

e-PORTALS IN COMMERCE

FACT SHEET

e-Portals in Commerce (e-PIC) <http://epic.od.nih.gov> is an e-business system designed to smartly capture the global marketplace and profile information about organizations providing products and services. The system is designed to function on a Web platform and links users of the system conducting market research or seeking sources of supplies and services to this virtual market place.

System Sponsorship: Designed, developed, and implemented by the National Institutes of Health Small Business Office, with technical guidance support and co-project direction from the Office of the Director (OD), Office of Information Technology (OIT). e-PIC system design and development was accomplished with contractor support and input from a “Test Study Group” comprised of Federal and private officials from cross-functional areas of business processes.

System Administration: The NIH Office of Acquisition Policy, with contractor support, serves as the “System Administrator.” e-PIC resides on the NIH OD/OIT SQL and Web servers in the office that serves as the “System Technical Administrator.”

System Design Structure and Features: e-PIC embraces new ASP and IIS Web technology, while residing on the MS SQL Server 2000 to provide cross-platform connectivity. e-PIC comports with Federal and International Web standards for design and development, including with “508” compliancy. e-PIC design was based on a modular and layered conceptual framework and is able to expand both horizontally and vertically through new design, bridges and plug-ins to other systems. e-PIC engages a simple user-friendly interface for system registration and searching. e-PIC maintains a community bulletin board for networking and business development. e-PIC links to the Federal Object Classification Code system to facilitate purchasing and to it’s own unique North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) engine, which serves as an encyclopedic reference for acquisition classification and size information. e-PIC links to various contract vehicles and Federal past performance systems.

Data Collection: Organizational profile information, such as name, address, business description, etc., and pertinent NAICS codes and other related information is input on-line, around the clock by registrants, who create, manage and secure their unique passwords and hyperlinked organizational information. Data collection is accomplished directly through data field input or HTML enabled forms that are accessible through profile hyperlinks. This information is smartly crossed with other secured data fields, e.g. “number of employees” and “average annual sales” to correctly size organizations for Federal acquisition purposes. Profile information is dynamic and portable.

Accessibility and Cost: e-PIC is accessible by “registrants” and “searchers” at no cost. System navigation requires no training and is accomplished with uniform and convenient navigational tools throughout the system.

