

U.S. International Trade Commission 2006 Progress Report on Implementation of the E-Government Act

October 20, 2006

This report is submitted in response to OMB Memorandum M-06-25: FY 2006 E-Government Act Reporting Instructions. The U.S. International Trade Commission's (USITC) progress report on implementation of the E-Government Act of 2002 is detailed below, in accordance with the three specific components outlined in the August 25, 2006 instructions.

1. Provide a brief overview of your agency's implementation of the Act including a description of an internal agency-specific E-Government initiative.

Overview of Commission's implementation of the Act

The Commission is continuing a phased approach to the implementation of the E-Government Act of 2002. Implementation began in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 with the appointment of a Chief Information Officer (CIO), an analysis of existing E-Government capabilities across all lines of business, the identification of opportunities for improvement in these capabilities, and the documentation of new requirements. These capabilities, upgrade opportunities, and new requirements were captured in the agency's first *Information Resources Management Strategic Plan* that covers the period of 2003-2008.

During FY 2006, the Commission continued its multi-year governance improvement plan, focused on ensuring that investments in information technology support the *IRM Strategic Plan*. In FY 2005, version 1.0 of the *USITC Modernization Blueprint* was completed. The Blueprint followed OMB-approved enterprise architecture approaches to develop as-is views of its business and technology architecture. Additionally, in FY 2006 a four-month pilot enterprise architecture repository and visualization project was completed that provided the CIO with additional information on alternatives for enhancing E-Government services within and between the Commission's lines of business. E-Government service improvements during FY 2006 included (1) upgrading the Electronic Document Imaging System (EDIS) to make it the authoritative on-line reference for all USITC investigations; (2) expansion search capabilities for the agency's public website (www.usitc.gov); (3) enhanced security solutions, and (4) a move toward alignment with applicable OMB E-Government initiatives (e.g., e-Payroll, EHRI, HRLOB, e-Clearance, and Recruitment One-Stop).

Agency-specific E-Government initiative - EDIS

As early as FY 1989, the ITC began imaging critical documents for an investigative document archive used for internal research. In FY 1994, the Commission created a Document Imaging Committee that proposed an imaging system for all documents filed with the Commission that would enable document research and retrieval on a self-service basis. The Commission approved that recommendation in the fall of FY 1995 and by FY 1996 the Electronic Documents Imaging System (EDIS) was installed and operational. In FY 1998, worldwide users were provided Internet access to the public documents through an upgrade known as EDIS On-Line. Service improvements during FY 2006 included new and enhanced EDIS search tool. This tool provides improved access to public documents filed with the ITC, including multiple search options, faster retrieval, and more user-friendly search results.

How EDIS is transforming agency operations

From the perspective of the system's users, EDIS has furthered the mission and function of the Commission by making its proceedings more transparent and the records of its

investigations more accessible. The ITC is a small agency with a world-wide impact on international trade. EDIS provides the Commission with a presence in those world-wide markets. EDIS also contributes to thoroughly researched and documented pleadings. It is not unusual for the evidentiary record of an investigation to include 2,000 or more exhibits that will be considered under an expedited schedule, a task that demands automated document research and retrieval. In sum, the mission of the Commission and the demands of large-scale investigations gave rise to EDIS and made it a success.

How the Commission maintains ongoing dialogue with interested parties to find innovative ways to use information technology for the initiative; and the external partners (e.g., Federal, State or local agencies, industry) who collaborate with the EDIS initiative

System enhancements are developed through collaboration between the Commission and EDIS users. Comments are received through agency website satisfaction surveys and an ongoing dialogue between the agency and its stakeholders. With all significant enhancements to EDIS, the Commission conducts several efforts to communicate those changes to parties to ITC investigative proceedings, their counsel, trade associations, the U.S. Trade Representative, Congress, and general public users. For each enhancement or system change, a Federal Register Notice is issued at the earliest available date prior to the release. Additionally, the Commission directly contacts all EDIS users through emails describing proposed changes to the system. The Commission also posts a notice about the pending changes on the EDIS website along with a link to the Federal Register Notice.

Identify improved performance (e.g., outcome measures) by tracking performance measures supporting agency objectives and strategic goals;

The Commission's Strategic Plan establishes the following general goals in support of the Commission's antidumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) investigations and reviews under Title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 and global safeguard and market disruption investigations under sections 202, 204, 406, 421, and 422 of the Trade Act of 1974:

Facilitate a rules-based international trading system by producing high quality and timely import injury determinations based on:

- *an effective exchange of information between the Commission and interested persons,*
- *an appropriate investigative record, and*
- *fair and equitably-implemented procedures.*

The Commission's Strategic Plan also establishes the following general goal for its mission of adjudicating complaints brought by domestic industries under section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930 that allege infringement of U.S. intellectual property rights and other unfair methods of competition by imported goods operation:

Facilitate a rules-based international trading system by conducting intellectual property-based import investigations in an expeditious and transparent manner and providing for effective relief when it is warranted.

In an effort to support these goals and to make its proceedings more transparent and the records of its investigations more accessible, the Commission makes its investigative records available through EDIS. The Commission's Performance Plan outlines the priorities and schedules for making investigative records publicly available. The performance goals for the release of public documents received by the Commission are (1) 85% of documents filed electronically are made available on EDIS within 24 Hours and (2) 90% of public documents filed in paper form are made available on EDIS within 36 hours.

In the past, the Commission had encountered difficulties in collecting meaningful and reliable data regarding the time between the receipt of filings and their availability on EDIS. During FY 2006, the Commission resolved the reporting problems and continues to improve the timely availability of public filings on EDIS.

While the Commission has met its goals of providing an electronic method of information exchange between the Commission and the public including real-time access to updates, the speed of availability of documents on EDIS still remains an issue. In addition, until recent upgrades and changes to EDIS performed in FY 2005 and FY 2006, the search tools were considered slow and the filing tools were considered cumbersome.

The version of EDIS released in FY 2006 provides a simplified and intuitive interface that has improved public access to documents and made document filing easier. The FY 2006 electronic filing initiatives included confidential e-filing. The goal of confidential e-filing was to reduce the cost and process time of paper filings while providing a secure, timely, and comprehensive electronic docket. To that end, the Commission internally released the new confidential e-filing tool, reducing the internal transference of paper documents. The search enhancements include refined search options for tailoring research, faster retrieval times, comprehensive document retrieval options, and targeted search results. In order to improve EDIS performance further, a working group continues to meet to discuss and review proposed EDIS enhancements. The working group consists of representatives of the major operation groups within the USITC including the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Unfair Import Investigations, the Office of Investigations, the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Administrative Law Judges, and the Office of Information Technology Services. The group meets bi-weekly to examine issues related to processing documents through EDIS with the goal of improving the accuracy of the administrative record and the timeliness of document availability on EDIS.

Quantify the cost savings and cost avoidance achieved through implementing the initiative (e.g., reducing or eliminating other investments in information technology).

For the last two fiscal years the Commission has averaged more than 700,000 pages of material scanned into EDIS. The cost of that scanning is roughly \$80,000 per year. If we continue to move in the direction of EDIS e-filing over traditional paper filings, the Commission would begin to enjoy partial savings near that amount. EDIS as a general matter also produces internal benefits that are difficult to quantify, such as reduced costs for storage of paper, improved efficiency in the records management process, reductions in error rates for records, increased speed of accessibility of submissions, improved searchability of files due to greater accuracy of the record, and the elimination of potential for "lost" documents.

Explain how this initiative ensures the availability of government information and services for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities.

For individuals who do not have access to the internet, the Commission maintains a public reading room in the Office of the Secretary, providing access to the records that the FOIA requires to be made regularly available for public inspection and copying. Reading room records submitted after November 1, 1996, are also available electronically through EDIS. In addition to the inspection of paper copies, the Commission provides terminals that provide access to EDIS. This includes a current subject-matter index of reading room records, which indicates which records are available electronically.

As outlined below, the U.S. International Trade Commission makes every effort to ensure that the EDIS features are accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended.

ITC's commitment takes several concrete forms:

1. Provide text equivalents for every nontext element including image maps, GIFs, JPEGs, and other format images.
 2. Use client-side image maps rather than server-side image maps.
 3. Ensure that information conveyed with color is also available without color.
 4. Accompany images on our Web site with alternative text describing graphics if your browser supports the alt-text function.
 5. Organize documents to ensure they may be read without the use of a style sheet. Provide column and row headers for tables.
 6. Provide links to specialized software needed to view certain information on our site (e.g., Adobe .PDF reader)
 7. Offer a point of contact for help if needed to access EDIS information.
 8. Employ graphics minimally, and those graphics that are present are labeled to ensure AVT readability.
2. Describe your process for determining which information will be made available on your agency's public website and the Internet as required in Section 207(O(2) of the Act.

Include a copy of the priorities and schedules for making your information available and accessible.

Requests to add, or change public website information that is of a first-time nature are referred to the CIO for the final decision, and requests of a recurring nature where CIO policy has been established are handled by the Manager, Publishing Services Division on a daily basis. Content that falls under established policy is made available within the same business day in which the information becomes internally available. Priority is given to major content categories in the following order: News Releases, Publications, Federal Register and other Notices, followed by all other content changes.

Explain how and when such final determinations, priorities, and schedules were available for public notice and comment.

Currently, the CIO oversees the process for determining which agency information is made available on the Internet. The CIO has appointed a properly qualified Manager, Publishing Services Division within the Office of IT Services to manage the day-to-day operation, maintenance, and security of the agency's public website (www.usitc.gov) and the content residing thereon. Requests from internal and external customers for information additions, changes, or deletions are initially received by the Publishing Services manager, who then works with the Director of the Office of IT Services to assess impact, sensitivity, applicable law/guidance, and identify the required actions for implementation. The Manager, Publishing Services Division, via the Director of IT Services, then makes recommendations to the Deputy CIO and the CIO, regarding whether to go forward with the customer request to add, change, or delete information on the agency's public website. Urgent requests are handled individually as they are received, and routine requests are handled at regular intervals as part of the normal cycle of Office of IT Service business activities.

In addition to the aforementioned web content, the Commission makes its investigative records publicly available through the agency's electronic document information system (EDIS). The schedule for release of public documents received by the Commission are (1) 85% of documents filed electronically are made available on EDIS within 24 Hours

and (2) 90% of public documents filed in paper form are made available on EDIS within 36 hours.

Provide the link where final determinations, priorities, and schedules can be found on your principal Federal agency public website; and

The Commission's Performance and Accountability Report located at http://usitc.gov/ext_relations/about_itc/USITC_PAR_2005.pdf, outlines the priorities and schedules for making investigative records publicly available.

Identify progress to date for permitting searching of all files intended for public use on the website, displaying search results in order of relevancy to search criteria, and providing response times appropriately equivalent to industry best practices.

In FY 2005, the CIO procured and implemented a search technology that enables searching of all files intended for public use on the website, displaying search results in either order of relevancy to search criteria or chronological order. The tool provides response times meeting industry best practices.

3. Describe how your agency's information dissemination activities are coordinated with its FOIA operations in order to improve both access to and dissemination of government information to the public. Your description must include a link to your agency's Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan and FOIA Improvement Plan. You must also describe specifically how you are fulfilling your responsibilities under three provisions of the Act:

- **Section 207(d), "Categorizing of Information;"**

When the ITC web site was set up the FOIA Officer was involved with design and content decisions. Requirements of 552(a) (2) were considered. Electronic versions of documents were created (if they did not already exist), and procedures and policies were developed to assure updates to existing documents and addition of new ones as they became available. Information is categorized by genre and/or Commission program area. The link to the website is: <http://usitc.gov/secretary/foia/documents/ExecutiveOrder13392.pdf>

- **Section 207(e), "Public Access to Electronic Information;" 6 and**

The FOIA Officer publishes the Index and Description of Major Information Systems and Availability of Records in the Federal Register and on the ITC web site. All ITC public notices, news releases, and official publications provide notice of the electronic availability of information and the relevant web address to access the information.

- **If your agency funds Federal research and development (R&D) activities, Section 207(g), "Access to Federally Funded Research and Development," including how your R&D information is available through Radius, Science.gov, or other means.**

The ITC does not receive funds for Federal research and development (R&D) activities.