

IDAHO

COMMERCE & LABOR

DIRK KEMPTHORNE, GOVERNOR
ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR

Oct. 5, 2005

Richard Trigg
Region VI - Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
P.O. Box 193767 71 Stevenson St., Suite 830
San Francisco, CA 94119-3767

Dear Mr. Trigg,

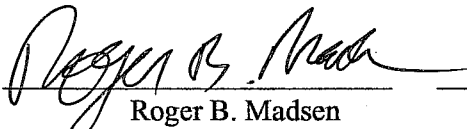
Enclosed is Idaho's Workforce Information Progress Report for program year 2004 pursuant to Training and Guidance Letter No. 1-04 ~ *Planning Guidance and Application Instructions for Program Year (PY) 2004 Workforce Information Core Products and Services: Workforce Information Formula Allocations to States.*

Idaho's PY2004 Progress Report elaborates on many of the critical LMI products provided by Idaho Commerce & Labor along with any significant changes in outcomes, milestones and expenditures experienced in PY2004.

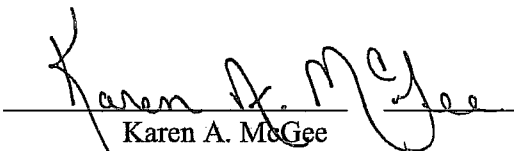
Questions concerning this agreement should be addressed to Bob Uhlenkott, (208) 332-3570 ext. 3217.

Sincerely,

Roger B. Madsen



Roger B. Madsen
Director, Idaho Commerce and Labor



Karen A. McGee
Chair, Workforce Development Council

Idaho Workforce Information

Annual Progress Report

Reference Period ~ July 1, 2004 to June 31, 2005

Table of Contents

Preface	2
Section A ~ Accomplishments.....	3
Section B ~ Customer Satisfaction Assessment.....	14
Section C ~ Recommendations for Improvements or Changes..... to the Suite of Core Products	22
Attachment A ~ Evaluation Protocol.....	23

Preface

Following the recent Idaho Commerce & Labor merger of 2004, the department in 2005 completed a comprehensive reorganization. The new changes have coalesced the Communications, Public Affairs and Research and Analysis bureaus into one Communications and Research Division. During the program year 2004, Communications and Research staff disseminated over 100,000 Labor Market Information products via public appearance, hard copy and electronic format and conducted well over 100 formal and several hundred informal training sessions involving over 1,000 participants. Idaho's premiere LMI Internet Web site experienced over 170,000 visits and over 2.3 million hits during our 17-month review period. These efforts will be chronicled in the following progress report. The report will also outline both qualitative and quantitative findings in the evaluation of Idaho's LMI products and our effectiveness to disseminate these products to customers and stakeholders. The paper details our efforts to use feedback received after making significant changes to improve our LMI products and our LMI delivery and dissemination systems for program year 2005.

Section A ~ Accomplishments

1. Continue to populate the ALMIS database with state data.



❖ Outcomes

The ALMIS database outcomes have been delivered exactly as described in the plan with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Milestones

The ALMIS database milestones have been achieved exactly on schedule with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Expenditures

The ALMIS database expenditures have followed the fiscal plan with no significant variances from the plan.

The ALMIS database continues to achieve efficiencies by reducing staff time needed to answer requests for data and information. Both printing and mailing costs are being reduced as users realize they can tailor data to meet their needs via the *iLMI* Internet delivery system. The more we can persuade data gatherers to obtain data via the ALMIS database browser, the more cost savings can be realized. Cost savings are a result of the universal properties of the ALMIS database, making development and maintenance effective, timely and accurate. Also, 24/7 availability of *iLMI* gives customers access to information outside regular work hours and without LMI staff assistance.

Most research and data will be pushed to its particular Web destination by both the ALMIS database and another database that supports data outside the ALMIS structure. This effort will improve speed and accuracy, enhancing our ability to distribute LMI to those customers and stakeholders in need of valuable data.

As we have mentioned in the past, ALMIS users tend to reside on the periphery of the customer continuum. Peripheral customers often are not familiar with LMI and are new visitors to *iLMI*. This creates an opportunity for increasing the outreach of LMI.

New modifications, additions and improvements include three new variables in Idaho's ALMIS database. Sub-State Short-Term Industry Projections, Sub-State Short-Term Occupational Projections and a previously archived Historical Economic Indicator Series will be pursued in the program year 2005.

Idaho is also considering adopting the ALMIS Distributed Access Method program, or ADAM, for state comparisons. Customer feedback indicates a significant number of ALMIS users need side-by-side comparisons of state data. The standardized structures allow for users to easily combine and compare data. The ADAM program would allow users to make these comparisons inside Idaho LMI Web pages.

2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.

❖ Outcomes

Projections outcomes have been delivered exactly as described in the plan with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Milestones

Projections milestones have been achieved exactly on schedule with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Expenditures

Projections expenditures have followed the fiscal plan with no significant variances from the plan.

As mentioned in the new PY2005 plan, one of the most significant changes due to customer feedback from the planning and evaluation process involves adjusting the delivery dates for short-term projections. Feedback from stakeholders, most notably our state Legislature, has made it necessary to move projections toward a December release. Therefore, we will be completing the short-term state deliverable eight months ahead of schedule to meet customer demand.

While this new approach is in high demand, we will continue to evaluate its benefits and costs. Early projections and releases do not allow for alignment with other states and regions. To date, however, the demand to deliver early outweighs the risks to accuracy and comparative purposes.

Also local feedback indicates a significant increase in demand for regional projections. Idaho's regional work forces differ significantly. Labor markets in parts of the state are extremely tight, and labor shortages have been experienced. Other parts of the state suffer from high unemployment. Therefore, efforts to measure and evaluate this phenomenon at the local level are extremely important to the state and regional economies. Efforts to develop independent models for regions are also under way to enhance accuracy to local regions.

Therefore, in PY2005, Idaho will continue to create and disseminate research containing and explaining both long-term and short-term projections in conjunction with other work force information. The findings will answer some of the most frequently asked questions from customers over the most recent rating period.

3. Provide occupational and career information products for public use.

❖ Outcomes

All occupational and career information product outcomes have been delivered as described in the plan with no significant variances from the plan. Due to customer feedback, slight alterations will be made in subsequent plans.

❖ Milestones

All milestones for occupational and career information product outcomes have been achieved on schedule with no significant variances from the plan. The hard-copy version of the projections publication has been delayed until October.

❖ Expenditures

The expenditures for occupational and career information product outcomes have followed the fiscal plan with no significant variances from the plan. Expenditures on the hard-copy version of the projections publication have been delayed till October 2005.

Each **OES Wage Publication** must include a customer satisfaction survey with a set of core questions and the opportunity for the developers to add more specific questions to serve the needs of their programs. Just as in previous years, feedback strongly favors maintaining current mediums of publication with slight adjustments in format and layout. For several years, Commerce & Labor staff have debated the categories and methods to display Occupational Employment Statistics wages -- median versus average, percentile categories and others. We used this feedback to create an OES publication that best suits customers and stakeholders. The PY2005 plan will include wage data via HTML in order to serve the needs of our one-stop customers, who need to have Idaho OES wage data housed in their electronic infrastructure. It provides employers a tool to attach the most accurate wage to customers in their sphere of influence. A full analysis of feedback from the OES customer satisfaction survey is on file at Idaho Commerce and Labor.

Fringe benefit research ranks near the top, according to customer satisfaction feedback, as a vital component of our ability to measure compensation. Therefore, Idaho's successful pilot effort in the Fringe Benefit Consortium partnership will serve to bridge this gap in our efforts to deliver comprehensive compensation analyses. We are now evaluating the feedback from the recent pilot and will be developing the protocol for future benefits according to customer feedback. Just to mention one of many, in the future survey we hope to ask how many employees receive benefits since many decline

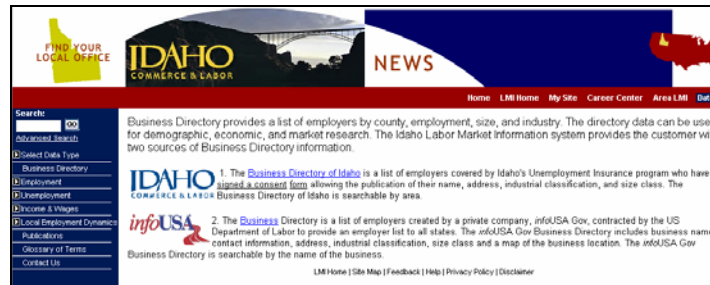
for a variety of reasons. Currently, we only gain information for the benefits offered. This is just one example of efforts to guarantee the survey protocol fits the needs of our customers and stakeholders. During the next program year, Idaho will be analyzing survey findings and developing a comprehensive publication from the 2004 survey effort. We will also focus on customer feedback in developing the official survey protocol for the 2006 fringe benefit survey. This is integral since the 2006 endeavor will be fully independent of the consortium, allowing Idaho the autonomy to fulfill our specific fringe benefit information needs.

Idaho has and will continue to develop the annual *Education & Training Pay* poster. Again, this product is an illustration that combines Occupational Employment Statistics with education codes developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Current Population Survey. The first poster was disseminated in hard-copy format and published via iLMI. Feedback has been outstanding. We have received significant feedback from our customers on the importance of this research. It has been reported that research in this area has a tremendous influence on job seekers and their career choices. The partnership we have developed with Career Information System has increased our LMI umbrella significantly, and we are now able to impact a larger continuum of customers from grassroots students to high-profile employers. Needless to say, augmenting this effort with projections, wages, education levels, career clusters and skills data into a suite of products really gets at the demand for synthesized LMI tools at the local level. Education and wages were the tip of the iceberg. This effort begins to evaluate and measure the work force from multiple dimensions. This effort is completely due to the partnerships we have fostered and the feedback we have gained from them. In fact, the demand from local colleges has resulted in the publication of these posters augmented with occupational projections and demand information for occupations supported by the various colleges and technical schools throughout Idaho. The tremendous response has resulted in our effort to produce these tools for all colleges and technical schools in Idaho. We are also working to complete an overall poster and matrix that graphically depicts the programs each college has to support the fastest growing and most prolific occupations currently in Idaho and forecasted over the next decade. A full analysis of feedback from the *Education & Training Pay* poster customer satisfaction survey is on file at Idaho Commerce and Labor.

Projections data continue to be one of our most sought after LMI products by the Workforce Development Council and local organizations. These data are extremely valuable to forecasting and economic development endeavors. Increased demand to develop projections data at a sub-state level continues. Projections are highly visible and vital to customers and stakeholders where projections are the cornerstone of planning and decision making.

We anticipate moving the statewide publication up to January in order to meet the demand of business leaders, legislators and other stakeholders. This publication will be the focal point at the upcoming LMI Economic Symposium in Boise and potentially around the state. The ability to target attendees will allow the LMI team to diffuse these vital projections to those who are in the best position to leverage forecasting and projections information to enhance and grow our local economies.

Idaho continues to provide two **employer databases** to customers. We continue to augment and maintain Idaho's Business Directory as well as display the *InfoUSA* product, including over 70,000 Idaho businesses. Via the iLMI Internet portal and the CIS interface, the employer databases are more widely available and integrated into ancillary systems that complement LMI. The department produces a directory file to fit our partner's internet platform needs.



Idaho will continue to augment the Idaho Business Directory via new Idaho business registrations for which releases are given. Currently, Idaho Business Directory listings have dropped from 19,153 to 18,504, down over 600 businesses. This is the second year we have experienced a decrease. We believe this is due to the new self-registration system. It is a priority that we identify the reasons and explore remedies.

4. Ensure that Workforce Information and support required by the state Workforce Development Council are provided.

❖ Outcomes

Workforce Information and support outcomes have been delivered as described in the plan with no significant variances from the plan. In fact, several structural and programmatic changes and additions have occurred in order to greatly enhance the department's ability to improve delivery of these outcomes. Rather than conducting a comprehensive skills survey, Idaho has adopted a skills-based employment system along with an economic forecasting tool.

❖ Milestones

Workforce Information and support milestones have been achieved exactly on schedule with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Expenditures

The Workforce Information and support expenditures have followed the fiscal plan with no significant variances from the plan. The savings in from the comprehensive skills survey have been used to operate the skills-based employment system along

with the purchase of a multiple user license for a new economic forecasting tool developed in Idaho.

The Communications and Research Division will continue to expand uses of the **Local Employment Dynamics** program to respond to the need for labor, economic and demographic data at the community level. As planned, Idaho Commerce & Labor has been selected as a pilot state for the LED mapping application tool. Organizationally, Idaho offers an integrated structure among local boards, economic development, labor market information, census entities and data users. The mapping application will bring a new planning and analytical tool to the state. This and other tools help a variety of entities faced with the challenge of improving the economic viability of their communities. The mapping tool, along with the comprehensive socio-economic, geographic-based database that will be enhanced by GIS and LED mapping applications, will be an enormous new tool to assist local boards and economic development officials.

The LED component provides an excellent tool to respond to the needs of the state board and local regions. The Communications and Research Division will use the LED program to respond to the need for labor, economic and demographic data at the community level. This program provides the tools necessary to measure, correlate and analyze these related data sets.

As mentioned earlier, in the last year the Communications and Research Division has been aligned in a cohesive unit during a department wide reorganization. This allows for immediate, 'on the fly' responses to data and research requests. The LMI Unit will continue to immediately respond to these requests. Within the evaluation component, the LMI Unit will determine the subsequent demand and continue to include high impact requests in subsequent plans.

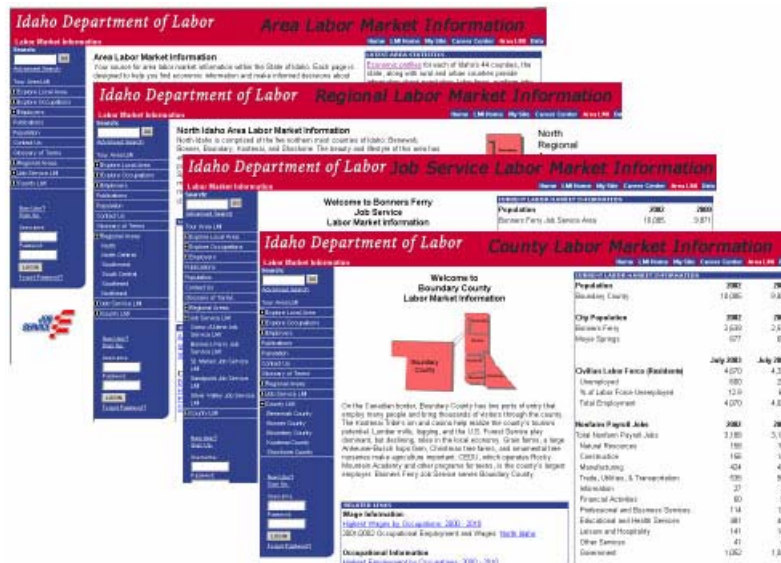
Idaho will also combine wage, occupational projections and career cluster data with the new skills-based employment system in order to quantify skills gaps. Partnerships via the Policy Academy are being built with legislators, educators, business people, government officials and other stakeholders to better quantify the supply side when determining and evaluating potential skills gaps. Most notably, a recent collaboration with professional-technical officials has allowed the department to link occupations with existing programs at the professional-technical institutions that fulfill the educational requirements for critical growing occupations. This initial partnership has been successful in providing cluster data through wage, occupational projections and skills data. We are now using this valuable collaboration on supply side information to better identify and quantify skills gaps.

Idaho uses the new **Skills Based Employment Projections** system along with a new economic forecasting tool to support local boards, leaders and stakeholders with critical labor market information. These new tools allow for immediate response to requests that previously required days along with significant costs.

The reorganization also has placed LMI in the direct path of our economic development division. The newly aligned economic development mission will require the purchase of

seven customer relationship management software licenses. This will allow the regional economists to share valuable LMI with economic development specialists throughout the state while including the economists in on information shared among economic development specialists.

The capabilities of iLMI include allowing the research team to create and link data into formats required by different user groups— state data, county data, data by local area. Regional pages are now available for the state, local office area and county. The initial setup has been extremely cumbersome and laborious. However, this upfront effort is now providing us the capability for disseminating data and information at a rapid and efficient rate at the county level. The iLMI application allows for timely and accurate state, regional and local labor market information to be readily available and easily accessible to internal and external users.



Idaho's evaluation of a potential job vacancy survey has resulted in our efforts to resurrect a previous database tool that allows data extraction from our local offices. For a small state like Idaho, the job vacancy-survey costs significantly outweigh the costs of delivery. The previous system allows us to monitor the changes in job vacancy using our local office data in an immediate, real-time fashion. Our information technology experts are very near completing this task and hope to have this program operational in PY2005.

5. Maintain and enhance electronic state Workforce Information delivery systems.

❖ Outcomes

The Workforce Information delivery system outcomes have been delivered exactly as described in the plan with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Milestones

The Workforce Information delivery system milestones have been achieved exactly on schedule with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Expenditures

The Workforce Information delivery system expenditures have followed the fiscal plan with no significant variances from the plan. Expenditures in subsequent plans will be altered in order to procure more sophisticated Web diagnostics software to accommodate the growth of our Web site and its demand.

We continue to gain feedback from online user surveys that can be accessed on each and every Web page. The LMI team gains perhaps the most intelligent feedback for improvements to our Internet delivery system from hands-on training sessions. These venues allow immediate ‘on the fly’ feedback to trainers. Often the improvements or enhancements from these suggestions are made within 24 hours.

The LMI team works closely with the six regional economists stationed throughout the state. These economists participate in and contribute to their local organizations. Through this relationship with the communities they serve, they obtain a multitude of requests from employers and work force intermediaries such as labor exchange agents, schools, community-based organizations, career guidance counselors and teachers. Feedback from the state council and the local groups continues to focus on the need for dynamic electronic and analytical products. The LMI unit will continue using the Workforce Informer, or *Wi*, technology to fulfill this need. Idaho continues to aggressively pursue the use of electronic and digital media to more efficiently and effectively publish and disseminate LMI.

The future of electronic delivery of LMI in Idaho is exciting. LMI data is accessible to anyone. *iLMI* has evolved over the last three years and includes both fundamental data tools for core customers and more comprehensive data tools for power users. Simple search engines and Web site links are included to facilitate rapid, user-friendly browsing of numerous LMI sources. It allows analysts to update and load information quickly, permits historic data to be retained and provides links to related topics, articles and publications. Customer feedback and demand will result in significant upgrades as seen below.

Specific to iLMI technology, anticipated outcomes and future enhancements to be made in PY2005 are:

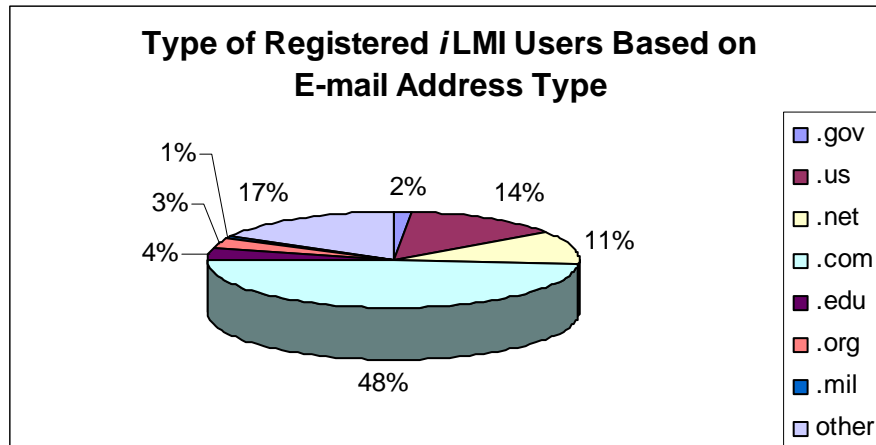
- ❖ New Web site administrator tools ~ Integrated user statistics allow administrators to track the number of downloads of publications, articles and Excel files. To date, the task is cumbersome and labor intensive due to the amount of traffic generated by users. A new tracking tool is currently being development by Idaho Commerce & Labor staff. Upon completion, administrators will be able to query Web statistics and create more in-depth reports on usage, downloads, visits and keywords used.
- ❖ User ~ Further enhancements are planned to Industry Explorer, a more user friendly report system based on industry data. User statistics will be available to e-mail articles, publications and Excel files directly from the site.
- ❖ Article and publication rating ~ An online rating system will include a one-to-five point range, displaying the most popular articles and publications in real time.
- ❖ Advanced search tool ~ Search engine will hit on all aspects of written content based on a keyword search, author name and category.
- ❖ Database enhancements ~ Non-core tables such as schools, programs, completer tables and economic indicator tables such as the consumer price index will be populated.
- ❖ Graphing tools ~ Integrated Pop Charts dynamic graphing tool will allow for more extensive use in the ALMIS database and the entire site.

Idaho's Internet Labor Market Information located at lmi.idaho.gov has celebrated its first complete year in service. It went live in February 2003 following several long and arduous years of development and preparation. It seems to have been well worth the wait since the product delivered fits immediate customer needs for labor market information.

Idaho currently is running version 2.3 of *Wi* and will be upgrading to version 3.0 in October. Idaho has a maintenance agreement for 2.3 and will procure another with version 3.0.

We continue monitoring Web statistics to evaluate the effectiveness of our electronic delivery of LMI to our customers and stakeholders. *iLMI* received nearly 171,500 visits for a 17-month period, and nearly 94,000 were unique visitors, an indication of new customers accessing LMI electronically. These unique visits to *iLMI* averaged just under 11,000 per month. The "my site" portal has a total of 715 registered users. External users account for 85 percent of those registered. My site allows the user to save articles, publications and data for easy retrieval. The chart below breaks down user types. Keywords to finding *iLMI* through external search engines such as Google, Yahoo and

MSN maintain in consistency throughout the search engines. “Idaho,” “County,” “Wages” and “Jobs” remain the most used keywords for successful searches in connecting to iLMI.



These diagnostics will be used as a baseline for future analysis. We expect these visits/hits to expand exponentially since we continue to convert all of our previous Internet information into the *Wi* product. We have currently converted the majority of our Internet delivery to *Wi*. We are also making extensive efforts in fully incorporate all of our information services under the *Wi* Web umbrella.

The Web statistics for iLMI have been provided through a software tool known as DeepMetrix LiveStats 6.2.7. This software has the capability to analyze Internet usage by month, week, day or a range of dates. Essentially, this software gives the Web site administrator a look at the usage trends of the site and individual pages. A full report on our Web site diagnostics can be seen in Section B of this report.

6. Support state Workforce Information training activities.

❖ Outcomes

Workforce Information training activity outcomes have been delivered exactly as described in the plan with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Milestones

Workforce Information training activity milestones have been achieved exactly on schedule with no significant variances from the plan.

❖ Expenditures

Expenditures for Workforce Information training activity have followed the fiscal plan with no significant variances from the plan.

Communications and Research staff provided Labor Market Information training to a wide variety of customers at sessions held around the state. These included legislative committees, local chambers of commerce, economic development groups, job fairs,

business groups, school classes and local office staff. The sessions focus on how to use LMI in making good business decisions, career choices and more effective job searches. State regional economists provided the LMI training module as part of the department's Career Development Facilitation. They developed the module for local Commerce & Labor offices and began providing training on those pages this summer to all local office staff, not just those participating in the career development program. They will also provide training on the new *iLMI* Web site including the local office pages.

This year the Career Development Facilitation effort offered over 50 classes that included an LMI element. The classes trained over 550 consultants and work force professional in the use of LMI within our Web delivery system. Of the 550 trainees, 50 have received the full comprehensive training on *iLMI* and its Workforce Information component. Outside the department, several hundred informal, ad hoc individual and group training sessions were conducted via our regional economists and central office staff.

The LMI team gains perhaps the most intelligent feedback for improvements to our Internet delivery system during training sessions. These venues allow immediate, 'on the fly' feedback to trainers. Often these improvements or enhancements from these suggestions are made within 24 hours. These power users understand how to leverage LMI so their feedback on *iLMI* is integral to its success.

Customer feedback suggests that too often valuable LMI goes unnoticed when important business, career and other work force decisions are being made. It has been directed by stakeholders, local groups and the state council that the department cross-market LMI and target events so customers needing LMI not only have access to it but are well aware of its availability and potential impact on the local and state economies. Therefore, the LMI team will aggressively market, train and disseminate research and data through the January LMI Economic Symposium in Boise. The effort to cross-market ancillary LMI products along with the core and primary LMI products will increase the visibility of LMI products and tools that too often go unnoticed. A consistent and sustained effort to market LMI research and data via *iLMI* and train users on retrieving it needs to be made during the LMI Economic Symposium and other LMI events throughout the state.

Section B ~ Customer Satisfaction Assessment

To meet the condition set forth in the Workforce Investment Act, Idaho developed a comprehensive plan to measure the effectiveness and demand of Idaho's LMI products and LMI delivery systems. The focus is to ensure that the Workforce Development Council, employers, job seekers and all other stakeholder were able to easily and effectively give feedback on products, services and LMI gaps. This comprehensive effort combined with the evaluation feedback from Idaho's one-stop unemployment insurance and job placement service delivery system strengthens Idaho's ability to identify, understand and address LMI demands. Consultation with businesses, individuals, the work force investment system and state and local boards via findings from the evaluation component and planning meetings are paramount in the research, development and submission of this work force information grant.

The cornerstone of this effort involves the department's regional economists attending and participating in the activities of their local communities and regions. This immediate and personal feedback allows us to better identify, understand and measure the demands and needs of our regional grassroots customers. Focus groups, phone and Internet traffic, information requests and customer satisfaction surveys are examples of metrics efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of LMI products and delivery. Idaho's planning and evaluation tool is fully described in Attachment A.

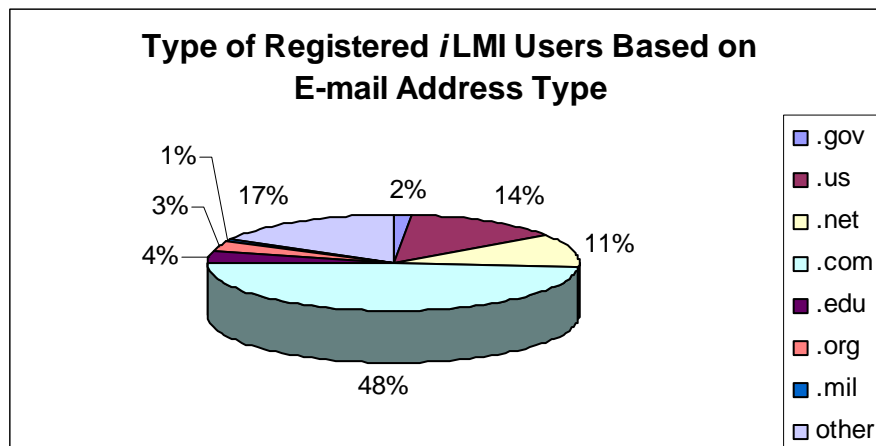
Each hard copy publication is accompanied by a customer feedback survey. On each survey is the opportunity for customers to indicate when they were unable to find information they were looking for. While it may be difficult to quantify this data, comments and suggestions provide very telling information on accessibility of Labor Market Information to our users. The returned surveys are culled, analyzed and shared with the evaluation team and author. The required survey template can be seen in Attachment A.

There are also plans to ask users to rate each electronic article online and in real-time as upgrades become available. By asking customers if they have used iLMI in the past, we will have a much better data of the accessibility and usefulness to customers, and their willingness to use iLMI as part of the Labor Market Information library. This kind of valuable information is uncovered from online customer surveys.

Idaho also gains constant qualitative feedback from its survey tool on the front page of iLMI. Although the findings from this feedback have been fairly constant over the last few years, we have observed a greater need to study underemployment and develop metrics for that vague topic. Therefore, you will notice in the PY2005 plan that funding has been targeted to investigate local underemployment metrics. The matrix on page 20 also supports the need for underemployment metrics. While our unemployment rates are tumbling and wages remain stagnant, investigation into underemployment is critical to clearly understand the changes in the dynamic of our labor force.

Idaho also evaluates Web statistics to measure our quality and effectiveness in the delivery of LMI. Survey feedback indicates there is a portion of the audience who is not interested in electronic distribution, requiring that a variety of means for dissemination must continue to appease all customers and stakeholders. Nevertheless, the popularity of electronic delivery is growing as the use of the Internet has vastly reduced the volume of hard-copy publications Commerce & Labor produces and disseminates. Idaho's main nexus to labor market information on the World Wide Web is iLMI. In the past three years, iLMI's has experienced enormous growth due to the expansion of our LMI mission.

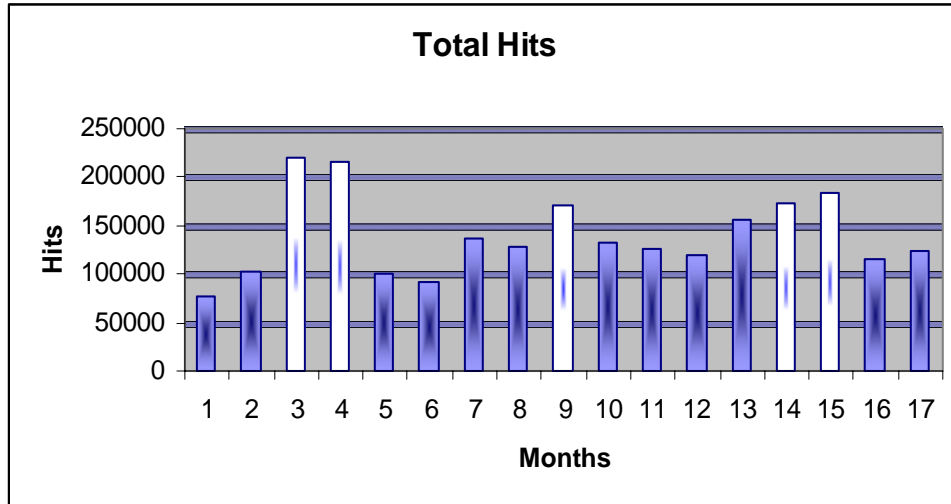
iLMI received nearly 171,500 visits for a 17-month period, and nearly 94,000 were unique visitors, an indication of new customers accessing LMI via the Web. These unique visits to iLMI averaged just under 11,000 per month. The "my sit" portal has a total of 715 registered users. External users account for 85 percent of those registered. My site allows the user to save articles, publications and data for easy retrieval. The chart below breaks down user types. Google, Yahoo and MSN are the major search engines using "Idaho," "County," "Wages" and "Jobs" as the leading keywords in searching LMI over the past 17 months.



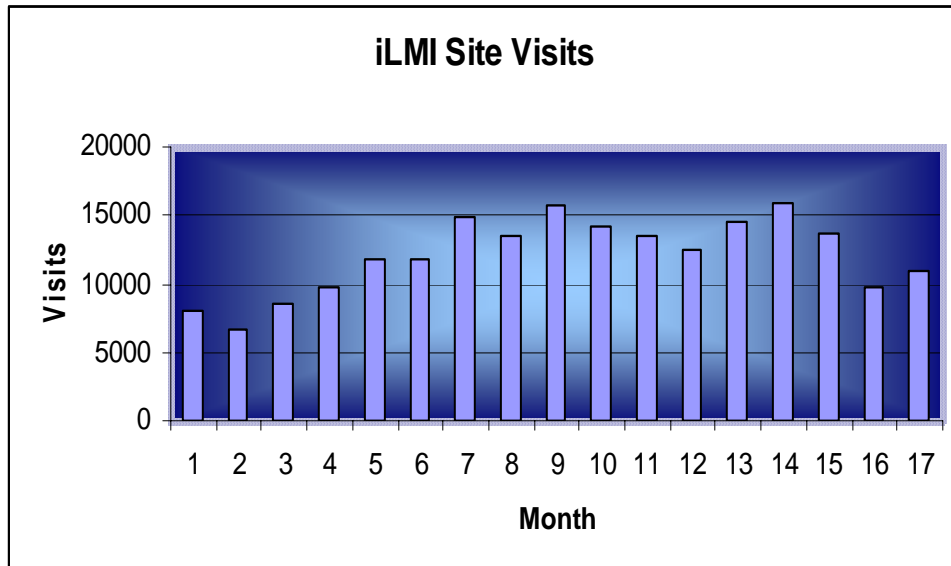
Since the reorganization in 2005, evaluating Web statistics has become challenging due to the integration of the information services and Labor Market Information Web sites under the **Wi** Web umbrella. This growth and complexity requires a more robust Web statistics software program we hope to purchase in PY2005. A current report of the Web statistics is presented below.

The **Total Hits** report tracks the number of requests for files - or "hits" - logged during the specified reporting period. A "hit" is any request on your web server for *any file*, such as a web page, bitmap, CGI, or header request. For example, if a visitor wants to see a web page containing two images, they must make three hits: one hit for the page, and two for the image files. For example, the front page of iLMI has approximately 5 hits on it each time that it is opened.

The total number of hits for the site have begun to fluctuate from month to month. For the logged 17-month review, total hits topped two million at 2,369,965. Hits throughout the 17 month review average 139,409 per month.

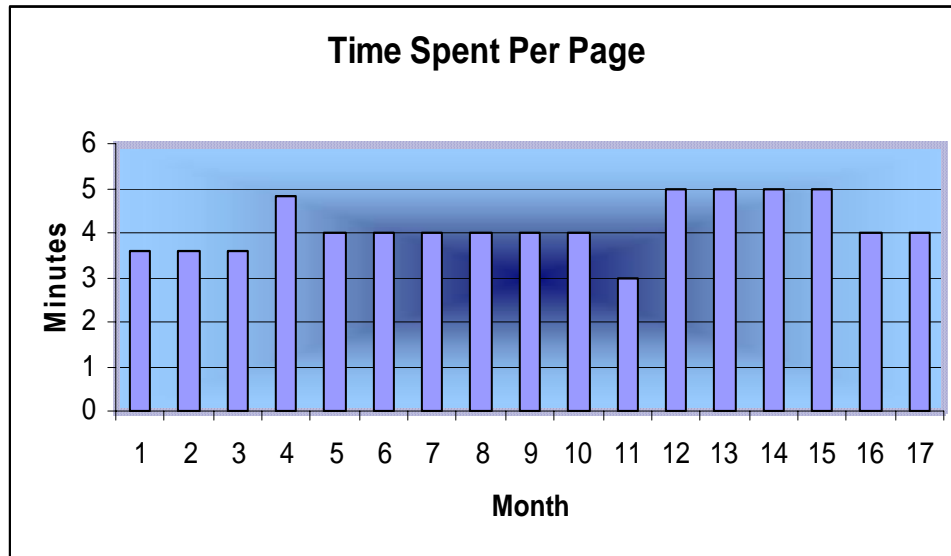


The **Visits** report shows the number of visitor sessions opened or "visits" to your site during the specified reporting period. A visit refers to a series of requests from a uniquely identified client. A visit starts with the first request from the client and remains active as long as the period between subsequent requests from the client does not exceed a set "time-out" period. After a visit "times out," Web statistics software counts a request from the same client as the start of a new visit.



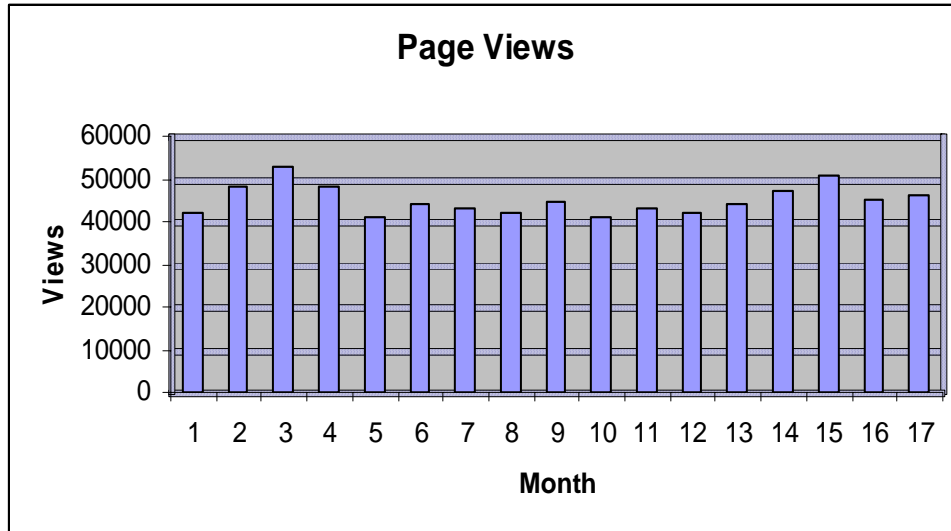
An increase in visitors is a good indicator of the actual number of users per site. For iLMI, the number of visitors does fluctuate between months but has remained constantly over 10,000 per month with an average of 12,112 for the review period.

Time Spent Per Visit tracks the average amount of time each visitor spends during a visit to the site. The longer the time spent, the higher the interest level in the site. A lower time spent can indicate that the marketing is efficient to get the visit but the pages are unable to retain the visitor's interest. A review of the site may indicate that it may not be visual pleasing, too complicated to maneuver through or that the person is not interested in the material.



iLMI users are staying an average of four minutes per visit. According to the Nielsen/Net Ratings, the average for time spent per page has also decreased from the previous year. These results are a measurement of all Web sites, which include chat sites, news sites and game sites. A decrease in time spent could indicate a more user-friendly site, which is easier to maneuver through.

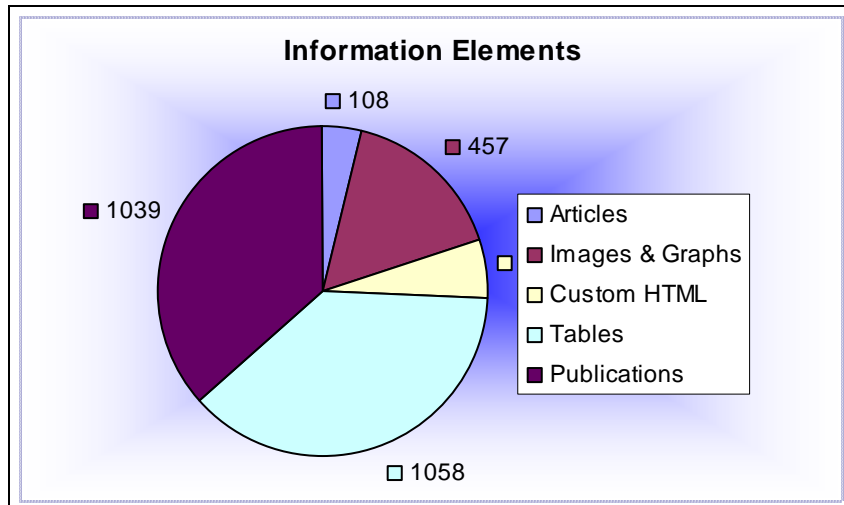
Page Views shows the number of successful requests for pages logged during the specified report period. Similar to the visits report, the page views report helps spot trends in Web site traffic. The average page views for the review period, is 45,490 per month. The highest usage is on Wednesday. The lowest is on Saturday. This indicates that major maintenance done on a Saturday would affect the fewest site visitors. The data for page views show a continued increase in page views, which corresponds with easier navigation throughout the site. This allows the user to go directly to the page needed or requested.



The Page Views report within Page Activity shows the most commonly accessed page views, the least accessed page views and the new, or previously unselected, pages requested during the specified period. The report lets us evaluate the site’s content and identify the level of interest in a page. Historically, the *iLMI* home page has continued to be the most popular page followed by the Occupational Employment and Wage Survey page and then the Area LMI page. This is a good indicator that other pages are driving interest. Over 700,000 total pages have been viewed by our customers during the review period, an average of over 44,000 per month.

Repeat Visitors shows how many visitors visited a site more than once during the specified report period. Visitors are uniquely identified either by their IP address or by their cookie. The Repeat Visitors report can help assess how well a customer base is being retained. If only a few of those who visit a site return, you may have to rethink your marketing strategy, Web site content or both. The *iLMI* site has continued to increase its repeat visitors during the review period. Repeat visitors average over 10,000 visits each month.

Downloads shows how many files were downloaded. The report indicates which publication files have the most and least interest. At this time there are over 1,000 separate publications available on *iLMI*. While Downloads only reports on publications, it is important to add that information elements such as articles, images and graphs, tables and publications should be considered in analyzing the success of *iLMI*. The pie chart below shows a representation of those information elements.



The Occupational Employment and Wage Survey continues to be the most download item on iLMI. That indicates that people are interested in knowing more about the survey and wages. The downloads on Regional/Area pages have increased over the review period, indicating a larger interest in sub-state information.

In conclusion, interest in iLMI by is continuing to grow, according to the statistics. The iLMI staff will continue to update the site with new and interesting data and publications to build on this growth. The availability of customer usage information in a timely manner is a must in order to maintain the loyalty of our repeat visitors. A Web site is an ever growing and changing entity that must have constant nurturing and attention.

Our major focus has been on using iLMI to reach more customers and disseminate data more effectively. We refine iLMI using these customer activity reports from the Web site to make data easier to find, easier to understand and attractive to new user groups. Specific to ever-changing technology and the increased interest of iLMI, we anticipate administrating a new Web site statistics program. A new tracking tool will query the statistics and create more in-depth reports on usage, downloads, visits and keywords used. The site usage dictates that our customers have a greater interest in our product, and our current Web site statistics tool is unable to handle the existing and future demand.

While Web usage, downloads and Internet traffic warrant attention, direct surveys of the Workforce Development Council and local and private organizations and their stakeholders is perhaps the most valuable source for identifying research projects providing the largest return on investment. These stakeholders have significant leverage in the business community so due to their economic influence their feedback is extremely valuable to the success of targeting specific LMI research. Below is a summary of priorities derived annually from direct customer satisfaction surveys.

Subject Areas Ranked by Average Score	Avg. Score
Labor market assessment – available labor pool, skills, wages demanded, wages offered, age, gender, underemployment, not in the labor force, education, turnover rates by area and industry, benefits,	2
Skills – what employers are looking for (soft and technical)	4
Projections - Employment & Industry	5
Labor Force Demographics – age, gender, race/ethnicity	5
Population Demographics – age, gender, race/ethnicity	6
Wages by occupation	7
Underemployment – wage, hours, and education	8
Income – median, per capita, personal	8
Covered Employment and wages by industry	9
Poverty – number in poverty and age	9
Drop outs – age, school or location	9
Applicants – age, gender, education, occupation, race/ethnic, veteran, migrant, disabilities, skills, by area not just JS office	10
UI – age, gender, race/ethnic, education, industry, occupation, reason, duration	13
Languages – types and whether primary or secondary	13
Foster Children – age and placement type	14
Veterans – total, age, gender, period of service	15

The summary matrix above exhibits only a few examples of efforts to gain feedback from and adopt changes recommended by customers and stakeholders. Idaho is committed to continually gauge our successes and failures pursuant to the Planning and Evaluation Plan and act on the feedback in developing a world-class work force information system in Idaho.

As mentioned earlier, the *Education & Training Pay* poster was a direct result of customer feedback from our most leveraged partner, Idaho Commerce & Labor local offices, during our local office cross-training effort. This publication also stems from the demand of our partners in the educational sector. We work closely with the Idaho Career Information System in developing, maintaining and disseminating the *Education & Training Pay* poster. In fact, the poster has grown to include occupational projection data to highlight the highest paid and most prolific occupations. We also provide separate posters specific to institutions and the programs they provide to students. This publication is gradually becoming one of our most requested products.

We are also developing a suite of LMI products to fulfill customer requests. One example involves the use of career-cluster methodology. We are now producing projections and wage data according to career clusters. We are also aligning LMI data with education curriculums to evaluate skills and training gaps. The department is also partnering with Professional-Technical Education colleagues to use the Skills Based Employment System to evaluate skills gaps. It is in this area where most requests for new and innovative products occur. The development of this suite of products will serve to fill many of the ad

hoc requests the department receives. This effort will essentially put into production the development of these products so customers and stakeholders can access this valuable LMI on an annual and consistent basis. Also, partnerships through the Policy Academy initiated by the governor are being built with legislators, educators, business people, government officials and other stakeholders to better quantify the supply of workers and the skills they offer in our dynamic labor force.

The Commerce and Labor merger and recent reorganization combining the Communications, Public Affairs and Research and Analysis bureaus has had a profound impact on Idaho Labor Market Information/Workforce Information programs. The synergies derived from this reorganization continue to enhance our ability to deliver vital LMI to our customers and stakeholders. LMI is now in position to have a greater impact on economic development. The State Data Center, the cooperating state agency with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the governor-designated state labor market information agency are now aligned with the LMI team. We are in the process of unifying them. We have already noticed improvements in product development and, most importantly, product delivery to markets. For example, the information services team develops a host of high-profile LMI products such as the Profile of Rural Idaho, County Profiles and Starting a Business in Idaho that are vital to the comprehensive delivery of LMI to our customers. As our LMI umbrella widens, it is even more critical that we focus limited resources on gaining feedback that adds value to LMI, opens doors to LMI and identifies LMI that is most effective at impacting our economy by assisting job seekers, students, business and other policy makers to succeed in our dynamic economy.

Section C ~ Recommendations for Improvements or Changes to the Suite of Core Products

Based on accomplishments, customer satisfaction feedback and consultation with stakeholders, Idaho along with its customers and stakeholders is very satisfied with the previous Training and Employment Guidance Letter's suite of core products. Our feedback indicates the major elements of the core products have consistently supported the current demand in Idaho for LMI. However, feedback also indicates the critical nature of flexibility in the secondary products, three through six, that primarily serve the state Workforce Development Council.

When evaluating the characteristics of the most requested LMI, real-time and ad hoc research has grown significantly, exceeding the time it takes to deliver the core products one and two. Idaho supports the growth in LMI development and delivery with auxiliary state funding. Although flexibility is needed, it is important that the core products one and two continue to be developed in a manner that allows for the ALMIS database and other federal deliverables to be standardized across all states and structured to suit a multitude of electronic platforms. Standardization is important for allowing more automation in the production of these core products. At the sub-state level, Idaho continues to enhance the suite of core products by increasing sample size and using statistical syntheses techniques to develop series that extend down to the local levels, where we see a growing demand for LMI.

Also from Idaho's perspective, a greater emphasis on skills, career clusters, education and the critical nexus between them needs to be explored. Therefore, flexibility is key as we conform to the continuously evolving needs of our customers.

Appendix A

Appendix A: Planning and Evaluation Plan

Purpose

A condition for receiving the Workforce Information grant is a state assessment of customer satisfaction with selected grant deliverables or with the larger statewide workforce information system. Section 15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (WIA Section 309) requires state agencies to consult with customers about the usefulness of the information disseminated through the statewide workforce information system. Consultation with the workforce development system, combined with the customers' feedback on their satisfaction with workforce information, provides the basis for formulating continuous improvement strategies for the system.

The grant plan must include a description of the customer consultation and satisfaction assessment strategy to be employed and the methods to be used to collect and interpret customer satisfaction information. Satisfaction must be assessed in some manner for each of the system's principal customers -- businesses, individuals and the workforce development system.

To meet the condition set forth in the WIA, Idaho assembled a 10-member team representing the data-producing units the Communications and Research Division to develop a comprehensive plan to measure the effectiveness of Idaho's LMI products and LMI delivery systems. The team was comprised of analysts who are instrumental in producing core Labor Market Information products and services and whose responsibility is to distribute LMI to the customer population.

States might find usage indicators to be a starting point for assessing satisfaction. Samples of possible indicators are: Web Metrics' demand information for a product or service such as number of publication or listserv subscriptions, number of requests for assistance by customer organizations or number of individuals served by an activity such as individuals trained by course offerings or counseled using an O*NET-based occupational analysis product.

The grant plan must include a description of the customer consultation and satisfaction assessment strategy to be employed and the methods to be used to collect and interpret customer satisfaction information. Satisfaction must be assessed in some manner for each of the system's principal customers -- businesses, individuals and the workforce development system.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Planning and Evaluation Plan is to develop qualitative and quantitative protocol for analyzing the value and effectiveness of the LMI products and services provided by Idaho Commerce & Labor.

Goal	Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify who uses Idaho's LMI product and information-providing services and how those products and services are accessed.	Evaluate the current mail, fax and Internet distribution in order to quantify the usage.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determine customer satisfaction with current LMI products/services.	Establish baselines and benchmarks for measuring acceptability of current LMI products/services by asking current customers why they like/use or don't like/use our LMI products/services.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve existing LMI products/services where needed.	Provide feedback from customers to Communications and Research so it may refine LMI products and services.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify data voids that new LMI products can fill.	Ask current customers what labor market information they would like/need. Develop new customer groups.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Devise a system for continual evaluation of the effectiveness of our service/products.	Include survey and feedback options with every point of use/customer contact.

Current situation

Idaho's labor market information products consist of weekly, monthly and annual data and publications accessible through the Internet, available in hard copy or given over the phone when requested.

Responses to phone data requests and publications are dealt with by support staff. The Communications and Research Division staff fields questions for non-standard or technical data, ad hoc data requests, or requests made by state government officials. It also produces a monthly newsletter containing current labor market developments and data. In-depth responses to questions are answered by the program research analyst, who produces the data and in most cases formats and publishes historic data series.

When calls are forwarded to a research analyst, previously there was no requirement to keep information about the request, the answer or the requestor. Analysts who have worked in their program for a number of years have a good feel for the kinds of information requests that come in, but that knowledge is anecdotal and informally passed from one analyst to another. While this informal approach is a valuable means of evaluating our effectiveness for delivering LMI, a more sophisticated approach is desired for optimal customer satisfaction measurement.

A significant drawback to this system is the relatively short time most of the LMI-producing analysts have been working in Communications and Research or at least with BLS programs. Over half of the senior research analysts have fewer than five years with their programs.

A customer satisfaction survey for the monthly newsletter was last conducted in 1996. User response was used to modify the newsletter. The usability of other products could only be estimated by the number of users who wanted to remain on the publications' mailing lists.

In February 2003, the Idaho Department of Labor unveiled a Web site that allows for downloading data series, current information and data and most of the LMI-related publications. The Internet product, iLMI, is still in its infancy and emphasis has been on formatting and posting data to the site.

The Challenge

Customer analysis has been more an attempt at deflecting time-consuming data requests than responding to customer needs. Although it has served the public well, there is room for improvement. The initial action will require Communications and Research to step off the well-beaten path that we have trod for years and to step onto a new path where we will encounter customers with needs we have not met before.

Goal: Identify who uses Idaho's LMI product and information-providing services and how those products and services are accessed

The Labor Market Information Planning and Evaluation Team identified four user groups:

- ◆ Users who call for information periodically
Initial contact by phone, follow-up by U.S. mail or e-mail
- ◆ Users who are on mailing or fax distribution lists for various publications
Those who utilize iLMI to retrieve data and information
- ◆ Users who register on iLMI—the Internet Web site for Idaho Commerce & Labor's labor market information
- ◆ Users of iLMI who do not register on the Web site

LMI users who call for information

To date, there is no formal method for collecting information from data users who call for information or want a single copy of a publication. If data can be supplied easily, it is simply relayed over the phone. If a single copy of a publication is requested, names and mailing addresses are not necessarily kept. If the calls are referred to a research analyst, the analyst deals with the call as he/she sees fit, and there is no 'formal' method of tracking how the customer was dealt with, what was requested or contact information file.

- *The team recommended that Communications and Research Division clerical staff—the initial point of contact for most calls -- should collect the information request by type -- CPI, labor force or whatever else -- whether it be read over the phone, mailed, faxed, e-mailed or referred to an analyst. Call tracking to be expanded to include analysts.*
- *Furthermore, it was decided that without universal use of a call tracking system, the data would not be complete. Therefore, the team requested that the six regional economists join research analysts in tracking information requests.*

Publication Mailing Lists and Fax Lists

The Communications and Research Division maintains mailing and fax lists for dispersal of data.

The division periodically includes surveys in its publications asking whether a recipient wishes to continue receiving the publication, but little information regarding how the publication is used or how it could be improved has been sought.

- The team recommends that with or following each publication's mailing, a survey as to how the publication is used, how it is circulated and improvements that could be made be sent to those on the mailing list.
- An added use of the survey would be to promote iLMI as an alternative source of the information, resulting in decreased production and mailing costs and offsetting the cost of a mail survey.

Users who register on iLMI

This group is essentially a captive audience, comprised of users who will take the time to dig through a Web site until they find what they want. They should prove to be a valuable source of information on data format, availability and usability. We will be able to contact them by e-mail.

Users of iLMI who do not register on the Web site

This user group is the largest constituent of iLMI. It is probably the most important group in terms of service and accessibility. Its constituents are not willing to spend time searching through a Web site or entering numerous parameters to retrieve data.

Casual users will be the hardest group to get information from since we do not know who they are, why they need the information they are looking for or how they found iLMI. Yet they are probably the most important user group—the lowest common denominator in terms of LMI sophistication. If we succeed in meeting their needs, we have achieved the pinnacle of customer satisfaction.

To get information from these users, a voluntary, online survey needs to be designed.

Having identified who our customers are and the way we would like to address them, the team then discussed what we would need to know in order to assess customer satisfaction.

Due to the varying nature of data delivery, the core questions are the most basic elements we believe we need to accurately determine customer satisfaction. Each data-producing unit is encouraged to add questions it feels could gather insight into how its products/services are used and what improvements or changes would enhance their usability. Therefore, on the following page is a template of core questions that are mandatory for publications or comprehensive iLMI outreach.

All surveys will have this standard set of questions (survey template):

How did you know about this publication/Web site

For publications:

I've used it in the past

It was in the library/resource room

I happened on a copy and wanted one for my own

I read about it in the *Idaho Employment* newsletter

Other

Are you aware that this publication is available on the Internet?

Y/N

OR

For Web site:

I've used it in the past

I found it using a search engine (Yahoo, AltaVista, Google, etc)

What words did you search for?

It was linked on another website

http: / _____

I read about it in an Idaho Commerce & Labor publication

Which one?

Which of the following best describes you

Expand this area

HR administrator/personnel

Student

Library personnel

Educator

Legal Professional

Job Seeker

Other

How do/will you use this publication? /Why did you access this Web site?

Expand this area

Library/resource room

Economic research

School-related research

Career-related research

Business planning (move to Idaho, expand, marketing, etc)

Pay Administration

Grant writing/proposals

File

Other

If you found the information you were looking for, please rate how you found the following

	Easy					Hard
Ease with which you found what you were looking for	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Layout/headings	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Poor explanations/ hard to understand	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Graphic elements	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

Corollary to this goal: Ask WDC to evaluate products and services

- ❖ The team recommends Communications and Research be active in addressing the local boards through the regional economists. Rather than ask general questions about what local customers experience with a product or service has been, ask that a product be presented at a meeting and a survey be returned. In this way, we will be able to respond directly to their needs and concerns about data and information issues. The LMI team will have monthly contact with the REs during their staff conference calls and meet annually to discuss issues pertinent to data distribution and dissemination. A formal customer satisfaction survey will be conducted with all local boards on the topics and effectiveness of current LMI research endeavors.

At this point, the group has accomplished the directive to “develop a comprehensive Planning and Evaluation Plan to include qualitative and quantitative approaches to measure the effectiveness and impact of Idaho’s LMI products and delivery systems.” The framework for conducting measurements of customer satisfaction for division publications and services has been constructed and data collection activity and analyses has been conducted and will continue.

What remains is implementation of the procedures that have been designed, the outcome evaluated and the process repeated until an acceptable level of customer satisfaction for each product and service is attained.

Recommendations

Although data are distributed in different ways by different bureaus in Idaho Commerce & Labor, the need to assess their value to data users is constant. So is a need for an easy-to-access format and, when possible, an attractive layout. The type of questions which need answers remain consistent so a standard set of questions can be asked of all data users. Additional questions by each data-producing unit to assess whether the data should be provided in a different format, or at all, is encouraged.

Short-term

- A.** Gather all information, formal and informal, that exists for each product or service offered by Communications and Research.

Improve by formalizing information collection procedures by the research unit and the regional economists.

- B.** Identify customers and when possible, classify them into a user group based on how the product/service is used: HR administrator/personnel, student, library personnel, educator, legal professional, job seeker, other

Improve by surveying customers about:

- 1) How data/information in the publication is used
- 2) How the publication is circulated after receipt
- 3) What improvements could be made to the publication
- 4) If they are aware that the publication is available on iLMI,

- C.** Formalize communication between Communications and Research and local boards through the regional economists as to their knowledge of division products and services, and as to their LMI needs. Improve by familiarizing local boards with current products and services and request specific suggestions on changes, additions and improvements based on their needs.
- D.** Add a user survey to iLMI, asking what was being sought, how the data/information was to be used and what improvements or changes would enhance the Web site’s usability. Improve by making changes where possible.

Long-Term

- A.** Make product/service evaluation a standard operating procedure.

Implementation Protocol

Orient LMI staff to the WIA customer survey requirements and outline the team's process framework that will be used for information collection.

Explain what the WIA requires and how we are part of the plan, how the plan affects us and what we would like to accomplish.

Help data-producing units clarify their goals for surveying their data users.

The team identified three methods of data dissemination -- Internet, phone and hard copy -- and challenges each posed in surveying data users.

The team developed a core set of questions that will be asked of all data users regardless of the method of data delivery. To accommodate the differences in the data, each data producer will be encouraged to augment the core questions with questions that data users believe would improve the delivery and quality of the product.

Help data-producing units augment the base list of questions.

It is important to note that the customer satisfaction survey instruments need to ask some demographic information about the person or entity filling out the survey. The survey should ask if the person is a member of a local workforce board, a job seeker, an education provider or something else. This will allow the survey to aggregate responses by customer group to identify the scope of customers assessed.

Develop plans for how survey results will be used by each data-producing unit.

Establish a baseline and benchmarks for measuring programs.

Analyze survey results to determine if key customer groups are being served.

After assessing survey results, assist with refining and enhancing survey to maintain quality of data products and access to products by key customer groups.

