

Web Presence and Social Media of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) leverages rapidly advancing communications technologies to support a global online community of individuals dedicated to international cultural exchange and understanding. ECA's web-based outreach provides a digital complement to its core business of increasing mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges. ECA exchange participants, alumni, and program partners use our web-based tools to connect to a comprehensive network of supportive, like-minded individuals and create a powerful voice in cyberspace.

Use of online communications magnifies the impact of ECA educational and cultural exchanges by reaching broader audiences, especially young people, who use the web as their primary communication platform. The web connects the broader public to ECA exchange participants,

The Bureau's web presence has six key components:

Exchanges – exchanges.state.gov – The Bureau's flagship website and the portal through which all official Bureau information is available.

ExchangesConnect – connect.state.gov – An open, global online community dedicated to international exchange and dialogue. The community facilitates information sharing and networking around exchange-related topics through videos, photos, blogs, discussions, features and contests. ECA also maintains the related ExchangesConnect Facebook group (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=17739977788&ref=mf>) and Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/ConnectStateGov>).

Fulbright – fulbright.state.gov – The official web presence of the Fulbright Program, the Bureau's flagship and founding exchange program. The Fulbright Program is large, multi-national and diverse, and this site serves as the authoritative information source.

International Education Week – iew.state.gov – This interactive site supports the annual celebration of international exchange and cultural understanding through event announcements and features.

EducationUSA – educationusa.state.gov – The official site supporting ECA's 450 Educational Advising Centers, this is a prominent and trusted source of unbiased information for an international audience about how to study in the United States.

State Alumni – alumni.state.gov – This exclusive online community for U.S. government exchange program participants and alumni offers a secure place for participants and alumni to network, share information, access grant opportunities, chat with experts, and conduct research using over 20,000 publications.

alumni, and program partners. Through the web, ECA encourages people to stay connected, think about exchange programs in new ways, and recognize their role in promoting mutual understanding.

ECA accomplishes online outreach through a comprehensive web presence, including its official websites, which answer questions from the online community about ECA exchange programs; a ground-breaking internationally focused social network, ExchangesConnect; and a secure, prestigious online alumni community, State Alumni. ECA also accomplishes outreach and community building via Facebook and Twitter.

Recognizing the dynamism of communications, ECA constantly explores new opportunities for leveraging

exciting online and mobile technologies in order to present the Bureau's mission with fresh, relevant approaches in the growing online world. ECA conducts, for example, innovative online contests and challenges to attract interest to its networks, including a highly successful video contest that drew over 360 entries from around the world.

