

Department of Commerce



E-Government Act Report

October 2010

Section 1: Innovation and Transparency

FY 2010 E-Government IT Accomplishments Related to Open Government

The [Commerce Open Government Plan](#) identifies 30 projects to increase transparency by publishing high-value information, and four innovative public-facing Flagship Initiatives that embody the principles of open government and showcase the Department's ability to serve as a cohesive provider of services for the business community. Brief synopses of three Flagship Initiatives follow.

Deepwater Horizon Response Tracking.

A new Web site developed by NOAA with the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, and Department of Interior offers near real-time information about the response. The [GeoPlatform](#) Web site is intended to serve as a public one-stop shop for data provided by the various agencies working together to tackle the oil spill disaster. Originally designed for responders tasked with making operational decisions, it integrates the latest information on the oil spill's trajectory, closed fishery areas, wildlife, and place-based Gulf Coast resources such as pinpointed locations of oiled shoreline and the positions of research ships into an interactive map that can be customized by the user. Public access to the site is intended to facilitate communication and coordination among a variety of users from federal, state, and local responders to local community leaders and the public and provide fast, user-friendly, and constantly updated information.

Virtual CommerceConnect.

CommerceConnect is an initiative designed to streamline access to government services and solutions in order to aid American businesses. Commerce is leading this initiative to integrate grant programs, partnership efforts, and other business-related services by undertaking a pilot project in Michigan. The primary goal is to provide one-stop shops for information, counseling, and access to the breadth of services that can help a business transform itself into a viable and competitive enterprise.

Virtual CommerceConnect will expand the reach of brick-and-mortar CommerceConnect locations in an online setting. An initial version of the CommerceConnect Web site has been launched at <http://www.commerceconnect.gov>. The functionality of Virtual CommerceConnect will be enhanced through an extensive beta testing process, and a fully operational 1.0-level product is expected to be deployed by the end of December 2010.

National Export Initiative

The National Export Initiative (NEI) is focused on expanding trade advocacy and improving access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with an interest in exporting, along with improving enforcement of international trade laws to

remove barriers that prevent U.S. companies from obtaining free and fair access to foreign markets.

The NEI involves the creation of an Export Promotion Cabinet that will report to the President and involve top leaders from federal agencies able to contribute to this effort, e.g., the Departments of Commerce, State, Treasury and Agriculture; the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative; the Small Business Administration; and the Export Import Bank. Each agency in the Export Promotion Cabinet will be responsible for submitting a detailed plan to the President outlining how it will strengthen the nation's ability to export. Those plans will be integrated into a cohesive strategy under the NEI.

Through the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC), Commerce leads the Administration's trade promotion efforts and will help operationalize the NEI. This interagency group, which is chaired by the Secretary of Commerce, establishes trade promotion priorities to expand trade and create jobs for Americans. The TPCC provides a platform for Commerce to advance a government-wide agenda for trade promotion and to directly engage the heads of other TPCC agencies. The Export Promotion Cabinet will coordinate with the TPCC to carry out the NEI.

Section 2: Compliance with Goals and Provisions of the Act

A. The Commerce Information Resources Management (IRM) [Strategic Plan](#) and Enterprise Architecture (EA). The EA Plan is submitted to OMB Max as a separate attachment.

B. Commerce E-Government Initiative final determinations, priorities, and schedules.

Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA) maintains the sole E-Government initiative managed within the Commerce Department, the International Trade Process Streamlining (ITPS). ITPS allows small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to obtain more easily the information and documents needed to conduct business abroad.

The government's existing online portal for small business export assistance information (www.export.gov) has been enhanced to meet the mandate and is integrated with the 1-800-USA-Trad(e) call center and domestic and foreign offices staffed by trade specialists. Export.gov provides online information about foreign market intelligence, trade leads, trade shows, export finance, and other valuable information and directs SMEs toward local Export Assistance Centers or to relevant offices in the foreign markets.

The concept of the ITPS initiative was to consolidate the export assistance programs and market information spread across 19 federal agencies into a single, easy-to-use Web portal. Recent surveys indicate that less than two percent of U.S. small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) sell their products outside of the U.S., and two-thirds of those SME's export to only one market. The potential leverage available from small

investments in export promotion is large. These non- and under-exporting SMEs represent an immense, untapped source of future U.S. employment and prosperity. For example, if a modest 0.5 percent increase in the level of SME exports were realized as a result of ITPS (an amount equal to \$1.2 billion in sales by U.S. companies) it is estimated that U.S. employment levels could rise by nearly 19,000 jobs. An additional benefit is that firms that export have been found to pay 15 percent higher wages than the average firm and go bankrupt at a significantly smaller ratio than non-exporting firms.

ITPS tracks performance measures supporting Commerce objectives and strategic goals for improved performance.

- Number of visitors per year to the ITPS Web site:
 - Fiscal Year 2010 = 3.5 million unique visitors up from 2.5 in FY 2009
- Customer Satisfaction:
 - Fiscal Year 2010 = 75% up from 73% in FY 2009

C. Identify improved performance (e.g., outcome measurement) by tracking performance measures supporting agency objectives and performance goals.

The Commerce [Performance and Accountability Report](#) (PAR) informs the President, Congress, and the American people of how well the Department of Commerce has managed its finances and programs. IT performance measures support the Commerce Management Goals.

D. Commerce FOIA handbook, Web site, and frequent record request site.

The Commerce Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) [Reference Guide](#) informs the public of how to submit FOIA requests and explains the process. It is posted on the [Commerce FOIA Web site](#), which also provides a facility for filing a FOIA request electronically. Records that are frequently requested are posted on the [Electronic Reading Room](#) Web site.

E. Commerce Web presence for disseminating research and development (R&D) information to the public and federal funding information.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) are the two principal Commerce operating units that perform R&D work and make this information available to the public. Much of this work is federally funded. The [Commerce Research and Development \(R&D\) Web site](#) is used to disseminate R&D information to the public.

F. Commerce inventory of formal agency dissemination agreements.

The [Commerce Data Dissemination Agreements Web site](#) provides the public with the agreements (e.g., contracts, memoranda of understanding, and partnerships) with external

entities (e.g., partnerships with state and local governments, public libraries, industry, and commercial search engines) that complement Commerce's information dissemination program. The Web site table contains a brief explanation of how each agreement improves the access to and dissemination of federal information to the public.

G. Commerce inventory of NARA-approved record schedules and progress in implementing NARA Bulletin 2006-02.

Current approved records schedules for Commerce and its operating units are posted on the [Commerce Records Management Web site](#) via a link to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) government-wide Repository of [Records Control Schedules Web site](#). In response to NARA Bulletin 2006-02, Commerce reported to OMB that there are a total of 311 Commerce e-records systems or series, of which 243 (or 78 percent) have been scheduled or for which schedules were developed and/or submitted to NARA for review at the end of FY 2010. Commerce continues to vigorously review its records schedules and develop new ones. As the result of increased emphasis and close coordination with NARA, Commerce has reduced the number of unscheduled e-records from 99 at the end of FY 2009 to 68 at present.

H. Implementation of use of electronic signatures.

The Travel Management Information System (TMIS+) is used by over 5,000 travelers at the Census Bureau and provides users the ability to electronically create, process, and track all travel-related documents (including authorizations and certifications). TMIS+ uses Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology to electronically sign travel documents. Electronic signature technology for TMIS+ provides a paperless travel system and eliminates much of the work a traveler must do before and after the trip. The traveler uses an on-line document to enter estimated travel costs, which is then approved by an official by placing an electronic signature on the data. On return, the traveler enters in the actual expenses for the trip and electronically signs the on-line travel voucher. The document is routed to the financial officers who review the costs and electronically sign the document before approving the document for electronic payment to the traveler. TMIS+ is fully integrated into the Census Bureau's financial system.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) uses Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) for patent application submissions (EFS Web) and for trademark applications (TEAS). The USPTO uses the Federal PKI bridge to enable certain PKI transactions to support efficient interoperability. The USPTO first obtained the Federal Bridge Certificate Authority in 2005.

I. How Commerce has enhanced public participation by electronic means for the development and issuance of regulations (e.g., [regulations.gov](#)).

NOAA, Commerce's largest operating unit, implemented the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) for all rulemaking actions, beginning on October 1, 2007. All rulemaking related notices are discoverable through [Regulations.gov](#) and the public is

invited to submit comments on those actions on-line, through [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). In addition to the public comments and the Federal Register documents, USPTO also posts all supporting materials documents, so that the public can retrieve them through [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). The other Commerce rule-making operating units also use [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) to notify the public of rulemaking activities.

J. How Commerce has linked performance goals to key stakeholders and others in delivering information and services through the use of IT.

Commerce uses IT to deliver information and services to stakeholders and to ensure that performance goals are met in many ways. Following are examples from NOAA's Line Offices.

The Drought Portal (www.drought.gov) and the NOAA Climate Services Portal (www.climate.gov) are multi-agency efforts to greatly expand the access and use of climate products in multiple sectors – private, research, government, etc. Direct engagement with stakeholders has been and will continue to be a critical part of this effort. The use of appropriate IT resources and technologies is ensuring success in these major programs.

NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) frequently evaluates electronic information needs through feedback gleaned from the scientific community at scientific and professional conferences, and from stakeholder forums conducted as part of an ongoing communication program. Individual laboratories and program offices maintain close contact through working relationships, cooperative agreements, and other official partnerships with key stakeholders (primarily academia, non-governmental organizations, and federal scientific agencies) to bring information to the right people at the right time.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) National Permits System (NPS) was designed to serve the needs of private sector stakeholders, as well as other NOAA components. Significant improvements in data quality have been realized through the NPS ability to link to external sources, such as the US Postal Service for address validation; the Social Security Administration to ensure applicants are still living and eligible to receive permits; the US Coast Guard to verify vessel documentation numbers; and the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement to verify that equipment required by law on certain vessels is installed and operational.

The DSFA (trade name, not an acronym) application for the NOAA Seafood Inspection Program (SIP) offers a variety of professional inspection services to assure compliance with all applicable food regulations. DSFA provides customers with single-point access (at <https://seafoodinspection.nmfs.noaa.gov/customer/customerlogin.html>) to request various services provided by SIP.

K. How Commerce has reduced errors through the use of electronic submissions.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has integrated electronic reporting options for international and government investment survey data suppliers and upgraded electronic data dissemination for data users. In the area of electronic data collection, BEA maintains a data collection program covering U.S. direct investment abroad, foreign direct investment in the United States, and U.S. international trade in services. In the last five years BEA developed and implemented the eFile system to support electronic (Web-based) survey data collection for all active BEA surveys. eFile reuses data previously collected to minimize the burden on businesses and new and revised surveys are added to it on an ongoing basis. The Bureau has noted an increase in response rates since eFile was implemented. In addition, BEA developed an electronic data collection system for a joint NIH/BEA survey that collects data in support of BEA's estimation of the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI). All of these electronic filing processes reduce respondent burden for reporters and improve internal efficiencies for producing the respective estimates by reducing the costs of printing, mailing, collecting, and data conversion of paper forms. Additionally, the electronic filing process significantly improves the timeliness and comprehensiveness of the international accounts estimates.

The USPTO has deployed Electronic Filing System-Web (EFS-Web) for patent application filing and Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS) for trademark application filing. EFS-Web utilizes standard Web-based screens and prompts to enable the applicant to submit patent application documents in PDF format directly to the USPTO. TEAS allows the applicant to fill out an application form and check it for completeness, and then submit the application directly to the USPTO over the internet. In addition, the Agency encourages the applicant to pay for their applications electronically by credit card, through an existing USPTO deposit account, or via electronic funds transfer. EFS-Web provides an Acknowledgement Receipt that contains critical information, including date stamp, an application number and a confirmation number. This receipt is electronic and may be printed. The receipt carries the security and authority of the post card receipt commonly provided in paper-filed applications. All electronic processes are designed to not only increase the speed at which patents are granted and trademarks issued, but to also decrease errors, and improve communication.

L. Commerce implementation and compliance with [Section 508](#) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Commerce maintains an [Electronic and IT Accessibility Web site](#) that provides the public and Commerce employees with information about their rights under Section 508 and Commerce policies and procedures to ensure that Commerce information is accessible. The Commerce Section 508 Coordinator maintains a network of Section 508 coordinators through out the Commerce operating units to communicate Commerce accessibility policy and share best practices. Commerce ensures that all of the information on its Web sites is fully accessible to individuals with disabilities through its annual Web Certification program.

Commerce operating units review procurement requests to determine if Section 508 applies and to ensure compliance. Public facing Web pages are routinely scanned for compliance with standard 1194.22 “Web-based intranet and internet information and applications” using automated tools. Internal pages are scanned on demand, and discrepancies are corrected as soon as possible. Training is offered to Web content managers and content providers to emphasize the importance of Section 508 compliance and the standards of Section 508. Commerce is committed to ensuring that Section 508 is fully implemented and that Commerce Web sites are accessible to all.

M. Cost savings and cost avoidance achieved through implementation of IT programs.

NOAA’s Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) Headquarters has implemented two IT projects to support the current Telework / Mobile Workforce programs:

- OAR Intranet Sharepoint Site and OAR HQ Citrix Portal. Although quantifiable cost avoidance or savings have not yet been documented for the implementation of these systems, potential savings may be realized and documented through metrics and performance measures of the federal telework program. For example, in the past year, a massive storm blanketed the Washington DC area for days closing all federal government agencies in the area. Instead of a 100% productivity loss during the outage, at least half of the OAR HQ workforce were logged in the servers and are identified as “connected and working” using the both the Sharepoint and the Citrix portals. OAR seeks to better document these IT-enabled workforce improvement initiatives and hope to quantify both their potential and actual cost savings/avoidance in the future.
- A NOAA-wide plan for consolidating Microsoft software licenses was put in place this year. FY 2011 costs will be approximately \$240,000 less than those for FY 2010, with further decreases showing with each purchase cycle.

The National Ocean Service (NOS) continues to consolidate purchasing to gain economies of scale and reduction in costs, including:

- Expanding the list of common software and hardware for consolidated purchasing to include: Adobe Acrobat, ESRI, NetApp storage, OpenLM, Printers, Roxio, SAS, Cisco SmartNet, and desktop / laptop refresh. These efforts have resulted in cost savings of over \$600,000.
- Leading efforts to consolidate the purchasing of storage needs for program offices, as well as expanding and enhancing the enterprise storage capabilities of the OCIO. This resulted in an estimated cost saving of \$300,000 in FY 2010.
- Leading efforts to implement a pilot program for managing ESRI licenses called OpenLM. This program allows Program offices to pool their license resources as

The new Web-based DSFA (trade name, not an acronym) application for the Seafood Inspection Program generates European Export Health Certificates and Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported Catch Certificates. It is estimated that this has saved the U.S. seafood industry approximately 15 minutes per certificate, which translates into 6250 hours, 4 FTEs and nearly half a million dollars.

The Census Bureau has begun to make significant advances toward making headquarters and offices more environmentally responsible. By taking steps to minimize idle time, maximize efficiency, and avoid waste, the Census Office of the CIO (OCIO) is helping employees adopt environmentally conscious practices without negatively affecting performance.

To achieve this mission, the Census OCIO has installed printers, monitors, and PCs that improve the way the Census Bureau uses energy and consumes resources. Previously, most printers were used less than 40 percent of their monthly capacity. To help mitigate this inefficiency, the Census OCIO has consolidated printers where feasible. Printers that are deemed outdated are considered surplus and removed. Additionally, printers have been configured for page duplexing, private printing, power-safe mode, and the removal of banner pages. To date, the Census Bureau has reduced the number of network printers in the Census OCIO by 30 percent. The Census Bureau has removed all local printers in the Census OCIO; local printers are provided only with approved special accommodation.

Throughout the Census Bureau, monitors go into power-safe mode after 10 minutes of inactivity. During normal activity, most liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors use roughly 33 watts of electricity. After switching to power-safe mode, most of these monitors drop down to 3 watts of electrical usage, saving about 90 percent more than normal power. The hard disk drive is put into standby mode after 20 minutes of inactivity. Additionally, the Census OCIO is testing the possibility of moving the central processing unit into a sleep mode after 30 minutes of idle time. Most computers use between 60 and 250 watts of power to operate normally. When sent into sleep mode, computers only use about 5 watts of electricity, resulting in an 80 percent savings in power. Limited power usage will help contribute to a cleaner, safer environment.

The USPTO is initiating a major modernization effort called the Patent End-to-End system, which will automate all remaining paper processes in patent operations. Among its benefits is the potential to reduce costs for electronic processing by relying on standardized and well-structured *textual data* provided by patent applicants, rather than *images* of the data they provide, which will make the data far more usable during the patent examination and publication processes, and will reduce the costs for electronic storage and exchange of the data. These potential cost avoidances have not yet been quantified.