

Broadcasting Board of Governors United States of America



E-Government Act Report
October 2006

2006 E-GOVERNMENT ACT REPORT

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Summary: This Report addresses the status of the Broadcasting Board of Governors' compliance with Sections 202(g), 207(f)(2), 207(d), 207(e), and 207(g) of the E-Government Act of 2002, in accordance with *FY 2006 E-Government Act Reporting Instructions* issued by OMB on August 23, 2006.

Introduction: The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG or Agency) is the federal agency responsible for all U.S. government and government sponsored non-military international broadcasting, in accordance with Public Law 105-277. The Agency executes its international broadcasting missions via radio, television, and Internet news and information programs that by law are intended for foreign audiences only and may not be distributed within the United States. Within the context of the E-Government Act and the many related initiatives now in progress within the federal government, the Agency's broadcasting mission does not involve any E-Government initiatives related to information services to and exchanges with U. S. citizens, businesses, or other government agencies. However, the Agency is participating in several E-government initiatives to improve the internal efficiency and effectiveness of its operations, including information services to employees.

Overview of the Agency's Implementation of the Act.

Efficiency and Effectiveness of Mission Operations. The BBG has recently completed a major long-term renovation project to automate and digitize its radio program production capabilities. In the past, audio programs were produced using several isolated and stand-alone analog-based magnetic tape equipment systems. These functions have been fully integrated under a common IT/computer network-based system that provides and retains superior audio quality throughout the program production and broadcast chain, and with reduction or elimination of many labor-intensive manual operations associated with analog systems. Television production capabilities are now being upgraded as well to more fully incorporate many of the same digital benefits into video production and broadcasting. The Internet is used increasingly to distribute audio, video and other program data worldwide. Agency Internet experts cooperated with other agencies in sharing information about Internet jamming and blocking by hostile entities, and have testified before Congress regarding techniques to circumvent Internet blocking and in support of Congressional initiatives to maintain open and free access to Internet services worldwide.

E-Payroll. The BBG has made significant progress in implementing a new payroll system to support the Administration's E-Government mandate. The BBG has selected the Department of Defense Civilian Payroll System (DCPS) and is working with the Office of Personnel Management, Office of Management and Budget, and the

Department of State to implement the new system in FY 2007 under a cross-servicing agreement with DCPS.

Employee Express. As of October 2004, the Agency has used Employee Express to automate employee services related to earnings and leave statements, and to changes in tax withholding status. MyPay will replace Employee Express when the transition to the DCPS is completed.

Human Resources Management Line of Business (HR LoB). The Agency receives HR services via a cross servicing agreement with the Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS). To improve the efficiency of internal HR operations, the Agency is investigating various options for integrating HR with other administrative services when the current servicing agreement expires in FY2007.

MyBiz. The agency utilizes the MyBiz service offered by the Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS) to automate employee access to their personnel records and benefit choices.

Recruitment One-Stop. The IBB uses USA Staffing and the USAJobs Federal Employment Information System to recruit and fill vacancies, many of which require unique and hard to find skills.

E-Training. The Agency utilizes the USALearn.gov web site training capabilities on an as-needed basis for various training needs of the Agency.

E-Travel. The Agency has joined with the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development in their selection of CW Government Travel (CW) as its official travel service center. In FY2006, CW implemented its E2 Solutions application to support online travel booking, authorization, and vouchering services for the Agency.

Financial Management Line of Business (FM LoB). The Agency has initiated migration of its financial services from the Department of State (DoS) to the Department of Interior (DoI) National Business Center (NBC) shared service center. This migration will be completed in FY2008.

FedBizOpps. The Agency utilizes the FedBizOpps service to post business opportunity announcements.

GovSales.Gov. The Agency utilizes the GovSales.gov service to locate and dispose of federal assets.

E-Records. The Agency is participating and coordinating with the activities of the National Archives and Records Administration as it develops standards for electronic record keeping. The Agency has reviewed and updated its e-mail retention policies, and

in a related area is reviewing its Systems of Records documentation for publication in the Federal Register.

CIO Council. The Agency CIO and other information management staff participate in the Small Agency CIO Council program to foster sharing and exchange of best practices in information management and technology among federal agencies.

Summary of an Internal BBG E-Government Initiative. The Voice of America, one of several BBG broadcasting entities, operates one of the largest radio/TV broadcasting facilities in the world, including over 50 radio and 4 television studios. These studios are a major U.S. asset in explaining and promoting American values and institutions worldwide, directly to foreign publics. The main VOA studio complex, located in the heart of Washington, D.C., near the Capitol Building, attracts many U. S. citizens and tourists who seek information regarding the role of U.S. government sponsored international broadcasting and how it is accomplished. As a public information service, the Voice of America conducts daily tours of its facilities.

In 2005, the Broadcasting Board of Governors launched an online free reservation system for public tours and events at the Voice of America. Previously, reservation confirmations required the presence of a staff member to respond to telephone or e-mail requests, which was feasible only during core Washington D.C. work hours. Response times varied from one to 24 hours approximately, and public inquiries were at times frustrated by the mismatch of time zones across the country. The public now has the option of checking tour and public event space availability online at any hour, and without the cost of a long-distance phone call. The public can immediately make a reservation for a desired date and time, rather than wait for a return call or e-mail to confirm arrangements.

The agency elected to develop and maintain the necessary software internally, after comparing the benefits and costs of a commercial ticketing service. By using an in-house system, the Agency not only avoids the continuing cost of a commercial contract, but also and equally important, the public saves a typical \$3 service fee for each commercial transaction. The convenience and accessibility of the new online system has proven popular with the American public. During the last half of FY2006, approximately 16 percent of all tour attendees made their reservations through the on-line tour system. As promotional and partnering efforts expand, awareness and use of the tour reservation system is expected to increase.

The online VOA tour registration system fosters several efficiencies and benefits.

- Reduction of staff time to respond to phone calls and e-mails
- Rapid and automated preparation of event lists for tour and event staff as well as the necessary participant lists for security.
- Marketing feedback through automated reports and voluntary questionnaires indicating how visitors learned about the tour and where they are from. (No confidential or personal information is retained on file.)

While our online reservation system has proven to be a popular convenience for many U.S. visitors, the Agency retains a dedicated tour reservation telephone number for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities who may require special assistance during the tour.

Agency Information Available to the Public.

Process for determining which information the Agency intends to make available to the American public over the Internet or by other means. Legal restrictions dictate the type of information that the Agency can make available to U. S. individuals and institutions. The Agency may not directly broadcast or otherwise distribute within the United States its actual radio, television or Internet news and information programs, or use its funds and programs to influence American public opinion. [Smith-Mundt Act of 1948; Foreign Relations Act of 1972.] In accordance with these information distribution restrictions, federal courts have supported the Agency's denial of requests for program transcripts and information content of its broadcast programs under the Freedom of Information Act. The Agency makes available to the public only information about its policies, programmatic plans, and organization and operations, plus information as necessary to conduct routine business information exchanges with U.S. individuals and businesses related to the acquisition of staffing and contractual goods and services.

The BBG and its broadcasting entities, such as the Voice of America, operate numerous web sites. Only two of these are federal sites intended to provide information services to the U.S. public, i.e., the web site of the BBG headquarters office [www.bbg.gov] and the web site of the International Broadcasting Bureau [www.ibb.gov], which provides administrative and/or technical support services to many BBG programming entities.

All other BBG web sites are operated by broadcasting entities and include news and information programs intended solely for distribution to foreign publics, primarily in their native language. While these entity sites may be accessible to the U.S. public due to the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, these sites are neither intended for nor designed for communication with or service to the American public.

Priorities and Schedules for making Information Available to the U. S. Public . At this time the BBG has posted all of its intended information on the BBG or IBB web sites, as follows, and in accordance with priority categories defined by OMB.

Priority 1. (Information required by law, regulation or Presidential directive.) In accordance with Section 207(f) of the E-Government Act, or other regulations, the BBG and the IBB web sites include information and links for the following items:

- Descriptions of the mission and statutory authority of the agency
- Listings of agency information and records that may be available under the Freedom of Information Act
- Strategic plan of the agency
- Organizational structure and staff information, including profiles of the members of the US Broadcasting Board of Governors

- Privacy statement
- Agency contact information
- Subject/map index

Priority 2. (Information or services to the public that are not required by law but are directly tied to the agency mission.) As noted, the agency is legally barred from providing its broadcasting products to the U.S. public.

Priority 3. (Frequently requested information to improve business processes or customer service to the public.)

- BBG annual reports
- BBG annual performance and accountability reports
- Personnel hiring information and vacancy announcements
- FAIR Act information

Priority 4. (Other information.)

- Public relations and press releases regarding BBG/IBB plans or events
- Information services for employees and contractors (e.g., health information, Office of Civil Rights information)
- International crime alerts

Search Function. The BBG and IBB web sites are simple in design and easy to navigate via subject indexes on the sites. The Agency plans to implement a search capability for these sites during FY2007.

Coordination of Dissemination of Information with FOIA

Requests for information not found on the Agency's public web sites are processed in accordance with *The BBG Guidelines on Requesting Records under the Freedom of Information Act*. Information about the Agency's FOIA guidelines and *FOIA Improvement Plan* are found at http://www.bbg.gov/foia/foia_rr.cfm. As discussed earlier, legal restrictions dictate the type of information that the Agency can make available to U. S. individuals and institutions [Smith-Mundt Act of 1948; Foreign Relations Act of 1972].

Categorizing of Information. The Agency's records are categorized per its *Request for Records Disposition Authority* approved by the Archivist of the United States on October 24, 1991. The Agency is reviewing its records management policies and schedules in accordance with NARA guidance and plans to revise these policies and schedules as necessary.

Public Access to Electronic Information. The Agency makes available to the public information about its policies, programmatic plans, and organization and operations, plus information as necessary to conduct routine business information exchanges with U.S. individuals and businesses related to the acquisition of staffing and contractual goods and services on its BBG and IBB web sites. A subject index provides

ample navigation guidance to access the information content of the sites, and the Agency plans to implement a search capability for these sites during FY2007.

Access to Federally Funded Research and Development. The Agency does not fund research and development activities.