

# Department of Commerce



## *Open Government Plan Version 1.5*



*The Commerce Department's mission is to help make American businesses more innovative at home and more competitive abroad.*

## *June 2011*





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## I. Introduction

On January 21, 2009, President Obama issued the first executive memorandum of his Administration, entitled “Transparency and Open Government.” In his memorandum, the President established three guiding principles for the conduct of government activities: Government should be transparent, participatory, and collaborative. On December 8, 2009, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued memorandum number M-10-06, “Open Government Directive,” providing guidance to federal agencies on specific actions they must take to increase transparency, participation and collaboration in government. This plan outlines the steps that the Department of Commerce has taken to date and will take in the future to achieve this objective.

The Department of Commerce fosters economic growth and opportunity by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and stewardship. For nearly 100 years, it has partnered with the U.S. business community to maintain a prosperous, productive America that is committed to trade, competitiveness, and environmental stewardship. The Department of Commerce has a longstanding record of innovation in manufacturing, transportation, communication and measurement standards, and has contributed significantly to U.S. leadership in the international marketplace. It leads the way in dissemination of information, including economic and demographic statistics, technological innovation, weather and climate research, and marine resources management. As the Department prepares to enter its second century of service to the American public, it seeks to ensure that the United States retains its position as the leader in the world economy.

The Department of Commerce is continuing to develop its Open Government efforts through interagency initiatives, public engagements (both in-person and via online new media) and internal programs that include training, collaboration, and modification of existing internal processes. Commerce fully embraces the President’s principles of transparent and open government. Through openness and discussions with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and private citizens, Commerce will better understand the products and services that are needed to best serve our customers and stakeholders, and how to facilitate timely and high-quality review of processes and products.

The Department will accomplish the objectives of transparency, participation, and collaboration by:

- Including processes that allow effective communication between Commerce and the public sector to ensure openness and transparency as part of all new initiatives and updates to existing initiatives;

“President Obama took office with a call for unprecedented openness in government, and we are heeding that call.”

Gary Locke  
Secretary of  
Commerce



## U.S. Department of Commerce – Open Government Plan



- Maintaining its leadership role in the Data.gov initiative by increasing the number of high value data sets and tools made readily available to the American public;
- Continuing partnerships with the private sector, including businesses, academia and nonprofit organizations, to broaden input obtained for consideration during the regulatory process;
- Creating online tools to improve public and private sector access to Commerce services and to enhance understanding of funding opportunities; and
- Increasing the use of social media and other online tools to encourage the public to participate in idea-generation and to provide feedback on Commerce initiatives.

## II. Leadership, Governance, and Culture Change

The Department of Commerce carries out its programmatic responsibilities through its 12 operating units:

**Table 1 - Commerce Operating Units**

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)	National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Bureau of the Census (Census Bureau)	National Technical Information Service (NTIS)
Economic Development Administration (EDA)	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA)	U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)
International Trade Administration (ITA)	
Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)	

Through their distinct missions, each of these operating units contributes to Commerce’s overall objective of promoting economic growth for the nation and providing opportunity for all Americans. These organizations are driving initiatives that range from improving patent processing to developing sustainable and resilient fisheries, from transforming service delivery to businesses to expanding international markets for U.S. firms, and from creating scientific and technological innovation to advancing measurement science.

Since taking office, Secretary Locke has called upon managers and employees at all levels to seek opportunities for greater collaboration, both among Commerce operating units and other federal agencies. He has challenged the workforce to bring together ongoing initiatives from across the Department to form a unified, strategic approach and to pursue opportunities to collaborate, increase performance, and enhance customer service. He has asked employees to think creatively as to how they can better work together to harness the power of their diverse talents.



To assist it in institutionalizing such initiatives, Commerce created an interdisciplinary, Department-wide leadership, planning, and execution team to implement the Open Government Initiative. The original membership in this group comprised Senior Leadership from the Chief Information Officer (CIO), General Counsel, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration (CFO/ASA), as well as representatives from the Offices of Public Affairs and Policy and Strategic Planning, Commerce’s operating units and subject matter experts from key mission areas. This team supplemented the existing and ongoing efforts of the extensive Data.gov team that Commerce launched in May 2009. Building upon these baseline efforts and in order to encompass the full breadth of the department, each of bureaus/operating units were tasked with assigning as Senior Leader to represent their organization. This Open Government Senior Leader (OGSL) Points of Contact (POC) are designated to ensure that Commerce Open Government efforts are integrated into each of the bureau/operating units business processes in a timely and cost effective manner. The OGSL initially addressed the existing quick wins for integration of Open Government principles into existing Commerce capabilities.

In October 2010 Commerce Senior Executive to head the Office of Privacy and Open Government. This executive is designated as Chief Privacy Officer and Director of Open Government. The primary role is to ensure the Commerce is appropriately addressing all matters of Privacy, Open Government, Freedom of Information, Federal Advisory Committees and Directives Management across all departmental initiatives.

As a whole, Commerce is continuing to explore other ways to work better across organizational lines. For example, Secretary Locke’s CommerceConnect Initiative streamlines how businesses access government services and solutions across the entire Commerce Department. Commerce started with a pilot project in Michigan, businesses will have a “one-stop shop” for information, grants, counseling, and other services that can help them improve their competitiveness. The progress being made through CommerceConnect can be found at [More details about this initiative appear in this document and on the CommerceConnect website commerceconnect.gov.](http://commerceconnect.gov)

### III. Transparency

“Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their government is doing. Information maintained by the Federal Government is a national asset.”

President Barack Obama

#### Why Commerce Needs to Take Action

Unlocking public access to government data is a critical component of the President’s Open Government Initiative. From rainfall levels measured by NOAA’s National Weather Service (NWS) to the portrait of the nation developed every 10 years by the Census Bureau, data

collection and dissemination is a vital aspect of what the Department does. Thus Commerce – as an organization – is fully committed to making its data sets more broadly accessible through



the government-wide Data.gov initiative. It is also prepared to serve as a leader in the Federal Government’s effort to make more raw data and tool sets of packaged data available through the Data.gov Web site and other data repositories.

## What Commerce Has Done

Historically, the Department of Commerce has been a source of information for the public through data collection and dissemination partnerships with state, local and tribal governments; educational and scientific institutions; nonprofit organizations; and for-profit businesses. Commerce maintains a comprehensive public [records management web site](#), which provides records control schedules for the Department and its operating units, records management policies and guidance, and links to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the wealth of information it contains. Additionally, Commerce and its operating units have identified and submitted to NARA records schedules for almost all electronic records. Commerce routinely approves the transfer of permanent records stored in the federal records center system to NARA, in accordance with instructions in the applicable records control schedules.

In keeping with transparency and openness, Commerce has developed and documented detailed procedures for posting all information technology (IT) investments to the [federal IT dashboard](#). The monthly reporting process includes publication by the Department's CIO of a red, yellow, or green status rating for each investment. The Department’s goal is to review all investments with a red or yellow CIO risk rating each month and to review one-third of all green-rated investments during that same period. By September 1, 2009 – well in advance of the “Open Government Directive” – Commerce had published over 104,000 data sets and data tools on Data.gov and, by January 22, 2010, it had released over 60,000 additional data sets and tools. While the vast majority of the data sets involve Census geodata that will allow the public to map other bits of information, Commerce’s 166,600 data sets also include 40 tools that should make other sets easier to use. The tools in Data.gov provide access to multiple datasets; in some cases, these represent thousands of raw datasets from an organization.

To assist Commerce in adhering to the guidance OMB provided in the Open Government Directive and to make existing and new data sets and tools more easily accessible by the public, the Department established an internal community of Data.gov points of contact (POCs) from each of its operating units. This communication network supports the enhanced exchange of information throughout the Department. As part of these efforts, Commerce has encouraged data owners to develop timelines to publish new information and enhance previously published information. Commerce is also improving existing data user tools to allow greater access across all of its operating units and by other federal agencies and departments.

The following table provides additional detail about a snapshot of the data the Department is making available on [Data.gov](#), the operating units that have provided or have responsibility for





them, and how often they were downloaded. The initial guidance in the Open Government Directive, “high-value” datasets must have appeared after December 12, 2009; and met other criteria; many of the datasets listed in the table below were available before this date. The Department has been utilizing the same factors to determine if a dataset or tool is “high-value” in all subsequent submissions to Data.gov. A significant number of datasets were newly provided by the Department have published in the raw format. These datasets while available to public previously in other formats could not be published to Data.gov because of restrictions on types of datasets allowed. Commerce will continue to produce new and convert existing datasets that developers and other members of the public find most useful where it is cost effective and efficient. Table 2 provides a snapshot of the number of datasets and tools provided to the Data.gov catalog.

**Table 2 - Commerce Datasets Published to Data.gov**

Department of Commerce Data Sets Released to Data.gov as of 06/29/2011					
Agency / Operating Unit	Raw Datasets (high-value)	Tools (high-value)	Geo-data	Total	Number of Times Downloaded Preceding Week
<a href="#">Department of Commerce (DOC)</a>	76 (64)	188 (111)	263,257	263,521	760
<a href="#">Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)</a>	0	2	0	2	16
<a href="#">Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)</a>	2	0	0	2	11
<a href="#">International Trade Administration (ITA)</a>	0	15 (6)	0	15	18
<a href="#">National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)</a>	0	3	0	3	13
<a href="#">National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)</a>	31 (21)	53 (46)	24,102	24,186	400
<a href="#">National Technical Information Service (NTIS)</a>	1 (1)	0	0	1	5
<a href="#">National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA)</a>	1 (1)	29 (2)	0	30	38
<a href="#">US Census Bureau (CENSUS)</a>	35 (35)	61 (52)	239,155	239,251	201
<a href="#">US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)</a>	6 (6)	25 (5)	0	31	58

### What Commerce Will Do

Throughout its history, the Department of Commerce has published high-value data as part of its scientific, technological, and economic programs. As a result, Commerce has been able to establish best practices in distribution and publication processes that meet the ever-evolving needs of the public.

We built the responsibilities of the Data.gov POCs on OMB’s guidelines for increasing transparency, participation, and collaboration. Their job is to focus on several themes: expanding access, utilizing open platforms, disaggregating data, adopting rapid integration, emphasizing program responsibility, growing and improving through user feedback and embracing and driving best practices. Commerce is using the POCs to build integrated, replicable processes that allow interaction between data owners, technical staff, knowledge management staff, and the public.

Commerce has launched a series of projects to increase transparency by publishing high-value information. Details for 43 such projects are provided below.

**Table 3 - Projects to Increase Transparency by Publishing High-Value Information**

Operating Unit	Project	Operating Unit	Project
<b>Census Bureau</b>	Introducing a Profile of U.S. Importing Companies Report	<b>NOAA</b> <small>(Cont. fm prev. column on pg 7)</small>	Instituting Online Access to Regional Data in Partnership with the San Francisco Exploratorium
	Improving Operational Efficiency		Improving U.S. Drought Portal with Addition of Soil Moisture Observation Data
	Improving the Census Bureau’s History Web Site		Providing Online Access to Historical Climate Data Through Historical Climate Reanalysis Project
	Add High Value Datasets to Data.gov		Establishing NOAA Climate Services Portal
	Improving Access to Economic Programs	<b>NTIA</b>	Creating a National Broadband Map
	Improving Access to Economical Indicators via the Central Indicator Data Repository (CIDR)		Establishing Online Access to Results of Broadband Survey
	Instituting Data User Notifications	<b>NTIS</b>	Making Five Years of Bibliographic Data Searchable
	Publishing Automated Export Systems Best Practices Online		<b>USPTO</b>
	Implementing Local Employment Dynamics (LED)Program	Expanding Patent Bibliographic Data	
	Improving LED Data Visualization	Enhancing USPTO Data Capabilities Available to the Public	
Modernizing Business Help Site	Enhancing Communications through Web and Social Media sites		
Re-engineering State and Local Governments Statistical Programs and Improving Data			



Operating Unit	Project	Operating Unit	Project
	Presentations		Providing Transparency for mission-related Training Activities
	Adding Web-based Learning Tools to Improve Access to Economic Programs		Publishing Key Performance Indicators on Patent and Trademark Procession
<b>ITA</b>	Improving Online Access to Free Trade Agreement Results Database		Peer to Patent Pilot
<b>NIST</b>	Improving Dissemination of Basic Research Results via Web and Social Media		Measuring and Improving Website satisfaction
	Improving Access to the Digital Data Repository of NIST Collections, including Publications, Artifacts, and Photographs Relating to Measurement Science		Improving the Manual of Patent Examination Procedures (MPEP) and Manual of Trademark Examination Procedures (TMEP)
	Improving access to NIST research results through Wikipedia		Outreach for Independent and Small-entity Inventors
	Making Interagency Reports (NISTIRs) and Technical Notes more widely available to researchers and the public		Patent and Trademark Depository Library (PTDL)
	Making Photos and Videos from the 9/11 Investigation available to the public		Public Advisory Committees
<b>NOAA</b>	Modernizing the NOAA Climate Database	<b>Office of the Secretary</b>	Publishing Public Schedule Data for Secretary Online
	Improving Access to Severe Weather Data Inventory (SWDI)		Expanding Video Streaming for More Commerce Meetings
	Upgrading Ocean Surface Current Simulator		

Bureau of the Census (Census Bureau)

- **Project – Introducing a Profile of U.S. Importing Companies Report**

*What’s New – Statistics on U.S. Importing Companies*

In response to data user requests, with the release of February 2011 statistics on April 12, 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau introduced a Profile of U.S. Importing Companies. The Import profile was combined with the annual Profile of U.S. Exporting Companies resulting

in many new exhibits covering companies that import and companies that engage in both import and export practices. This initial combined Profile covers data years 2008 - 2009. The Profile provides statistics on the type of industry, the major foreign markets, and employment size of businesses that import or export with the United States. This Profile is created from the Importer and Exporter Databases by matching the companies identified in the detailed trade transactions to the business tax information contained in the Census Bureau's Business Register. The importer profile report provides information currently not available on the U.S. Import trade market and companies that import. It also introduced a new perspective of being able to create reports and analysis about the companies that participate in both importing and exporting. Comparing import and export trade data, from an enterprise-based system, could play an important part in economic research. The report was released as scheduled and is available at: <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/edb/2009/>.

- ***Project - Improving Operational Efficiency***

The Census Bureau's Improving Operational Efficiency (IOE) 2010 program was a tremendous success. Census Bureau staff submitted over 650 proposals. Suggestions included ideas to eliminate duplicative or unnecessary activities, re-engineer processes, and implement standardized tools. Senior management selected 20 proposals for business case development, of which 10 were funded. In addition, 14 original proposals that required few, if any, additional resources were implemented immediately.

The 2011 IOE process began this February by incorporating lessons learned from the first year. Improvements included developing a social media forum that allowed employees with Intranet access to use a streamlined process to submit proposals, and to vote and comment on other proposals. The social media forum was extremely important in providing feedback for senior managers to use during both the initial and final proposal assessment phases. Additionally, a new Internet site was developed to facilitate submission of proposals from field representatives throughout the country who did not have access to the Census Bureau's Intranet.

These enhancements, along with the continued enthusiasm of Census Bureau staff, generated over 800 proposals in the 2011 IOE program. The goal is to institutionalize this innovative process by making it an annual event so that Census Bureau staff develop and implement innovative changes and efficiencies as a regular part of their ongoing work.

- ***Project – Improving the Census Bureau's History Web Site***

*What's new – Increased usability and accessibility and modernization of the menu system*

The Census Bureau's history staff continues to make improvements to the history website that enhances our ability to disseminate information to customers. Each month, the staff



designs a new "themed" homepage linking "pop culture" and historical events to census data. Recent homepages included a genealogy theme celebrating the anniversary of the opening of Ellis Island; the 150th anniversary of the fall of Fort Sumter; and Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

The history staff continually listens to its customers (via telephone calls, e-mail, visitor surveys, and website usage statistics) to develop new content for the website. This new content includes the addition of newly digitized publications that are of interest to the sites visitors (such as "Instructions to Enumerators" for each census, past census questionnaires, etc.); new pages of content (including "Census Instructions," Notable Alumni entries, etc.); and refreshed photos and captions to encourage visitors to return to pages. Additionally, the history staff launched its "Sights & Sounds" category April 1, 2011. The category contains galleries of photos depicting census operations, advertising, and related images for each decade from 1790 to 2010. Approximately 65% of our visitors are drawn to our website because of its image content. These galleries will create a "one-stop shop" allowing customers to view and download these images quickly and easily.

Finally, the history staff is proud of its attention to the accuracy of its website's html coding. All new content is subjected to coding accuracy checks and existing content is rechecked on a regular basis. In June 2011, each page, link, and downloadable file will be checked for accuracy and any errors will be corrected.

- ***Project -- Add High Value Datasets to Data.gov***

*What's New –providing important data series through Data.gov.*

The Census Bureau is publishing current and past American Community Survey (ACS) datasets to Data.gov. The ACS provides statistics on more than 40 topics. Data.gov users will find that ACS data are available to the public through American FactFinder and also in formats useful to developers. In late January, two days after publishing on Data.gov, the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Summary File for Tracts and Block Groups was a most-popular dataset on *www.data.gov*. We also are updating and improving metadata for the Current Population Survey, which provides a comprehensive body of data on the labor force, employment and unemployment, and supplements to it. These data, available as far back as 1989, are formatted for use by developers. To fulfill requests from the public, we will publish 2008 Annual State and Local Government Finances and the Governments Integrated Directory online tool. The Central Indicator Data Repository (discussed below), when complete, will be published to Data.gov. The TIGER files for the redistricting program for all states have been released to the public on the Census Bureau website. Once these files are available through Geospatial One Stop, the metadata will be imported to Data.gov.

- ***Project – Improving Access to Economic Programs***

### *What's New – Improved Web site navigation*

The Census Bureau's Economic Programs cover myriad topics and, over the years, we have published information relating to them on various dissimilar Internet pages. Even the most veteran users have found it difficult to find information they need, and new or unsophisticated users are even more challenged. A project now under way seeks to ease access to these data by adopting standard Web page designs and standard access cues. An integrated search tool, linked to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) keyword search, provides for each industry a list of all available reports as well as available geographic area data. To assist novice users of the data and access tools, a series of brief instructional videos provides step-by-step instructions.

More information can be found at <http://www.census.gov/business>.

- ***Project – Improving Access to Economic Indicators via the Central Indicator Data Repository (CIDR)***

### *What's New – Easy access to principal economic indicators published by the Census Bureau*

The Census Bureau's Economic Programs Directorate include 12 principal economic indicators covering retail trade, wholesale trade, services, manufacturing, business inventories, manufacturers' and retailers' profits, construction, and international trade. These monthly and quarterly reports are among the most closely watched statistics published by the Census Bureau. The reports have been published in a variety of dissimilar formats and layouts. The Census Bureau is developing a database-driven access system that will provide access to current and historic data from each report using a single user interface. Users will be able to view the data and extract tables in a variety of formats.

The Census Bureau has activated the system for 7 Economic Programs' principal economic indicators - U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services; Monthly Wholesale Trade: Sales and Inventories; Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders; Quarterly Services Survey; Construction Spending; Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services; and Monthly Retail and Food Services. The Census Bureau has a goal of activating the Economic Programs' remaining 5 economic indicators by the end of 2011. Within the Economic Programs, the Advanced Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders is the only economic indicator not planned for CIDR inclusion since this is a preliminary release of the Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders which is already activated in the CIDR. To complete the CIDR coverage of all principal economic indicators, discussions are underway for the Housing Vacancies which is produced by the Demographic Directorate/Housing and Household Economic Studies (HHES) for possible CIDR inclusion. <http://www.census.gov/econ/currentdata/>

- ***Project – Instituting Data User Notifications***





*What's New – E-mail alerts to data users when reports have been issued*

The publications of the 2007 Economic Census include more than 2,000 separate files covering 18 sectors, 1,000 industries, 50 states and the District of Columbia, 5 Island Areas, and myriad special topics, issued over a period of more than two years. Data users interested in a particular data set have been frustrated by the uncertain timing of its publication. The NotifyMe service, initiated in April 2009, addressed this uncertainty by allowing data users to sign up to receive an e-mail notification when individual reports in the Industry Series and Geographic Area Series are released. More than 20,000 reports have been requested via this system.

We have expanded the NotifyMe service to include additional Economic Census reports series, including the Survey of Business Owners. In the future, Commerce would like to further increase the scope of NotifyMe to allow e-mail notifications for additional Census Bureau surveys.

More information can be found at <http://www.census.gov/notifyme>.

- ***Project – Publishing Automated Export Systems (AES) Best Practices Online***

*What's New – Best Practices manual helps exporters comply with export regulations*

The AES Best Practices Manual shares with AES filers a variety of methods that can be implemented to stay compliant with the Foreign Trade Regulations (FTR) reporting requirements. The content of the Manual ranges from suggestions on training material and training staff to export checklists, technical documentation references, and links to other government agency resources. The Manual also provides several excellent examples of best practices that could assist exporting companies in meeting the FTR compliance standards. We obtained the best practices from visits to AES filers that maintained a compliance rate greater than 95 percent. The Manual is revised and updated as regulatory changes occur.

More information can be found at

[www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aes/documentlibrary/bp/aes\\_bestpractices.html](http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aes/documentlibrary/bp/aes_bestpractices.html)

[www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aes](http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aes)

- ***Project – Implementing Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Program***

*What's New – Revolutionary new approach to analyze and understand socioeconomic data*

LED is a voluntary partnership between state labor market information agencies and the Census Bureau to develop new information about local labor market conditions. LED uses modern statistical and computing techniques to combine federal and state administrative data

on employers and employees with core Census Bureau censuses and surveys while protecting the confidentiality of people and firms that provide the data. It includes the Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), a set of economic indicators (including employment, job creation, wages, and worker turnover) that can be queried by different levels of geography (state, county, metropolitan, and workforce investment area) and by industry, gender, and age of workers. LED and QWI provide powerful tools and entirely new ways to explore, analyze, and understand the American economy.

LED has reached a milestone where all 50 States are members of this partnership as we integrate data from new partners New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The scope of the LED data infrastructure has been updated to include Race, Ethnicity, and Education as well as employees of the Federal Government. For 2011, we will expand the infrastructure to include information specific to firm age and size and self-employed workers.

More information can be found at <http://lehd.did.census.gov/led>.

- ***Project – Improving LED Data Visualization***

*What's New – Presentation tools improve understanding and use of Census Bureau data*

Data visualization tools have emerged as important new ways to present statistical information to make it more understandable for data users. The Census Bureau's LED program has pioneered this effort with its OnTheMap tool that graphically illustrates the relationship between jobs and workplace on user defined maps.

The Census Bureau has developed an application called OnTheMap for Emergency Management, which provides rapid access to labor market information for local areas affected by emergency events. Currently limited to hurricanes, the application provides an easy-to-use tool based on a live feed from the National Hurricane Center. A pilot application using the IBM Many Eyes Stack Graph tool was released in September 2010 to show the quarterly employment trends for the private industry in 48 states by industry sector and groups, as well as by worker gender and age groups. OnTheMap Version 5 was released in December 2010. A pilot application of Google Public Data based on LED data for seven states – Arizona, California, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Virginia, and Washington – was implemented in January 2011.

Efforts have also started to build and visualize the profiles of U.S. workers by age groups based on LED data. Delivery of their visualization has been tentatively scheduled for February 2012.

The operating principles, approach, and action plans are described in the LED Data Visualization Plan, which is posted at the LED website.





More information can be found at <http://lehdmap.did.census.gov/>.

- ***Project – Modernizing Business Help Site***

*What's New – Online assistance for business respondents*

The Census Bureau introduced the Business Help Site (BHS) to provide information to aid businesses in completing census and survey questionnaires. BHS includes “frequently asked questions,” access to regulations, online services such as form re-mails and time extensions, company reporting calendars, and other types of assistance. A Secure Message Center allows respondents to communicate with the Census Bureau electronically via secure e-mail.

BHS is being redesigned to modernize its look, feel, and functionality, and to improve its effectiveness in providing assistance to data providers.

More information can be found at <http://www.census.gov/econhelp>.

- ***Project – Re-engineering State and Local Governments Statistical Programs and Improving Data Presentations***

*What's New – Improved integration of census and current governments programs, and improved data products*

Based on extensive consultation with public and private sector data users in a series of workshops, the Census Bureau is re-engineering the government statistics programs. The effect will be better integration of the Census of Governments with associated annual and quarterly tax, finance, and employment surveys. In addition, we will make improvement to tabulations to better address data user needs. We have already introduced several, including:

- summary briefs, issued quarterly, covering government finance, revenue, and taxes;
- annual reports will accompany the release of FY 2009 data products, covering government finance, revenue, and taxes;
- a new medium of products was released in the spring of 2011. The Snapshot series highlights government statistics data on states;
- making data more accessible through a variety of modes, such as DataFerrett and data.gov;
- for the 2012 Census of Governments, Commerce will provide additional data on a new government organization component city and county finance and employment; and
- a national map of local governments. In addition, Commerce will publish a graphical summary report of the 2007 Census of Governments.

- More information can be found at <http://harvester.census.gov/duw/>.

- ***Project – Adding Web-based Learning Tools to Improve Access to Economic Programs***

*What's New – On-line resources improve understanding of Census Bureau data and programs*

The Census Bureau's Economic Programs incorporate vast, complex topics and employ dissemination and collection tools that require some sophistication on the parts of the data user and respondent. New Web-based tools make it easier to understand and use the data and comply with regulations.

- Videos – Web-based videos explain tools and regulations. Economic Census-related videos show how to use American FactFinder to accomplish a variety of tasks ([http://www.census.gov/econ/census07/www/factfinder\\_videos/](http://www.census.gov/econ/census07/www/factfinder_videos/)); foreign trade videos show how to find and use trade data, submit accurate reports, and comply with trade regulations (<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aes/exporttraining/videos/>); and a secure messaging Center (SMC) video shows how to register and communicate on the SMC (<https://bhs.econ.census.gov/BHS/SMC/smcregvideo.html> ). We plan additional videos.
- Export Compliance and AES Webinars – The Foreign Trade Division conducts a series of online conferences to help exporters comply with mandatory filing requirements (<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aes/meetingsandpresentations/index.html>).
- Social Media – The Foreign Trade Division has introduced a blog to show how to find and use trade data, submit accurate reports, and comply with trade regulations. The blog is updated three times a week and has over 17,000 users (<http://blogs.census.gov/globalreach/>).

International Trade Administration (ITA)

- ***Project – Improving Online Access to Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Results Database***

*What's New – Improving public access to tariff and trade data resulting from U.S. FTA negotiations*

ITA is developing a new way for the public to view tariff information and trade statistics for industrial goods under the various FTAs. Currently, the FTA tariff rates for the United States and its FTA partners are available only as large documents appended to the legal texts of the agreements. It is difficult for U.S. exporters and importers to use these documents to determine current and future tariff rates under the agreements. Additionally, users are currently unable to analyze how the FTAs affect various product groups or sectors. Finally,



users who currently wish to examine trade flows with FTA partners must obtain trade data from multiple Web sites hosted by various U.S. agencies.

ITA's FTA Results Database will combine tariff and trade data into a simple and easy-to-search public interface. Using the Database, users will be able to see how U.S. and FTA partner tariffs on individual products—searchable by keyword or tariff code—are treated under an agreement. U.S. importers and exporters will be able to see the current tariff and future tariffs applied to their products, as well as the date on which those products become duty-free. By combining sector and product groups, trade data, and the tariff elimination schedules, users will also be able to quickly analyze how various key sectors are treated under recently concluded FTAs. The Database will allow the users to quickly identify the share of trade or the share of tariff lines that fall within the various tariff elimination baskets. Users will also be able to compare how particular sectors were treated across various FTAs. The development of this project will be on-going, as future FTAs will be added to the Database and trade data is updated annually. The Database was made available during the second half of 2010.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

- ***Project – Improving Dissemination of Basic Research Results via Web and Social Media***

*What's New – Tagging content to ease search, simplifying public feedback process*

As part of an effort to more broadly disseminate its research results, NIST has implemented a new Web site design based on a content management system. This system includes access to an improved database of research papers authored or co-authored by NIST researchers. Content posted on the new Web site is “tagged” by topic, enabling the public to subscribe to receive new information posted on the Web site on specific topics of interest such as nanotechnology or energy-related research. The new Web site also allows members of the public to comment or ask questions about posted research articles and to easily share content from the NIST site with their own Web sites. NIST has created YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter sites as well. To ensure that as many people as possible benefit from NIST's work, news of major research results posted on the new NIST Web site is routinely announced through these additional social media sites.

- ***Project – Improving Access to the Digital Data Repository of NIST Collections, including Publications, Artifacts, and Photographs Relating to Measurement Science***

*What's New – Using Open Archives Protocol to allow automatic harvesting by major search engines and research repositories*

Currently, information regarding NIST's publications is electronically available through its Research Library's online catalog, which includes links to the full text of many publications.

Information about some of the objects in NIST's museum is also available through the NIST Virtual Museum. The online catalog and the NIST Virtual Museum are available to the public.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, NIST will implement a digital library repository. This repository will conform to the latest library and publishing metadata standards to enhance the ability of other scholarly and research repositories to discover and harvest information. The repository will contain the full text of NIST's technical publications, including the Journal of Research, as well as images of and information about historical scientific objects that it maintains. The metadata will conform to the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting, which is the accepted standard within scholarly and scientific communities for making the contents of information collections available to researchers. File formats will adhere to Government Printing Office, Library of Congress, and NARA preservation requirements. The repository will permit the digital forms of NIST's technical publications and other content to be easily searchable by the public through major Internet search engines, such as Google, Google Books, Google Scholar, WorldCat, and Yahoo. This will significantly enhance dissemination and use of NIST's research results.

- ***Project – Improving access to NIST research results through Wikipedia***

NIST is experimenting with a novel use of Wikipedia to improve dissemination of its research results to the American public. For selected topics on which NIST researchers have published papers in the Journal of Research of NIST, NIST staff are adding links to those papers to make the information more readily available in a popular venue. NIST staff members are also tracking the number of web hits on and the number of citations of those papers to make a measurement-based determination of the effectiveness of this strategy.

- ***Project – Making Interagency Reports (NISTIRs) and Technical Notes more widely available to researchers and the public***

Over the years, NIST has published hundreds NIST-IRs and Technical Notes – which are largely targeted to very specific audiences. Some of these topics are also of interest to a broader audience, so NIST staff members are republishing them as papers in the Journal of Research of NIST. Because the Journal of Research is indexed in major scientific/technical databases, these republished reports will reach a broader audience and are more likely to be used and cited. NIST staff members are also tracking the number of web hits on and the number of citations of those papers to make a measurement-based determination of the effectiveness of this strategy.

- ***Project – Making Photos and Videos from the 9/11 Investigation available to the public***

NIST collected thousands of photographic and video images as part of its investigation of the collapse of the World Trade Center Towers (Buildings 1 and 2) and World Trade Center



Building 7. NIST is looking into how to make those images publicly available and searchable by a variety of criteria.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- ***Project – Modernizing the NOAA Climate Database***

*What’s New – Converting 19<sup>th</sup> century paper shoreline charts to digital geo-referenced images to track and compare current and historical shoreline change.*

The Climate Data Modernization Program (CDMP) supports NOAA’s responsibility to collect, integrate, assimilate and effectively manage Earth observations on a global scale, ranging from atmospheric, weather, and climate observations to oceanic, coastal, and marine life observations. Many of these data were originally recorded on paper, film, and other fragile media. Prior to CDMP, not only were these valuable data sources mostly unavailable to the scientific community, but storage technology for the archive had become obsolete. Today, CDMP has greatly improved the preservation of and access to NOAA’s holdings by migrating many of these resources to new digital media. CDMP has placed online over 54 million weather and environmental images that are now available to researchers around the world via the Internet. The amount of data online has grown from 1.75 terabytes in 2001 to over 15 terabytes in 2011. One rescue project involves research done under the direction of some of the leading American scientists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States Coast Survey created exceptionally accurate and detailed maps of the country’s coastline. In the San Francisco Bay Area, these surveys (commonly referred to as “T-sheets”) are the most important data sources for understanding the physical and ecological characteristics of the Bay’s shoreline prior to Euro-American modification. One of NOAA’s Climate Database Modernization Program (CDMP) multiyear tasks is to convert approximately 15,000 old manuscript paper copy T-sheets from the 1840s through the 1980s to digital geo-referenced and vectorized image products accessible via GIS technology. Nearly 200 of these images were provided to San Francisco Estuary Institute, <http://www.caltsheets.org> allows these remarkable maps to be viewed in full detail and overlaid on modern aerial photography. These GIS files with metadata and JPEG images can also be downloaded. These baseline data will be useful for a range of current concerns, including wetland restoration, shoreline protection and identifying engineering hazards and potential contamination associated with San Francisco Bay fill. The increase in the quality and quantity of historical climate and environmental data helps researchers worldwide improve real-time monitoring and forecasting of environmental, solar and geophysical events.

- ***Project – Improving Access to Severe Weather Data Inventory (SWDI)***

*What’s New – Simplified access to current and past information about severe weather incidents*

The SWDI at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) provides users access to archives of several data sets critical to the detection and evaluation of severe weather. These data sets include:

- Next Generation Radar – or NEXRAD – Level-III point features describing general storm structure, hail, mesocyclone and tornado signatures,
- NWS local storm reports collected from storm spotters,
- Lightning strikes from Vaisala's National Lightning Detection Network.

SWDI archives these data sets in a spatial database that permits convenient searching. These data are accessible via the NCDC Web site, FTP or automated Web services. The results of interactive Google Maps-based Web page queries may be saved in a variety of formats, including plain text, XML, Google Earth's KMZ, and Shapefile. Summary statistics, such as daily counts, allow efficient discovery of severe weather events. More information may be obtained at <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/swdi>.

- ***Project – Upgrading Ocean Surface Current Simulator***

*What's New – Upgrading the ability to visualize changes in ocean surface currents*

The Ocean Surface Current Simulator (OSCURS) numerical model is a research tool that allows oceanographers and fisheries scientists to perform retrospective analyses of daily ocean surface currents anywhere in an ocean-wide grid of 90 km cells that stretches from Baja California to China and from 10 degrees north of the equator to the Bering Strait. This model is used to measure the movement of surface currents over time, as well as the movement of what is in or on the water. Ocean surface currents affect organisms suspended in the water column – such as fish eggs, small larvae, and plankton – and may affect their survival by determining their location after a few months of drift. Even swimming or migrating fish or mammals may have their destinations significantly offset by currents or the annual variability of currents. OSCURS has gained visibility as an accidental debris tracker to analyze accidental but fortuitous at-sea events beyond the scale of normal oceanographic science. Investigations of events such as spills of cargo containers loaded with plastic bathtub toys have been used to fine-tune the OSCURS model.

- An updated interface to serve the OSCURS model had been developed by NOAA (<http://las.pfeg.noaa.gov/oscurs>) that uses Google Maps as the visualization tool and the latest in AJAX technology to improve users' experience. ***Project – Instituting Online Access to Regional Data in Partnership with the San Francisco Exploratorium***

*What's New – Near real-time ability to visualize weather and water conditions in San Francisco Bay*





NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service has developed a new way to visualize regional data in the San Francisco Bay (<http://las.pfeg.noaa.gov/SFBay>). Data from shore stations, buoys, high-frequency radar, and satellites are available, but scattered among many Web pages and stored in many formats making it difficult for regional and public interests in the San Francisco Bay area to visualize and use this system to assess real-time conditions.

- As a demonstration tool to support NOAA's new partnership with the renowned science museum, the Exploratorium, and in collaboration with the Central and Northern California Ocean Observing System and other regional data providers, NOAA is developing a Web page to make it easy to visualize near-real time data in San Francisco Bay. The interface uses Google Maps and the latest AJAX technology to combine and compare data from diverse sources. Users can visualize water temperature, salinity, and other station-based measurements along with overlays of satellite measurements of Sea Surface Temperature (SST) and radar measurements of currents. Users will also be able to compare time series of measurements from various stations and sources. The Web page is continually enhanced with new data as they become available. ***Project – Improving U.S. Drought Portal with Addition of Soil Moisture Observation Data***

*What's New – Making public for the first time soil moisture observation data*

Timely recognition of drought risks depends on the ability to monitor and forecast the diverse physical indicators of climatological drought, as well as relevant economic, social, and environmental impacts. A 2004 report from the Western Governors' Association makes it clear that recent and ongoing droughts underscore the critical need for a coordinated, integrated drought monitoring, forecasting, and early warning information system. To fill this need, Congress passed the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-430) (NIDIS). The first component of NIDIS is the Drought Portal (<http://www.drought.gov>), which is part of an interactive system to:

- Provide early warning about emerging and anticipated droughts,
- Assimilate and control the quality of data about droughts and models,
- Provide information about the risk and impacts of droughts to different agencies and stakeholders,
- Provide information about past droughts in order to compare them with and to better understand current conditions,
- Explain how to plan for and manage the impacts of droughts, and
- Provide a forum for different stakeholders to discuss drought-related issues.

During the first quarter of FY 2010, the Drought Portal was expanded to include soil moisture observation data from the U.S. Climate Reference Network, which had not been previously available to the public. In FY 2011, the incorporation of soil moisture data into the US Drought Portal was completed. All available CRN soil moisture data is now being served publically through the US Drought Portal.

- ***Project – Providing Online Access to Historical Climate Data Through Historical Climate Reanalysis Project***

*What's New – Re-launching and expanding access to data sets describing past weather*

The Historical Climate Reanalysis Project uses a three-dimensional globally-complete climate model and available weather observations to produce output fields of weather variables measured four times daily from 1871, to the present. Using what are often, especially in earlier years, sparse data sets of observations, the Project is able to reconstruct past weather and fill in missing data values around the rest of the globe. These data are available through a number of different types of Web-based, interactive plotting pages as well as file download. In addition to generating plots, users are able to conduct basic analyses of data, download subsets of data, and obtain data in Google Earth format, which will permit easy visualization by the general public using the Google Earth application.

Currently, the data are available at the Physical Sciences Division of NOAA's Earth Systems Research Laboratory only in "grib" format, which is difficult to read and not available for online plotting and analysis. The complete dataset itself is well over four terabytes, so examining even portions of it requires enormous storage space and computing resources.

By enabling the public to work with the data and data products online, NOAA will allow users to examine past weather and climate events in a detailed way never before possible. Version 1 of the Project is available today at [http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/data/20thC\\_Rean/](http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/data/20thC_Rean/). However, it spans only the years 1908 through 1958 and does not include the interactive plotting tools described above. NOAA expects Version 2 to include data for 1891, to the present, provide online plotting and analysis tools, and be available online during the second quarter of calendar year 2010.

- ***Project – Establishing NOAA Climate Services Portal***

*What's New – Enhanced Access to NOAA Climate Information*

NOAA is enhancing its climate information Web presence in response to customer requirements, emerging needs for improved decision-making capabilities across all sectors of society facing impacts from climate variability and change, and the value of leveraging climate data and services to support research and public education. NOAA is developing a Climate Services Portal (NCS Portal) with the goal to become the "go-to" Web site for





NOAA’s climate data, products, and services for all users. The NCS portal was released for public access in early 2010 as a prototype, and at this stage only scratches the surface of the many climate datasets, products, and services available across NOAA. The prototype highlights some of most popular datasets and products based on customer usage of the data, focused on numerous datasets and products from NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center, Coastal Services Center, and Climate Prediction Center, among others. NOAA is continuing to gather user feedback through focus groups, usability studies, and informal communications. Initial efforts to improve and expand the Portal are now underway, and users will gradually see these enhancements during 2011. Over the next several years, NOAA will expand the NCS Portal’s scope and functionality in a user-driven manner to enhance the access to, and extensibility of, climate data and services, timely articles and information, education resources, and tools for engagement and decision-making.

#### National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

NTIA is embarking on a series of data collection and dissemination initiatives to provide a more detailed, quantitative understanding of broadband Internet access and use in the United States. This information will inform efforts to increase broadband access and adoption, thereby supporting economic growth. Initiatives will include data collected through NTIA’s broadband mapping program and a new broadband-related survey.

- ***Project – Creating a National Broadband Map***

*What’s New – National, interactive map showing broadband availability and speeds*

Through its State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program, which is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, NTIA awards financial assistance grants for broadband data collection and planning. Data is displayed in NTIA’s national broadband map, which was made publicly available in March 2011. The map displays the geographic areas where broadband service is available and its speed, as well as the technology by which it is provided, and its availability at public schools, libraries, hospitals, colleges, universities, and public buildings. The national map is interactive and searchable by address, and identifies broadband service providers by census block or street segment. Data collection began in 2009 and will continue to take place semiannually until 2011. Data is presented in a clear, accessible, and open format to the public, government, and research community. This initiative provides broadband information at an unprecedented level of comprehensiveness and granularity.

- ***Project – Establishing Online Access to Results of Broadband Survey***

*What’s New – Resuming use of the Census Bureau’s periodic Current Population Survey to study Internet usage*

Working with the Census Bureau, NTIA launched a 75,000-household Internet-use survey via the October 2009 *Current Population Survey*. Through this effort, NTIA will examine why people do not use high-speed Internet service and explore differences in Internet usage patterns around the country and across socio-economic groups. NTIA intends to release data in open, Web-based formats and to make the survey instruments and associated reports as widely available as possible.

### **National Technical Information Service (NTIS)**

- ***Project – Making Five Years of Bibliographic Data Searchable***

*What's New – Making 180,000 records describing federal reports available in XML format*

NTIS is making the latest five years of the NTIS Bibliographic File searchable via Data.gov. The file contains over 180,000 bibliographic records that link to a Web-store of federally funded technical reports from a broad spectrum of federal agencies. This bibliographic file is being made available through Data.gov in a compiled XML format, which will – for the first time – fully open access to NTIS' technical reports collection to Web exposure and extraction. NTIS will measure the effect of increased exposure via Data.gov by comparing future ordering information to existing baseline data. The increased exposure of scientific and technical content will be a significant step forward in opening public access to a valuable collection that has heretofore had limited library and commercial vendor availability.

### **United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)**

- ***Project Name – Providing Online Access to Patent Maintenance Fee Events Data***

*What's New – Making fee data available in machine-readable form for the first time [completed]*

During the first quarter of FY 2010, USPTO met an expressed public need for data by making available a new machine-readable online product: *Patent Maintenance Fee Events*, a record of patent maintenance payments, expired patents, and related transactions. Patent maintenance fee information had been previously available only through interactive patent application retrieval from USPTO's Public Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) System. This data had been frequently requested by USPTO's data customers and is the first machine-readable, raw data made available from the Public PAIR system.

- ***Project – Expanding Patent Bibliographic Data***

*What's New – Expanding online availability of bibliographic information on past patent grants and applications [completed]*



During the first quarter of FY 2010, USPTO made available more bibliographic information for patent grants issued from September 1996 through December 2008, and patent applications submitted from mid-March 2001 through December 2008. In the second quarter of FY 2010, USPTO made available the remainder of available patent bibliographic data, covering patent grants back to 1976. These data expanded the current USPTO dataset offerings on Data.gov.

- ***Project – Enhancing USPTO Data Capabilities Available to the Public***

*What’s New – Providing free Full Text and Images of all U.S. Patents [completed]*

USPTO is now making all patents, published patent applications, and related materials more easily available to the public online. With intellectual property-based businesses estimated to contribute nearly 40 percent of growth achieved by all U.S. private industry, the impact on jobs and the economy of more patent transparency should be significant. As a step toward improved access to patent information, this data is now available for free download from Google, Inc.

- ***Project – Enhancing Communications through Web and Social Media sites***

*What’s New – Blogs and information sharing tools [completed]*

The USPTO launched a Director’s Forum in November 2009, and followed up with a public feedback channel in February 2010 – both features are available directly on the Home page at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov). The public can also follow USPTO activities through its official Facebook site, which launched in May 2010, or its YouTube, Twitter, and other outlets that are part of an evolving communications improvement plan.

- ***Project – Providing Transparency for Mission-related Training Activities***

*What’s New – Launch of public access to USPTOTraining.gov [completed]*

In June 2011, USPTO and NTIS launched a 90-day pilot to make more than 60 training modules available to the public at no- or low-cost on topics including interview practice, requirements to file an application, written description guidelines, the trademark international classification system for goods and services, and many others. The goal of the pilot is to determine an effective model to allow practitioners, students, government officials and others from across the IP community to access and utilize training materials that until now have mostly only been available to the patent and trademark examining corps.

*What’s New – Launch of Global and Domestic Intellectual Property Rights Training program registry [completed]*

In May 2011, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), in cooperation with the Office of the Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator (IPEC), launched a new online database ([www.usipr.gov](http://www.usipr.gov)) where U.S. government agencies post information about the intellectual property rights (IPR) training programs they conduct around the world.

- ***Project – Publishing Key Performance Indicators on Patent and Trademark Processing***

*What's New – Data Visualization Center on the USPTO Web site with monthly Patents statistics [completed]*

In September 2010, the USPTO implemented a dashboard view of key Patent production data, improving transparency relative to receipt, production and pendency metrics. The dashboard will provide monthly reports with up to two years' worth of information to communicate trends and improvements, in a reliable and consistent fashion.

*What's New – Data Visualization Center on the USPTO Web site with monthly Trademarks and Policy and External Affairs statistics [completed]*

The Data Visualization Center was updated in May 2011 to include key performance indicators for Trademarks; and in April 2011, a site for Policy and External Affairs metrics was launched.

- ***Project – Peer to Patent Pilot***

*What's New – Relaunch of Peer-to-Patent Pilot [completed]*

In collaboration with the NY Law School, the USPTO re-launched a pilot for Peer-to-Patent review in October 2010. The pilot program expands on the earlier version from 2007, and aims to improve the quality of issued patents by enabling the public to contribute information relevant to assessing the claims of pending patent applications. The community supplies information and research based on its expertise, and the patent examiner makes the final determination on the basis of legal standards. This process combines open participation with effective administrative decision making.

- ***Project – Measuring and Improving Website satisfaction***

*What's New – Launch of Satisfaction Survey on [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov) [completed]*

Using the American Customer Satisfaction Index methodology, the USPTO launched a satisfaction survey of its main website in December 2010. Along with measuring overall satisfaction, the survey will provide important feedback on visitor goals and agency transparency.



- ***Project – Improving the Manual of Patent Examination Procedures (MPEP) and Manual of Trademark Examination Procedures (TMEP)***

*What's New – Launch of Public Collaboration site for topics in USPTO examination manuals [completed]*

In January 2011, the USPTO launched an online tool for public discussion of ideas for improving the MPEP and TMEP. Collected suggestions and comments will be considered during the production of subsequent editions of these important publications. In the first six weeks, activity on the MPEP site resulted in [56 ideas](#), [135 comments](#), and [247 votes](#).

- ***Program – Outreach for Independent and Small-entity Inventors***

The USPTO's programs include:

*Inventor's Eye newsletter [ongoing]*

In February 2010, the USPTO launched a bi-monthly newsletter that features tips on working with the USPTO; events, organizations and meetings of interest to the community; issues that impact independent and small entity inventors; and stories about successful inventors.

*Online chat [ongoing]*

Periodic online chat sessions, featuring senior officials of the USPTO, are conducted to answer questions and offer tips for independent inventors. The most recent session was conducted in June 2011.

- ***Program – Patent and Trademark Depository Library (PTDL)***

PTDLs are a nationwide network of public, state and academic libraries that are designated to disseminate patent and trademark information and to support the diverse intellectual property needs of the public. The program has been in existence since 1871.

*Annual Training Conference [ongoing]*

The latest annual training conference was conducted in April 2011.

*Roundtable for maximizing effective use of the program [completed]*

In February 2011, the USPTO held a public roundtable to invite comment on the ways to advance the PTDL program and bring it current with new needs and practices. The transcript of the meeting is published on the USPTO website at

<http://www.uspto.gov/products/library/ptdl/Roundtable0215USPTO-OCIO1PMET.doc>

- ***Program – Public Advisory Committees***

*Patent Public Advisory Committee [ongoing]*

The latest meeting of the PPAC was held April 2011 and was accessible through the USPTO website. Transcripts of past public meetings are available at

<http://www.uspto.gov/about/advisory/ppac/index.jsp>

*Trademark Public Advisory Committee [ongoing]*

The latest meeting of the TPAC was held June 2011 and was accessible through the USPTO website. Transcripts of past public meetings are available at

<http://www.uspto.gov/about/advisory/tpac/index.jsp>

- ***Program – Measuring Costs and Progress of Major Information Technology Investments***

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires all federal agencies to submit reports referred to as the OMB Exhibit 300 and OMB Exhibit 53 to report on investment plans for the current and future five years. OMB Exhibit 53, which summarizes all major and non-major investments, is extracted from budgets in the OMB Exhibit 300 reports. To improve transparency and support investment and management decisions, the OMB operates a public website called the "IT Dashboard", which tracks the costs and progress of major Information Technology (IT) investments. Monthly updates on the progress of major investments for all of the Commerce Department can be found at

<http://www.it.usaspending.gov/?q=portfolios/agency=006>.

The USPTO reports on its investments as follows:

- Major investments

These investments represent progress on major systems and modernization efforts, and the USPTO reports on a total of five. As required by all federal agencies, the USPTO reports on two major investments: the IT Network and Infrastructure (NSI) systems, and the Consolidated Financial System (CFS). The other three major investments are specific to USPTO modernization: Patents End-to-End (PE2E) System, the Trademark Next Generation (TMNG) System, and the Fee Processing Next Generation (FPNG) System.

- Non-major investments

These investments represent costs to maintain the "steady state", and USPTO reports on a total of six. Four of the non-major investments tracked by the USPTO are operations and maintenance of the legacy IT systems that are currently used by USPTO business areas (patents, trademarks, information dissemination, and corporate). The other two non-



major investments are for the "steady state" IT functions of policy/governance and technology-sustaining activities such as data management and configuration management.

#### Office of the Secretary

- ***Project – Publishing Schedule Data for Secretary Online***

*What's new – Regularly updated, searchable feed of the Secretary's public schedule*

The Office of Public Affairs, in conjunction with the Offices of Scheduling and Business Liaison, now releases the Commerce Secretary's public schedule on a daily basis. Commerce intends for this data to be as readable and as complete as possible. It is currently examining options for dealing with technical and managerial hurdles involved in regularly releasing this data, but plans to begin posting it on Commerce.gov and Data.gov by the end of 2010.

- ***Project – Expanding Video Streaming for More Commerce Meetings***

*What's new – Expanded availability of Commerce meetings via the Web*

One of the more widely requested methods of being more transparent involves streaming video of appropriate Commerce meetings for public viewing. While it would be prohibitively expensive to provide video access to all meetings that occur at Commerce on any given day, it is important to increase the extent to which streaming is currently employed. To do so, Commerce plans to meet core new media objectives relative to streaming meetings or events in 2011.

## How Commerce will Identify and Publicly Release More Information

Effective data sharing requires high standards for information accuracy, integrity and quality. To provide consistency across government, communities of practice and communities of interest are reviewing existing standards and establishing inter-agency best practices to encourage a well-defined, active information dissemination environment.

Through its involvement, Commerce will emphasize the following:

### Information Quality

All data published by Commerce is subject to rigorous checks that maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information. Details on the information quality guidelines can be found on the [Commerce CIO Web site](#).



### Federal Spending Information

The CFO/ASA serves as the senior official responsible for the integrity of Commerce-related data posted to the USASpending.gov Web site. The Department's grants are timely and comprehensively reported through USASpending.gov as reflected in the "green" ratings that Commerce has consistently earned from 2007 to the present. The Department established a formal process to ensure that all grant offices are reporting in a timely manner and implementing a formalized data content oversight program. For contracts, the Department regularly conducts an independent validation and verification of data recorded in the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) each quarter. Feedback on the results of those reviews is provided to the operating units. Quality control for non-Recovery Act transactions has been further strengthened by processes developed for reporting under the Recovery Act. Commerce continues to meet all requirements for publishing spending information on this Web site and is an active participant in planning for its expansion.

The Recovery Act requires recipients of funds to report quarterly on how money is being spent. All data is posted at <http://www.recovery.gov> and <http://recovery.commerce.gov> so the public can monitor Recovery Act efforts. Other reporting requirements include posting program plans and performance metrics, weekly updates on financial status and major activities, notices of all funding announcements, and notifications of press releases and other public information about Recovery Act-related activities.

To develop processes, procedures and policies for complying with the Recovery Act and all related guidance, Commerce formed several interlocking intra-agency working groups in March 2009. Taking direction from OMB guidance, it created a team to implement the Recovery Act and report in as transparent a manner as possible. All reporting requirements are being met. Commerce has complied with all OMB guidance, timelines and milestones and, in many cases, has played a leading role in government-wide working groups to improve timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness in reporting on Recovery Act activities.

### Citation

Commerce will explore best practices for citing published data to make reference data easier to locate for end-users. This will assist in establishing the context needed to fully understand the meaning of published data.

### Intergovernmental Working Groups

The government-wide Open Government Working Group has created cross-agency groups to examine data sets that would support health and green energy communities of practice. At Commerce's suggestion, an additional group has been established to identify information and data sets to support job creation. This group is chaired by Commerce and focuses on data and





resources across government. As a model, it uses National Weather Service (NWS) data, which has created an entire industry based on its machine readable formats.

### Security

The Department of Commerce exists to promote the Nation’s economic development, advance technology, and ensure stewardship of the environment. These mission areas often intersect with national security issues. The Office of Security, in conjunction with appropriate Department entities, will perform pre-release reviews to ensure that any information or data to be released does not jeopardize U.S. security or law enforcement interests and is in line with applicable national strategies.

### Privacy

Commerce is also relying on its Operating Unit POCs to verify that information we are publishing does not pose a risk of personally identifiable information being released. We are also participating on inter-agency efforts, and relying on the expertise of our operating units such as Bureau of Census, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and Patent and Trademark Office.

## IV. Participation and Collaboration

### Why Commerce Needs to Do This

Participation and collaboration are central tenets of the President’s [Open Government vision](#). Although many units within Commerce have long-standing, close relationships with external partners, the rapid evolution of collaborative technologies and practices offers new ways to engage wider and more varied cross-section of the public.

In addition to experimenting with these new tools, Commerce is seeking to increase employee participation in the formulation of significant policies and strategic plans. The Secretary has called for breaking down barriers to cooperation previously existing between Commerce’s operating units to create a Department that is a fully integrated service provider. In order to realize this vision, managers across the agency have been asked to explore opportunities for communication and collaboration across operating units.

### What Commerce Has Done

- Commerce has led the way in experimentation with government-citizen collaboration. In 2007, USPTO collaborated with New York University in a pilot study to improve the process of patent examination. Through this project, called Peer-to-Patent, citizens were invited to share their expertise with patent examiners by suggesting “prior art” – documents that

address whether or not a proposed patent is a new idea. This crowd-sourcing activity helped lay the groundwork for the President's Open Government Initiative.

- Commerce supports public engagement in other ways as well. The public provides valuable comments on proposed rules and changes to existing rules. To encourage public comment, the Department of Commerce actively participates in the eRulemaking program, [Regulations.gov](http://Regulations.gov). This site provides a Web-based means for the public to comment on proposed rules and changes to existing rules.
- Throughout the nation, Commerce provides community-based information resources for public access and research. Examples include: [Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries \(PTDLs\)](#), [Census Research Data Centers \(RDCs\)](#), [ITA's U.S. Export Assistance Centers \(USEACs\)](#), and [NOAA Library Network](#).
- Every federal agency provides a process to respond to congressional inquiries. To provide better visibility into that process, the Department established a public Web site which provides a direct link to the [Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs \(OLIA\)](#). Launched on May 13, 2010, the site includes current telephone, postal mailing address, and e-mail contact information for OLIA. The Web page also provides a current staff directory, including listings of operating units or topics covered by each legislative and intergovernmental specialist. Furthermore, the portal also connects users to over thirty links to Web sites of key intergovernmental associations and organizations, as well as links to related congressional Web sites, constituent support data and common research tools.

The Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs is the primary adviser to the Secretary of Commerce on legislative and intergovernmental issues and the Department's principal liaison to Congress, state governors, and elected state and local officials. As a result, OLIA communicates directly with these stakeholders and responds to inquiries for information and constituent requests, and tracks current or proposed legislation and congressional hearings. OLIA also oversees the legislative and intergovernmental outreach strategies and communications of the individual bureaus of the Department. OLIA utilizes a multitude of public and specialized internal databases, correspondence tracking, grant tracking, and outreach tools to ensure inquiries are responded to in a timely and professional manner.

- Commerce also collaborates with non-profit and private entities through ITA's Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP). Using [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov), MDCP awards financial and technical assistance to non-profit industry groups (such as trade associations and chambers of commerce) that support projects enhancing the global competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing and services industries. Such groups are particularly effective in reaching small- and medium-size enterprises. Industry groups that win awards pledge to pay a minimum of two-thirds of the project cost and to sustain the project after the MDCP award period ends.



- The [Commerce.gov/open](http://Commerce.gov/open) Web site was launched on February 2, 2010, creating an easily accessible location for Americans to see how the Department is making itself more transparent, participatory, and collaborative. The new site meets all relevant guidelines established in OMB's Open Government Directive.
- Commerce sought input from the public for the development of this Open Government Plan on its Ideascale Web page, <http://www.OpenCommerce.Ideascale.com>. Suggestions that have been received have been incorporated as appropriate. Moving forward, Commerce will post additional strategic questions on its Open Government Web site for public input.

### What Commerce Will Do

#### Online Partnership Tools

Commerce's NTIA and the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) were appropriated \$7.2 billion under the Recovery Act to award competitive grants to expand broadband capability. Both Commerce and USDA have embraced the principles of open government and launched multiple online information and collaboration tools. Among these, the BroadbandMatch tool has proven to be a signature initiative. This new online tool facilitates partnerships among prospective applicants to the agencies' broadband programs. BroadbandMatch – at <http://match.broadbandusa.gov> – allows potential applicants to identify partners for broadband projects and helps them to combine expertise to create stronger proposals. For example, a broadband infrastructure provider might partner with community institutions, such as universities, hospitals, or libraries, on a proposal to bring high-speed Internet service to their facilities. Any company, nonprofit organization, state or local government, or qualified individual interested in applying for funding under NTIA's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program or RUS' Broadband Initiatives Program can post a profile, including key information about the contribution they can make to a broadband project, and search for other stakeholders whose skills and resources match their needs.

Commerce is exploring ways to use the technology and approach developed for the BroadbandMatch site for other Departmental initiatives that seek to connect grantees and better use government resources. One project currently under consideration involves adopting this model for EDA's Regional Innovation Clusters Program, which seeks to connect established businesses and entrepreneurs to pursue joint projects that will promote regional economic growth.

Commerce's USPTO is designing the next phase of the Peer-to-Patent pilot, described in the transparency section of this document, in partnership with academia. As details are finalized they will be made available.

### Long-Term Vision for e-FOIA

Commerce employs a decentralized approach to implement the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Departmental FOIA Officer, located within the Office of the CFO/ASA, exercises oversight for the program, coordinates the implementation of government-wide policies and initiatives, facilitates regular meetings held for training and collaboration, and processes FOIA inquiries that involve multiple operating units. Each operating unit has at least one FOIA Officer to coordinate implementation of the Act within their organization; larger operating units may have several FOIA Officers.

Incoming FOIA inquiries are directed to a lead operating unit that is most likely to have the requested records. The lead operating unit coordinates with others as needed to locate all responsive records, determine the extent to which any redactions are necessary, and respond to the request. The Departmental FOIA Officer is responsible for processing requests that relate to Commerce as a whole. In the event that a requestor wishes to file an appeal, the Department's Assistant General Counsel for Administration serves as the Departmental appeals official with the exception of USPTO, which – under the Patent and Trademark Office Efficiency Act – retains responsibility for processing its own appeals.

Commerce receives and processes an average of 2,100 FOIA requests each year. Recently, it has experienced an increase in both the number and scope of FOIA inquiries received. The Department has limited its backlog of inquiries during the last two fiscal years to an average less than 7.5 percent of total requests. The operating units are taking various steps to help reduce this level, which include additional training, streamlining procedures, augmenting staff, and automating processes.

The Department is also exploring options for procuring FOIA management software. While each operating unit uses IT software and systems to a varying degree, a single approach has not been adopted across the Department. As an example, USPTO currently utilizes commercial software to manage all aspects of FOIA processing. At the Census Bureau, certain portions of its process are automated, e.g., redaction, while others are not.

To facilitate the transition to automated processing enterprise-wide, the Department is exploring the purchase of a site license for software that could be used by the Departmental FOIA Officer and each operating unit's FOIA Officer. Also, the interagency Chief FOIA Officers Working Group is considering the adoption of a coordinated, government-wide approach. By increasing its use of technology, Commerce expects to enhance its ability to receive and track requests, produce and post FOIA reports to the Web, and manage documents responsive to FOIA requests.

The Department is also working to provide quicker access to documents that are of public interest. It intends to create a searchable archive of FOIA responses. This will not only make it easier for the public to find out more about how the Department has responded to requests, but also reduce the staff time associated with answering duplicative requests. Additionally, in the



past, records were typically posted to the e-FOIA Reading Room after a minimum of three requests had been received. Commerce is now posting records that relate to topics that may be of broad interest following the receipt and processing of one request.

Information on Commerce’s FOIA program and how to file a FOIA request is available at <http://www.osec.doc.gov/omo/FOIA/FOIAWebsite.htm>. This Web site provides access to many documents and records maintained by the Department, including frequently requested records, Departmental policy statements, administrative manuals, general counsel opinions, annual FOIA reports, online Commerce libraries and FOIA reading rooms, and much more.

### Declassification of Records

The Office of Security, within the Office of the CFO/ASA, serves as the central point for providing policy guidance and operational oversight for classification and declassification activities throughout Commerce, and actively coordinates systematic declassification review efforts required under Executive Order 12958. Through this effort, Commerce has exceeded the requirement for annual reviews by collaborating with the operating units to perform monthly reviews of classified holdings of national security information.

### Ideation

As one member of the public suggested in the Department’s open government Ideascale community, which has helped Commerce in implementing OMB’s Open Government Directive, the increased use of ideation tools could be beneficial. Ideation refers to a family of tools designed to gather feedback from employees or the general public. They range from systems as simple as a physical “suggestion box” or electronic mailbox to those as sophisticated as an electronic forum with a community of participants interacting with each other.

Deployment of such electronic collaboration and idea-generation tools could aid with enhancing intra-Departmental communication. Deployment could also help ensure that the public can reach decision-makers with their thoughts and suggestions, and share their ideas with others. Commerce is looking forward to building on its experience with Ideascale and to develop an ideation platform to solicit thoughts from its employees and the public on how it can better deliver services and administer programs. It is currently evaluating the wide array of ideation tools that are available and anticipates launching a solution by December 2011. Several operating units are working on internal efforts in idea generation. Sharing best practices and building on these efforts are helping to move the Department towards a cost effective solution across the Commerce Enterprise.

### Open Source Information Technology

Also emerging from Commerce’s Open Government Ideascale community was a suggestion to “become more open through the increased use of open source software.” The Department has already begun using the open source platform, Drupal, for a number of its new Web sites and,

based on the experience so far, plans to increase this use in the future. The Department is amenable to using any technology that will allow it to develop new methods for collaborating more readily with the public and other government agencies, and within the Department itself.

### Blogging

Commerce intends to increase the use of blogging tools to facilitate dialogue between leadership and the general workforce. A blog with comment capabilities is already being used on Commerce's Open Government Web site. While more work needs to be done to keep this site regularly updated with fresh content, Commerce has ensured that comments can be posted and, most importantly, effectively addressed.

The Office of General Counsel has assisted in devising a standard policy that can be used across the Department to ensure a clear understanding of what is and is not allowed when blogging.

Blogging and commenting tools were integrated as part of the Commerce Web site ([www.commerce.gov/blog](http://www.commerce.gov/blog)). This capability assist management in carrying on conversations with employees across the Department and with the general public. The new version of the Commerce Web site premiered in the second half of 2010. An intranet, featuring tools for intra-Departmental blogging, may be also put in place in the first half of 2011, pending the availability of funding.

### Social Media Use

The Department's current use of Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube has already shown how the strategic use of social media can help Commerce collaborate with and respond to the public. Expanded use of these tools will increase Commerce's opportunities to interact with the public. In order to move forward with the use of social media throughout the Department, Commerce will:

- Create and publish policy guidance on the use of social media and other Web 2.0 technologies, e.g., blogs and wikis, so that Commerce employees can safely use these tools in their role as both users and providers of information;
- Develop a system that allows Departmental officials to monitor official social media usage to ensure the adequacy and appropriateness of interaction with the public;
- Explore new ways to monitor social media services to assist Commerce in outreach to and interaction with the public regarding programmatic and mission-related responsibilities; and
- Encourage more Department officials to follow the example set by the Secretary and NOAA Administrator in using social media services and directly interacting with the public.





## Responsiveness

While a great deal of Commerce’s open government work focuses on what can be done to make it easier for stakeholders to reach out to Commerce, significant progress is needed to ensure two-way interaction.

For example, it is not enough to seek input from the public without recognizing the need to provide thoughtful responses. As the Department begins to adopt these new forms of communication, employees may feel overwhelmed with new technologies or other responsibilities, or confused about the appropriate channels for responding to suggestions and comments received through social media.

To make certain that these new technologies are being used to engage in real dialogue, Commerce will:

- Develop additional guidance explaining how employees should respond to common questions and what types of communications require approval under Department Administrative Order 219-1, “Public Communications;” and
- Ensure that staff time needed to respond to comments and engage in online communities is considered when the Department and its operating units develop plans to engage the public online.

Additionally, when the Department receives a request for information from a member of Congress or Congressional Committee, OLIA works to respond to the request in a timely and appropriate manner.

## V. Flagship Initiatives

Commerce is presently developing several innovative, public-facing projects 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. Four examples can be found below.

### Deepwater Horizon Response Tracking

The dynamic nature of British Petroleum’s Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico presents significant challenges for a range of affected communities – from hotel operators to fishermen to local community leaders.

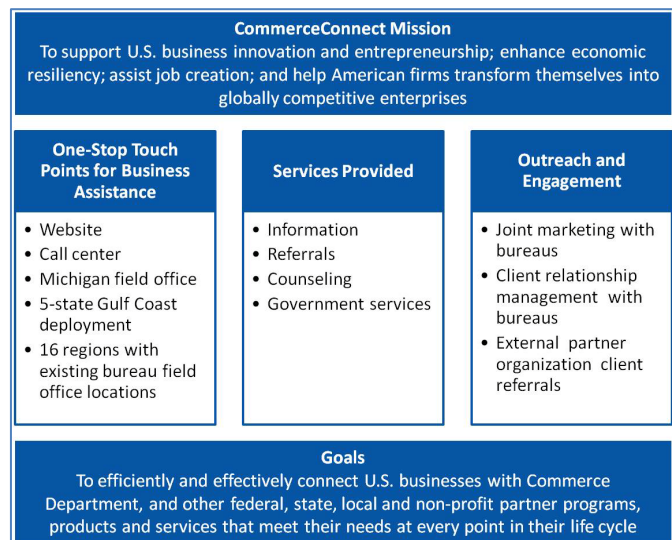
A new Web site – developed by NOAA with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Coast Guard, and Department of Interior – offers near real-time information about the response. The GeoPlatform Web site (<http://www.GeoPlatform.gov/gulfresponse>) is intended to serve as a public “one-stop shop” 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.

In addition to NOAA information, the site includes data from the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard, Fish and Wildlife Service, EPA, NASA, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Gulf states. Agencies contribute data through a response data sharing mechanism within the command posts. Developed through a joint partnership between NOAA and the University of New Hampshire’s Coastal Response Research Center, the site is a web-based GIS platform designed specifically to reflect response activities where it is necessary to coordinate among various federal, state and local agencies.

### CommerceConnect

Businesses and entrepreneurs need federal partners who understand their requirements and can provide them with efficient access to the full spectrum of government resources as they strive to succeed, and to maintain and create jobs. This is particularly true in times of economic crisis and recovery. The burden should not be on businesses and entrepreneurs to determine how the government can help them. Instead, government should reach out to them – understanding their needs and delivering appropriate services and solutions. To demonstrate this, Commerce Secretary Locke established CommerceConnect, an initiative designed to streamline access to government services and solutions in order to aid American businesses. Figure 1 – Complementary Missions, show a general overview of CommerceConnect from its mission to the goals of help U.S businesses. Commerce is leading this initiative to integrate grant programs, partnership efforts, and other business-related services. Building off a successful pilot in Michigan last fiscal year, CommerceConnect has made considerable progress establishing the operational infrastructure to support the growth of the initiative, expand inter-bureau collaboration, and implement a Department-wide customer-oriented business model. CommerceConnect established a call center operation through U.S. Patent and Trademark as the first point of contact for clients, a customer relationship management (CRM) system to manage those client relationships and track outcomes, and a knowledgebase system to capture critical program information. CommerceConnect also



**Figure 1 - Complementary Missions**



established an initial website presence. It will be building a much more robust virtual service interface to better match business needs with programs, products and services. See Figure 2 – Commerce Business Assistance Programs for current internal Commerce programs that CommerceConnect has made referrals.

CommerceConnect has established a cadre of case managers known as “Commerce Specialists.” These individuals are existing staff from various Department of Commerce bureaus assigned to support this initiative. They participate in formal and informal training sessions to hone their knowledge, skills and better understand their role in the Secretarial

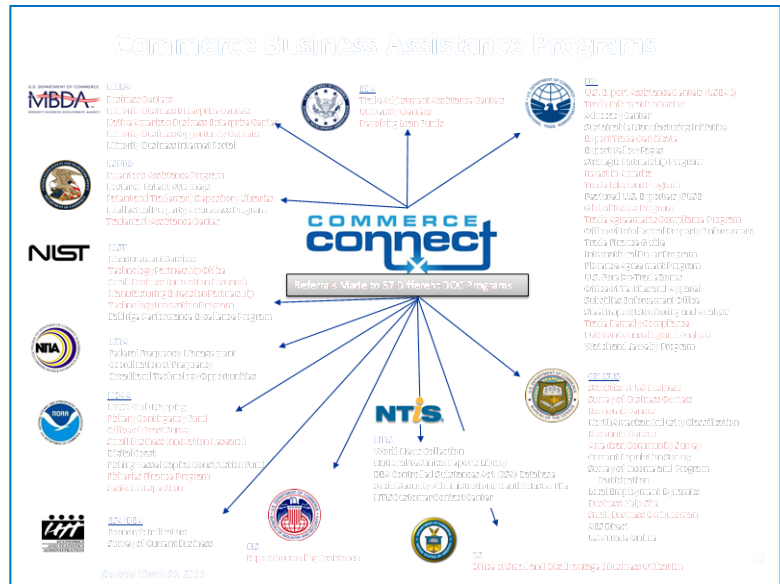


Figure 2 - Commerce Business Assistance Programs



Figure 3 - Common Client Challenges

initiative. These individuals interact with businesses. They are on-the-ground experts responsible for assessing a business’ needs and connecting firms with the most relevant services – services that could involve addressing infrastructure needs, improving operational efficiency, gaining access to capital, adopting innovation, protecting intellectual property, commercializing technology, or engaging in foreign trade. The diagram in Figure 3 – Common Client Challenges, shows the various areas in the business life cycle that Commerce Specialists assist the businesses.

Another and integral part of CommerceConnect is identifying and recruiting program resource coordinators (PRCs). The PRCs have broad, expert knowledge of Commerce programs and services. They work in tandem with a central program manager to ensure up-to-date information is readily available in the knowledgebase.

Additionally, inter- and intra-agency collaboration is critical for success. Commerce Specialists rely on other Commerce Specialists from sister bureaus to assist in addressing the immediate

needs of the clients and, subsequently, long-term needs as they move from survival mode to strategically position themselves for future growth.

CommerceConnect fosters regular and open communication between existing field staff. It established a community of practice whereby Commerce Specialists are assigned mentors who provide informal guidance in assisting clients. CommerceConnect also established voluntary weekly teleconferences with Commerce Specialists to review new knowledgebase entries, updates to CRM, tips/tricks, better customer service and expectations.

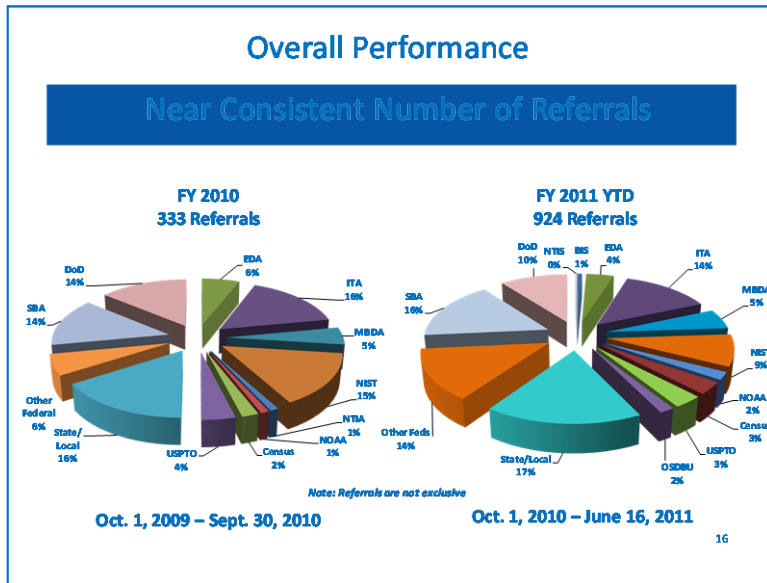


Figure 4 – CommerceConnect Overall Performance

CommerceConnect monitors progress as it designs mechanisms to evaluate the results of its engagement with clients, to assess the efficacy of federal programs, and to identify gaps between client needs and available services. Experience gained from this effort will also be used to establish similar integrated approaches for providing services to businesses – “one-stop shops” – in other areas of the United States.

Figure 4 – CommerceConnect Overall Performance shows the Agencies to whom customers were referred were made (note: Referrals are not exclusive to one Agency). Working as part of the referral process CommerceConnect will also help develop an integrated customer relationship management platform within and across operating units to allow for optimal service delivery. This initiative will play a critical role in bringing federal resources to businesses in an effective and efficient way – making the Federal Government a true partner in helping to revitalize business communities.

### National Export Initiative (NEI)

The NEI focuses on three key areas:

- A more robust effort needs to be made to expand trade advocacy in all its forms, especially for small- and medium-sized enterprises. This includes educating U.S. companies about overseas opportunities, creating direct connections between U.S. companies and new customers, and advocating more effectively on behalf of their interests.



- Access to credit needs to be improved, focusing on small- and medium-sized businesses with an interest in exporting.
- International trade laws need to be rigorously enforced to help remove barriers that prevent U.S. companies from obtaining free and fair access to foreign markets.

Additionally, 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.

The President's budget for ITA for FY 2011 includes a 20 percent increase to help achieve the goals of the NEI. If appropriated, these new resources will allow ITA to:

- Recruit as many as 328 additional trade experts to serve as advocates for U.S. companies;
- Assist more than 23,000 clients to begin or increase exporting in FY 2011;
- Put special focus on increasing by 50 percent the number of small- and medium-sized businesses exporting to more than one market over the next five years;
- Increase the presence of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service in emerging high-growth markets such as China, India, and Brazil; and
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to identify market opportunities in fast-growing sectors such as environmental goods and services, renewable energy, healthcare and biotechnology.

Through the NEI, the government will continue its efforts to remove barriers that prevent U.S. companies from obtaining open and fair access to foreign markets, to combat unfair tariff and non-tariff barriers, and to address practices that blatantly harm U.S. companies. The Administration will pursue trade agreements that are balanced, ambitious and improve market access for U.S. workers, firms, farmers, and ranchers.

Commerce, through the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC), 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.

Commerce will develop a robust online presence to inform the public of progress of this initiative and solicit citizen input. The public can sign up online to receive e-mail updates about what's new with the National Export Initiative, and businesses are asked to share online their export success stories. The Department will sponsor in-person seminars as well as Internet webinars on various topics intended to assist American businesses to succeed in global trade. Available online are video and audio programs featuring experts in various businesses sharing their advice on export excellence. Information about presentations, audios, videos, conferences, and other events sponsored by business, academia, and other government agencies will be maintained on the Commerce Web site. In addition, online registration is available for training programs designed by Commerce trade specialists to give businesses the strategies, insights, and networks of contacts necessary to expand sales globally. These efforts are expected to contribute significantly to the sustainability and enhancement of this flagship initiative.

### Sustainable Business Clearinghouse

Commerce's Sustainable Manufacturing American Regional Tours (SMART) effort involves Assistant Secretary-led, regional manufacturing facility tours across the United States aimed at enhancing awareness of the benefits of sustainable manufacturing practices. Numerous U.S. companies have voiced concern over the lack of visibility that sustainable manufacturing receives nationwide and the lack of information many U.S. manufacturers – particularly small and medium-sized businesses – possess in this field. To address these concerns, the SMART effort was initiated in 2008, and its continuing implementation and improvement supports the goals of the Open Government Directive. In order to continue spreading awareness of sustainable manufacturing's benefits to U.S. global competitiveness and the environment, Commerce held its first round of SMART events in:

- Atlanta, Georgia on February 22, 2010,
- Columbus, Ohio on October 27, 2009,
- Seattle, Washington on July 13, 2009,
- Rochester, New York on September 23, 2008,
- Grand Rapids, Michigan on September 3, 2008, and
- St. Louis, Missouri on July 28, 2008.

Commerce created the Sustainable Business Clearinghouse to provide U.S. companies with a central portal for information on programs and resources which can assist them in enhancing their competitiveness and profitability in environmentally sustainable ways. It has started by collecting information on federal programs and resources in this searchable Clearinghouse. It plans to expand the Clearinghouse to include state-level resources, and state government



programs or firms that receive state-sponsored services are encouraged to contact Commerce with information on those programs.

Efforts to sustain this initiative and improve upon its usefulness will be greatly enhanced by the strategies used on the Department’s Sustainable Business Web site which invites users to add federal and state government sites to the clearinghouse data base, provides many links to information and organizations whose focus is sustainable manufacturing and businesses, and offers businesses and members of the public on-line registration for e-mail updates on this subject.

More information regarding the Sustainable Business Clearinghouse may be found at <http://ita-web.ita.doc.gov/sbc/sbc.nsf/pgSearch?OpenPage>. Additionally, a list of key federal programs and resources that support sustainable business practices can be found at [http://www.trade.gov/competitiveness/sustainablemanufacturing/USG\\_PRS\\_Sustainable\\_Business.asp](http://www.trade.gov/competitiveness/sustainablemanufacturing/USG_PRS_Sustainable_Business.asp). Comments, questions, or information regarding a federal or state government site that should be included in the Clearinghouse may be submitted via e-mail to [Sustainability@trade.gov](mailto:Sustainability@trade.gov).

## VI. Conclusion

The Department of Commerce is committed to the principles of Open Government established by President Obama: transparency, participation and collaboration. It will build on its long history of information dissemination and adopt new tools and technology available to make its actions, decisions and information more transparent and accessible to the American people. It will continue to encourage and strive for increased participation among its employees, with other government agencies and by the American people.

This plan represents just the growth from our beginning in the Open Government efforts and include the changes in a continuing journey – a journey toward a more fully open and effective Department of Commerce. As implementation proceeds, the team of open government collaborators is growing both internally and externally. Commerce will continue to make public its ideas and plans to become more open on the Open Government Web site – [www.commerce.gov/open](http://www.commerce.gov/open) – and to seek input from stakeholders to help in achieving that objective.

The Department invites the American public to join in as it moves toward a more collaborative, effective provider of government services and information.





# U.S. Department of Commerce – Open Government Plan



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