



Report to Congress on Implementation of Section 212 of the E-Government Act of 2002

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1 Introduction

This is the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) report on implementing Section 212 of the Electronic Government Act of 2002 (Pub. Law No. 107-347), describing the results of the integrated reporting study and pilot projects.

As the President explained in the FY 2006 budget, E-Government continues to seek to leverage information technologies to make government services available to the citizen while ensuring security of those systems, the privacy of the citizen information and the prudent use of taxpayer money. E-Government is about providing direct and measurable results supporting departments' and agencies' mission and goals.

2 The E-Government Act of 2002 and Section 212

The E-Government Act of 2002 has enhanced the management and promotion of Electronic Government services and processes by establishing an Office of E-Government and Information Technology within the Office of Management and Budget, and appointing an Administrator to run the post. The Act also establishes a broad set of mandates requiring use of Internet-based information technology to enhance citizen access to Government information and services.

Section 212 of the Act calls for enhancing interoperability, assisting the public in electronically submitting information to agencies, and enabling citizens to integrate information from different agencies. The section also calls for OMB to designate up to five pilot projects to provide input to an integrated reporting study describing progress toward integrating Federal information systems across agencies.

This report describes programs, projects, and other initiatives greatly enhancing the interoperability of Federal information systems, including:

- the Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA),
- the Presidential E-Government Initiatives, and
- the five pilot projects designated under section 212

OMB, the CIO Council, and the agencies have made significant progress in the area of integrating federal information, and continue working to improve the cross-agency interoperability of Federal information systems. Doing so will save money, improve services, and increase efficiencies. For example, in 2001, 26 Federal payroll systems were consolidated into two systems, saving taxpayers \$1.1 billion over 10 years. Building on this experience, agencies are pursuing consolidation opportunities in other areas, such as financial management, grants management, and human resources management. Federal agencies will compete with one another and with private providers to be designated shared service providers that will provide specific administrative services on a Government-wide basis, reducing the need for individual agencies to invest in these administrative systems individually.

The Administration will continue to work with the Congress to remove legislative restrictions on E-Government so all Federal agencies can fully implement this important management tool.

3 Compliance with Specific Goals and Provisions of Section 212 of the Act

Section 212 of the e-Government Act requires OMB to submit a report on a study of the following topics:

1. The integration of data elements used in the electronic collection of information within databases established under Federal statute without reducing the quality, accessibility, scope, or utility of the information contained in each database.
2. The feasibility of developing, or enabling the development of, software, including Internet-based tools, for use by reporting persons in assembling, documenting, and validating the accuracy of information electronically submitted to agencies under non-voluntary, statutory, and regulatory requirements.
3. The feasibility of developing a distributed information system involving at least 2 agencies providing public access to multiple agencies' information holdings without requiring public users to know which agency holds the information.

The Administration's innovative E-Government program addresses each of these requirements. The FEA supports agencies and uses a "common language" (or frame of reference) to identify opportunities to consolidate information resources and processes, share information, and improve interoperability across organizational lines. The FEA is described in more detail in section 3.1 below. Using the FEA's "common language", the Presidential E-Government initiatives transform Federal programs and services into high-quality and well-managed cross-agency solutions. Many of these initiatives are described in more detail in sections 3.2 and 3.3 below.

Each year during the budget process, agency business cases are analyzed to identify overlapping or duplicative IT investments. When there is duplication across Federal agencies, the Administration brings together the appropriate agencies and helps them to consider broad-based approaches to promote inter-agency data sharing and cooperation in building common solutions, rather than maintaining separate investments. These inter-agency taskforces focus on the agency Lines of Business (LoB) rather than a specific technology or investment. In Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005, there was significant progress made on five LoB efforts. These are:

- Case Management
- Federal Health Architecture
- Financial Management
- Human Resources Management
- Grants Management

As OMB stated in its FY 2003 Report to Congress on Implementation of The E-Government Act, these five LOB efforts have been designated as the pilot projects of section 212.¹ They are described in more detail in sections 3.2.1 through 3.2.5 below, and can be found at www.egov.gov.

Finally, there are other E-Government initiatives highly relevant to Section 212 requirements. While not pilot projects, these initiatives provide further evidence of progress toward the section 212 requirements, and are discussed in section 3.3 below.

3.1 Federal Enterprise Architecture

Development and implementation of the FEA has gone far to improve the exchange and use of data between multiple information technology systems in order to 1) enhance interoperability between agencies; 2) assist the public in submitting electronic information to agencies; and 3) enable people to integrate information from different agencies.

Disparate agencies are using the “common language” of the FEA to develop common processes and information systems to save money, improve services and increase efficiencies. The FEA reference models provide this “common language” and use different perspectives (Business, Performance, Service, Technical and Data) to look at the same information from different angles. These reference models are helping agencies identify and define common processes, needs, and information systems.

These common processes and information systems will be reused Federal government wide through the E-Government Line of Business (LoB) Initiatives -- Case Management; Federal Health Architecture; Financial Management; Human Resources Management; and Grants Management. The LoB initiatives require agencies to do one of two things: 1) become a “Service Center” or “Center of Excellence” (CoE) by providing a common solution for other agencies, or 2) migrate their own redundant capability to another service center/CoE. Through this process, agencies consolidate their business processes and data sources, and standardize the data they use. This consolidation and standardization will improve the interoperability of information systems across government.

OMB requires all agencies to link their IT investments to the FEA in order to help OMB and agencies identify programs providing similar capabilities and using similar information. These are opportunities to consolidate resources, share information, and improve interoperability across organizational lines. For example, the same business capability that is provided by investments in many different agencies is a prime candidate for consolidation or integration.

The major products developed to date as part of the FEA are:

- A series of five supporting reference models (Business, Performance, Service, Technical and Data) providing a common framework (available at <http://www.egov.gov>),
- A policy² requiring agencies to link investments with the reference models to help identify commonalities across agencies,

¹ FY 2003 Report to Congress on Implementation of The E-Government Act, page 31, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/fy03_egov_rpt_to_congress.pdf

² Part II.A of Section 300 in OMB Circular A-11, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a11/current_year/a_11_2004.pdf

- An Enterprise Architecture assessment framework and process to help agencies improve the quality of their Enterprise Architectures to identify cross-cutting opportunities within agencies.

The law requires OMB to report on progress towards integrating federal information systems across agencies. The OMB EA Assessment Framework³ is an instrument to measure this progress. In 2004 and 2005 OMB measured agency implementation and use of the FEA major products using this assessment framework. The results of OMB's assessments were provided to each agency to serve as a baseline from which OMB will continue to measure agency progress in FY 2006 and beyond. OMB officials visited each agency to discuss the results of their assessment and how each agency can also use the assessment framework to measure their progress against OMB's rating. Examination of current and future data architectures was included in the assessment, and interoperability was a major criterion for future data plans. The OMB EA Assessment process provided useful input to both OMB and agencies concerning the feasibility of applying the FEA to integrate information resources across agencies.

3.2 Pilot Projects

For nearly three years, the Administration, as part of the President's goal of expanding electronic government, has been working on ways to improve how the government provides services internally and to citizens, businesses, and state and local governments. This effort has resulted in the establishment of 24 E-Government initiatives and six Line of Business task forces (also discussed in section 3.1 above). Operated and supported by agencies, these initiatives are providing high-quality and well-managed solutions for delivering various high demand services in a more efficient manner, resulting in savings or cost-avoidance through reduced duplication and economies of scale. As mentioned above, OMB's FY 2003 Report to Congress on Implementation of The E-Government Act designated the five original E-Government LoBs as Section 212 pilot projects: Human Resources Management; Financial Management; Grants Management; Case Management; and Federal Health Architecture.⁴

Three of these LoBs have been developed in a similar way. Cross-agency teams analyzed opportunities for integration and consolidation in the areas of Financial Management, Human Resources Management, and Grants Management and recommended the establishment of government-wide service providers in the areas of Financial Management and Human Resources Management.

- The Grants Management team is developing plans for the consolidation of Grants Management activities across the government.
- The analysis showed savings of more than \$5 billion can be expected over a 10 year timeframe through the consolidation of Financial Management and Human Resources Management systems and the standardization and optimization of associated business processes and functions.

³ Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/a-2-EAAssessment.html>

⁴ FY 2003 Report to Congress on Implementation of The E-Government Act, page 31, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/fy03_egov_rpt_to_congress.pdf

Similarly, the Case Management and FHA LoBs were launched in 2004 after analysis of Federal Enterprise Architecture data revealed opportunities for integration and consolidation in those two areas. These five LoBs are described more fully in the sections below.

A result of many of these initiatives is improved system interoperability and streamlined data collection. This section of the report highlights the five pilot projects and the progress those initiatives have made toward streamlining and improving data collection and integration, systems interoperability, and public access to cross agency information. While all of the Presidential E-Government initiatives address cross-agency interoperability of Federal information systems, the five pilot projects described below specifically meet the objectives of Section 212 of the Act.

3.2.1 Human Resource Management Line of Business

The HR LoB supports the strategic management of Human Capital. Its goals are to:

- Improve strategic management of human capital
- Achieve operational efficiencies
- Increase cost savings/avoidance
- Improve customer service

In FY 2004, the Administration asked agencies with the skills and capabilities to function as government-wide service providers in the area of Human Resources Management to submit business cases for doing so as part of the FY 2006 budget process. Five Federal service providers demonstrated sufficient capabilities and were chosen. These include the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of the Treasury.

The HR LoB addresses the following specific Section 212 requirements:

- **Data element integration:** Through its Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI) activity, the HR LoB is transforming the way Federal HR Specialists and Managers access human resource information and the way all Federal employees access their personnel file information. When fully implemented, EHRI will replace the current Official Personnel Folder (OPF) with an electronic employee record for all Executive Branch employees, resulting in a comprehensive electronic personnel data repository covering the entire life cycle of Federal employment. In addition to streamlining personnel management actions, EHRI will provide HR managers and specialists with powerful workforce analytic and planning capabilities. EHRI users will be able to query workforce data from a variety of perspectives, determining trends for retirements, promotions, reassignments, and other significant personnel actions. Together, these analytical tools will enable a level of strategic human capital planning that has, up to now, been difficult if not impossible to conduct.
- **Cross-agency database interoperability:** The service center concept on which the HR LoB is built will implement a distributed information system involving the integration of multiple agencies' processes, systems and databases to provide efficient, effective, and consistent access to HR data and services. The initiative has already developed a future-state architecture and transition approach, including verified and validated common HR business processes covering functions such as Labor Relations, HR Strategy, Staff Acquisition, Organization and Position

Management, Compensation Management, Benefits Management, Employee Development and Performance Management, Employee Relations, and Separation Management.

3.2.2 Financial Management Line of Business

The FM LoB supports efficient and improved business performance while ensuring integrity in accountability, financial controls and mission effectiveness. Its goals are to:

- Enhance process improvements
- Achieve cost savings
- Standardize business processes and data models
- Promote seamless data exchange between Federal agencies
- Strengthen internal controls

In FY 2004, the Administration asked agencies with the skills and capabilities to function as government-wide service providers in the area of Financial Management to submit business cases as part of the FY 2006 budget process. The following agencies were designated as eligible to enter into competitions to become cross-agency service providers: the Department of the Interior (National Business Center), General Services Administration, Department of Transportation and Department of Treasury (Bureau of Public Debt). OMB will issue guidance in early in calendar year 2006 to assist agencies in selecting a financial management service center. Governance of the LoB is organized under the CFO Council's Financial Systems Integration Committee.

This initiative addresses the following specific Section 212 requirements:

- **Data element integration:** The FM LoB is developing standards for consistent reporting of financial data across the Federal government. This will improve data interoperability between customers and service centers, and reduce information collection burdens by eliminating duplicative data elements.
- **Cross-agency database interoperability:** The FM LoB will enable the integration of numerous financial management processes, systems and databases, including general ledger management, cost management, funds management, payment management, receipt management, and financial reporting. It will also promote the integration of financial management systems with other systems, including E-Travel, E-Payroll, and Grants Management systems.

3.2.3 Grants Management Line of Business

The Grants Management LoB supports end-to-end grants management activities promoting citizen access, customer service, and agency financial and technical stewardship. Its goals are to:

- Improve customer access and efficiency of the grants submission process
- Improve decision making
- Integrate with financial management processes
- Improve efficiency of reporting procedures in order to increase usable information content
- Optimize post-award and closeout actions

To date, the initiative has defined an implementation approach for consolidating grants management systems around "consortia" service providers, with agencies participating as members in various consortia built around particular grant types. The initiative also developed a process for forming consortia and agencies participating in consortia as members. In FY 2006, OMB will select three consortia service providers to begin solution planning and alignment for FY 2006.

This initiative addresses the following specific Section 212 requirements:

- **Data element integration:** Grants management data elements have been standardized through the use of extensible mark-up language (XML) schemas. This will result in improved system-to-system integration.
- **Development of reporting software:** The public can already apply for their grants online. Federal agencies are working through the Grants Management LOB on a common reporting solution. This capability will help eliminate many of the paper-based processes serving as hurdles to organizations attempting to report on Federal grants.
- **Cross-agency database interoperability:** The Grants Management LoB is working on integration with financial management processes and systems. Following this integration, GM LoB service providers will be able to exchange data with a customer agency's financial system.

3.2.4 Case Management Line of Business

The Case Management LoB provides common solutions and data standards to help agencies share appropriate case management information within and between federal and local agencies. Its goals are to:

- Enable case management data to be shared efficiently within and across agencies.
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement, investigation, and civil and criminal litigation case management business processes.
- Identify common case management processes across components and agencies to drive system and function consolidation.
- Address immediate and long term case management needs and opportunities at the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor, and other agencies.
- Provide guidance for future case management investments across the federal government.

This initiative addresses the following specific Section 212 requirements:

- **Data element integration:** The Case Management LoB is participating in a project to standardize and harmonize the types of information exchanged between federal and local agencies. This project, the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), is a cross-agency effort (<http://www.niem.gov/>) sponsored by the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security.

3.2.5 Federal Health Architecture

The Federal Health Architecture (FHA) helps ensure safer and healthier citizens by improving access to health related information and services. The FHA will create a consistent federal framework to (1) allow health care agencies to collaborate and communicate, and (2) improve the exchange of health information, including health care delivery, and appropriate patient access to improved health data.

The FHA will link health business functions, such as Access to Care, Population Health Management and Consumer Safety, Health Care Administration, Health Care Delivery Services, and Health Care Research and Practitioner Education, to their enabling technology solutions and standards. By doing so, agencies will be able to demonstrate how these solutions achieve improved health performance outcomes, such as avoiding medical errors, improving use of resources, accelerating diffusion of knowledge, reducing variability of care, advancing consumer role, strengthening privacy and data protection, and promoting public health and preparedness. The FHA will also provide the ability to identify cross-functional processes, redundant systems, areas for collaboration, and opportunities to enhance interoperability in critical information systems and infrastructure.

In the past year, the FHA has achieved the following accomplishments:

- Established a vision and goals; produced initial governance and program management plans;
- Defined architecture development methodology and developed standard templates to capture information;
- Assimilated the Consolidated Health Informatics (CHI) initiative into the FHA;
- Defined and provided revisions to the Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA) Health Lines of Business sub-functions;
- Established four work groups and began to review architecture efforts of the participating agencies through these groups;
- Identified interoperability focus areas and definitions of technical specifications;
- Developed and distributed a survey to evaluate federal agencies that deal with the electronic health record (EHR) and the HL7⁵ Functional Model; and
- Defined initial consensus food safety import processes and established a Web site for documenting and sharing information.

This initiative addresses the following specific Section 212 requirements:

- **Data element integration:** When the CHI was integrated into the FHA, an existing portfolio of standards (health vocabulary and messaging or other health information interoperability standards) was available. As a result, agencies conducting business in the federal health field were able to "speak the same language" based on common enterprise-wide business and information technology architectures. Numerous agencies are active in the CHI governance process. Through the CHI governance process, all federal agencies will incorporate the adopted standards into their individual agency health data enterprise architecture used to build all new systems or modify existing ones. In addition, the

⁵ HL7 is a health-related data and messaging standard. It is part of the CHI package of health IT data standards.

initiative consults with the regulated community and public interest organizations through the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics.⁶

3.3 Other Relevant Initiatives

This section describes other E-Government initiatives promoting the advancement of data and systems interoperability. These initiatives were not specifically designated as pilot projects, but are highly relevant to the requirements of Section 212, and are therefore worth noting. These include:

- International Trade Process Streamlining
- Business Gateway
- Grants.gov
- Geospatial One-Stop
- GovBenefits.gov
- Efficient and Effective Information Retrieval and Sharing (EEIRS) Study

3.3.1 International Trade Process Streamlining (www.export.gov)

The International Trade Process Streamlining initiative makes it easy for small and medium sized organizations and enterprises to obtain the information and documents needed to conduct business abroad. This initiative addresses all three requirements in section 212 by integrating data elements used to collect information, providing Internet-based tools to assemble and document information submitted to agencies, and providing access to information from several federal agencies.

U.S. companies with fewer than 20 employees accounted for nearly \$32 billion in export sales over the last decade. Despite this encouraging statistic, only 2 percent of small and medium-sized enterprises export, and of those that do, 63 percent export to only one foreign market. These non- or under-exporting organizations represent an immense, untapped source of future U.S. employment and prosperity.

Numerous surveys have revealed a critical barrier for small exporters is a lack of information about the export process and limited resources for obtaining the information and documents necessary to conduct business abroad. Although the federal government provides a wealth of market research, programs, and counseling to assist businesses in all aspects of the export process, this assistance is spread across 19 separate agencies and dozens of web sites.

The International Trade Process Streamlining initiative was created to make it easier for small and medium –sized organizations to obtain the information and documents needed to conduct business abroad. Export.gov, the government’s existing online portal for small business export assistance information has been enhanced to fill this gap.

This initiative has made significant progress to date, including:

⁶ <http://www.ncvhs.hhs.gov/>

- Consolidated and integrated the export process online under Export.gov, which includes foreign partner matching/verification, export financing and insurance, and consolidated market research;
- Developed online applications for export financing, insurance, and loan guarantees offered through the Export-Import Bank and the Foreign Agriculture Service's Credit Guarantee System; and
- Introduced "One-Stop, One Form," which has reduced the time required for small and medium-sized organizations to fill out export-related forms and paperwork by providing a single on-line form for many export transactions.

The International Trade Process Streamlining initiative has created a seamless environment for small and medium-sized organizations to research markets, gather trade leads, and conduct a majority of their export transactions on-line. Moreover, it now provides more timely and accurate export information, and results in cost savings for U.S. businesses by reducing the amount of time they spend trying to get information and filling out applications and forms. As a result, Export.gov consistently receives a customer satisfaction rating of over 80 percent, and has seen the number of visitors increase by over 600 percent, with over 500 new companies a month registering to use the site.

3.3.2 Business Gateway (www.business.gov)

Business Gateway provides a single access point, www.business.gov, for businesses to easily find government information, including forms and compliance resources and tools. Business Gateway also reduces the regulatory paperwork burden on businesses by simplifying data submission.

To accomplish its mission, Business Gateway offers "issue-based" search and organized agency links to answer business questions. It also links to resources to help businesses understand what regulations to comply with and how to comply, and provides online access to government forms. This reduces the time it takes for businesses to find forms, and a streamlined submission process reduces the amount of data businesses submit to the government.

Business Gateway is involved in significant cross-agency data harmonization and standardization efforts designed to reduce the data collection burden for businesses. For example, Business Gateway built a catalog of 6,000+ Federal forms. It also launched a pilot for a streamlined data collection interface in the Surface Coal Mining Industry, which can be used as a model to streamline data collection throughout the Federal (and state and local) government.

Planned future activities include testing and piloting ways for agencies to share data across agencies to simplify the reporting process for businesses. The initiative is conducting ongoing conversations with the business community, and will implement the appropriate modifications to Business.gov based on this feedback.

3.3.3 Grants.gov

The Federal government awards over \$400 billion in grants each year to state, local, and tribal governments, universities, and non-profit organizations. These grants are awarded through 26 major "grant-making" agencies in over 900 programs. Grant administration varies from agency to

agency, program to program, and information about Federal grants – and how to apply for them – is scattered in printed materials and across agency websites. As a result, potential recipients were faced with a complex and burdensome task in trying to find and apply for Federal grants.

The Grants.gov initiative makes it easier for potential recipients to obtain information about Federal grants by creating a single, online storefront of grant information. The storefront consolidates much of the online grants information from various federal agencies and eliminates many of the paper-based processes that serve as hurdles to organizations attempting to apply for Federal grants.

Significant data harmonization and standardization activities are in progress, and include the Grants.gov core XML schemas and the System-to-System Integration Procedures (<http://www.grants.gov/DoingBusinessIT>). In the future, the initiative will continue to improve the Grants.gov functionality, and increase outreach, training and ramp-up activities with agencies and applicants.

3.3.4 Geospatial One-Stop ([www. geodata.gov](http://www.geodata.gov))

The Geospatial One stop initiative provides Federal, state, and local agencies with a single point of access to map-related data, enabling the sharing of existing data to maximize geospatial investments and reduce redundancies. To date, Geospatial One-Stop has developed a portal “Geodata.gov” for seamless access to geospatial information, provided a number of standards and models for geospatial data, and created an interactive index to geospatial data holdings at federal and non-federal levels.

The portal combines thousands of geospatial resources from Federal, state, local, tribal and private sources and makes them available from a single website. Version 2 of Geodata.gov was deployed in July 2005 and achieved broad adoption, with 30 Federal agencies, 48 states, and a number of local jurisdictions and private organizations posting over 100,000 data sets on GeoData.gov by the end of fiscal year 2005.

Geospatial One-Stop provides the tools for greater cooperative and collaborative activities through the portal, has established data channel stewards for all channels and has developed processes for maintaining the currency and quality of content in the portal using a data community approach. The portal includes a “Marketplace” feature in which Federal agencies report their planned geospatial investments to Geospatial One-Stop.

The initiative also submitted harmonized Draft Geospatial Data Standards, available for review on www.geo-one-stop.gov, to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for review and approval. It has established a unified grants program for awarding of grants/cooperative agreements to state and local governments for creation of metadata standards for their data holdings. In the future, the initiative plans on expanding the unified grants program for metadata creation. It will also establish a mandatory standard for GSA IT Schedule for interoperable geospatial portal components.

3.3.5 GovBenefits.gov

GovBenefits.gov provides a single point of access for citizens to locate and determine potential eligibility for government benefits and services. It empowers people to make decisions for themselves and their families by providing a single website – www.GovBenefits.gov – for access to information on more than 1,000 government benefit and assistance programs. Launched in April 2002, GovBenefits.gov features an easy-to-use on-line screening tool to help individuals or caseworkers quickly determine potential eligibility for benefit programs. By answering a few confidential questions, such as income, marital or employment status, and family size, users are guided to a list of benefits they may be eligible to receive. Program descriptions and contact information are provided for each benefit program.

GovBenefits.gov significantly reduces the amount of time individuals spend trying to identify and access relevant information about government benefit programs that match their specific needs. GovBenefits.gov also allows local government or social service caseworkers to quickly identify and match alternative programs with an individual's specific needs.

In spring 2004, GovBenefits.gov made it possible to launch a new E-Government initiative, called GovLoans.gov, by re-using the GovBenefits.gov architecture. GovLoans.gov is now an integrated companion site of GovBenefits.gov and features information about Federal loan programs, including business, agricultural, housing, veterans and disaster assistance. In addition, the project unveiled GovBenefits.gov *En Español*, offering Spanish-speaking communities greater access to benefit information. The initiative also established a cross-governmental working group to develop data standards for benefit information that will ultimately be used to exchange data across the benefits community.

More than 80 million people receive government benefits through hundreds of Federal domestic assistance programs and federally funded programs managed by state and local governments. Previously, information about these programs was spread across 31 million Federal government web pages. To date, more than 19 million people have visited the GovBenefits.gov site, and, as a result, 4 million citizen-referrals were made to government programs. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, GovBenefits.gov provided hurricane victims with information on benefits they were eligible to receive. In the future, the initiative will continue to improve the product through usability testing and enhancements, and will work with Federal partners to identify redundant systems and determine migration strategies.

3.3.6 Efficient and Effective Information Retrieval and Sharing (EEIRS) Study

In September and October 2005, U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Office of Governmentwide Policy, in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), surveyed industry, academia, and government agencies with an instrument that covered a wide range of information retrieval, categorization, dissemination, and sharing needs and capabilities. The purpose was to: 1) identify and promote the most cost-effective means to search for, identify, locate, retrieve, and share information, and 2) assess the net performance difference (including cost-benefits) of assigning metadata and/or a controlled vocabulary to various types of information versus not doing so. GSA and OMB received responses from 47 organizations, and their analysis may be found on www.gsa.gov.

4 Conclusion

The Federal Government is delivering results through expansion and adoption of E-Government principles and best practices in managing information technology, providing timely and accurate information to citizens and government decision makers while ensuring security and privacy. The E-Government initiatives are saving millions of taxpayer dollars by taking advantage of new technologies and improved electronic processes. The five pilot projects demonstrate the feasibility of applying the principles and practices of E-Government to integrate information resources across agencies. OMB looks forward to working with Congress on continuing to improve interoperability of Federal government data, to assist the public in electronically submitting information to agencies, to integrate information from different agencies, and to continue:

- Implementation of the existing lines of business, including testing and certification of service center solutions, migration of agencies to service centers, and retirement of legacy systems.
- Implementation and adoption of all other Presidential E-Government initiatives.
- Identification and initiation of new lines of business and other Presidential E-Government initiatives.
- Development of the FEA Data Reference Model (DRM) providing LoBs and other communities of practice with an improved framework and methodology for data harmonization, standardization, and integration across government.

Appendix A: Section 212 of the Electronic Government Act of 2002

SEC. 212. INTEGRATED REPORTING STUDY AND PILOT PROJECTS.

(a) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are to—

- (1) enhance the interoperability of Federal information systems;
- (2) assist the public, including the regulated community, in electronically submitting information to agencies under Federal requirements, by reducing the burden of duplicate collection and ensuring the accuracy of submitted information; and
- (3) enable any person to integrate and obtain similar information held by 1 or more agencies under 1 or more Federal requirements without violating the privacy rights of an individual.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the term—

- (1) “agency” means an Executive agency as defined under section 105 of title 5, United States Code; and
- (2) “person” means any individual, trust, firm, joint stock company, corporation (including a government corporation), partnership, association, State, municipality, commission, political subdivision of a State, interstate body, or agency or component of the Federal Government.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall oversee a study, in consultation with agencies, the regulated community, public interest organizations, and the public, and submit a report to the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives on progress toward integrating Federal information systems across agencies.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report under this section shall—

- (A) address the integration of data elements used in the electronic collection of information within databases established under Federal statute without reducing the quality, accessibility, scope, or utility of the information contained in each database;
- (B) address the feasibility of developing, or enabling the development of, software, including Internet-based tools, for use by reporting persons in assembling, documenting, and validating the accuracy of information electronically submitted to agencies under nonvoluntary, statutory, and regulatory requirements;
- (C) address the feasibility of developing a distributed information system involving, on a voluntary basis, at least 2 agencies, that—
 - (i) provides consistent, dependable, and timely public access to the information holdings of 1 or more agencies, or some portion of such holdings, without requiring public users to know which agency holds the information; and
 - (ii) allows the integration of public information held by the participating agencies;
- (D) address the feasibility of incorporating other elements related to the purposes of this section at the discretion of the Director; and

- (E) make any recommendations that the Director deems appropriate on the use of integrated reporting and information systems, to reduce the burden on reporting and strengthen public access to databases within and across agencies.

(d) **PILOT PROJECTS TO ENCOURAGE INTEGRATED COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF DATA AND INTEROPERABILITY OF FEDERAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS.—**

- (1) **IN GENERAL.—**In order to provide input to the study under subsection (c), the Director shall designate, in consultation with agencies, a series of no more than 5 pilot projects that integrate data elements. The Director shall consult with agencies, the regulated community, public interest organizations, and the public on the implementation of the pilot projects.
 - (2) **GOALS OF PILOT PROJECTS.—**
 - (A) **IN GENERAL.—**Each goal described under subparagraph (B) shall be addressed by at least 1 pilot project each.
 - (B) **GOALS.—**The goals under this paragraph are to—
 - (i) reduce information collection burdens by eliminating duplicative data elements within 2 or more reporting requirements;
 - (ii) create interoperability between or among public databases managed by 2 or more agencies using technologies and techniques that facilitate public access; and
 - (iii) develop, or enable the development of, software to reduce errors in electronically submitted information.
 - (3) **INPUT.—**Each pilot project shall seek input from users on the utility of the pilot project and areas for improvement. To the extent practicable, the Director shall consult with relevant agencies and State, tribal, and local governments in carrying out the report and pilot projects under this section.
- (e) **PROTECTIONS.—**The activities authorized under this section shall afford protections for—
- (1) confidential business information consistent with section 552(b)(4) of title 5, United States Code, and other relevant law;
 - (2) personal privacy information under sections 552(b) (6) and (7)(C) and 552a of title 5, United States Code, and other relevant law;
 - (3) other information consistent with section 552(b)(3) of title 5, United States Code, and other relevant law; and
 - (4) confidential statistical information collected under a confidentiality pledge, solely for statistical purposes, consistent with the Office of Management and Budget’s Federal Statistical Confidentiality Order, and other relevant law.