



Highlights of [GAO-03-751](#), a report to congressional requesters

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys Needs to Institutionalize Key IT Management Disciplines**

**Why GAO Did This Study**

The Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) of the Department of Justice is responsible for managing information technology (IT) resources for the United States Attorneys' Offices. GAO was asked to determine the extent to which EOUSA has institutionalized key IT management capabilities that are critical to achieving Justice's strategic goal of improving the integrity, security, and efficiency of its IT systems.

**What GAO Recommends**

To strengthen EOUSA's IT management capacity and to increase its chances of effectively leveraging IT to improve its mission performance, GAO recommends that the Attorney General direct the Director of EOUSA to (1) designate institutionalization of each of the IT management disciplines as priorities and (2) develop and implement action plans in each of the four IT disciplines to address the weaknesses that are identified in this report. EOUSA agreed with the majority of GAO's findings and recommendations, and stated that it will address most of the recommendations. It also stated that it has made notable progress in institutionalizing the IT management disciplines, particularly information security, and that each is currently an office priority.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-751](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-751).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Randolph C. Hite at 202-512-3439 or [hiter@gao.gov](mailto:hiter@gao.gov).

**What GAO Found**

To varying degrees, EOUSA has partially defined and implemented certain IT management disciplines that are critical to successfully achieving the Justice Department's strategic goal of improving the integrity, security, and efficiency of its IT systems. However, it has yet to institutionalize any of these disciplines, meaning that it has not defined existing policies and procedures in accordance with relevant guidance, and it has yet to fully implement what it has defined. In particular, while EOUSA has developed an enterprise architecture—a blueprint for guiding operational and technological change—the architecture was not developed in accordance with certain best practices. In addition, while the office has implemented certain process controls for selecting, controlling, and evaluating its IT investments, it has not yet implemented others that are necessary in order to develop an effective foundation for investment management. Further, it has not implemented important management practices that are associated with an effective security program. In contrast, it has defined—and is implementing on a major system that we reviewed—most, but not all, of the management practices associated with effective systems acquisition.

Institutionalization of these IT management disciplines has not been an agency priority and is not being guided by plans of action or sufficient resources. Until each discipline is given the priority it deserves, EOUSA will not have the IT management capabilities it needs to effectively achieve the department's strategic goal of improving the integrity, security, and efficiency of its IT systems.

<b>EOUSA's Institutionalization of Four Key IT Management Disciplines</b>		
<b>Management discipline</b>	<b>Fully Institutionalized?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Enterprise architecture management	No	Has an approved enterprise architecture but, for example, has yet to develop a policy for maintaining it.
IT investment management	No	Has several basic elements of proper IT investment management but has not yet, for example, used its defined investment selection process.
Information security management	No	Is not fully satisfying any of the tenets of effective security, such as monitoring the effectiveness of security controls and promoting security awareness.
System acquisition management	No	Is successfully employing most of the practices associated with effective software acquisition management on one key project but does not have, for example, a policy for software acquisition planning.

Source: GAO.