Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned programs collect and analyze data, then “disseminate, integrate, and archive” lessons. The lessons are used to develop or improve doctrine, as well as generate other products such as training videos and handbooks. These are a few of the Lessons Learned programs maintained by different branches of military:

- Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)
- Army Medical Department Lessons Learned (AMEDD)
- Navy Lessons Learned System (NLLS)
- Navy Medical Lessons Learned System (MLL)
- Combined Automated Lessons Learned (CALL)
- Air Force Center for Knowledge Sharing Lessons Learned (AFSKLL)
- Marine Corps Combat Development Tracking System (CDTS)
- Joint Center for Lessons Learned

Problems with current Lessons Learned systems

Problems accessing and organizing the collected data for analysis prevent current Lessons Learned systems from achieving their goals effectively. For example, Lessons Learned information can not be used in real time. The process of collecting, analyzing, integrating and disseminating is time consuming, and information that could be immediately beneficial to others is lost.

Furthermore, after Lessons Learned information is analyzed, it is archived and rarely accessed again. Raw Lessons Learned data is not classified or sorted logically in the database, and therefore lessons do not grow through support and confirmation from different sources. Lessons Learned information stored in a database is merely textual content, and translating the information into useful knowledge takes time and resources.

Also, because this information is not linked together in the database, finding information from archived Lessons Learned is a tedious process. Not only must the data be sorted through and re-read several times over, but keyword matching alone is an ineffective means of locating pertinent information.

KMC Solution

The Knowledge Management Center (KMC) stores and catalogues data using a highly logical network designed to expedite knowledge extraction. Because raw data is automatically indexed as it is entered into the system, it is much easier to access and analyze. The KMC also offers tools that allow users to locate related information from different sources, as well as build comprehensive documents based on up to date information. This in turn allows soldiers to make informed decisions.

The KMC also assists in creating and formatting XML based doctrine making it immediately available to soldiers on the field. Applying the most recent Lessons Learned information to these documents prevents mistakes from being repeated. Communication is essential, and being able to access the right information quickly and easily can make the difference between succeeding and failing in a mission.

Furthermore, the data in the KMC is not limited to the development of doctrine. If a lesson has not been used to create or influence a specific protocol, it is still accessible for reference in the event that a similar situation occurs. This extends the function of actual Lessons Learned to parties that would rely on this real-time information as a necessary resource. For example, if an effective method for achieving a goal is developed at one location, this information would be immediately available to others, who could then in turn modify the lesson with their own insight.