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## Introduction

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### Background

Achieving interoperability among Navy systems is instrumental to enabling critical functions, such as timely information exchange during operations and efficiencies in acquisition. Navy interoperability policy provides the means for realizing the benefits of the many facets of interoperability. These many facets imply that interoperability touches on a variety of arenas, and hence policy governing its establishment also intersects many arenas. For this reason, it is important to understand what parties have authority to issue policy that governs any facet of interoperability.

The laws and policies that address interoperability reflect that interoperability has many facets and touches a variety of arenas. In particular, federal law, upon which defense and military Service policies are based, provides for two communities to issue policy related to interoperability. These are (1) the defense information technology (IT) community, which has federally mandated responsibility to ensure that IT and national security systems (NSSs) are interoperable, and (2) the defense acquisition community, which has federally mandated responsibilities to acquire the systems that are to be interoperable. Moreover, federal law stipulates that the acquisition community is responsible for the systems engineering function that is integral to achieving interoperability. Both the IT and acquisition communities must, of course, interact with the operational community that will employ the fielded systems to carry out military missions.

As might be expected, federal law provides general guidance on responsibilities regarding interoperability policy. Department of Defense (DoD) and Service-level guidance implement federal law. However, since many facets of interoperability intersect many arenas, it is not always clear which party has responsibility to issue interoperability policy in any particular area. Such an environment can create ambiguous situations, such as more than one party assuming responsibility for issuing interoperability policy in a particular area or gaps where policy is missing and no party can assume responsibility for establishing interoperability policy in the area. Neither of these situations is conducive to either achieving interoperable systems or effective and efficient execution of agency functions. A thorough understanding of how federal law has been implemented with Service-level policies is required to prevent potential conflicts and gaps and to correctly identify the party responsible for issuing policy pertaining to any facet of interoperability.

## Purpose

This report has two purposes. First, it presents an approach for determining which parties have authority to issue Navy interoperability policy, the origins and implementation path of the authority, and the extent of the authority. The approach includes a methodology and framework for comparing the scopes of authority to determine potential gaps, overlaps, ambiguities, and inconsistencies in defense policy. Second, this document presents the results of applying our approach and methodology to the Navy mission area systems engineering (MASE) facet of interoperability. In particular, we illustrate the complexity of the Navy's network of policy regarding interoperability policy and examine in detail the role of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN[RD&A]) Chief Systems Engineer (CHSENG) with regard to issuing MASE policy.<sup>1</sup>

## Approach

Our approach for this study is to trace authority to issue interoperability policy, and specifically Navy MASE policy, from federal law to DoD policy, and finally to Navy issuances. To do so, we tailored a rigorous and well-established methodology. Analysts identified pertinent authorities specified in federal laws, then pinpointed relevant roles and responsibilities in pertinent DoD and Navy policies. Analysts were aided in identifying roles and responsibilities in policy issuances by a new capability developed by RAND that facilitates efficient analysis of many policy documents. This new capability is called the Electronic Policy Improvement Capability (EPIC). EPIC was used to scan DoD and Navy issuances for sentences that pertain to roles and responsibilities related to interoperability policy. Analysts examined the EPIC output for relevance, pinpointing the roles and responsibilities that were pertinent to interoperability policy and adding any that EPIC missed.

The continuity established by the citations and references in policy documents allows the researcher to trace authority from federal law to DoD policy to Navy issuances to determine which parties have authority to issue MASE policy for the Navy and the purview of that authority. We constructed a framework to capture the tracings and purview of authoritative parties who have roles in determining interoperability and systems engineering policy for the Navy. The framework is used to display our findings and is the medium we use to build a roles and responsibilities (R&R) network of guidance relevant to interoperability and thus show how complex the authority network for issuing MASE policy is.

Although we apply our approach and resulting method to the MASE scenario in this study, our approach and method are applicable to all facets of interoperability policy, as well as to any other area relating to roles, responsibilities, and authorities to execute the duties assigned to defense officials. Our approach can also be tailored to apply across government agencies to illuminate areas where multiple agencies have to collaborate to ensure complete and consistent policy. For example, the approach can be applied to information-sharing policy between the Department of Homeland Security and DoD.

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<sup>1</sup> This report is based on information current as of July 7, 2011.

## Organization

Chapter Two presents the framework and methodology we developed to trace citations from origins in federal law through Service-level policy identifying executives responsible for issuing policy. Chapter Three presents an analysis of authority to issue Navy interoperability policy related to MASE. Chapter Four presents a case study that details the authority the ASN(RD&A) CHSENG has to influence Navy MASE policy. Chapter Five presents recommendations and closing remarks.

