

NAVIGATING YOUR FUTURE: NAVY KNOWLEDGE ONLINE
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NORFOLK, Va. – For Sailors, managing their Navy careers is now as easy as point, click, and grow, thanks to Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). The flagship of the Navy’s Revolution in Training, NKO is the portal through which Sailors will access vital career information, education and training requirements, college programs, and other professional and personal development opportunities.

Launched in September of last year as the delivery vehicle for the Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark's initiative to enhance operational readiness and increase mission effectiveness by revolutionizing the Navy's training and education structure, NKO has evolved into a major component of the Navy's integrated delivery system for lifelong learning initiatives, personal development, and knowledge management.

A dynamic, broad based delivery system, NKO is designed to be accessible by all Sailors, both active, reserve, and retired, Department of Navy civilians and contractors, whether on the job, on the road, or at home and is connecting Sailors with the information, expertise, and learning opportunities required to support both their professional and personal development. By giving Sailors the opportunity to not only manage their careers in a more efficient manner, but also to engage with mentors, subject matter experts, and managers concerning all facets of those careers, the Navy is setting its workforce up for success.

“This is going to allow Sailors to access what is most important to them; the information required to excel, both professionally and personally,” said Commander, Naval Personnel Development Command Rear Adm. Kevin Moran. “It is going to allow Sailors to take maximum

advantage of the tools and opportunities available to them, no matter where they are stationed or deployed.”

While NPDC's knowledge management team is responsible for the overall management of NKO, each of the Navy's new Learning Centers is tasked with developing, populating, and subsequently managing their own NKO interests via their Center pages. Here, Sailors will find all the information that is relevant to a given occupational cluster, specific job task, or mission area. This aggressive approach to centralizing all the tools and opportunities might include the posting of technical manuals and schematics, reference materials for courses, links to appropriate training and education sites and other career management tools, as well as the creation of chat rooms and message boards, to be moderated by subject matter experts and focusing on systems, equipments, and programs taught by the individual center. NKO's management teams will also be able to utilize this captured content as reusable knowledge to enhance the Navy's training and knowledge transfer.

"The idea of having the individual Centers manage their own content is consistent with the Revolution in Training's goal of distribution of professional and personal growth tools to the Fleet," said Lt. Eric Morris, NKO Operations. "We are really overseeing the process and assisting the Centers with the technical aspects of the portal, they are responsible for posting what they determine to be relevant to Sailors within their community."

One of the most important tasks facing the Centers is the conversion of valuable knowledge captured through the chat rooms, message boards, and polls, into a distributable commodity for community wide use. This information may take the form of frequently asked questions, white papers, and best practice documentation, which helps to formalize the vast amounts of knowledge gained from experience into a format that is readily available to all

Sailors. Instant messaging (IM) is also available on NKO for one to one communication and mentoring.

The IM feature was given major consideration during the initial design phase of NKO, along with the presence of chat rooms. Both features allow for maximum connectivity between deckplate Sailors and subject matter experts. Through these avenues Sailors can connect and share information. When navigating the portal, a user need only to mouse over any document posted to view the author's contact information, which also alerts the user to whether the author is online at the time, providing the user access to the author through the IM feature. Possibly the best aspect of IM is its multi tasking ability, conducting multiple chats or IMs at once.

Additionally, the system supports temporary and permanent chat rooms designed for discussions and collaboration within the various working groups developing programs and solutions as part of the Revolution in Training. The chat feature allows community managers to identify user groups based on specific attributes, such as occupational field or mission area, rank, or platform, and then send out notifications to those users alerting them of an upcoming chat.

Transcripts of the chats are can be saved to FAQ files for re use or distribution. This not only increases the realm of impact for a particular chat session, but also creates a retrievable document containing valuable knowledge often lost during regular meetings.

"We want to connect people and ideas," said Morris. "NKO puts front line Sailors in instant contact with the appropriate subject matter experts so they can do their job better, increasing both their professional proficiency and efficiency."

Both IM and chat provide Sailors with a service that is rapidly growing in popularity both inside the military and within the civilian sector because it provides instant communications

without additional system or software requirements and eliminates the need for timely downloads. Since the communications are run through the browser, both methods are secure.

To begin using IM, which is auto launched, click on Add Contact to add a user or simply see who is online. To chat, scroll through the list of chat rooms to find those that are active and click to gain entrance. Users can also create their own chat rooms and maintain access control once the chat is initiated.

Another prominent feature of NKO will be the posting of Sailor Continuums (5 Vector Models) for every occupational field within the Navy as they are developed by the Learning Centers. These continua will be the roadmap by which Sailors will navigate their careers. Interactive in nature, the continua will highlight milestones Sailors must reach to be eligible for promotion. These milestones will not only detail what is expected of Sailors, but will be linked to that milestone's corresponding training or education requirements which will allow Sailors to enter a virtual course, request approval and register for a residence course, and access online reference study materials.

These continua will provide Sailors with real time assessments of their progress along each vector (professional, personal, leadership, certifications and qualifications, and performance), expert advice on professional growth and development and upward mobility, as well as direct access to courses, career information, and other information to ensure career progress. The continua contain all the relevant and important information organized by occupational field, knowledge, skills and abilities, and will serve as the core knowledge integration and distribution channel for Sailors throughout their Navy careers by combining unique personalization, robust search capabilities, and collaborative tools in a dynamically integrated environment.

"This is where NKO pays off," said Moran. "By bringing together all the resources related to a given career path, or mission area, the Navy will streamline the process of identifying goals, granting immediate access to the tools required to successfully meet that goal, and providing a virtual support network of technical experts and community leaders to work with the Sailors to ensure their success."

Through NKO's collaboration feature, Sailors will have access to what is, in essence, a portable hard drive, on which is stored all the relevant information pertaining to their careers. This feature allows Sailors to post up to 50 megabytes of data and then, if they choose, securely share that information with their shipmates. This Enterprise Collaboration Center (ECC) organizes files into knowledge centers. These knowledge centers have either Navy community or personal and team files. Communities are arranged around function or mission area and are managed by community administrators. These files contain documents that subscribers need to do their jobs.

Personal and Teams files can be created by anyone to share knowledge securely. Most users will only create and utilize folders within the Personal and Team knowledge centers, but they will be able to request and be granted access to other areas within Communities. Upon registration, every Sailor will have a private knowledge center created for them, but may choose to add additional folders. The Centers section of NKO links users to the homepages of the different Learning Centers and Training Support Centers and includes information pertaining to that center, such as announcements from center leaders, community managers, detailers, administrative notes, calendars, news, and document centers and additional career management links.

NKO leverages the success of Army Knowledge Online (AKO), the enterprise portal with 1.2 million users for the Army. Both portals utilize software from Appian Corporation, the developer of both NKO and AKO. For external content integration, NKO and AKO both leverage web services and XML. NKO has 45,000 users and is built to scale to the entire Navy enterprise.

"What Appian brought to the table was a history of success within the Department of Defense," said Morris. "Their relationship with the Army carried great weight in our decision to utilize their services."

Currently, NKO is accessible from anywhere through the Internet. A SIPRNet (NKO-S) version to support the handling of classified information is in development. NKO-S is expected to operational by midyear. A shipboard version is also under development. Over the course of the next several months, NKO will also see improvements to its message boards, collaboration, and instant messaging features.

New users should log onto NKO at www.nko.navy.mil and then click the I'm a New User button and follow the step by step registration process. Upon completion of the registration process, the new user completes a profile form and selects one of the Learning Centers, based on which community of occupational fields the Sailor belongs, as his or her own center. Users can learn more about NKO's functionality by clicking on the NKO Primer button on the homepage. More detailed instructions and user guide, accessible via the user guide button on the top right portion of the homepage.

"NKO is a great example of what the Navy's Revolution in Training is doing for our Sailors," said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy MCPON(SS/AW) Terry Scott. "This is going to give Sailors a single access point to all their professional and personal development

milestones and the training and education resources that support their success. I strongly encourage Sailors to log on to this site, become familiar with it and use it to manage their careers."