

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Open Government 2015 Progress Report



Open Government 2015 Progress Report



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Open Data

Enterprise Information Management Policy (EIMP)

- After several years of development and stakeholder outreach, the Agency published its Enterprise Information Management Policy (EIMP) in March 2015. By requiring information to be developed and maintained in open and machine readable formats for public consumption, the EIMP ensures that Agency information is easy to discover, understand, access, and reuse.

Environmental Dataset Gateway (EDG)

- On November 30, 2014, in compliance with OMB requirements originally issued in the FY 2013 Portfoliostat Guidance, EPA developed and submitted a comprehensive EPA Enterprise Data inventory. It included all data assets, both public and non-public, contained in all information systems listed in the Registry of EPA Applications and Databases (READ). Categories included all assets:
 - Previously posted to Data.gov or Geospatial One-Stop
 - Associated with research, program administration, statistical and financial activities
 - Posted to EPA.gov
 - Addressed in System of Records Notices (SORNs) and Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs)
 - Purchased to support Agency business
 - Released via FOIA in the Agency's Public Data Listing (PDL)
- Each office submitted metadata records to the EDG following either the EDG geospatial metadata template (for geospatial information) or the Data.gov metadata template (all others). Records were categorized as Public (information released to the public without restrictions), Restricted (information available to the public under certain use restrictions) and Non-Public (information not released to the public, such as CUI or pre-decisional information).
- With the exception of Non-Public records, all records in the EPA Enterprise Data Inventory are regularly uploaded to Data.gov, thus integrating EPA's information holdings with those of other federal agencies. EPA will continue to expand, enrich and open this Inventory on a quarterly basis in FY 2016 and beyond.

Participation in Transparency Initiatives

CFDA

- EPA initiated the FY 2015 update cycle for the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance and now lists 100 programs on the CFDA website.
- Each program's objectives, eligibility requirements, application and award process, and financial information are thoroughly documented and accessible by the public via the CFDA website.



Proactive Disclosures

ChemView

- Web services have been developed to provide a platform to make the system readily accessible from other venues. By mid-2016 ChemView will be accessible to OECD eChemPortal and data.gov users via those applications.

FOIAonline

- In addition to the 8 partner agencies already using FOIAonline, these three agencies initiated participation in FY2015:
 - General Services Administration
 - Small Business Administration
 - Federal Communication Commission

EPA Websites

- As part of EPA's ongoing effort to improve user experience, the Agency has begun leveraging a customized version of Google Analytics to track Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) across all of its websites. The monitoring of KPI's helps EPA track its progress towards achieving a number of goals for its websites, including increasing opportunities for users to find desired content by improving search capabilities.
- The conversion of EPA.gov to a topic-based website, managed by a Drupal-based Web Content Management System, was completed in FY2015 Q4. Over 10,000 content pages were transformed, however improvements to better meet the needs of website visitors continue to be made on an ongoing basis.

Whistleblower Protection Program

- EPA hosted several meetings of the Coalition of Federal Ombudsman which serves as the principal interagency forum that provides collaboration, advice, and guidance on professional Ombudsman standards, skills and program development, and effectiveness.
- EPA has initiated the Office of Special Counsel's (OSC) Certification Program for federal whistleblower protection programs. EPA anticipates meeting the five criteria necessary for OSC certification in FY2016.



Flagship Initiatives

Enforcement Compliance History Online (ECHO)

- EPA continued development of the Enforcement Compliance History Online (ECHO) application throughout 2014 and 2015, introducing 4 major system updates, culminating in the release of version 2.4 in June 2015. Since EPA's 2014 progress report, the following features and enhancements have been added:
 - **Air Pollutant Report** - ECHO's Clean Air Act Pollutant Report for the first time allows users to view facility emissions data from the National Emissions Inventory, Toxics Release Inventory, Greenhouse Gas Reporting Tool, and Acid Rain Program on one report. The new report decreases barriers to finding and viewing air pollution data. The Air Pollutant Report aims to improve agency operations by combining air pollution emissions for regulated facilities into a single, easy-to-use webpage. Previously, users would have had to search four different websites and combine data themselves to view the same information.
 - **Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Dashboard** - presents data about violations and the compliance status of public water systems. The dashboard contains interactive charts and graphs that provide information regarding the compliance of public water systems with federal drinking water regulations, as well as enforcement actions.
 - **Clean Water Act Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR) Pollutant Tool Version 2.0** - The DMR tool allows users to see who is releasing pollutants into lakes, rivers, and streams, what pollutants they are discharging and how much. Version 2.0 now provides weekly updates on the latest facility, permit, and DMR data and gives users the ability to see what wastewater treatment technologies industrial facilities use to manage their wastewater.
 - **Pesticide Dashboard** - provides interactive charts that present a summary of key activities related to the FIFRA regulated community and answers questions like: how many facilities in the United States manufacture pesticides or employ workers covered by the Worker Protection Standard; how many have been inspected, and how many have violations and enforcement taken by states, tribes and/or EPA.
 - **Enforcement Case Search enhanced** - Users could previously search the case name, defendant name, and/or facility name for search terms in any order. The enhancement allows users the option to search for exact matches or names that begin with a search term.
 - **ECHO Video Tutorials** – The video tutorials provide users with helpful guidance on how to use ECHO and introduce users to ECHO's many features.

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Flagship Initiatives Continued

AirNow

- EPA's AirNow program continued its tremendous growth by expanding the global community of partners that share air quality data. In 2015 the application became operational in Mexico City, Mexico as part of the program's planned 14-city Air International rollout which aims to bring an international version of AirNow to foreign partners and agencies. Additionally, the Agency signed an agreement with the Department of State (DoS) to collaborate on the installation of air quality monitors at DoS posts around the world. As part of that effort, AirNow's "Embassies and Consulates" page went live in August 2015 with five sites reporting real-time air quality data from India.
- The application was also enhanced to accept one-minute data as opposed to the hourly data the system was previously limited to. This enhancement greatly increases the accuracy of air quality data the application provides and ensures users have the most current air quality information.

Records Management Program

- During FY 2015, EPA submitted four records schedules for major electronic information systems to NARA and two were approved. Four transfer requests for permanent electronic information systems were submitted to National Archives and eight previously initiated were completed. Five of EPA's new 21 consolidated schedules submitted to NARA in 2012-2013 have been approved, bringing the total approved to 15. The consolidated schedules are "media neutral" covering records in any format, including electronic. EPA's Records Management Policy update was approved in February 2015.
- Work began in 2015 on a new email retention policy. The "quarterly records management day" was used to communicate EPA's policies and procedures on electronic records management, including text messaging. Due to EPA's transition to a new email platform, EPA IT and records management staff began reviewing Lotus Notes databases to determine which ones need to be migrated or deleted per approved records schedules. EPA's Information Management and Exchange Subcommittee's Records Work Group continues to work on several initiatives related to managing electronic records. EPA procured auto-categorization software to automate the assignment of records retention categories to records in the electronic records repository and is in the process of preparing the tool for future operational use. EZ Desktop Records, a pilot project for managing electronic records other than email, was initiated in an EPA regional office and expanded to other locations.



News from Elsewhere

Regulations.gov and FDMS

- In FY 2015, there were more than 6,338,000 visits to Regulations.gov, with over 4,673,000 of those visits being unique. On the Agency user side, the EPA Docket Center processed 1371 Federal Register documents and received over 7 million comments in FY 1015, which is a 16% increase from FY 2014. The Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) offers a Deduplication Engine, which agencies can use to run reports on duplicate comments received for a Federal Register (FR) document. This tool helps agencies review and process large numbers of comments in a timely and efficient manner. Users can select a percentage of similarity ranging from 70%-90%. In 2015, EPA processed 77,749 documents through the deduplication tool.

FITARA Implementation

- As part of its FITARA implementation plan, EPA is introducing an Innovation Fellowship program and an IT skills gap analysis process to identify and deliver needed IT competencies in the Agency. High level milestones for these actions are due to OMB on November 14, 2015

Envirofacts

- Envirofacts developed a RESTful data service API to all of its internal data holdings. This functionality provides a user of Envirofacts with the ability to query any table through the use of a URL. The default output is in XML, which can be utilized in other applications, as well as tools such as Microsoft Excel or Access. Output options of JavaScript Object Notation (JSON), CSV, and Excel can be requested in the URL. The entire Envirofacts database metadata is available online, so that all tables and columns within Envirofacts are documented. Having the table structures available in this manner makes most of Envirofacts data easily available through the service.