

VA ENTERPRISE DESIGN PATTERNS ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE USER INTERACTION CAPABILITIES



Office of Technology Strategies (TS)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scope

The User Interaction Capabilities Enterprise Design Pattern (EDP) provides high-level guidance on a common set of current and future capabilities available throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that enable consistent user interaction. These capabilities help projects develop web applications or leverage portals in standardized ways. The capabilities also support a client-independent set of functionality that is separately consumed and rendered through both client platforms and devices.

Business Need

Even though Human Centered Design (HCD) resources exist at VA, there is no VA enterprise implementation of HCD. To enable the implementation of HCD, VA must adopt standards for user interaction capabilities that provide an optimal user experience (UX). Standards pertain to the manner in which users will access, view, and update VA information, within a constantly evolving customer-centric environment. These applications include web technologies that allow clients to call services within a browser, without depending on business logic. Web applications are easier and more economical to develop. They offer increased functionality and can be accessed from any device. These portals support a standardized “front end” that allows VA to provide an optimal UX, while migrating back end systems to Enterprise Shared Services (ESS). VA project teams can also implement the HCD framework for mobile applications. As project-specific business needs evolve, separating the front end from the back end allows greater flexibility for presenting information to users.

Approach

This EDP aligns with VA's overall IT strategy for supporting "any device, anywhere, anytime" for VA patients, customers, staff, and partners through the use of modern applications. Modern applications integrate with collaboration services, and leverage a standard set of user interaction capabilities that is aligned to industry best practices. VA will provide these capabilities through utilizing HCD best practices to develop user interaction capabilities; migrating "thick client" applications; institutionalizing enterprise portals with a common visualization for users; and other activities. This approach establishes a framework for browser-independent and device-independent capabilities by following the latest industry standards (HTML5, Cascading Style Sheets [CSS], and JavaScript).

Enterprise Design Patterns (EDPs) are developed by TS in coordination with internal and external subject matter experts and stakeholders. An EDP is a reusable capability guidance document that identifies best practice approaches and resources for achieving VA IT strategic objectives. The EDP Team uses industry trends and innovations; enterprise architectural standards; and guiding principles for capabilities and constraints to improve efficiency and effectiveness and define solutions to reoccurring technical problems. The EDP helps guide the design of IT systems and services by VA project teams.