VHA Innovation Program eBook
Quarterly Portfolio

Future Technology Laboratory

innovation
inspiration, incubation, illumination…

VHA Innovation Program Recent Highlights

VHA Innovation Recognized
In March, the Remote Veteran Sleep Apnea Management Platform (REVAMP) was named a finalist in the American Council for Technology (ACT) and Industry Advisory Council (IAC) Igniting Innovation showcase. Igniting Innovation is the premier annual event to showcase innovations to improve services for citizens and government operations at the federal, state and local level, and industry. This event recognizes the best-of-the-best solutions for important problems and showcases those ideas and successes.

The Innovation Station Blog*
Do you auto-subscribe to our internal blog? The Innovation Station is the most frequent way to receive updates on innovation in VHA. New blogs are posted monthly and over 800 staff members automatically receive each edition. If you are interested in joining the list, email Allison.amrhein@va.gov and use *"TIS Auto-Subscribe"* in the subject line.
*Note that this is a VA internal blog.

VHA Innovation Pulse Pages*
VA Pulse is quickly becoming a leading communication tool for VA employees. VHA Innovation's Pulse page has 143 followers and 97 members and is continually growing. In addition, the VHA Innovation's Pulse page, certain innovation efforts within the Program have their own page as well. VHA Innovation Women's Health Initiatives page provides a venue to collaborate on the upcoming Women's Health VHA Innovation-developed products soon to be available for providers across VA.

The My Life, My Story project has a VA Pulse page dedicated to the work being done to gather Veterans' stories across the country. My Life, My Story is a VA program (and VHA Innovation Employee Innovation Competition winner) in which trained VA staff interview Veterans about their lives and create short stories based on the interviews. These short stories are then are uploaded to the VA health record and shared with the Veteran's care team.

eScreening also has their own VA Pulse project page. The page keeps interested future users in-the-know about when eScreening might be available at their site and updates the page regularly with video of the innovation in use. You can find links to all the VHA Innovation-related Pulse pages, including LEAF and REVAMP, on our VA Pulse homepage.

*Note that VA Pulse is only accessible to VA employees and contractors with a VA.gov email address.

The VHA Innovation Future Technology Laboratory

The VHA Innovation Program's Future Technology Laboratory (FTL) is the "VA's sandbox cloud," a development infrastructure and software as a service platform that is *publicly* accessible and external to the VA's internal network. The FTL provides many useful services and now hosts instances of the Enterprise Health Management Platform (eHMP). The FTL is a valuable technical resource for VA employees, contractors, and third-party developers whose goals are to develop software to improve health care for Veterans.

This quarter we will review the functionality for the FTL, and will be answering commonly asked questions. We invite VA staff to visit the FTL Pulse page for more information and access to training resources such as FAQs, Quick Start Guide and more.

We invite all users to visit the publicly accessible FTL home page at: http://vaftl.us/.

Opportunities in the FTL

The first step to utilizing the FTL is to set-up an account with the VHA Innovations Web Help Desk. The Web Help Desk is the go-to location for everything FTL-related, including:

- Source Code Requests
- Custom server requests
- Wiki requests
- VistA server access/creation
- Suggestions for improvement
- Assistance from SME's

Any issue should be logged into the Web Help Desk and will eventually be assigned to a technical support staff member to resolve.

A few of the most popular uses for the FTL are for software and VistA integration and development. The lists below indicate what request should be submitted in the Web Help Desk and what the result will be.

Software

1. **MDWS/VIA/VistA.js Access** will submit a request to provide access to the MDWS (Medical Domain Web Services – legacy Class 1 middle-tier) and VIA (VistA Integration Adapter – replacement for MDWS) or VistA.js (also known as VistA Services Assembler or 'VSA') a replacement for both MDWS and VIA.
2. **New Software Request** is to either add new VA licensed or VA created software to your pre-existing custom virtual server or pre-existing custom virtual workstation. Additionally, you can request that software be made available through the laboratory.
3. **Report Problem** allows you to submit a ticket with a problem you are having with your custom virtual server or custom virtual workstation.
4. **Request Software Removal** will request to remove software from your pre-existing custom virtual server or pre-existing custom virtual workstation.
5. **Request Update** will submit a ticket to update software within your pre-existing custom virtual server or pre-existing custom virtual workstation.

VistA

1. **CPRS Assistance** is the ticket to submit in order to ask questions about CPRS (Computerized Patient Record System).
2. **KIDs Help** is the ticket to submit to ask questions about KIDS (Kernel Installation and Distribution Center).
3. **New Custom VistA Server (MUMPS Developers)** will give VistA Developers a custom VistA server to test their routines.

4. **Other** allows you to submit a custom question related to VistA that is not related to any of the existing ticket types.
5. **Report Problem** allows you to submit a ticket with a problem you are having with VistA.
6. **Special Builds Other** allows you to submit a custom question related to servers that is not related to any of the existing ticket types.
7. **Report Problem** allows you to submit a ticket with a problem you are having with your servers.
8. **Special Builds** allows you to request specific VistA packages or KIDS to include specific CPRS versions.
9. **Subject Matter Expert** will submit a request for a VistA SME to reach out to you for assistance with your project.

Questions and Answers on the FTL

Q: What can I do in the Future Technology Laboratory (FTL)?
A: *Just about anything that can benefit Veterans. The FTL was designed for "destructive development and test." The FTL is a development infrastructure and software used as a service platform that is publicly accessible and external to the VA's internal network. The FTL provides many useful services and now hosts instances of the Enterprise Health Management Platform (eHMP). The FTL is a valuable technical resource for VA employees, contractors, and 3rd party developers, whose goals are to develop software to improve healthcare for Veterans.*

Q: Who can use the FTL?
A: *VA employees, contractors, and 3rd party developers.*

Q: How do I sign up for a FTL account?
A: *Visit http://vaftl.us and click the "Create Account" link.*

Q: What if I forgot my FTL password? How can I reset my FTL password?
A: *Visit http://vaftl.us and click the "Reset Password" link.*

Q: Can I have real patient data in the FTL (i.e., Personally identifiable information (PII), Protected Health information (PHI))?
A: *No, not under any circumstance at this time. To maintain our level of operation and to allow us the flexibility to support all manner of idea exploration, we need to restrict the data to only that which is sanitized and fictitious. If the data cannot be provided on a public web link (public web page, public FTP) we cannot have the data in the FTL. Please see the VA Cloud Data wiki and its subpages for more information.*

Q: Does the FTL have any patient data to use in testing and or writing software?
A: *Yes, we have over 200 patients and the related medical records in our VistA database.*

Q: Can we add patient data for our own purposes?
A: *Yes, as long as it is publicly consumable data. It must be sanitized or fictitious and most of all, you are responsible for it. While not obvious, lawsuits can occur over using popular cartoon characters as patients in your public data… Safe names are names like "1Patient Patient1" (note first and last*

name varies this way). Also, there are rules for what kind of data exists in key fields such as the Social Security Number. For more information, please see De-Identification Of Data within the VA Cloud Data wiki.

Q: How can I search the VA Cloudwiki system?
A: *There is a search field in the top right of each wiki page. You can search tags, titles, content of wiki pages, content of embedded documents and even search all wikis in the system. For full disclosure on how the search works, go to the help system and then search for 'search.'*

Q: How can I learn more about the Help Desk?
A: *The Web Help Desk Introduction introduces the Web Help Desk through the process of creating your account.*

Q: I want to set up a Virtual Machine. Where can I find out more information?
A: *The Virtual Machine Introduction has information about what a virtual machine is and how to set it up. To jump right to the instructions and installers for the virtual machine client software (for Windows, Mac and iPad), visit the Virtual Machine - Client Software Installation Instructions. Once you have installed your virtual machine software, learn how to use it by reading the Rules of Behavior and General Usage Instructions.*

Q: Is there a list of software that is available inside the Sandbox?
A: *The Software Available in the FTL is a list of software that VA either has licensed or has developed which may be installed on the sandbox cloud virtual machines or in some cases physical development machines.*

Q: Is the VA Cloud wiki easy for groups to use?
A: *Yes, it's meant to be a collaborative editing environment for groups. Depending on how the wiki administrator sets permissions, anyone who can view wiki content can also add or edit content. To read more about how the wiki can be used to collaborate, check out the Collaboration System Introduction as well as the Idea Management System and also MicroBlogging.*

Q: My team is new to developing for VA. Is there any documentation for the VA software and systems?
A: *Yes, we have developer guides. Note that you need to be logged into the FTL to access them:*

- *Innovation VistA Developer's Guide: VistA & CPRS development guide for open source and innovation developers. (requires FTL account)*

- *My HealtheVet Source Code: (requires FTL account)*

- *eHMP Development: The replacement to the CPRS VistA GUI*

FTL on VA Pulse

The Future Technology Laboratory (FTL) has a dedicated VA Pulse page where VA staff can keep-up with the most recent advancements to come from the FTL "sandbox" and more. Looking for a resource that isn't on the Pulse page? Contact us and we will add it! Email Adriaan.Denkers@va.gov with suggestions.

Looking for previous eBooks? View and download previous editions on the Office of Connected Care website at: https://connectedcare.va.gov/innovation.

Want to automatically receive a copy of the new eBook when it's published? Contact Allison.Amrhein@va.gov.