Office of Information Analysis and Access
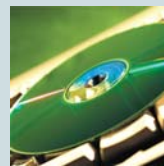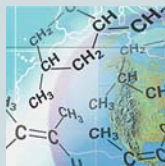
Office of Environmental Information • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Web 2.0 @ EPA

What are the drivers? Where are we today?
What are the concerns?

Federal Remediation Technologies Roundtable

May 20, 2009

What are the drivers at EPA?

EPA is using Social Media:

- So geographically dispersed teams can work together effectively;
- To share knowledge within EPA and with partners;
- To attract and retain employees;
- To communicate with the public in new ways;

- To capitalize on existing tools and applications rather than recreate new tools;
- To enable public discussion of important environmental issues;
- To expand traditional participation in EPA's regulatory development process; and
- To increase transparency with the public.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Another major driver…

Our offices are asking for it! They want to know what they can and cannot do.

They want to explore opportunities to be innovative, more efficient, and meets their audience's needs better.

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
INFORMATION

Where EPA is Today

70 wikis and blogs, more on the way…
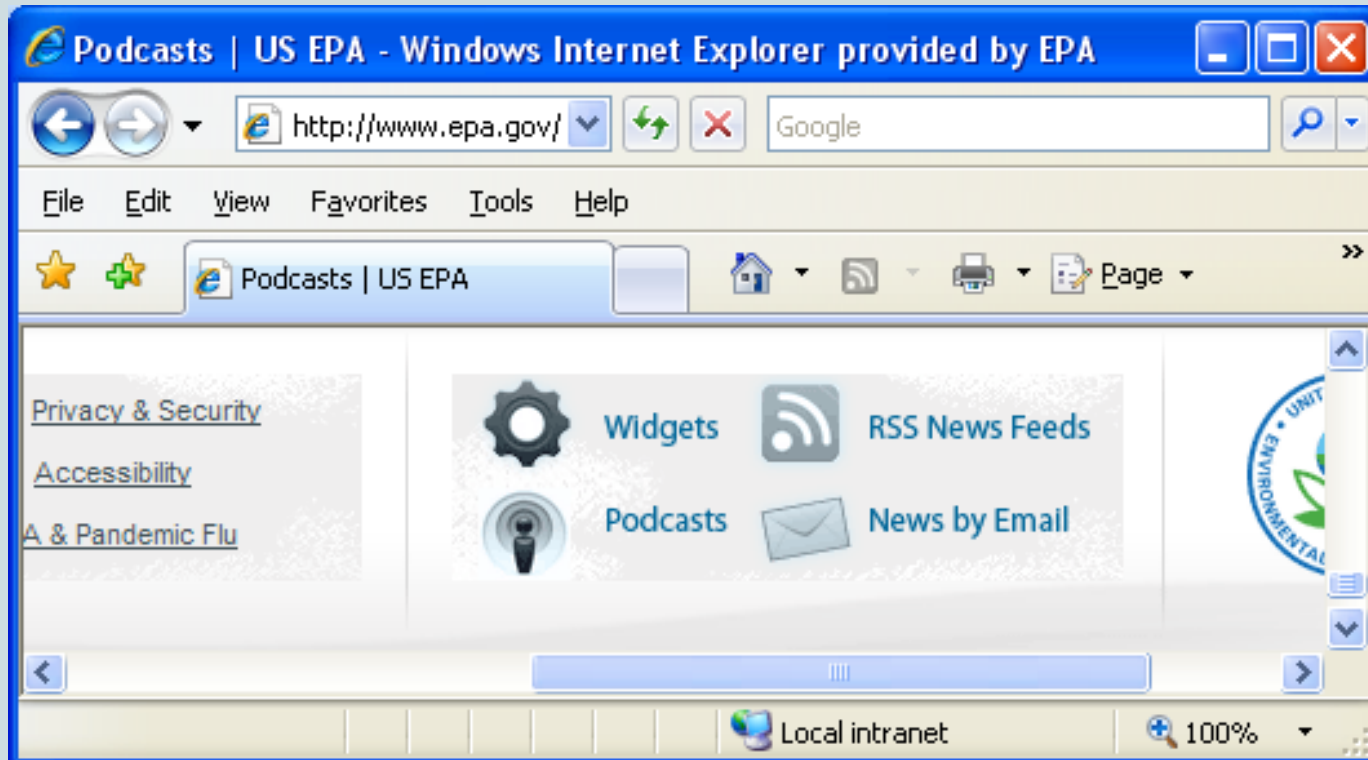
The one public-facing blog is Greenversations.

	Intranet	Internet	Extranet	Total = 70
Wikis	28		19	47
Blogs	13	1	9	23

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Other uses of Social Media at EPA

- Launched EPA YouTube channel in early March. http://www.youtube.com/usepagov

- Twitter – Greenversations blog; Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watershed; EPA Newsroom; Office of Research and Development; etc.

- Facebook page has current blog entries, events (Earth Day, etc.) and links back to the EPA Web site. It is not new content, just new delivery method.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Other uses of Social Media at EPA

EPA provides widgets, podcasts, RSS News Feeds (found in the footer).

Current Broader Efforts at EPA

Social Media and Rule-making

- Externally: exploring ways for public to participate in a discussion about a proposed rule.

- Internally: working to help EPA's regulatory development professionals and senior management make quality regulatory decisions.

Puget Sound Information Challenge

- In 2007, The Governor of Washington state appointed former EPA Administrator Bill Ruckleshouse to head up the Puget Sound Initiative, which was tasked with developing a comprehensive plan for cleaning up and protecting the Puget Sound ecosystem.

- Mr. Ruckleshouse asked EPA if we could help him by providing environmental information about the Puget Sound ecosystem. At the 2007 Environmental Information Symposium, we kicked off the 2 Day Puget Sound Information Challenge using Web 2.0 technologies.

- The wiki garnered more than 18,000 page views, 175 entries with everything from documents to decision support systems.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Puget Sound Information Challenge

- Following the Symposium, EPA presented the contributions that nonprofits, corporations and government agencies made to the "Puget Sound Information Challenge" to Ruckleshouse and Puget Sound Initiative officials.

- The willingness of people to contribute everything from documents to decision support systems illustrated the benefits of using Web 2.0 collaboration tools.

http://pugetsound.epageo.org/index.php5?title=Main_Page

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
INFORMATION

Watershed Central Wiki

- Watershed Central has been designed to assist users to develop and implement effective watershed management programs.

- The site includes guidance, tools, case studies, and data sets to assist users in sharing information, analyzing data, and identifying opportunities to initiate or strengthen watershed management efforts.

- Watershed Central contains the wiki application used for information sharing and collaboration. Information in the wiki that is deemed appropriate is moved over to the Watershed Central pages on EPA's web site.

Providing Access to Environmental Information and Tools for Decision Making

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Watershed Central – Why a Wiki?

- Share best practices, case studies and lessons learned;

- See what other watershed organizations are up to & learn from them;
- Identify partners in your watershed area;

- Rate and comment on watershed management tools or report on new tools;

- View a map with water monitoring stations, land use types, watershed boundaries, high-resolution aerial photography, and more for your watershed;

- Publish your watershed management plan for others to learn from;

- Create a page about your organization, add a map, and share it amongst members of your group; and

- Build the community knowledgebase for more effective watershed management and implementation!

EPA Enterprise Collaboration Strategy

- Developing a strategy to address social media infrastructure needs.

- The strategy will assess options and provide recommendations for technologies EPA can support and use.

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
INFORMATION

Social Media Policy Workgroup

- Developing a policy for the Agency.

- Policy will specify that the use of social media should be linked to the agency's mission.

- Will include procedures and additional guidance on specific technologies or issues.

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
INFORMATION

Why a policy?

- Managers and staff need guidance - what can we do and not do?

- How can we use these tools to accomplish our mission, engage the public, include people in the governing process, and collaborate internally and externally.

- There are so many different requirements that need to be explored in the context of social media.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Why a memo & interim guidance?

- Workgroup is drafting a memo and interim guidance from CIO and Office of Public Affairs about representing EPA online in an **official capacity**.

- Does not apply to personal use while at work.

- Guidance includes the following:
  - On-line representation needs supervisor's approval, should be within job responsibilities or expertise; maintain records; transparency; facts, not opinion; ethics; etc.
  - The public needs to be clear that any edits or corrections made by EPA are based on facts with appropriate supporting citations.

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
INFORMATION

Concerns & Challenges

There are legal issues that are unique to the federal government. To name a few:

- Privacy

- Records management

- Section 508 compliance (accessibility)

- Paperwork Reduction Act

- Procurement rules and terms of agreement

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
INFORMATION