

**IRS COMPLETES NEW BLUEPRINT FOR MODERNIZING
BUSINESS AND COMPUTER SYSTEMS**

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service today unveiled the Enterprise Architecture, a roadmap for modernizing the agency's business systems and supporting information technology networks.

The IRS Enterprise Architecture, commonly called the Blueprint, has been approved by the agency's Executive Steering Committee, a team of top IRS leaders. The committee's approval of version 1.0 of Enterprise Architecture, the first in a series, will allow the IRS to use the Blueprint to guide the agency's business and technology improvements in the coming years.

"The approval of the architecture marks a major milestone in our progress towards the goals of Business Systems Modernization," said IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti. "The architecture, as a blueprint, will enable us to design and build new business and technology projects that will be the backbone of the IRS."

The IRS had previously published the Blueprint in 1997. It was the first comprehensive view of modernized tax systems and guided the IRS in efforts to update technology. The new Blueprint reflects the lessons learned since 1997 and incorporates elements of the IRS reorganization into the four new customer-oriented operating divisions.

"For the first time, the IRS has a plan that spells out how the business practices of the agency will change and how technology will support that effort," said Bert Concklin, Director of IRS Business Systems Modernization.

The Blueprint is an evolving document designed for constant use, with updates scheduled for spring 2001 and during October in subsequent years. It will ensure that the technology in the IRS business systems is compatible. And it will enable IRS employees to do their jobs better and provide taxpayers better service.

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The Blueprint will support several long-term goals for the IRS, including:

- **Faster refunds.** Currently, the IRS generally issues refunds in 4-7 weeks for paper returns and as little as 10 days for electronically filed returns. In the future, improved IRS systems could reduce refund time to as little as 2-3 days.
- **Improved service.** Today, when a customer calls about their account, the IRS resolves the issue or concern during that first phone call about 40 percent of the time. In the future, the goal will be 80 percent.
- **Better collection.** Today, it can take an average of 2.5 years to collect an outstanding balance on an account. In the future, the IRS wants to see the average reduced to around 6 months.

“We can’t get this kind of business improvement without modernizing our technology,” Concklin said. “These are the types of business issues that drive the technology effort, and we will design our systems to reach those goals.”

The IRS is currently planning several projects that fit in with the Enterprise Architecture, including the Customer Account Data Engine, or CADE. This will create a centralized database for taxpayer records capable of being updated daily. CADE will improve customer service by making complete and current information about taxpayers available at one reference point. The IRS will develop CADE in phases over the next six years, beginning with individuals filing the simplest returns.

The Blueprint was developed by a partnership between IRS and businesses in the private sector under the Prime contract.

The Prime contract is a long-term effort that could last 10-15 years. The ultimate goal of the Business Systems Modernization project will be revolutionizing nearly every aspect of the IRS, with new technology touching everything from the agency’s core data systems to the processing of tax returns.

“This new technology will be the springboard for us to improve taxpayer service,” Rossotti said.

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