

Additional improvements were made to EZSource (Version 4.0) that helped alleviate these problems, improving the user's accuracy and efficiency. The enhancement created an index of the proposal documents and allowed the user to open those documents side-by-side. Now the user can easily locate the desired document in the Notes database and paste the exact text of the proposal directly into the evaluation document (see Figure 4). This capability allows the users to review a variety of external files in various formats (e.g., Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Project, etc.).

EZSource is gaining acceptance not only at Wright-Patterson, but also at Eglin, Warner Robins, Edwards, Tinker, Brooks, and Hill Air Force Bases and with Department of Defense agencies including the Coast Guard, Army, and the Marine Corp.


Source Selection: EVALUATION NOTICE document

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (When Filled In)
SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION - SEE FAR 3.104

Evaluator: Naomi Kump  Date Created: 06/20/2001

Offeror: Offeror A  Current Status: In Process

| Factor | Subfactor | Element |
|---|---|---|
| Performance/Technical | 1.1 Development Approach | Additional Capabilities |

| RFP Reference | Proposal Reference |
|---|---|
| Section M, Page 34, Para 4 | Volume II, Page 23, Para 5 |

Subject:

Statement to Offeror

Figure 4 - Sample Evaluation Notice Used in EZSource

**Selection Criteria for Telecommuters**

Two facets entered the criteria for selection of participants, the individual and the suitability for the work to be performed. While the team did not use specific documented criteria for selecting teleworkers, the team ensured that each person possessed the following characteristics:

- Familiarity with program requirements
- A historical high level of performance and quality of work produced
- The ability to work independently
- Job tenure
- Computer literacy
- High degrees of self-motivation
- Strong time management skills

An informal, subjective assessment led the team to determine that all of the six remote members possessed the desired characteristics.

According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, work may not be suitable for telework if:[7]

- The employee needs to have extensive face-to-face contact with the supervisor, other employees, clients, or the general public;
- The employee needs frequent access to material that cannot be moved from the regular office;
- The agency cannot provide any special facilities or equipment that are necessary; or
- It would be too costly for the agency to duplicate the same level of security at the alternative workplace.

In addition, the OPM also cited jobs least suitable for telecommuting include:

- Jobs requiring face-to-face interaction
- Positions that use Privacy-Act protected data
- Frequent access to material that cannot be moved from the Federal office
- Involvement with Top Secret documents
- Site specific occupations
- Trainee and entry-level positions
- Positions dealing with classified material

The tasks/job characteristics listed are not all-inclusive and provide only to serve as guidance. None of the aforementioned was germane to the evaluators' work characteristics for the MSAMT source selection. Consequently, it was determined that the nature of the evaluators' work was suitable for telework and could be proficiently completed at a remote site.

**Monitoring Performance**

The team members' completed work product is the indicator that he/she is working. Since each member's inputs were directly linked to the database via their analysis worksheet, level of effort was transparent to all that viewed the database. The EZSource sort feature enables users to sort any prescribed document (analysis worksheet, etc.) by team member. This focus on the quality, quantity, and timeliness of the work

product, rather than on the process the telecommuter used to achieve the end result, aides in the management by objectives philosophy.

## RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE VIRTUAL OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

### Built-in Cost Savings

According to the ASD, typical source selections can range from four days to 12 months depending on the complexity of the program. The average is approximately 120 days. This source selection, from the date of proposal delivery to contract awarded, lasted 97 days. However, the last 12 days were spent ensuring that the Judge Advocate General concurred with the methodologies from a legal standpoint.

Whereas the corporate world uses telecommuting as a means to reduce relocation costs, the MSAMT team's focus was decreasing costs of temporary travel. The team saved more than $61,000 with the virtual office approach (see Figure 5).

| Location | # people | Rental Car/day | Lodging/day | Per diem/day | Total for 85 days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Luke AFB (AZ) | 2 | $29.00 | $45.05 | $68.00 | $21,428.40 |
| Sheppard AFB (TX) | 2 | $29.00 | $45.05 | $68.00 | $21,428.40 |
| Hill AFB (UT) | 1 | $0.00 | $45.05 | $68.00 | $9,496.20 |
| Langley AFB (VA) | 1 | $0.00 | $45.05 | $68.00 | $9,496.20 |
| | | | | | **$61,849.20** |

Figure 5 - Cost Savings Derived

Costs for laptops, software licenses, Internet Protocol access, and long distance phone charges were absorbed by the ASD and not charged to the MSAMT team. The F-16 MSAMT team was unaware of any cost incurred by the ASD as a result of the source selection conducted.

### Job Satisfaction from Remote Participation

In traditional source selection environments, the users can spend upwards to twelve months away from their normal assigned duties. The source selection activities are cyclic. The work ranges from several weeks to months of compressed efforts and overtime partnered with weeks waiting for responses from offerors. Telecommuting allows the remote participants to work on the source selection as well as their daily work requirement. One initial concern of this activity was that the remote participants might feel detached from the day-to-day activities of the selection process since their input was solicited on an ad hoc basis. However, the results directly observed conclude that the remote participants felt their contribution had a direct impact to the overall team goal. The team synergy gained from telecommuting during this process enabled the acquisition corps to establish a better rapport with the ACC and AETC. Weekly conference calls also contributed to building this rapport.

### Elimination of Lengthy TDY Duration

When asked about the process, one of the telecommuting participants indicated: "we remote users could participate in the important source selection process from our duty locations so we could continue performing other aspects of our jobs." Another teleworker indicated: "it's hard to be gone from the office for several weeks at a time." Virtual office eliminated the need for this time away from their duty locations. Two source selection training days and two travel days were required for this process.

Telecommuting allowed participants to continue day-to-day operations at their primary duty station while integrating their assessments into the selection process. This was beneficial to the telecommuters' home stations, allowing them to keep critical resources in place without sacrificing a temporary drain of an evaluator's corporate knowledge or expertise. With the current operational tempo, the Air Force is constantly seeking to minimize the non-mission critical TDY of its operational and deployable personnel. Several of the remote participants were even able to maintain their normal TDY travel for their base and maintained support through the laptops and telephone conferencing.

### Increased Employee Productivity and Quality of Life

Increases in productivity and quality of work may derive from a number of changes in employee work practices when they are able to structure their time to individual needs and optimum work cycles.[2] The results from a survey conducted indicate that the majority of the telecommuters during this source selection felt their productivity toward the team had increased as a result of this work arrangement, attributing this to the flexibility

to work when conducive to their personal schedules. The Training System Product Group's management initially approached the notion with some reservation but now fully encourage the concept and enjoy the productivity and cost savings it provided.

In addition to observing an increase in productivity, the remote participants were happier and maintained their quality of life. Being able to spend routine time with family improved the balance between family and work pressures for the participants.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUTURE TELECOMMUTING SOURCE SELECTION TEAMS

### Establish Selection Criteria

The telecommuter selection process will need to be examined if conducted again. Managers or supervisors who understand the concept of telecommuting should identify personnel they feel are suitable to work remote activities within their conventional office. In the corporate environment, candidates for remote work would complete questionnaires developed to assist in determining employees whose jobs and personal characteristics make them good candidates for successful telecommuting. The adoption of a similar, formal screening technique would help ensure that the requisite characteristics were met.

### Avoid Potential Workplace Hazards

There are several workplace-related issues telecommuters should be aware of prior to implementation, including [8]:

- Coping with Interruptions – Often friends, neighbors, and family members do not realize that a telecommuter is working. Although an occasional interruption may be welcome, telecommuters must learn to keep interruptions to a minimum.
- Designating Space – A designated work area in which to view the material free from outside influence. A separate workspace would lead to a decrease in security risk as well as lead to fewer interruptions.
- Receiving support from supervisor – A supervisor's attitude could potentially be detrimental in this type of arrangement.

### Technology Limitations Encountered

While this virtual facility provided the communication necessary for effective teamwork, opportunities for improvement were soon recognized. The notebook computers used had very basic capabilities; e.g. 28.8 kbs modems. Connection over 28K modems is too slow to be practical. In addition, use of Defense Service Network (DSN) lines made the connection itself problematic; lines were often busy and the modem connections were occasionally dropped. To overcome this challenge, users dialed in during off-peak hours. To improve the remote connectivity, an upgrade to all computer hardware is necessary. In the future, use of the industry standard 56 kbs modems or latest technology is recommended.

Within the next nine months EZSource users will have the option to generate forms from a new web-enabled application of EZSource. This will address the remote connection problem and eliminate the need for specially configured notebook computers. A recent enhancement made to this application is the availability to import XML–tagged documents. Future updates to the EZSource application will incorporate the distribution of source selection inquires and the receipt of the offeror's responses, both via the Internet. Further enhancements are being made to generate new modules to the electronic briefing capabilities. These initiatives are in concert with yet another phase of the Air Force's paperless initiative of electronically connecting the entire source selection process in a virtual environment.

## CONCLUSION

This paper addressed the feasibility and issues associated with an Air Force source selection that used the concept of telecommuting with multiple users at multiple remote locations. This advancement in telecommuting allowed participants to continue day-to-day operations at their primary duty station while also allowing the project manager to capitalize upon expertise of key, off-base Government personnel.

Telecommuting is a growth concept, and both employers and employees are constantly refining as they learn more about how it can benefit the organization.

Traditionally, Air Force source selections have tied evaluators to a physical location. The success of the F-16 MSAMT team's source selection process disproved this generalization by exploiting telework as a viable option in reducing cost. Telecommuting is neither a one-size fits all proposition nor a concrete set of standard operating procedures.[9] However, when best practices for implementation are followed, and the correct conditions exist, and telework is positioned carefully and appropriately, it is a powerful "win-win" solution for employers, employees, society, and the environment[2].

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