

**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

# Memorandum

Date:

NOV 04 2014

From:

Executive in Charge and Chief Information Office, Office of Information and Technology (005)

Subj:

Consideration of Open Source Software (VAIQ# 7532631)

To:

Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

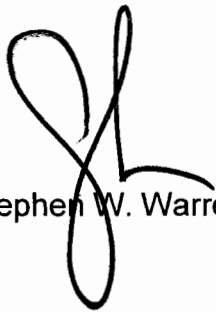
1. The intent of this policy is to establish requirements to thoroughly evaluate Open Source Software (OSS) solutions when VA acquires software and consider the use of OSS development practices when VA develops software.
2. VA recognizes that there are numerous potential advantages to utilizing and relying upon Open Source Software (OSS) solutions in support of VA's mission. Potential advantages of OSS solutions include: lower development costs; lower licensing costs; lower maintenance costs; faster introduction of community developed innovations; higher software quality; and increased openness and transparency.
3. Effective January 1, 2015, planning and execution of all VA software projects will consider OSS solutions in addition to proprietary software solutions when acquiring software systems. The considerations outlined above will be evaluated and documented in addition to current software evaluation metrics, resulting in a comprehensive analysis of advantages and disadvantages when conducting software acquisitions. In addition, all VA software development projects, whether performed by VA or with the support of contractors, will consider the use of OSS development practices.
4. Throughout 2015, guidance and materials for conducting a comprehensive evaluation of software systems for acquisition, including the considerations outlined above, will be coordinated by OI&T Product Development. This guidance will contain a set of OSS development practices to be considered when VA conducts software development projects including a minimum set of OSS development practices to be applied to all new software development projects.

Use of Open Source Software

5. For additional information, please refer to the following sources:

- *VistA Open Source Initiative*, VAIQ 7239949, June 6, 2012
- *Open Source VistA Deployment*, VAIQ 7256522, August 31, 2012
- *Modifications to Standardized National Software*, VA Directive 6402, August 28, 2013
- *U.S. Digital Services Playbook* (<http://playbook.cio.gov>)

6. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-461-6985 or have a member of your staff contact, Julie Harvey, at 727- 502-1381 or email [Julie.Harvey@va.gov](mailto:Julie.Harvey@va.gov).

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a smaller 'W' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephen W. Warren