.gov Reform Initiative

Environmental Protection Agency Web Improvement Plan
Working Draft as of 10/11/2011

Background

In the [August 12, 2011 Agency Instructions for Completing Web Inventories and Web Improvement Plans](#), Agency CIOs were asked to work with their Agency Web Manager and Office of Public Affairs to submit an Interim Progress Report on their efforts to streamline Agency-managed .gov domains (due September 6, 2011) and to begin development of an Agency-wide Web Improvement Plan.

> "By October 11, Agencies shall develop a Web Improvement Plan that communicates their **strategy for managing web resources more efficiently, improving online content,** and **enhancing the customer experience of Agency websites**." This comprehensive plan will "address the broader objectives of **streamlining content, infrastructure,** and ultimately **improving customer service**."

The purpose of this Web Improvement Plan is to identify the strategy, actions, measurements, and timelines that the Agency is using to streamline website infrastructure, improve web content, and enhance the customer experience with Executive Branch websites.

Agencies are being asked to create a Web Improvement Plan that will be developed iteratively over the next few months. In this plan, Agencies will describe Agency-wide efforts to effectively manage publicly accessible websites in the .gov domain. Only agencies in the Executive Branch are required to submit a Web Improvement Plan. The initial plan for the Environmental Protection Agency, due to OMB by October 11, 2011, is in the following section.

Step 1: Current State of Agency-wide Web Improvement Efforts

Over the past few months, Agencies have been reviewing their .gov domains, web operations, and other web-related efforts in response to OMB .gov Reform data collection efforts (individual domain inventories, web governance survey, interim progress reports, etc.). The following describes the state of current web improvement efforts at the Environmental Protection Agency.

1) Does your Agency currently have an Agency-wide web strategy?

Yes.

Yes. EPA has operated under the Web Governance and Management Policy since 2006 (attached). See question 2 for how we operate under this policy. We are currently rebuilding epa.gov under the One EPA Web project. We have completed a pilot round and are now working on several new websites in accordance with the Interim Web Content Development Strategy, also attached.

2) How does your agency currently ensure that Agency-wide web resources are managed efficiently (e.g. governance, technology/infrastructure, hosting, staffing, operations, etc.)?

EPA has a policy and set of procedures, standards, guidance, and best practices for the governance and management of the EPA website. These policy documents provide a framework for clear infrastructure and content management responsibilities, identifying and allocating necessary resources, promoting Agency-wide standards for best Web practices, and recognition and support for the Agency's Web community. The Office of External Affairs and Environmental Education and the Office of Environmental Information (the CIO's office) co-lead the Agency's Web Council, which is chartered to establish and enforce these procedures, standards, and guidance. Under the "Web Governance and Management Policy" mentioned above, OEAEE and OEI work together to communicate with the EPA Web community, senior management, and EPA as a whole about the EPA Web effort. Also, since establishing our Web presence in 1994, EPA has had a policy that restricts EPA content to www.epa.gov, and the agency has avoided the proliferation of independent Web sites that so many departments and agencies are now fighting against.

3) How does your Agency currently ensure that website content is readily accessible, updated, accurate, and routinely improved?

EPA uses a variety of tools to manage and improve website content, such as a review process for websites that are being developed, monthly reports about broken links and website usage, templates for web developers to use to provide consistency, and required elements. EPA also provides routine training on best practices of website management. EPA has a procedure for keeping Web content updated and routinely reviewed, called the "Web Content Types and Review" Procedure. Policies,

procedures, standards, and guidance are provided via EPA's online Web Guide: http://www.epa.gov/webguide.

4) How does your Agency currently ensure that websites are meeting user expectations and needs and that the customer experience with websites is continually enhanced?

EPA uses a variety of tools. First is the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The monthly and special reports provide a high level view of EPA Web site users' opinion, as well information about who are users are, what they were looking for and what they couldn't find. Between 1500 and 2300 users answer the ACSI survey every month.

EPA also uses Maxamine/Accenture Quality Assurance and Traffic Reports. Using these tools, EPA is able to provide produce monthly Quality Assurance Reports and Traffic Reports to the webmasters and content managers. Quality assurance reports include link integrity, redundant file, searchability and metadata coverage. Traffic reports consist of a traffic summary, demographics, traffic sources, technologies and specific site report.

The webmasters and content managers can review the data from the survey and reports and then in turn make changes to improve the site.

EPA also actively manages our search results, frequently and regularly reviewing common search queries to ensure that our best information is presented high in the search results. Internet Librarians also actively manage our Frequently Asked Questions databases and links from our topical landing pages.

EPA also uses heat maps to determine what people are clicking on.