Collaborative Technology: Guidance for Federal Agencies

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For: National Academy of Public Administration
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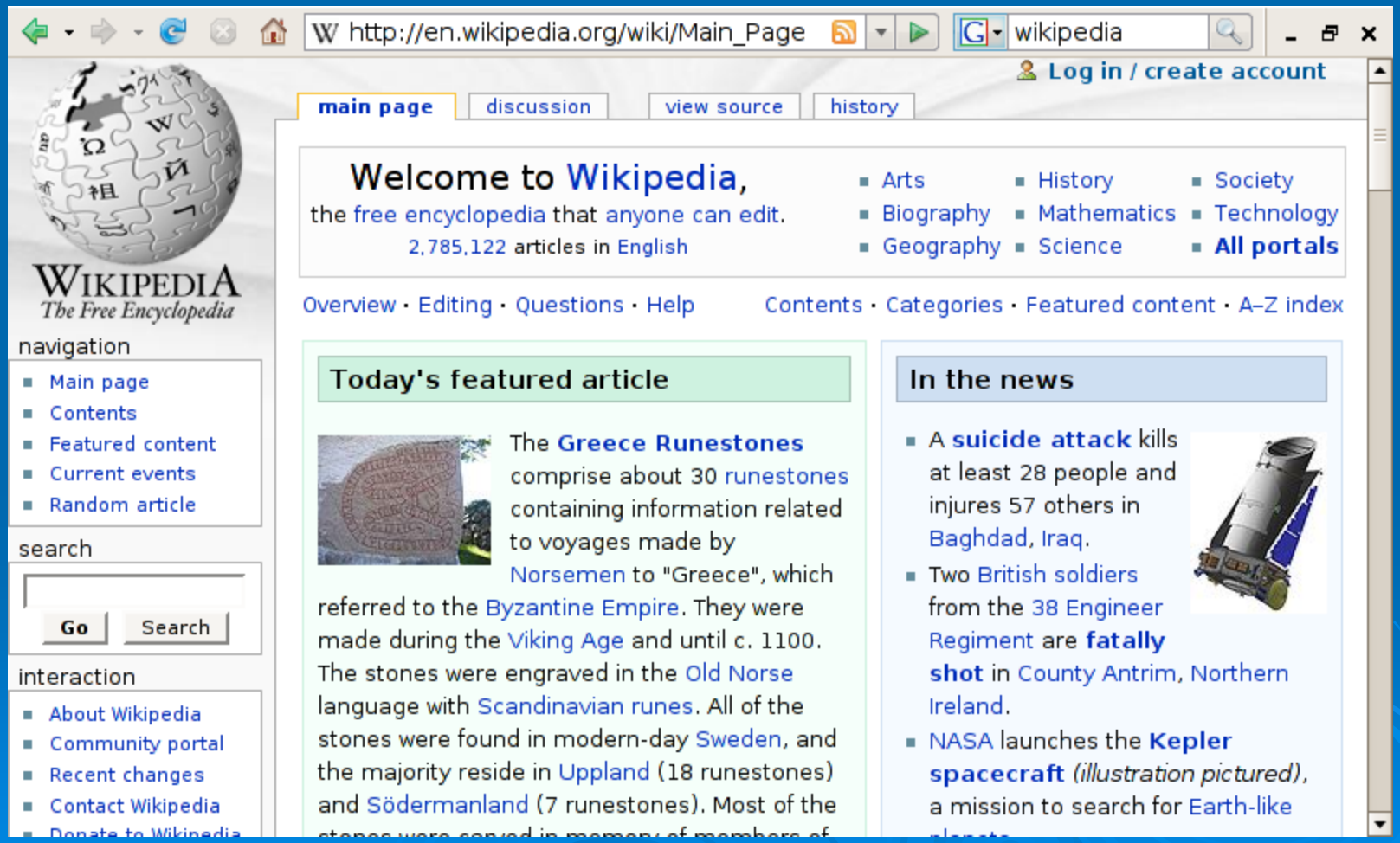
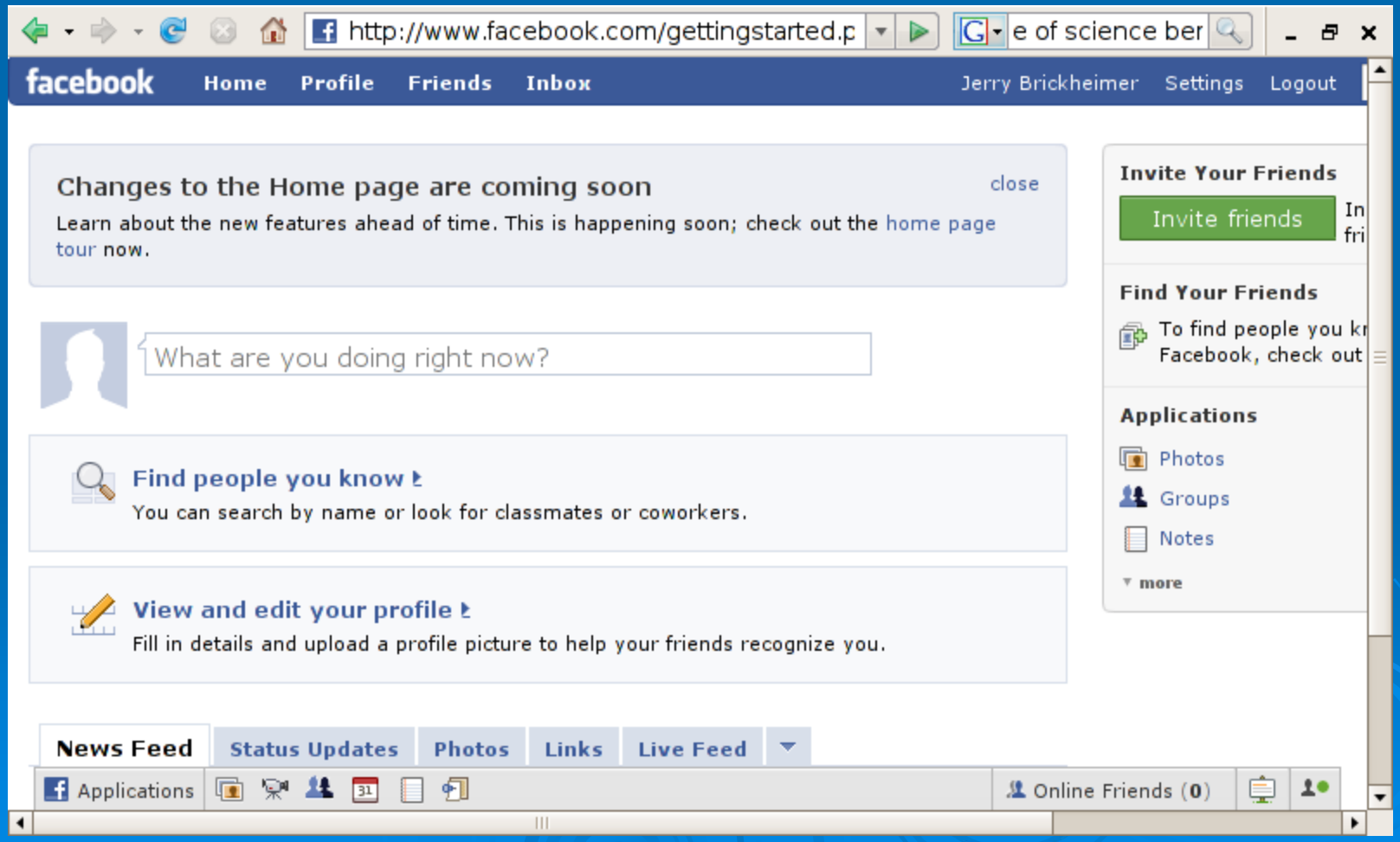
What Is Collaborative Technology?

- Software designed to help people involved in a common task achieve their goals
- Common examples
  - Wikis
  - Blogs
  - Smashups
  - Social networking
  - Social voting

Wiki is a collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it, such as Wikipedia.



Social networking is a broad class of websites and services that support online communication for people who share interests and activities, such as facebook.



Executive StEPPs Team

- Action learning team of nine federal employees working with the National Academy of Public Administration to analyze and document instances in which agencies used collaborative technologies to solve organizational challenges.
- Michael Clark, Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Julett Denton, Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
- Phil Golinski, Marine Corps
- Roy Greene, Department of State
- Craig Johnson, National Nuclear Security Administration
- Beth Moore, Department of Energy
- Dana Richey, Department of Agriculture
- Susan Senkeeto, Department of Education
- David Weingart, Federal Aviation Administration

Project Sponsor

- National Academy of Public Administration
- The Collaboration Project
  - Established by a forum of leaders to share ideas, examples, and the benefits of collaborative technology to solve complex challenges within government
  - www.collaborationproject.org

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Problem Statement

- *When, and in what circumstances, should agencies use collaborative technology to solve organizational challenges?*

Method of Analysis

- Analysis of case studies
  - Successful and less successful cases used
  - Cases from federal, state, local, international, nonprofit and private sectors
  - Facilitated interviews and web surveys used to create a project data base
  - Statistical analysis of the project data base performed on 4 elements: the business challenge, approach taken, results achieved, and lessons learned

Results Presented in Four Categories

- Organizational Culture
- Policy and Governance
- Science, Engineering, and Technology
- Business Case

Science, Engineering, & Technology

- Optimizes technical transfer, support, and education to connect experts and provide solutions to those in need
- Promotes the formation of self-initiated groups around similar data or projects to undertake analysis and solve challenges
- Catalyzes innovation and process improvement, for example, public peer review and input
- Improves internal and external communication, as well as better delivery of services for stakeholders and clients

Technical Transfer, Support, & Education

http://www.arlingtonclimateblog.com/ arlington aire

AIRE
ARLINGTON INITIATIVE TO REDUCE EMISSIONS

blog

ARLINGTON VIRGINIA

Where Arlingtonians & friends share ideas, experiences, and tips that promote Fresh AIRE

ARCHIVES

March 2009
February 2009
January 2009
December 2008
November 2008
October 2008
September 2008
August 2008
July 2008
June 2008

March 03, 2009

Good Business = Green Business

There is a lot of talk out there about "going green" - and not only for individuals, but for businesses too. So, what does that mean exactly? Well, it doesn't have to be as complicated as some might think. In fact, the benefits and values that businesses gain from going green are often quite similar to those gained from running a good business. So, what do you have to lose?

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Welcome from County Chairman

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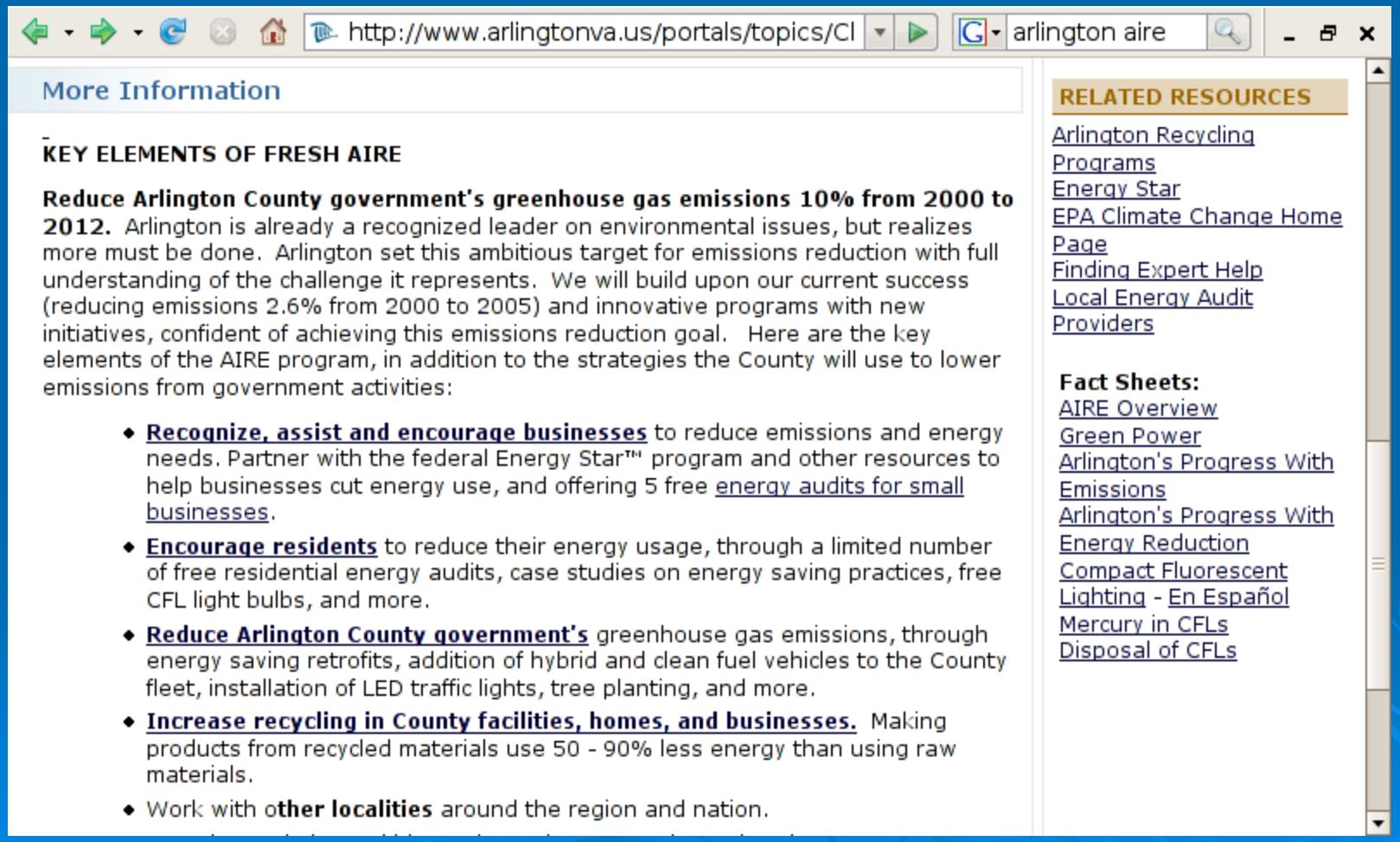
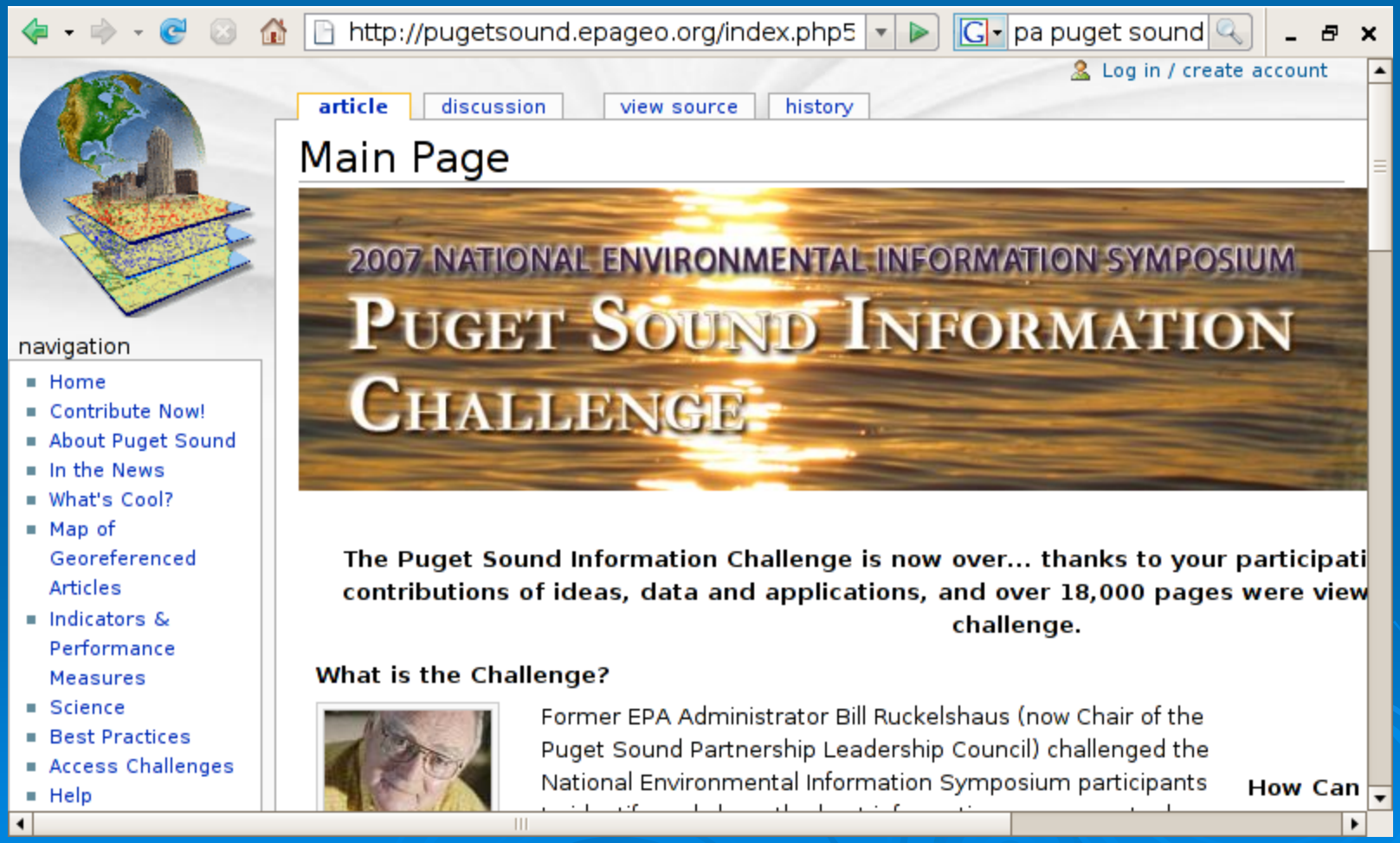
Fresh “AIRE:” Arlington Initiative to Reduce Emissions

- Arlington County website and blog allows partnering with community and businesses to reduce air emissions and energy use, promote recycling, and use of innovative technologies
- Keeps community updated with progress toward emission goals on website
- Advertises free energy audits, best practices, incentives, initiatives, science tips, videos, and articles
- Promotes community feedback and innovation through blog and website updates
- “Think locally, think globally:” website model that other counties are using to design theirs

Technical Transfer, Support, & Education



Self-Initiated Groups for Analysis and Problem Solving



EPA Puget Sound Information Challenge

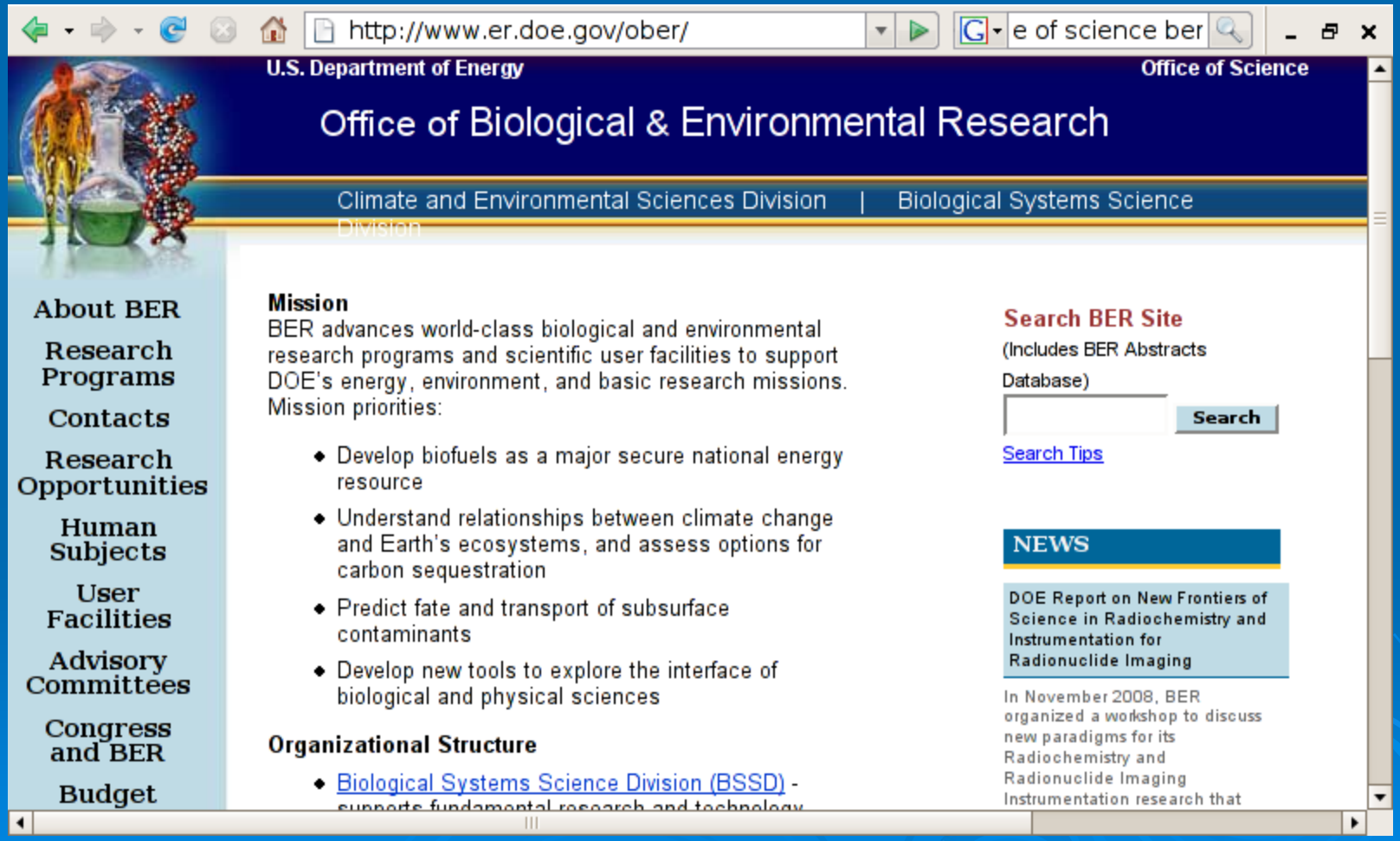
- 36-hour demonstration of wiki technology to solve a regional environmental problem more quickly and efficiently
- IT professionals used Web 2.0 software to post environmental information, share data, and collaborate about techniques and methods to cleanup Puget Sound
- Teams formed in virtual space linking those in need to those with solutions
- Users can communicate any where, any time toward a common solution
- Procedures and regulations under development to accommodate CT for public comment on rule-making, enforcement cases, etc.

Catalyzes Innovation and Process Improvement

Peer-to-Patent Project : Community Patent Review

- Uses social software to allow the public to participate online in an open patent evaluation process
- Conceived by NYLS and paid for by corporate sponsors
- Reduced patent application backlog
- Uses USPTO labor resources more effectively
- Speeds up processing time for patents
- Patents more robust, reducing litigation burdens

Improves Communication & Delivery of Services



DOE Office of Science Blog

- Internal blog as an open portal for staff to share ideas for a new organizational structure
- Organizational improvement to reduce stove-piping, update management practices, and incentivize employees to improve service and advance science
- Self-organized teams formed to solve research barriers and improve workflow
- More productive supervisor to employee relationship due to spontaneous teaming
- Open and transparent communication incorporating all staff members and personality types

Summary of Recommendations

- Officially obtain senior leadership backing
- Find a champion, ideally outside of IT
- Define a clear vision of direction and purpose
- Be realistic about how collaborative technology fits into the organization
- Utilize sound project management practices
- Dedicate financial resources and staff

Summary of Recommendations

- Classify criteria for success and failure
- Measure return on investment (ROI)
- Create adequate, but not excessive, security
- Design the site to be simple to use
- Integrate into regular employee workload
- Include incentives to keep audience engaged
- Account for the culture of the stakeholders