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December 25, 2025

The Honorable Michael Duffey
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1010

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Subj: Recommended Best Practices for the Use of Digital Engineering Tools

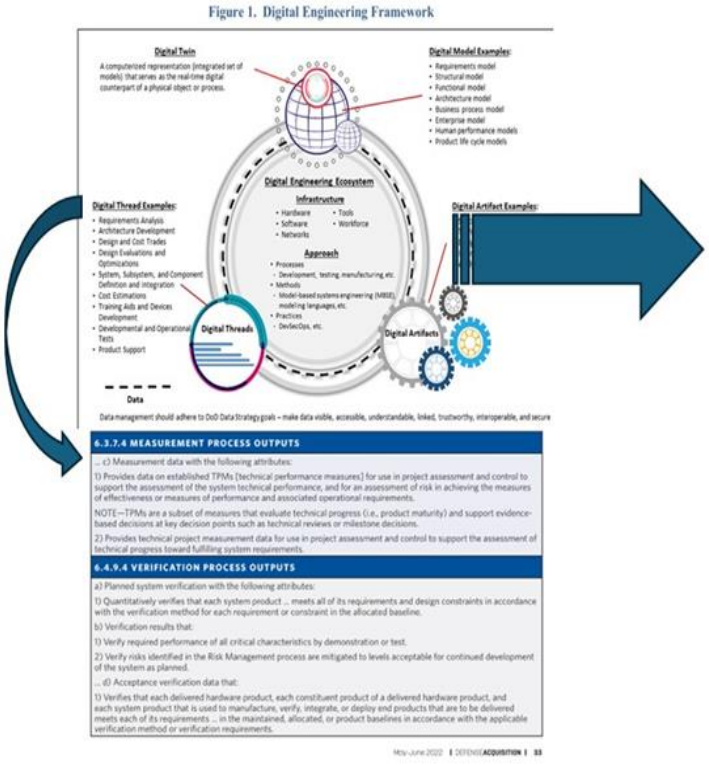
Dear Hon. USD (A&S) Michael Duffey:

This letter supersedes the letter dated December 21, Subj: NDAA for FY 2026 Review of Digital Engineering. It cites the revised white paper, *Integrating the Embedded Software Path, Model-Based Systems Engineering* (SE), *MOSA, and Digital Engineering* (DE) *with Program Management*," 12/25/25. The white paper was revised to be consistent with the final NDAA for FY 2026, including the following sections:

- SEC. 218. ALTERNATIVE TEST AND EVALUATION PATHWAY FOR DESIGNATED DEFENSE ACQUISITION PROGRAMS (digital twins)
- SEC. 221. REVIEW AND ALIGNMENT OF STANDARDS, GUIDANCE, AND POLICIES RELATING TO DIGITAL ENGINEERING.
- SEC. 1832. MODIFICATIONS TO REQUIREMENTS FOR MODULAR OPEN SYSTEM APPROACH.

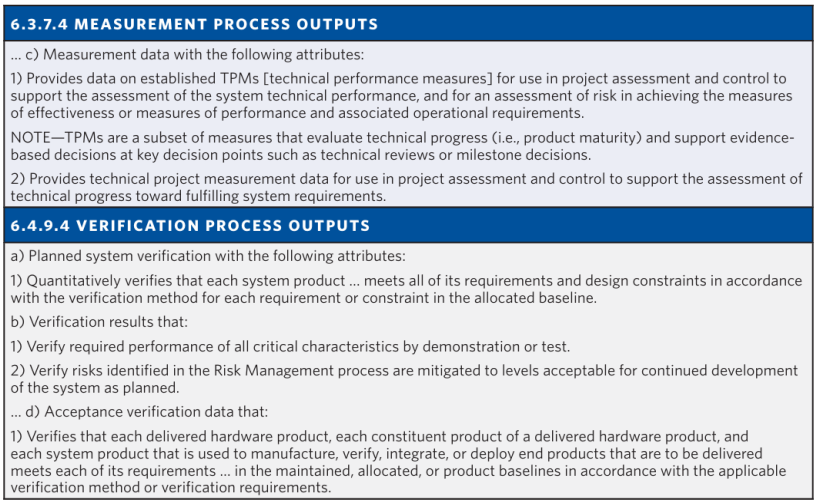
The white paper now includes Figure 1 in Appendix T, the DE framework that includes the digital twin, digital threads, and digital artifacts. Excerpts from Appendix T follow.

***DoDI 5000.97* and *Systems Engineering Guidebook* examples of Digital Thread and Artifacts**



(4) Digital Artifacts:
Examples of digital artifacts:
(a) Design specifications.
(b) Technical
(c) Design documents.
(d) Interface management documents.
(e) Analytical results.
(f) Bills of material.
(g) Software source code.
(h) Work breakdown structure.
(i) Production or machining instructions.
(j) Test planning and cases.
(k) **Schedules.**
(l) Product support strategy.
(m) Data flow diagrams.

Digital Thread examples from SE Guidebook



6.3.7.4 MEASUREMENT PROCESS OUTPUTS

... c) Measurement data with the following attributes:

1) Provides data on established TPMs [technical performance measures] for use in project assessment and control to support the assessment of the system technical performance, and for an assessment of risk in achieving the measures of effectiveness or measures of performance and associated operational requirements.

NOTE—TPMs are a subset of measures that evaluate technical progress (i.e., product maturity) and support evidence-based decisions at key decision points such as technical reviews or milestone decisions.

2) Provides technical project measurement data for use in project assessment and control to support the assessment of technical progress toward fulfilling system requirements.

6.4.9.4 VERIFICATION PROCESS OUTPUTS

a) Planned system verification with the following attributes:

1) Quantitatively verifies that each system product ... meets all of its requirements and design constraints in accordance with the verification method for each requirement or constraint in the allocated baseline.

b) Verification results that:

1) Verify required performance of all critical characteristics by demonstration or test.

2) Verify risks identified in the Risk Management process are mitigated to levels acceptable for continued development of the system as planned.

... d) Acceptance verification data that:

1) Verifies that each delivered hardware product, each constituent product of a delivered hardware product, and each system product that is used to manufacture, verify, integrate, or deploy end products that are to be delivered meets each of its requirements ... in the maintained, allocated, or product baselines in accordance with the applicable verification method or verification requirements.

Please note that schedule performance, TPMs, and verification results are elements of the DE ecosystem.

Finally, the website, www.pb-ev.com, has a new tab, “Digital Engineering,” with links to the white paper and the *Defense Acquisition Magazine* articles.

Please advise each Secretary of a military department to consider the best practices for the use of DE tools in those publications when developing their best practices for the use of DE tools and recommendations for improvement.

Yours truly,

Paul Solomon

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