

A Model for Expertise: The Competency Assessment Model eTool

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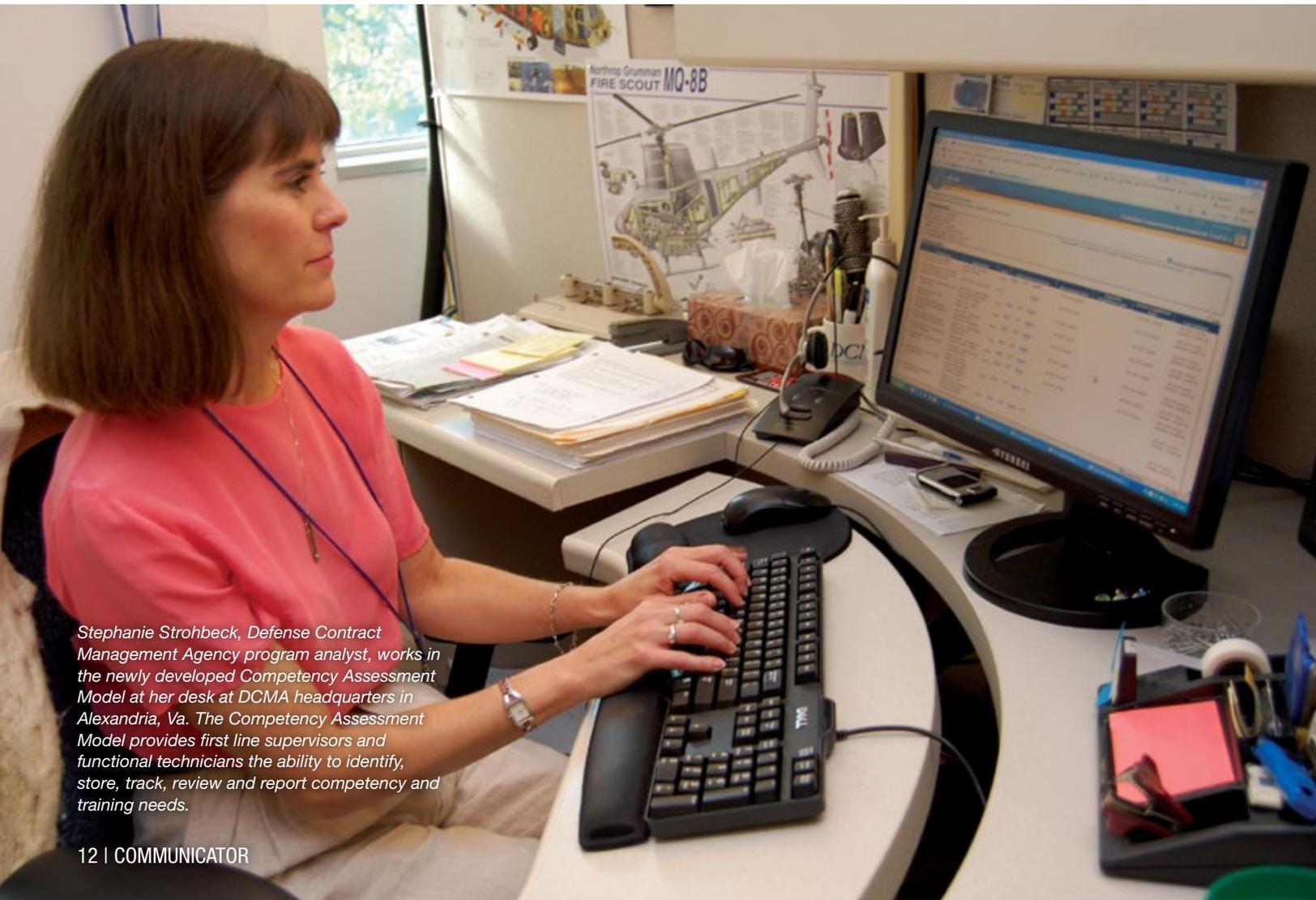
Michael Shields, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Directorate executive director, chartered an integrated product team in January 2010. James Davenport and Tom Leeper, DCMA quality assurance specialists, led the IPT to develop a single automated tool that provides first-line supervisors and functional technicians the ability to identify, store, track, review and report

competency and training needs. This team worked in conjunction with the Institute for Defense Analysis, a federally funded research and development corporation, to identify a set of functional requirements to create a prototype from which a new application, the Competency Assessment Model, was built.

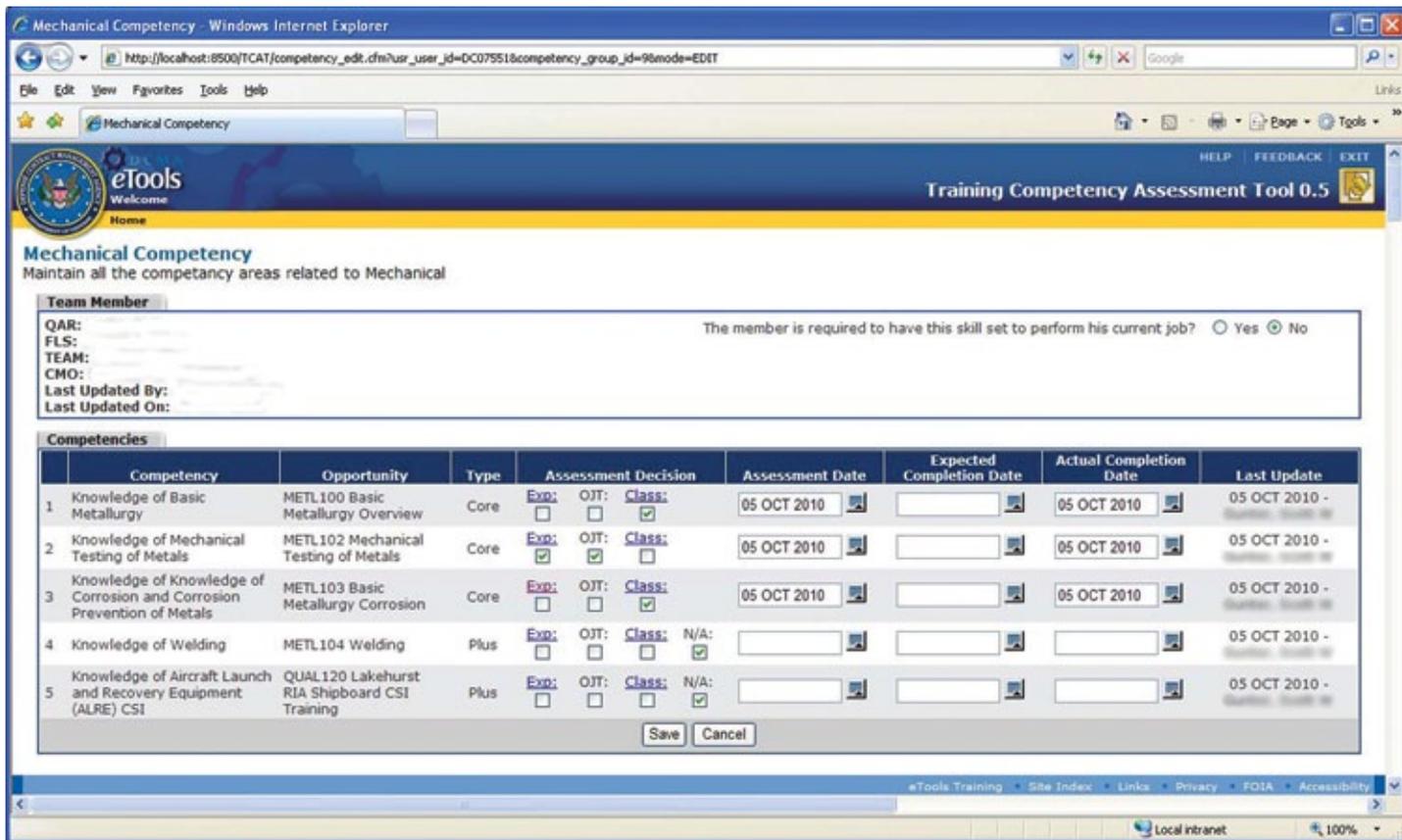
IDA and the IPT met on a weekly basis with all stakeholders, including functional

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— Michael Shields, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Directorate executive director



Stephanie Strohbeck, Defense Contract Management Agency program analyst, works in the newly developed Competency Assessment Model at her desk at DCMA headquarters in Alexandria, Va. The Competency Assessment Model provides first line supervisors and functional technicians the ability to identify, store, track, review and report competency and training needs.



A screenshot of the Competency Assessment Model program shows how first-line supervisors and functional technicians will be able to identify, store, track, review and report employees' competency and training needs.

analysts, subject-matter experts, developers and users. Within a couple of months, the prototype was approximately 80 percent complete. From this prototype, IDA worked with DCMA Information Technology to develop an eTool that could function as a production system with a framework that supports the QA community and provides an enterprise solution for tracking training needs throughout the agency.

Upon completion of testing, a fully operational eTool was built in just days. The project's short overall cycle time was a significant accomplishment. Jacob Haynes, DCMA Information Technology Customer Service Organization acting executive director, stated, "This was a huge success for DCMA. IDA and ITCSO's collaborative efforts resulted in achieving a record turnaround time for eTool development."

As processes change, the agency is beginning to identify more tools and capabilities to meet its needs. As eTools become more integrated into the agency,

they enable employees to work more efficiently and effectively with fewer resources. The Competency Assessment Model is a materialization of this progression that creates a documented, consistent and standardized approach to identifying and tracking skill sets fundamental to expertise development.

E-capabilities, for instance, is a feature incorporated into the tool that allows DCMA users to interact with relevant data and functionality across business processes, data domains and eTool components. DCMA can now leverage enterprise-wide data sets in an integrated, consistent and rational manner, providing users with situational awareness based on real-time information.

"The tool will provide the capability to share lessons learned, analyze training status, identify areas of opportunity and address areas of improvement," said Shields. "The outcome is that the workforce can more readily identify the competencies needed to better execute its mission and improve support to

the contract management office. In the future, we hope to link the tool automatically to the Electronic Individual Development Plan and the Civilian Training Management System." 

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