



Web Communications Division (WCD) June/July Update
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google search . watchfire compliance monitor . webtrends
metrics . graphics support . Q/A database . enterprise
portal . governance . <http://intranet.hhs.gov> . usability
hhs.gov/web . video hosting . translation . blogging
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Pandemic Flu Blog: A Federal First



June 26, 2007 – National leaders and citizens are convening on the Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog to discuss pandemic flu preparedness and how to “make it happen.” The blog is part of HHS’ ongoing campaign to encourage leaders to convince and help Americans prepare for a potential pandemic flu. The blog will continue through tomorrow, June 27, 2007. This blog will be frozen and archived as of June 28, 2007. Add your thoughts and questions today at blog.pandemicflu.gov!

In hosting a five-week Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog, Secretary Mike Leavitt became the first Cabinet member to formally enter the blogosphere. The PF blog was a major success, with more than 2000 comments in response to 60 posts, hundreds of RSS subscriptions and almost 29,000 inbound links!

Our blog created quite the flurry in the federal Web community, with numerous requests for information on how-to and lessons learned (see Editors’ Notes adjacent). Yes, WCD has a blogging application, but we learned a lot and one thing we learned is that blogging is not something to undertake lightly.

All proposed HHS blogs require advance WCD approval in addition to program approval at a senior level.

Application updates



Go-To-Meeting: Easy-to-use collaborative tool provides white board, chat space and ability to share files. We’ll be using it to consult on Web development. **(Go-To-Meeting: Craig Lafond)**

Portal: CMS is moving its extensive community onto WCD’s application at a significant cost savings. WCD is working with UNISYS to upgrade load balancing to ensure continuity of service across all portal communities. **(Portal: Craig Lafond)**

Watchfire: The purchase order still has not been let; it continues to be imminent, and we continue to provide desk audits on piecemeal basis. **(Watchfire: Julia Sothoron)**

OS Web Reps Organizational Meeting

Thursday July 12, 405-A Humphrey
9:00am – 11:00 am

HHS Web Council Maiden Meeting

Thursday July 19, 800 Humphrey
9:00am – 12:00pm

To Blog or Not to Blog*

It’s clear that blogs are an important new form of communication. Important for the democratic process too; they remind me of the town meetings I was dragged to as a kid growing up in New England – meetings where everyone had a public say before a decision was made.

Secretary Leavitt’s Pandemic Flu blog was a major success, not because it broke ground, but because of the dialogue it fostered and the understanding it generated.

All this does not come easily. Government blogs must be moderated. That doesn’t mean that opposition is censored – the whole point is dialogue, but free expression stops at personal attack, obscenities, etc. We only killed three submitted posts but we had to read all 2000 to cull them. That takes resources.

Our own posting, what we say, carries its own set of liabilities. Shoot from the hip and the blogosphere will spray your words like an unchoked shotgun. And there’s no taking them back.

The Secretary – and HHS – will be blogging again and probably soon. But we will blog prudently, learning as we (and others) go. For now, blogs require both WCD and senior program management approval.

If you’re interested, there’s already a report, *The Blogging Revolution: Government In The Age of Web 2.0* (<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/WyldReportBlog.pdf>)

*BTW: As of 12:46, July 6, Google reports 1.6 million Shakespeare blogs!