

GUIDING PHILOSOPHY	1	What's inside...	IMPLEMENTATION	4
THE POST METHOD	2		MONITORING AND EVALUATION	5
COMMUNICATION TOOLS AIDS.GOV USES	3		SCHEDULE OF AIDS.GOV MONITORING & EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	5
LISTENING	4		FUTURE DIRECTIONS	5

GUIDING COMMUNICATION PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

At AIDS.gov we use emerging and traditional communication channels to engage in a dialogue about the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and to further the reach of HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care, policies, programs, and resources. Our partnerships with federal, national, state, and local HIV agencies form the cornerstone of our communication planning and implementation activities. We develop and repurpose content to reach people through different communication channels.

This document explains how we use Forrester Research's "POST" (People, Objectives, Strategy, Technology) Method¹ to guide our overall communications approach, and to plan specific initiatives for World AIDS Day (December 1) and National HIV Testing Day (June 27). Before starting a new communications activity, we discuss the following questions:

- What is our audience's use of and comfort level with various communication tools?

- What do we want to accomplish with this particular audience?
- Is someone else already doing this? What partnerships do we need to engage to learn more about this audience and plan a response?
- What resources (e.g., funding, time, capacity, human resources, etc.) do we have to implement and maintain this strategy?
- What tools are most appropriate for this target audience, objectives, and strategy?
- What would success look like? How can we measure it?

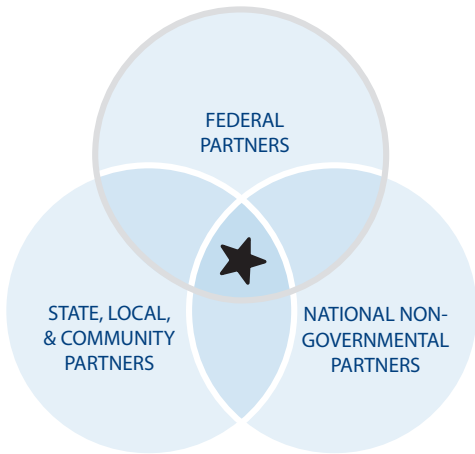
In order to ensure that all information is accessible, our communications tools and materials are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Furthermore, we believe in transparency and participate in the White House's Open Government Initiative. We also regularly monitor and evaluate our efforts so that we can learn from and, as needed, adapt our approach.

¹ Li, C. & Bernoff, J. (2008). *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*. Boston: Forrester Research, Inc.

THE POST STRATEGY

Who is AIDS.gov trying to reach?

At AIDS.gov, we establish and leverage our federal, national non-governmental, state, local, and community partnerships. These partners enable us to reach our target audiences.



- People living with HIV (PLWH)
- High-risk populations (men who have sex with men, communities of color, injecting drug users)
- Caregivers and family members of PLWH

What is AIDS.gov trying to accomplish?

Our mission and three primary objectives guide our communications approach, and help us to meet the needs of our target audiences.

MISSION

AIDS.gov works to increase HIV testing and care among people most at-risk for, or living with, HIV, by using emerging communication strategies to provide access to federal HIV information, policies (e.g., the National HIV/AIDS Strategy), programs, and resources.

OBJECTIVES

1. Expand visibility of timely and relevant federal HIV policies, programs, and resources to the American public in particular, and specifically to communities at greatest risk for HIV.
2. Increase use of new media tools by government and community partners to extend the reach of HIV programs to communities at greatest risk.
3. Increase knowledge about HIV and access to HIV services for people most at-risk for, or living with, HIV.



What are the most appropriate tools to use?

At AIDS.gov we use a range of emerging and traditional media tools (see Table 1).

Guided by our communication strategy, we use a wide variety of tools to reach our audiences, including:

- AIDS.gov website and mobile site
- AIDS.gov Blog
- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Podcasts
- HIV/AIDS Prevention & Service Provider Locator
- Flickr
- Webinars
- Slideshare
- Foursquare

How do emerging and traditional media support AIDS.gov's objectives?

In order to best meet our AIDS.gov audiences' information needs, we use the following strategies:

- **Share** our innovative work, select channels that can reach a critical mass of people in our target audiences, and have strong content so people trust us and come back for more.
- **Learn** from our federal, national, state and local partners and identify opportunities to cross-promote each others' work.
- **Connect** people and respond to their information needs for HIV resources, programs, and policies.
- **Engage** our audiences in a conversation, encourage participation, and make it easy for people to share information.
- **Repurpose** content using new and traditional media channels to reach our audiences when they want HIV information, and in what format they want it.
- **Model** use of new media and other tools for community and federal public health programs.
- **Guide** individuals and organizations about communication strategy development and tools so they can implement their own communication plans using the most appropriate tools through training, technical assistance, and online content.

TABLE I: COMMUNICATION TOOLS AIDS.GOV USES

Our primary focus is on the tools and channels that have the highest return on investment and insight. For us these are the channels and tools:

- that have a critical mass of individuals from our target audiences;
- respond to an expressed information need; and/or
- provide a significant opportunity to engage with our audiences.

We also maintain a secondary focus through tools and channels that we use in response to a specific event and/or initiative (such as *Facing AIDS* for World AIDS Day).

COMMUNICATION CHANNEL	HOW WE USE IT					
	Provide information about HIV basics and federal resources	Highlight news and events	Share HIV/AIDS Awareness Day information	Provide training and technical assistance	Listen, monitor, and engage	Promote our partners
PRIMARY FOCUS/PRESENCE						
WEBSITE AND MOBILE SITE <i>www.AIDS.gov, http://m.AIDS.gov</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
BLOG <i>http://blog.AIDS.gov</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GOVDELIVERY <i>www.govdelivery.com</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TWITTER <i>www.twitter.com/AIDSgov</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
FACEBOOK <i>www.facebook.com/AIDSgov</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
YOUTUBE <i>www.youtube.com/AIDSgov</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓
PODCASTS <i>www.AIDS.gov/podcast/podcast-gallery</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓
HIV/AIDS PREVENTION & SERVICE PROVIDER LOCATOR <i>http://locator.AIDS.gov</i>	✓					✓
CONFERENCES, TRAININGS, IN-PERSON MEETINGS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MEETINGS WITH FEDERAL & COMMUNITY PARTNERS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SECONDARY FOCUS/PRESENCE						
FLICKR <i>www.flickr.com/photos/AIDSgov</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓
WEBINARS & CONFERENCE CALLS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SLIDESHARE <i>www.slideshare.net/AIDSgov</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PRESS RELEASES/STATEMENTS		✓	✓			✓
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS		✓	✓			✓
MYSFACE <i>www.myspace.com/AIDSgov</i>	✓	✓				
FOURSQUARE <i>www.foursquare.com/AIDSgov</i>		✓			✓	✓
FACING AIDS SITE <i>http://facing.AIDS.gov</i>			✓			✓

HOW AIDS.GOV USES THESE TOOLS TO LISTEN

While we use new and traditional communication channels to expand the reach of our HIV/AIDS information and resources, we also use them to listen, learn from, and engage with our audiences. By doing so, we stay abreast of the conversation, enabling us to respond, as needed, with a tweet, comment, or timely blog post that addresses the concerns and information needs of our audiences. Listening allows us to have a better sense of who our online audiences are and what they are saying, as well as to inform us of relevant and timely information.

Here are some examples of how we use tools to listen to our various audiences:

- Use Twitter search, hashtags, and Hootsuite to track Twitter topics of interest, retweets, mentions, partners, and respond to direct tweets;
- Monitor comments and “likes” on our Facebook page;
- Monitor comments on our AIDS.gov blog;
- Monitor comments on our YouTube channel;
- Subscribe to relevant RSS feeds and listservs;
- Receive Google Alerts to monitor online reach and conversation.

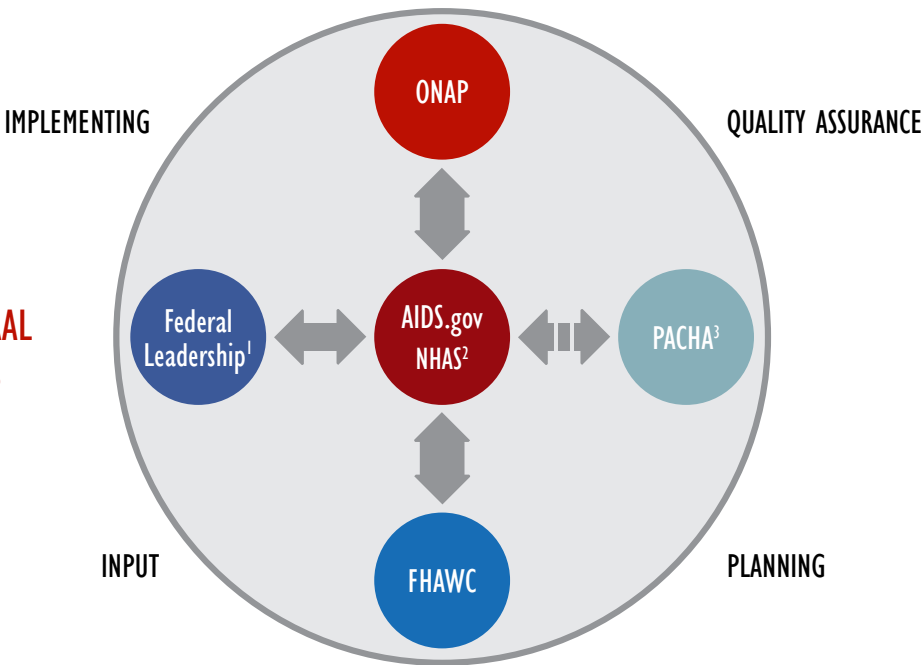
IMPLEMENTATION

The White House National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) released in July 2010 provides ongoing guidance to the communication content and activities of AIDS.gov and our federal partners. As a cross-departmental program, AIDS.gov leverages resources across the government to meet our mission. Figure 1 below depicts key federal partners that guide AIDS.gov communication activities. We primarily receive planning guidance from the White House Office of National HIV/AIDS Policy (ONAP), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy, the HHS Web Council, and the cross-agency Federal HIV/AIDS Web Council (FHAWC). The Council includes web/new media leads, subject matter experts, and communication leads from over twenty federal programs, agencies and offices,

representing HIV programs across the U.S. Government. Together we develop blogs posts, Twitter messages, videos, cross program products, and promote HIV/AIDS Awareness Days. This allows AIDS.gov to maintain an active and responsive new media presence.

Another major component of the AIDS.gov program is training and technical assistance. We attend HIV/AIDS, health-related new media conferences, and other health conferences to provide technical assistance. At these conferences we share the value of using new media to reach and engage the HIV/AIDS community. We also collect stories from the HIV community about how they are using new media in their programs and share this information through blog posts and videos.

**FIGURE 1:
AIDS.GOV FEDERAL
PARTNERSHIPS**



¹ White House, HHS/IOS, HHS/ASH, Federal Web Council, HHS Web Council
² “Vehicle for Transparency”
³ The Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS

MONITORING AND EVALUATION: HOW DOES AIDS.GOV MEASURE SUCCESS?







Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is an integral component of our overall communications strategy, and helps us to know if our efforts are reaching intended communities who are the hardest hit by the HIV epidemic. The AIDS.gov Team primarily conducts process monitoring to determine the degree to which our planning targets (established in a team logic model) have been met. Based on our overall goals and objectives, as well as specific outcomes for targeted initiatives, our monitoring and evaluation activities aim to answer the following questions:

- Are we reaching our intended audiences? Are they engaged? For example, do people leave comments, retweet, send emails, etc?

- Are we engaged? Do we respond appropriately and in a timely manner?
- Are the time and resources being invested in a particular activity providing us with the outcomes we expect and a significant/appropriate return on investment and/or insight?

Twice a year, we conduct a comprehensive analysis of new media analytics across all of our communication tools. We assess how they are interacting around key events, analyze current and past estimated reach through metrics, and discuss strategies for extending our reach and supporting optimal communication.

TABLE 2: SCHEDULE OF AIDS.GOV COMMUNICATION MONITORING & EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

 <p>1</p>	<p>DAILY Monitor and respond to blog and Facebook comments, Twitter mentions, retweets, and direct tweets.</p>	 <p>3 months</p>	<p>QUARTERLY Logic Model Progress-to-Date Report tracks progress towards stated goals and objectives, including communications activities.</p>
 <p>7</p>	<p>WEEKLY Social network site updates track how many followers we have on our social network sites (and compare these numbers to the previous week to monitor trends), tweets, and new and notable Twitter followers. We use an online internal tracking system to document new and ongoing communications activities, and distribute a weekly internal report to capture these updates.</p>	 <p>6 months</p>	<p>BIANNUALLY Communications channel assessment looks at the current status and relationship of the blog and social network sites, progress toward objectives, and plans future directions. We assess comments, visitor traffic, and other analytics to identify trends, measure engagement, and see how the various channels are working together.</p>
 <p>31</p>	<p>MONTHLY Blog, social network sites, and video updates track number and types of posts, comments, and traffic (using Google Analytics, Feedburner, and built-in insights to track visitor traffic). Monitor secondary focus presence/sites (such as Flickr and Foursquare), respond to comments and requests, and track updates.</p>	 <p>12 months</p>	<p>ANNUALLY Review and revise Communication Strategy. Revisit AIDS.gov target audiences, mission, objectives, and activities.</p>

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We will continue to expand our reach to diverse audiences by leveraging tools that have proven successful, while also using new tools, community resources, and partnerships. In regard to specific tools, mobile technology and geo-location are tools we have expanded upon in the past year. In fact, about 20% of our users are accessing AIDS.gov through mobile devices.

In 2012, The International AIDS Conference, AIDS2012, will take place in the United States for the first time in more than 20 years. AIDS.gov will leverage our website, blog, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to provide information and updates about the U.S. Government participation at AIDS 2012.

We are also exploring the use of emerging tools, such as Google+, Tumblr, and Pinterest. We plan to explore expanding options for evaluation as AIDS.gov new media efforts continue to grow.

Providing platforms for community and federal leaders to lend their voice to AIDS.gov content and news is a goal we will continue to expand. Developing content with our partners in the HIV community is essential. Communication channels are changing every day, and AIDS.gov will continue to embrace diverse tools as a vital strategy for communicating about HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, care, treatment, research, and policy.