Open Government Plan

Version 2.0

Open Government Initiative
TRANSPARENCY · PARTICIPATION · COLLABORATION

DATA.GOV EMPOWERING PEOPLE   OPENGOV

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

March 2012

Table of Content

List of Tables

List of Figures

I.   Introduction

*O*n 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 over 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 enters 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, in-person and online public engagements 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 is refining the products and services that best serve our customers and stakeholders, along with how to facilitate timely and high-quality review of processes and products.

The Department is accomplishing the objectives of transparency, participation, and collaboration by:

- Including processes and best practices that improve and allow effective communication between Commerce and the public sector ensuring 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."

- Maintaining its leadership role in the Open Government and Data.gov initiatives by building into the information lifecycle best practices that increase the number of high value data sets and tools made readily available to the American public;

- Continuing to improve existing and building new partnerships with the private sector, including businesses, academia nonprofit organizations and inter-agency, to broaden input obtained for consideration during the regulatory process;

- Improving existing and creating new online tools and processes that enhance public and private sector access to Commerce services and that increase the understanding of funding opportunities; and

- Improving and increasing the use of social media and other collaboration tools to encourage the public to participate in idea-generation and to provide feedback on Commerce initiatives building an open two-way conversation.

II.   Leadership, Governance, and Culture Change

*T*he Department of Commerce carries out its programmatic responsibilities through its 12 operating units:

Table 1 - Commerce Operating Units

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)	National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)	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.

Previously, Secretary Locke called upon managers and employees at all levels to seek opportunities for greater collaboration, both among Commerce operating units and other federal agencies. He 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 asked employees to think creatively to how they could better work together in harnessing 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 selected a 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.

Since being appointed Secretary of Commerce, Secretary Bryson has continued to proactively engage managers and employees ensuring the continuation of building new and improving existing best practices for Open Government, while increasing avenues of outreach and communications. This has allowed the Department to create new partnership and build on existing coalitions in order to reduce costs and increase effectiveness of programs, personnel and outreach capabilities.

As a whole, Commerce is continuing to explore other ways to work better across organizational lines. One example is the initial CommerceConnect Initiative which streamlined how businesses access government services and solutions across the entire Commerce Department. The recently launched federal BusinessUSA program is an intergovernmental effort focused on the provision of outstanding customer service to America's small businesses and exporters in order to make it easier for them to grow and hire. It builds upon the synergy from CommerceConnect and its ability to reach across and connect business with multiple programs

and agencies as a model for BusinessUSA.gov. This inter-agency initiative is lead by an executive committee which is made up of the Federal Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Performance Officer (CPO), Department of Commerce and Small Business Administration.

III.   Transparency

Why Commerce Needs to Take Action

*U*nlocking public access to government programs and 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

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

vital aspect of what the Department does. Commerce – as an organization – is fully committed to improving its programs and data while increasing the business capabilities to utilize them more effectively. Increased accessibility through government-wide initiatives such as Data.gov and BusinessUSA.gov are current and ongoing methods for most cost effective solutions that have broad outreach capabilities. Commerce is also prepared to serve as a leader in the Federal Government's effort to make more information and tools available through inter-agency partnerships utilizing integrated information repositories.

What Commerce Has Done

*H*istorically, 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. Since that time the Department increased the number of data sets and tools to 303,611 available on Data.gov. While the vast majority of the data sets involve Census Geodata that will allow the public to map other bits of information, Commerce's 303,611 data sets also include over 170 tools that 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 refreshed. 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 provided by the Department have been 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.

As Commerce leads the way in making information and data consumable for its customers, creating tools such as Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Interactive Data Tables (iTables) allow customers to perform online analysis of current and historical economic information. BEA has updated its interactive data service to make it easier to access and use BEA statistics. The goal is to provide a common look and feel for users accessing national, international, regional or industry statistics; to make the information easier to print, save and export; to make the charting features more robust and visually appealing; and to make the information easier to share with others via a variety of methods. 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 02/28/2012				
Agency / Operating Unit	Raw Datasets (high-value)	Tools (high-value)	Geo-data	Total
Department of Commerce (DOC)	86 (71)	268 (170)	303,257	303,611
Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)	0	2	0	2
Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)	2	0	0	2
International Trade Administration (ITA)	3	28 (6)	0	31
National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)	0	3	0	3
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	31 (21)	82 (67)	24,102	24,215
National Technical Information Service (NTIS)	1 (1)	0	0	1
National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA)	1 (1)	29 (2)	0	30
US Census Bureau (CENSUS)	42 (42)	99 (99)	279,155	279,296
US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)	6 (6)	25 (5)	0	31

What Commerce Will Do

*T*hroughout 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 in the following section broken out by operating unit responsible for leading the initiative.

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is an agency of the Department of Commerce. Along with the Census Bureau and STAT-USA, BEA is part of the Department's Economics and Statistics Administration.

BEA is one of the world's leading statistical agencies. Although it is a relatively small agency, BEA produces some of the most closely watched economic statistics that influence the decisions made by government officials, business people, households, and individuals. BEA's economic statistics, which provide a comprehensive, up-to-date picture of the U.S. economy, are key ingredients in critical decisions affecting monetary policy, tax and budget projections, and business investment plans. The cornerstone of BEA's statistics is the national income and product accounts (NIPAs), which feature the estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) and related measures.

The GDP was recognized by the Department of Commerce as its greatest achievement of the 20th century and has been ranked as one of the three most influential measures that affect U.S. financial markets. Since the NIPAs were first developed in the aftermath of the Great Depression, BEA has developed and extended its estimates to cover a wide range of economic activities.

Today, BEA prepares national, regional, industry, and international accounts that present essential information on such key issues as economic growth, regional economic development, inter-industry relationships, and the Nation's position in the world economy.

Transparency and openness have been top priorities of the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The Bureau makes all of its published data publicly available on the Internet, along with detailed methodology papers that explain exactly how BEA computes the nation's key economic indicators. The Bureau publishes on the Web the names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and areas of expertise of dozens of subject matter experts. Before implementing changes to the presentation or methodology of the accounts, BEA holds user conferences to explain the changes and solicit input on the impact of the changes on data users. As a 2011 New York Times story notes, "The Bureau of Economic Analysis, an arm of the Commerce Department… emphasizes transparency and is uncommonly open to public questions."

The Bureau is continuing to explore ways to increase openness and transparency in how it produces, presents, and educates the public about its data. Over the past two years, BEA made major improvements to the interactive tables on the BEA Web site, making the Bureau's vast stores of data more accessible, consumable, and shareable.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for ***Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)***

Table 3 - BEA Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
BEA	**Enhancing Communications through Web and Social Media**	**Planning/Implementation**	**9/30/2012**

- **Enhancing Communications through Web and Social Media**

  What's new – Use social media tools and enhanced web tools

  BEA is enhancing its use of Web and social media tools to make its data more accessible and useful for the public. The first prong of this project will involve the next iteration of enhancements to the interactive tables portal on the BEA Website. This year, BEA will add a mapping capability for data sets that have a geographic component. This improvement is currently in the implementation phase, with an initial launch in second quarter of FY 2012. The second prong of this project involves using blogs and social media to make BEA data more digestible for the public. BEA is launching a blog to educate members of the public about how it might use the data to better understand the dynamics of the U.S. economy. To speed technical implementation, BEA is using open-source software to support this project. Finally, BEA is launching twitter feeds to keep followers apprised of newly available data, BEA events, and job opportunities. BEA's twitter presence is in the implementation phase, with an initial launch in the first quarter of FY 2012, while the BEA blog is in the planning stage.

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)

*B*ureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is to advance U.S. national security, foreign policy, and economic objectives by ensuring an effective export control and treaty compliance system and by promoting continued U.S. strategic technology leadership.

Primary BIS Activities:

Maintain and strengthen an adaptable and effective U.S. export control and treaty compliance system: BIS administers and enforces controls on exports of dual-use goods and technologies to counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), combat terrorism, and pursue other national security and foreign policy goals.

Integrate non-U.S. actors to create a more effective global export control and treaty compliance system: The effectiveness of U.S. export controls is enhanced by strong controls in other nations that export, or transship sensitive goods and technologies. BIS works to improve the participation and compliance of existing members of multilateral export control regimes and cooperates with other countries to help them establish effective export control programs. As part of policy formulation and implementation toward key trading partners and transshipment countries, BIS utilizes an end-use visit program.

Ensure continued U.S. technology leadership in industries that are essential to national security: BIS works to ensure that the U.S. remains competitive in industry sectors and sub-sectors critical to national security. To this end, BIS analyzes the impact of export controls and trade policies on strategic U.S. industries, administers the Federal Government's Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS), reports on the impact of defense trade offsets, and evaluates the security impact of certain proposed foreign investments in U.S. companies.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)*

Table 4 - BIS Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
BIS	**Web site transformation**	**Online for public comment**	**June, 2012**

- *Project – Website transformation*

In response to the feedback from our many stakeholders, the BIS website is being transformed. We are making improvements to the site's appearance, enhancing communications capabilities, and providing better information mapping. Until the new site is fully operational, BIS is offering access to either the current BIS site or the beta version of the new site (www.bis.doc.gov). By clicking either picture or icon users can explore the beta version of the new site and continue making comments and recommendations as BIS works to improve its service.
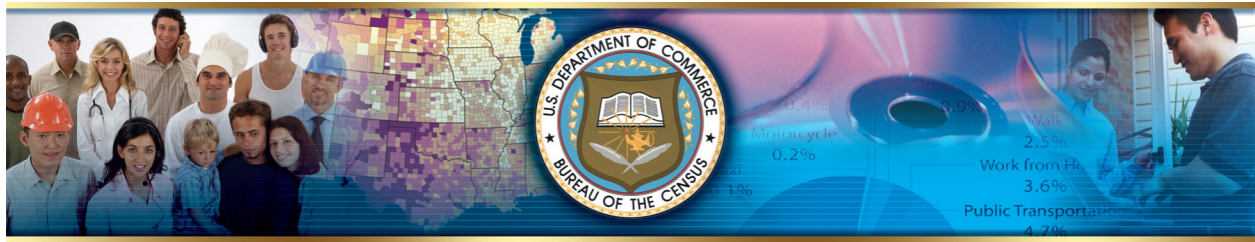
Bureau of the Census (Census)

*C*ensus Bureau is the premier source of information about the American people and the economy. More than just numbers, this information shapes important policy decisions that help improve the nation's social and economic conditions.

The production of high quality, relevant statistical information rests on principles that the Census Bureau holds dear. Openness to user and respondent concerns, independence and neutrality, strong statistical standards, and protection of confidentiality form the foundation for the work we do. These principles are reflected in Office of Management and Budget guidelines for the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated by federal agencies.

The Census Bureau's mission is built around large-scale surveys and censuses. Activities involve survey and questionnaire design, geographic infrastructure update, and data collection, processing, and dissemination. Research and data analysis help improve processes from data collection through dissemination.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *Bureau of the Census (Census)*

Table 5 - Census Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
Census	**Introducing a Profile of U.S. Importing Companies Report**	**Completed**	**April 2011**
	Improving Operational Efficiency (FY 2012)	**In Progress**	**Sept 2012**
	Improving the Census Bureau's History Web Site	**In Progress**	**TBD**
	Add High Value Datasets to Data.gov	**On-going**	**On-going**
	Improving Access to Economic Programs	**Completed**	**Dec 2011**
	Improving Access to Economical Indicators via the Central Indicator Data Repository (CIDR)	**In Progress**	**Sept 2012**

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
	Instituting Data User Notifications	Completed	Dec 2011
	Publishing Automated Export Systems Best Practices Online	In Progress	June 2012
	Implementing Local Employment Dynamics (LED)Program	Completed	Sept 2011
	Improving LED Data Visualization	In Progress	Feb 2012
	Modernizing Business Help Site	In Progress	Dec 2012
	Re-engineering State and Local Governments Statistical Programs and Improving Data Presentations	In Progress	Feb 2012
	Adding Web-based Learning Tools to Improve Access to Economic Programs	In Progress	Oct 2013
	Establishing the 2012 Account Manager Program	In Progress	Sept 2013
	Implementing the Advance Mailing to 80,000 Businesses that the Census is Coming	In Progress	June 2012
	Installing Economic Directorate Change Management and Succession Management Training Program	In Progress	Sept 2012
	Testing of Interactive On-line Electronic Tools with the Business Community for the 2012 Economic Census	In Progress	Dec 2012
	Accelerating release of the FT-900: U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services (FT900)	In Progress	Mar 2013

- *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.

The 2012 IOE process began in late November and incorporated a number of improvements from lessons learned in previous years. Improved included a new social media tool with significant enhancements over the 2011 version providing staff more options to track ideas and provide comments. The 2012 IOE process also started earlier and gave employees additional time to develop their proposals and seek comments.

- *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 American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month, Fire Prevention, and "Back to School."

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," and new "FAQs" and Housing sections); and refreshed content and photos to encourage visitors to return to pages.

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 October 2011, every link on the website was checked for accuracy and errors were corrected. In December 2011, each page will be "validated" to ensure the accuracy of html coding and 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 datasets to Data.gov as identified on a flow basis. Previously published records for Census Bureau products are reviewed regularly for date of last update and link validation.

- *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 has developed a database-driven access system that provides access to current and historic data from each report using a single user interface. Users can now view the data and extract tables in a variety of formats.

The Census Bureau has activated the system for all of the Economic Programs' principal economic indicators, with the exception of the Advanced Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders, 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/Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics (SEHS) Division for inclusion in the CIDR. 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
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. Starting in 2006, Census also began to release OnTheMap, an innovative block-level workforce data product by worker residence and workplace geography, based on the same jobs frame as the QWI. OnTheMap 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. In 2011, we released for the first time QWI and OnTheMap data by race, ethnicity, and education (previously only worker age and gender were available). In 2012, we are releasing for the first time new firm characteristics, the age and size of the firm (previously only firm industry and geography were available) in the QWI. We are also releasing in 2012 QWI and OnTheMap data for federal workers, who had not previously been part of the integrated job frame.

  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 web application that graphically illustrates the relationship between jobs and workplace on user defined maps. Most recent version provides improved performance and additional analytical capabilities. LED has released version 2 of the OnTheMap for Emergency Management, which provides rapid access to labor market information for local areas affected by emergency events. This version provides additional information on hurricanes and includes other events such as floods and wildfires.

LED continues to review other data visualization methods such as the IBM Many Eyes Stack Graph tool, which 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. A pilot application of Google Public Data based on LED data for seven states: Arizona, California, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Virginia, and Washington were implemented in January 2011.

Efforts have continued to build a web based application that visualizes the profiles of U.S. workers by age groups based on LED data as well as begin initial investigation into adding visualization methods to our QWI Online application.

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. The 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.

Phase I of the BHS redesign is complete. The new modernized BHS look, feel and functionality will improve its effectiveness in providing assistance to data providers. Phase 2 of the BHS will introduce a survey portal that will be used for some annual surveys and the Economic Census. The portal will allow respondents to access their electronic instruments, online services and SMC. However, they will need to login again to report online or communicate using the SMC. The BHS will continue to be improved to include a Single Sign-on approach. This approach will allow respondents to login once to the BHS for access to online services (including electronic reporting) and the Secure Messaging Center.

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

- *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, tabulations will be improved to better address data user needs. Several improvements already have been introduced, including:

  - summary briefs, issued quarterly, covering government finance, revenue, and taxes;

  - annual reports accompany the release of data products, covering government finance, revenue, taxes, and employment;

  - 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 including data.gov;

  - for the 2012 Census of Governments, Commerce will provide additional data on a new government organization component; national map of local governments. In addition, Commerce published 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/); 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 – Foreign Trade Division*

  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 – Foreign Trade Division*

  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/).

- *Project – Establishing the 2012 Account Manager Program*

  The 2012 Account Manager Program is designed to support Economic Programs Directorate Strategic Plan Goal 4: "Limit Respondent Burden". The program looks at large companies across the directorate programs and finds ways to reduce total burden for data providers and to provide expert resources to assist data providers in complete questionnaires. The 2012 program will advance these goals and improve quality and timing of the Economic Census response by providing improved information and individual assistance to a selected group of the largest companies.

- *Project – Implementing the Advance Mailing to 80,000 Businesses that the Census is Coming*

  The Advance Mailing is the first major 2012 Economic Census activity. We will mail a letter to 80,000 companies in March 2012, explaining the 2012 Economic Census and requesting contact information via the Census Bureau's Business Helpsite. For 2,000 of those companies, we will include an Account Manager's name and contact information.

- *Project – Installing Economic Directorate Change Management and Succession Management Training Program*

  In an effort to meet our new strategic vision of being the leader and trusted source in providing compressive and timely data that tell the story of the changing economy; the

Economic Directorate has developed two new training initiatives. The change management and succession management training programs will provide the means for the Economic Directorate to skillfully and effectively handle change and will help identify, manage, and integrate key positions and key talent in a series of steps that form an on-going channel of developing resources, matching supply to demand, and evaluating results to achieve our business goals and priorities. These programs will design, develop, deliver and evaluate effective, efficient, and cost-effective change management and succession planning training to provide the means for Economic Directorate leadership to implement their succession plan process within the Economic Directorate. Over the course of FY12 we will offer a broad range of change management and succession planning learning opportunities and exposure of the individuals to as much of the working environment as possible so that they gain a good understanding of what the Economic Directorate requires to remain successful.

- *Project – Testing of Interactive On-line Electronic Tools with the Business Community for the 2012 Economic Census*

Census staff is working with the business community to present the best electronic tools to complete the 2012 Economic Census. Electronic tools include online reporting, requests for time extensions, form re-mails, reporting calendars, and filing status. Usability testing is being performed with the business community to provide feedback on the electronic tools. The Census Bureau uses suggestions from the testing to improve the software, making it more user-friendly and further reducing respondent burden. Respondents have the flexibility to manage their time to complete a survey or census. Electronic reporting also helps to improve the quality of statistical data by using built-in edits. Respondents can communicate confidential information electronically through the Secure Messaging Center (SMC) to get assistance with completing their forms. For the 2007 Economic Census, 54 percent of multiunit establishments reported electronically. In 2012, the expectation is that an even greater number of respondents will submit their data electronically.

- *Project – Accelerating the release of the FT-900: U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services and related releases and data products.*

In response to having more relevant and timely statistics that adhere to the Office of Management and Budget's Statistical Policy Number 3, the Foreign Trade Division will accelerate the release of the *FT-900: U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services* (FT900) beginning with January 2013 statistics. Working together with our partners at the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Statistics Canada, the goal is to release the FT900 accompanied with all underlying detailed statistics on average five days earlier than the current schedule. This translates to providing the Foreign Trade statistics 34 – 36 days after the reference month has ended. By accelerating the release of the Foreign Trade statistics, it will allow other government agencies and private industry to incorporate the data for more efficient economic analysis and decision-making. It will also allow the United States to be

more in-line with other major trading partners such as China and Japan, who currently release their trade statistics earlier than the U.S.

Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA)

Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA) plays three key roles within the Department of Commerce (DOC). ESA provides timely economic analysis, and disseminates national economic indicators. ESA's expert economists and analysts produce in-depth reports, fact sheets, and briefings on policy issues and current economic events. DOC and White House policymakers rely on these tools, as do American businesses, state and local governments, and news organizations around the world. See our Reports section for a list of recent reports.

ESA also oversees the U.S. Census Bureau (Census) and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). In this role, ESA works collaboratively with BEA and Census leadership on high priority management, budget, employment, and risk management issues, integrating the work of these agencies with the priorities and requirements of the Department of Commerce and other government entities.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA)*

Table 6 - ESA Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
ESA	**Economic Indicators**	Ongoing	Continual
	The Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity of the United States	Completed	January 2012

- *Project – Economic Indicators*

The Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA) releases 12 monthly and quarterly **Principal Federal Economic Indicators** collected by its constituent bureaus: the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Businesses rely heavily upon these indicators to make decisions every day. In their public comments, the Secretary and ESA's Under Secretary and Chief Economist put the indicators into a national and global economic context.

- *Project – The Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity of the United States*

On January 4, 2011, President Barack Obama signed into law the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (COMPETES). Section 604 of COMPETES mandates that the Secretary of Commerce complete a study that addresses the economic competitiveness and innovative capacity of the United States (see Supplemental Materials). Congress directed that this report address a diverse array of topics and policy options, including: tax policy; the general business climate in the U.S.; regional issues such as the role of state and local governments in higher education; barriers to setting up new firms; trade policy, including export promotion; the effectiveness of Federal research and development policy; intellectual property regimes in the U.S. and abroad; the health of the manufacturing sector; and science and technology education.

In conducting this study, COMPETES specified that the Secretary of Commerce establish a process for obtaining comments. One part of that process was to establish a 15 member Innovation Advisory Board (IAB) "for purposes of obtaining advice with respect to the conduct of the study." The Department of Commerce announced the members of the IAB (listed in the Supplementary Materials section of this report) on May 4, 2011, and the inaugural meeting of the IAB was on June 6, 2011, in Alexandria, Virginia. A second meeting of the IAB was held September 23, 2011, in Boulder, Colorado. IAB members provided input into the process throughout the summer. Additionally, some IAB members generously hosted COMPETES-related events in Washington, D.C.; Youngstown, Ohio; Morgantown, West Virginia; Philadelphia, PA; and New York, NY. These events brought together community and business leaders, and experts in a wide variety of areas, to share their ideas on competitiveness. Department of Commerce and Administration staff attended all of these meetings.

Additionally, we received input from a number of other groups at various events. These included an all day event with a group of prominent academic economists in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a conference at the Silicon Flatirons' Center for Law, Technology, and Entrepreneurship at the University of Colorado. Other groups, as well as the general public, provided additional input.

International Trade Administration (ITA)

*I*nternational Trade Administration's (ITA) mission is to enable U.S. firms and workers to compete and win in the global marketplace. Furthermore, given the importance of the National Export Initiative (NEI) to America's economic recovery, ITA plays a crucial role in its implementation through our programs, people, and global footprint, while leading interagency coordination to expand exports under the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC). ITA is critical to the NEI's success and realizing the President's goal of doubling U.S. exports by the end of 2014.

GOAL

Create prosperity by strengthening the international competitiveness of U.S. industry promoting trade and investment, and ensuring fair trade and compliance with trade laws and agreements.

VISION

Foster economic growth and prosperity through global trade.

VALUES

- High standards of personal integrity and professional excellence
- Mutual respect and teamwork
- Creativity and individual initiative

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *International Trade Administration (ITA)*

Table 7 - ITA Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
ITA	**Improving Online Access to Free Trade Agreement Results: FTA Tariff Tool**	Phase I: Complete	April 11, 2012
		Phase II: Development Underway	FY2012
	Improving Online Access to Industry Trade Information: Trade Stats Express - Industry	Phase I: Development Underway	FY2013

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

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

ITA has developed a new way for the public to view tariff information and trade statistics for industrial goods under the various FTAs. Previously, the FTA tariff rates for the United States and its FTA partners were available only as large documents appended to the legal texts of the agreements. It was difficult for U.S. exporters and importers to use these documents to determine current and future tariff rates under the agreements. Additionally, users were unable to analyze how the FTAs affect various product groups or sectors, and were unable to examine trade flows with FTA partners via a single website.

ITA's FTA Tariff Tool, deployed in April, 2011, combines tariff and trade data into a simple and easy-to-search public interface. Using the Tool, users can see how U.S. and FTA partner tariffs on individual products—searchable by keyword or tariff code—are treated under an agreement. Additionally, U.S. importers and exporters can see the current tariff and future tariffs applied to their products, as well as the date on which those products become duty-free. Finally, by combining sector and product groups, trade data, and the tariff elimination schedules, users can also analyze how various key sectors are treated under recently concluded FTAs. Since its release in 2011, over 33,100 unique visitors have used the FTA Tariff Tool. On average, the tool has 164 visitors per day.

For FY2012, ITA will be further improving on the FTA Tariff Tool by engaging other agencies in the federal government to further expand the Tool to include agriculture and textile products, along with product-specific rules of origin (ROO).

The FTA Tariff Tool can be located at http://export.gov/FTA/FTATariffTool/.

- *Project – Improving Online Access to Industry Trade Information*

What's New – Improving public access to trade data via industry-level aggregation

Following on the success of the Trade Stats Express website, ITA is exploring the creation of a new database to aid the public and private sectors in analyzing trade data at the industry-level. This project, tentatively called "Trade Stats Express – Industry", will provide the opportunity to retrieve, visualize, analyze, print and download customized trade data at the industry-level, all via a single convenient website.

Specific metrics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) selected for inclusion currently are: industry employment count, hourly wage, and weekly hours. Specific metrics from the U.S. Census selected for inclusion are: those related to payroll and shipments in the Annual Survey of Manufacturers (ASM) and the most recent Economic Census (conducted every five years).

In addition to the aforementioned list of broad standard metrics that will be reported for all industries, the proposed Trade Stats Express – Industry will include additional metrics that are pertinent to individual industries. These variables will be identified and implemented with assistance from industry experts and would allow Trade Stats Express – Industry to provide a more meaningful picture for each industry. These variables may include the price of key commodity inputs or the performance of substitute/complement markets.

Deployment of the proposed Trade Stats Express – Industry is slated for FY2013.

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA is an entrepreneurially focused organization committed to wealth creation in minority communities. To foster the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. businesses that are minority-owned.

MBDA actively coordinates and leverages public and private-sector resources that facilitate strategic alliances in support of its mission. MBDA's vision is economic prosperity for all American business enterprises.

MBDA provides funding for a network of Minority business centers located throughout the Nation. The Centers provide minority entrepreneurs with one-on-one assistance in writing business plans, marketing, management and technical assistance and financial planning to assure adequate financing for business ventures.

The Centers are staffed by business specialists who have the knowledge and practical experience needed to run successful and profitable businesses. Business referral services are provided free of charge. However, the network generally charges nominal fees for specific management and technical assistance services. The Centers are located in areas with the largest concentration of minority populations and the largest number of minority businesses. Locate a center near you.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)*

Table 8 - MBDA Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
MBDA	**Support of BusinessUSA.gov Project**	**Active**	**Ongoing**
	Business Development Tools Modernization Project	**Active**	**End of FY 2013**

- *Project – Support of BusinessUSA.gov Project*

What's new –Integration of MBDA programs and services with BusinessUSA.gov

In an effort to increase transparency and awareness of its programs and services MBDA is participating on BusinessUSA.gov steering committee to provide a one stop destination of all federal programs that support small businesses. MBDA's role in this effort has been to ensure that its programs and other information specific to minority business enterprises are equitably included within the resulting BusinessUSA.gov portal. The first iteration of BusinessUSA.gov was released on February 17, 2012. Since its release MBDA and the BusinessUSA steering committee have be working on functionality and enhancements to improve the user experience for the portal.

- *Project – Business Development Tools Modernization Project*

What's new – Enhancement and redesign of MBDA's business development applications

MBDA is identifying technology that could be used to enhance or replace its suite of business development applications that residing on the MBDA portal. Historically these tools have been used by MBEs, and MBDA Grantees to support activities associated with their business. Although visitor to MBDA's portal actively used these tools the Agency has determined that they need to be updated to ensure first class experience for visitors of the site. It will also ensure that their experience will be more tailored to their needs and provide a virtual space that can be used to grow their business. A multi-year effort, the ultimate vision for the initiative will be to increase MBE access to financing and procurement opportunities existing within the public and private sector. The first in a series of iterations is expected to be complete by September 2012.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) founded in 1901 is a non-regulatory federal agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce. NIST's mission is to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve our quality of life.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)*

Table 9 - NIST Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
NIST	**Improving Dissemination of Basic Research Results via the NIST and other Web sites**	Ongoing	Sept. 2013
	Improving access to NIST research results through social media including Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter	Ongoing	Sept. 2014
	Improving Access to the Digital Data Repository of NIST Collections, including Publications, Artifacts, and Photographs Relating to Measurement Science	Ongoing	Sept. 2014
	Making Photos and Videos from the 9/11 Investigation available to the public	Complete	8/12/11

- *Project – Improving Dissemination of Basic Research Results via the NIST and other Web sites*

  What's New – Institute-wide effort to examine and make recommendations on standardized long-term solution to improve access to both current and historical collections of publications and data authored or co-authored by NIST researchers or facility users.

  Ongoing – Improved tagging of content to ease search, simplifying public feedback process; use of social media to announce research results

Several years ago, as part of an effort to broadly disseminate its research results, NIST implemented a content management system, which included access to an improved database of research papers authored or co-authored by NIST researchers. Content 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. Currently, there are more than 60,000 subscribers who receive information on approximately 160 different topics. The 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 (more than 3,000 "shares" in just 4 months of this fiscal year).

In the last 110 years, NIST published hundreds of technical reports such as NISTIRs and Technical Notes – which were targeted to very specific audiences. Some of these topics are of interest to a broader audience, so NIST is republishing them electronically 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, increasing the impact of NIST research. NIST staff members are 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 – Improving Dissemination and Access to Basic Research Results via Social Media***

  What's New – NIST has expanded the scope of materials linked to Wikipedia entries to include NIST technical reports and images in the NIST Digital Archives. NIST has increased use of Twitter (for example by participating in a Twitter chat recently on manufacturing R&D) and by expanding use of Twitter to allow the public to ask questions and participate in conferences remotely through Webinars.

  NIST has created sites on YouTube (more than 2,000 subscribers), Facebook (more than 4,500 "likes"), Twitter (4,800 "followers"), and Flickr (more than 17,000 images viewed). 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.

  NIST continues to use Wikipedia to improve dissemination of its research results to the public. For selected topics NIST staff members continue to add links to NIST technical reports or papers in the Journal of Research of NIST, to make NIST research information more readily available in a highly used web resource. NIST staff members are adding links to images and descriptions of scientific instruments in the NIST Digital Archives. NIST staff members are tracking the number of web hits on and the number of citations of those reports and papers to make a measurement-based determination of the effectiveness of this strategy to increase the impact of NIST research.

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

What's New – NIST is participating in the Library of Congress Open Content Alliance FedScan Initiative. This initiative is major digitization, digital preservation, and access service for the federal library community to build a permanent accessible archive of digitized text and multimedia material.

Ongoing – Using Open Archives Protocol to allow automatic harvesting by major search engines and research repositories

Currently, information regarding NIST 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 2011, NIST implemented the NIST Digital Archives, a digital library repository. The Digital Archives conforms to the latest library and publishing metadata standards to enhance the ability of other scholarly and research repositories to discover and harvest information. It contains the full text of NIST's technical publications, including the Journal of Research, as well as images of and information about NIST historical scientific objects. The metadata conforms 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 adhere to Government Printing Office, Library of Congress, and NARA preservation requirements. NIST is collaborating with the Library of Congress and the Internet Archive to digitize NIST's legacy publications through the Open Content Alliance FedScan initiative. The NIST Digital Archives permits 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. Through the FedScan initiative NIST's legacy publications are scanned, processed through a rigorous quality assurance protocol, and made available to the public in a variety of file formats (e.g., Daisy, EPub, Kindle) through the Internet Archive website. All file formats are also provided back to NIST. These multiple efforts and searchable access points significantly enhance dissemination and use of NIST's research results.

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

NIST acquired a large amount of visual material as part of its World Trade Center Investigation. A subset of this material, including photographs and video clips, was organized into a searchable database in which each image and video clip was characterized by a set of attributes including: source/owner, time of shot/video, content (including building,

face(s), key events such as plane strike, fireballs, collapse), and other details. These materials can be obtained by visiting http://wtcdata.nist.gov/index2.htm.
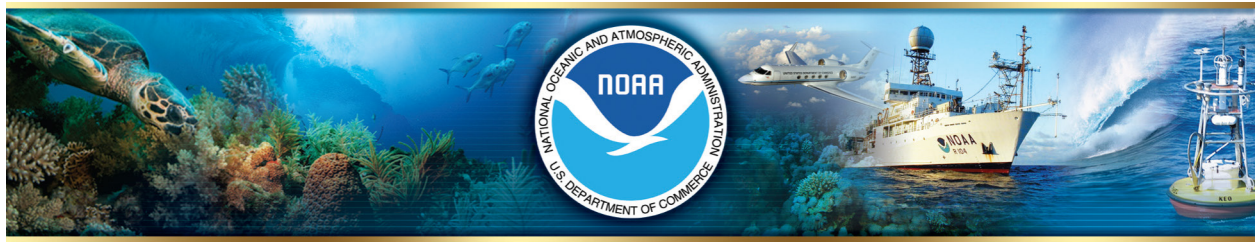
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

*N*ational Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is an agency that enriches life through science. Our reach goes from the surface of the sun to the depths of the ocean floor working to keep citizens informed of the changing environment around them.

The range from daily weather forecasts, severe storm warnings and climate monitoring to fisheries management, coastal restoration and supporting marine commerce, NOAA's products and services support economic vitality and affect more than one-third of America's gross domestic product.   NOAA's dedicated scientists use cutting-edge research and high-tech instrumentation to provide citizens, planners, emergency managers and other decision makers with reliable information they need when they need it.

NOAA's roots date back to 1807, when the Nation's first scientific agency, the Survey of the Coast, was established. Since then, NOAA has evolved to meet the needs of a changing country. NOAA maintains a presence in every state and has emerged as an international leader on scientific and environmental matters.

NOAA's mission touches the lives of every American and has a role in protecting life and property and conserving and protecting natural resources.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)*

Table 10 - NOAA Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
NOAA	**Modernizing the NOAA Climate Database**	Shutdown Closeout	Estimated FY13, Early Q3
	Improving Access to Severe Weather Data Inventory (SWDI)	Ongoing Incremental Improvement	Completed

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
	Upgrading Ocean Surface Current Simulator	Ongoing Incremental Improvement	Completed
	Instituting Online Access to Regional Data in Partnership with the San Francisco Exploratorium	Ongoing Incremental Improvement	Completed
	Improving U.S. Drought Portal with Addition of Soil Moisture Observation Data	Completed	Completed
	Providing Online Access to Historical Climate Data Through Historical Climate Reanalysis Project	Completed	Completed
	Establishing NOAA Climate Services Portal	Ongoing	End of FY12

- *Project – Modernizing the NOAA Climate Database*

What's New – Converting 19th 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 19th 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 has 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/ 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. 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)

*N*ational Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is the Executive Branch agency that is principally responsible for advising the President on telecommunications and information policy issues. NTIA's programs and policymaking focus largely on expanding broadband Internet access and adoption in America, expanding the use of spectrum by all users, and ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for continued innovation and economic growth.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)*

Table 11 - NTIA Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
NTIA	**Creating a National Broadband Map**	**Ongoing**	
	Establishing Online Access to Results of Broadband Survey	**Ongoing**	

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 Broadband Map is interactive and searchable by address, and identifies broadband service providers by census block or street segment. Data collection began in 2009 and continues to take place semiannually. Data sets are 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 has undertaken a series of 54,000-household Internet-use supplements to the basic *Current Population Survey, most recently in October 2009, October 2010, and July 2011.* Through this effort, NTIA is examining why people do not use high-speed Internet service and is exploring differences in Internet adoption and usage patterns around the country and across socio-economic groups. NTIA is releasing these data in open, Web-based formats, making the survey instruments and associated reports as widely available as possible.

National Technical Information Service (NTIS)

National Technical Information Service (NTIS) seeks to promote American innovation and economic growth by collecting and disseminating scientific, technical and engineering information (STEI) to the public and industry, by providing information management solutions to other Federal agencies, and by doing all without appropriated funding. NTIS outreach to the public and industry is for the purpose of promoting scientific research and technology transfer to enhance economic growth.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *National Technical Information Service (NTIS)*

Table 12 - NTIS Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
NTIS	**Making Five Years of Bibliographic Data Searchable (Data.gov)**	**Released Jan. 2010**	**Regular Updates**
	National Technical Reports Library (NTRL)		
	Online access to an electronic library of over 2 million bibliographic records (dating from 1964) Links to over 700,000 corresponding full-text reports Coverage from the late 1890's to present (most reports date from the 1970's to present.) Search engine capabilities	Release 1, 2009 Release 2, 2011 Release 3, 2012	Content continuously added; software upgrades periodically
	Federal Science Repository Service (FSRS)		
	The FSRS is based on open-source approaches, is durable against technological changes, and is flexible enough to support broad and varied uses, increasing access to the Federal Government's data and information. • Storage and preservation of diverse resources • Ingestion of distributed content • Access control customized to agency requirements • A robust interface with advanced metadata and full text search, filtering, and full-text and media display	Launched 2011	Federal Projects in Development

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

    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. Titles within the NTIS Collection represent billions of dollars in research. Metadata content corresponds to research reports, computer products, software, video cassettes, audio cassettes and more. Data includes such fields as Title, Author, Source Agency, Document Type, Page Count, Category Code, as well as a link to NTIS' online ordering system for those who wish to purchase the title directly from NTIS. Users can also access the NTIS Website at www.ntis.gov to search, identify and purchase items within the NTIS Collection of more than 3,000,000 products.

- *National Technical Reports Library (NTRL)*

    The National Technical Reports Library (NTRL) provides access to the largest collection of U.S. Government-sponsored technical reports. There is metadata for more than 2 million records with links to approximately 700,000 digitized full-text reports. Primarily, the NTRL provides an open environment online subscription access to the results of U.S. Government-sponsored basic and applied research.

    The development of the NTRL is rooted within NTIS' basic authority to operate a permanent clearinghouse of scientific and technical information as codified in chapter 23 of Title 15 of the United States Code (15 U.S.C. 1151-1157). This chapter also established NTIS' authority to provide products and services in a cost sustainable manner. Federal Agencies are required to provide their research results to NTIS per the American Technology Preeminence Act (ATPA), and the results are available to the public in perpetuity.

- *Federal Science Repository Service (FSRS)*

    NTIS created the Federal Science Repository Service (FSRS) to transition and modernize the Federal investment in scientific research. Building on the existing Federal information assets of Data.gov and Science.gov, the FSRS creates a common foundational platform to move existing science discovery to the future of e-science while embodying the principles of technology transfer--research, innovation, and economic growth. The FSRS is an information management tool that can be used effectively by Federal agencies, laboratories, and the science community. The objective for these more robust repositories for federally funded scientific content has been to highlight interagency collaboration and interoperability of various data object types joined together for ease of discovery and access. Developed with

a private-public partnership, the FSRS fulfills the Federal archival mandate for opening up access to Federally-funded scientific research.

United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

*U*nited States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is the Federal agency for granting U.S. patents and registering trademarks. In doing this, the USPTO fulfills the mandate of Article I, Section 8, Clause 8, of the Constitution that the Executive branch "promote the progress of science and the useful arts by securing for limited times to inventors the exclusive right to their respective discoveries." The USPTO registers trademarks based on the Commerce Clause of the Constitution (Article I, Section 8, Clause 3). Under this system of protection, American industry has flourished. New products have been invented, new uses for old ones discovered, and employment opportunities created for millions of Americans. The strength and vitality of the U.S. economy depends directly on effective mechanisms that protect new ideas and investments in innovation and creativity. The continued demand for patents and trademarks underscores the ingenuity of American inventors and entrepreneurs. The USPTO is at the cutting edge of the Nation's technological progress and achievement.

The USPTO advises the President of the United States, the Secretary of Commerce, and U.S. Government agencies on intellectual property (IP) policy, protection, and enforcement; and promotes the stronger and more effective IP protection around the world. The USPTO furthers effective IP protection for U.S. innovators and entrepreneurs worldwide by working with other agencies to secure strong IP provisions in free trade and other international agreements. It also provides training, education, and capacity building programs designed to foster respect for IP and encourage the development of strong IP enforcement regimes by U.S. trading partners.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)*.

Table 13 - USPTO Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project/Major Milestone	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
USPTO	**Improving Access to data sets**		
	Making fee data available online in machine-readable format for the first time.	completed	1st quarter of FY2010
	Expanding online availability of patent bibliographic information on past patent grants and applications	completed	2nd quarter of FY2010
	Providing free full-text and images of all U.S. patents	completed	3rd quarter of FY2011
	Enhancing Online Document Retrieval for the Public		
	Providing Online Access to Assignment Documents	completed	August 2011
	Virtualization for Trademark Document Retrieval (TDR)	completed	April 2011
	Enhancing Communications through Web, e-mail, and Social Media sites		
	Blogs and information sharing tools	completed	May 2010
	Establishment of online Subscription Center and Monthly Review	completed	December 2010
	Launch of website for the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act (AIA)	completed	July 2011
	Webinars on key topics for America Invents Act	ongoing	N/A
	Presentations on the America Invents Act		
	America Invents Act Roadshows	underway	March 9, 2012 (projected)
	Expanding Public Participation Opportunities		
	Using Challenge.gov to improve ways to view patent drawings	winners announced	February 2012
	Using Challenge.gov to recognize patents for humanitarian needs	accepting submissions	December 2012 (projected)
	Improving the Manual of Patent Examining Procedures (MPEP) and Manual of Trademark Examining Procedures (TMEP) through a public discussion forum	established	January 2011
	Expanding Collaboration Opportunities		
	Establishment of Thomas Alva Edison Visiting Professionals Program	established	February 2012
	Providing Transparency for Mission-related Training Activities		

Operating Unit	Project/Major Milestone	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
	Public access to training materials at USPTOTraining.gov	established	June 2011
	Launch of Global and Domestic Intellectual Property Rights training program registry	completed	May 2011
	Satellite Office Locations		
	Seeking public comment on new locations for satellite offices	completed	January 30, 2012
	Publishing Key Performance Indicators on Patent and Trademark Processing		
	Estimator for Patent first office action on the USPTO website	underway	Spring 2012 (projected)
	Data Visualization Center on the USPTO website with monthly statistics for Patents, Trademarks, and Policy and External Affairs	completed	May 2011
	Peer to Patent Pilot		
	Peer to Patent Pilot relaunch	completed	October 2010
	Small Business Innovation Research Pilot		
	Launch of pilot program to provide intellectual property support to Small Business Innovation Research awardees	completed	October 2011
	Launch of IP Awareness Assessment tool	completed	November 2011
	Measuring and Improving Website satisfaction		
	Satisfaction Survey on www.uspto.gov	established	December 2010
	Refresh of wwww.uspto.gov home page	completed	December 2011
	National Trademark Expo		
	National Trademark Expo – 2011	completed	October 2011
	Outreach for Independent and Small-entity Inventors		
	Launch of Inventor's Eye newsletter	established	February 2010
	Online chat for independent inventors	ongoing	N/A
	Establishment of pro-bono programs to assist independent inventors and small businesses with obtaining a patent.	Underway	December 2013
	Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC)		

Operating Unit	Project/Major Milestone	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
	Program name change and designation of a new Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC)	completed	October 2011
	Annual Training Conference for PTRCs	ongoing	N/A
	Roundtable for maximizing the effective use of the PTRC program	completed	February 2011
	Public Advisory Committees		
	Patent Public Advisory Committees	ongoing	N/A
	Trademark Public Advisory Committee	ongoing	N/A
	Public Discussion on Patent and Trademark Topics		
	Roundtable regarding Identifications of Goods and Services	completed	February 2012
	Medical Device Technology Partnership Meeting	completed	November 2011
	Public Meeting on continuing legal education programs on Trademark policing measures and tactics	completed	November 2011
	Conference on Patent Statistics	completed	November 2011
	Public hearings on prior user rights study and international protection study	completed	October 2011
	Roundtable on streamlined patent reexamination proceedings	completed	June 2011
	Roundtable on Trademark Disclaimer Practice	completed	June 2011
	Measuring Costs and Progress of Major Information Technology Investments		
	Measuring Costs and Progress of Major Information Technology Investments	ongoing	N/A

- *Project– Improving Access to data sets*

Milestone – Making Patent Maintenance Fee Events 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.

Milestone – 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.

Milestone – 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.

- ***Program – Enhancing Online Document Retrieval for the Public***

    Milestone – Providing online access to assignment documents [*completed*]

    In August 2011, the USPTO began offering on its website the ability to view or print the cover sheet and underlying documents supporting a recorded trademark assignment.

    Milestone – Virtualization for Trademark Document Retrieval (TDR) [*completed*]

    In April 2011, the TDR system became the first USPTO application running partially in a cloud-computing environment. Virtualization and cloud computing are now the industry standards in information technology solutions, and the USPTO is taking advantage of this technology to provide full end-to-end electronic processing for Trademarks. It is the agency's first step toward the Trademarks Next Generation goal of providing a system that is faster, more practical, more feature-rich, and reliable for both the public and staff. This new system will eventually provide direct the ability to access data directly, including multimedia content.

- ***Program – Enhancing Communications through Web, e-mail, and Social Media sites***

    Milestone –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. The public can also follow USPTO activities through its official Facebook page, which launched in May 2010, or its YouTube channel, Twitter feed, and other outlets that are part of an evolving communications improvement plan.

*Milestone – Establishment of online Subscription Center and Monthly Review [**completed**]*

The USPTO expanded its public outreach efforts in December 2010 with the launch of an online Subscription Center. As of August 1, 2011, there were over 25,000 unique subscribers registered. The Center enables the public to easily subscribe via e-mail to an array of USPTO newsletters and alerts. One of the newsletters, the USPTO Monthly Review, increases transparency by providing a summary glance at new initiatives, events and significant media coverage during the previous month.

*Milestone – Launch of website for the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act (AIA) [**completed**]*

In July 2011, the USPTO established a website to provide comprehensive information and guidance to stakeholders and the public on the significant and far-reaching changes to U.S. patent law associated with the AIA, which was signed by President Barack Obama on September 16, 2011. The site is located at
 http://www.uspto.gov/aia_implementation/index.jsp and will have ongoing updates.

*Milestone – Webinars on key topics for America Invents Act [**ongoing**]*

The USPTO is committed to a regular series of live webinars that allow public interaction the USPTO and its leaders regarding the agency's latest news and issues.

- On February 21, 2012, USPTO Director David Kappos and other members of the USPTO's senior leadership team engaged in a live webinar examining implementation of the America Invents Act and the proposed USPTO patent fees announced earlier in the month. Joining Director Kappos were Deputy Director Terry Rea, Patents Commissioner Peggy Focarino, General Counsel Bernie Knight, and Chief Judge James Smith of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences. USPTO Chief of Staff Peter Pappas moderated the discussion.

- In October 2011, the USPTO hosted a free public webinar with senior agency officials to discuss the America Invents Act.

- ***Program –Presentations on the America Invents Act***

  What's New – America Invents Act Roadshows [**underway**]

  In February 2012, the USPTO announced its schedule of events for roadshows in February and March. Events include seven America Invents Act (AIA) roadshows, two hearings for the Genetic Testing Study, and two Patent Public Advisory Committee fee setting hearings.

At the AIA roadshows, the USPTO will explain its proposed rules for various new provisions required under the AIA including supplemental examination, inter partes review, and post grant review. At the Genetic Testing Hearings, the USPTO will collect information from the public about ways to offer a second, confirmatory genetic test in situations where there is a gene patent and the patent is licensed to an entity that offers a first genetic test. At the Fee Setting Hearings, the PPAC will gather public feedback about the USPTO's proposed fee structure for patent services. The USPTO released its proposed patent fee schedule on February 7, 2012, available through the www.uspto.gov website on the AIA or PPAC pages.

Individuals may give testimony at any of the hearings by either pre-scheduling testimony or offering unscheduled testimony on the day of the hearing. All events are free and open to the public; pre-registration is not required. Select AIA roadshows (Alexandria and Sunnyvale) and all hearings will be webcast live from a link on the AIA micro-site. An AIA roadshow will also be recorded and made available on the AIA micro-site.

- ***Program – Expanding Public Participation Opportunities***

*Milestone – using Challenge.gov to improve ways to view patent drawings [**completed**]*

The USPTO is building a new IT system for patent examination. One way to help streamline that process is to provide better ways to view patent drawings. Patent examiners would benefit greatly if part numbers were labeled with the corresponding text. Further, if figures could be separated from drawing pages, then examiners could arrange them and more easily compare figures across applications. Although there is no software available to recognize the figure labels and boundaries in patent drawings pages, image processing experts think it is a solvable problem. Therefore, the USPTO partnered with the National Atmospheric and Space Administration (NASA) and TopCoder to issue a Challenge in December 2011 to improve ways of viewing patent drawings. The goal is to develop software to automatically identify figure boundaries and label numbers, as well as their positions on the drawing page, to allow annotation with textual descriptions. Additional details are available at http://challenge.gov/NASA/269-50-000-uspto-innovation-challenge, with results to be announced in February 2012.

*Milestone – using Challenge.gov to recognize patents for humanitarian needs [**underway**]*

Announced in February 2012, Patents for Humanity is an awards competition for patent owners and licensees. It is the USPTO's voluntary pilot program to recognize patent owners who apply their patented technology to address humanitarian needs. The program advances the president's global development agenda by rewarding companies who bring life-saving technologies to underserved people of the world, while showing how patents are an integral part of tackling the world's challenges. The submission period is March 1, 2012 – August 31, 2012. Participants will send in applications describing how they've used their patented technology or products to address humanitarian challenges. Judges will choose winners in

four categories: medical technology, food and nutrition, clean technology and information technology. Winners will receive a certificate for accelerated processing of select patent USPTO matters. The program creates a powerful tool for businesses to expedite handling of their most important matters and help validate technology in the market – leading to quicker and more efficient investment decisions.

Milestone – Improving the Manual of Patent Examining Procedures (MPEP) and Manual of Trademark Examining Procedures (TMEP) through a public discussion forum [established/ongoing]

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.

Update: As of February 20, 2012, there were 80 ideas posted, with 255 comments and 394 votes on the MPEP site. The TMEP site contained 19 ideas, with 45 comments and 50 votes.

- ***Program – Expanding Collaboration Opportunities***

What's New – Establishment of Thomas Alva Edison Visiting Professionals Program [established/ongoing]

On February 16, 2012, the USPTO announced the establishment of a new program designed to tap expertise of distinguished IP professionals and academics. The Thomas Alva Edison Visiting Professionals Program enlists the services of leaders in academia and the intellectual property (IP) industry who can devote up to six months of service to the agency on a full time basis. The first Edison Professional, Jay Thomas, a tenured member of the Georgetown University law faculty, previously served at the USPTO as an instructor at the Patent Academy.

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

Milestone –Public access to training materials at USPTOTraining.gov [established]

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. *Update:* the initial pilot was extended to permit evaluation of possible longer-term arrangements.

Milestone – 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) where U.S. government agencies post information about the intellectual property rights (IPR) training programs they conduct around the world.

- ***Project – Satellite Office Locations***

What's New – Seeking comment on new locations for satellite offices [completed]

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) released a Federal Register Notice in November 2011, seeking written comments on potential additional locations for USPTO satellite offices; deadline for comments was January 30, 2012. An initial USPTO satellite office is already planned to be established in Detroit, Michigan. The agency plans to open its Detroit facility in the second half of 2012. The Detroit satellite office is expected to create more than 100 high-paying, high-skill jobs in its first year of operation and represents the first phase of the USPTO's satellite office project, an effort to hire more patent examiners and seek out additional technical expertise in locations across the country. Subject to available resources and as provided for in the *America Invents Act*, the USPTO intends to establish at least two more satellite offices in addition to the one in Detroit in the next three years.

"Establishing satellite offices in geographically diverse areas of the country will allow the agency to better recruit and retain talented patent professionals and allow the agency to better interact with the applicant community," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO David Kappos. "We are committed to conducting a transparent selection process based on objective criteria, and with input from stakeholders around the country."

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

What's New – Estimator for Patent First Office Action on the USPTO website [underway]
The USPTO is developing an interactive tool for displaying the estimated time to first office action based on a lookup by patent class/subclass. This self-serve feature will be useful for both current and potential applicants, and is projected to be available on the website in the spring of 2012.

Milestone – 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.

Milestone – 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***

  Milestone – 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 – Small Business Innovation Research Pilot***

  Milestone – Launch of pilot program to provide intellectual property support to Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) awardees **[completed]**

  In October 2011, the USPTO launched a pilot program in collaboration with the National Science Foundation (NSF), to provide SBIR awardees with comprehensive intellectual property support through the agency's small business programs and resources. Among the features will be monthly webinars covering a broad array of IP topics, and offered through Global Intellectual Property Academy (GIPA). SBIR encourages domestic small businesses to engage in Federal Research, Development and Commercialization through a competitive awards-based program that enables small businesses to explore their technological potential and provides the incentive to profit from its commercialization.

  What's New – IP Awareness Assessment tool **[completed]**

  An IP Awareness Assessment tool was developed in collaboration with The National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to help inventors and companies assess their IP strategies. In November

2011, the USPTO provided a new IP Awareness Assessment tool to its first group of 20 SBIR awardees. The USPTO will continue to work with SBIR grant-recipients to refine the program and provide additional services.

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

Milestone – Satisfaction Survey on www.uspto.gov [established/ongoing]

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 continues to provide important feedback on visitor goals and agency transparency.

What's New – Refresh of www.uspto.gov home page [completed]

The USPTO presented a more modern and efficient look to its website on December 20, 2011, to make it easier to find upcoming events, the latest news, policy updates, as well as popular USPTO resources. The USPTO is monitoring feedback on this change through the satisfaction survey, as well as through a dedicated email address that was established to collect comments.

- ***Program – National Trademark Expo***

The annual free two-day event is designed to educate the public about the value of trademarks in the global marketplace.

Milestone – 2011 Expo [completed]

The 2011 National Trademark Expo was held October 14-15, 2011 at the USPTO's headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. Highlights included "Unusual Trademarks" and "Brand Evolution," with educational workshops for adults and children, exhibits of authentic and counterfeit goods, and costumed characters.

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

USPTO's programs include:

Launch of Inventor's Eye newsletter [established/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 for independent inventors [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.

*What's New - Establishment of pro-bono programs to assist independent inventors and small businesses with obtaining a patent. [**underway**]*

These programs are designed to operate throughout the country in order to serve under-resourced communities and inventors with the legal tools they need to advance their technologies and acquire patent protections. In addition to operations already set up and running in Minnesota as of June 2011, the USPTO plans to expand this program to five locations in 2012, and provide legal assistance to ten additional cities in 2013, with the ultimate goal of having all regions in the country covered by 2014.

- ***Program – Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC)***

  USPTO's Patent and Trademark Resource Center – formerly known as the Patent and Trademark Depository Library Program (PTDL) – represents a nationwide network of public, state, special and academic libraries authorized to disseminate patent and trademark information and to support inventors, intellectual property attorneys/agents, business people, researchers, entrepreneurs, students, historians and the general public who are not able to come to USPTO's offices in Alexandria, Virginia. The program began in 1871 when federal law first provided for the distribution of printed patents to libraries for use by the public. Services at the libraries are free and include assistance in using patent and trademark information, training on USPTO databases and hosting public seminars on intellectual property topics for novice and experienced innovators. More information is available on the USPTO website at www.uspto.gov/PTRC.

  *What's New – program name change and designation of a new Patent and Trademark Resource Center [**completed**]*

  On October 1, 2011, the USPTO formally changed the name of the program partner locations to Patent and Trademark Resource Centers (PTRCs). PTRC designated libraries can be found in 46 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, offering expanded access to electronic information and specialized training to meet the information needs of 21st Century patent and trademark customers. Iowa's Davenport Public Library, the 81st library in the nationwide network, was formally announced as the first PTRC and serves as the first center geared away from the "paper depository" concept and towards electronic access and training for patent and trademark information.

  *Milestone - Annual Training Conference [**ongoing**]*

  The latest annual training conference for PTRCs was conducted in April 2011.

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

In February 2011, the USPTO held a public roundtable to invite comment on the ways to advance the former 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 February 2012 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 November 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 – Public Discussion on Patent and Trademark Topics***

*What's New – Roundtable Regarding Identifications of Goods and Services [**completed**]*

In February 2012, a public session entitled "Future Plans for USPTO ID-Class Practice was held on the USPTO campus and webcast to discuss and receive feedback on four topics:

USPTO's Acceptable Identification of Goods and Services Manual (ID Manual): USPTO seeks suggestions regarding desirable features and content for the Manual, as well as feedback on a suggestion to present the ID Manual in a hierarchical format.

USPTO's practice regarding the level of specificity required in describing goods and services: USPTO seeks feedback on whether modification of current practice is desirable.

Collaboration with industry groups: The USPTO is considering the possibility of creating ongoing working relationships with key industries to ensure that the USPTO ID Manual is promptly updated with new products and services, and contains comprehensive lists of the most common goods and services in each industry.

International databases of acceptable identifications of goods and services: Efforts are underway to develop a harmonized list of identifications that all participating

countries or international organizations accept, and also to create a non-harmonized list of identifications with an indication of which countries or international organizations accept each listed item. The USPTO seeks user input on the potential value of these projects to trademark owners who seek registration in multiple jurisdictions.

*Milestone – Medical Device Technology Partnership Meeting [**completed**]*

In November 2011, the USPTO hosted a Medical Device Technology Partnership Meeting to bring industry stakeholders and patent examiners and directors from Technology Center 3700 together to share ideas, experiences, and insights on best practices in advancing prosecution, and provide a forum for discussion on how the agency can improve and expand its relationship with the medical device technology community.

*Milestone - Public Meeting on Continuing Legal Education Programs on Trademark Policing Measures and Tactics [**completed**]*

In November 2011, the USPTO hosted a public meeting to discuss the feasibility of intellectual property associations providing continuing legal education programs focusing on trademark policing measures and tactics. The impetus for the discussion was the Trademark Technical and Conforming Amendment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-146), which President Obama signed on March 17, 2010. In addition to making technical changes to the trademark statute, this legislation required the Department of Commerce (DOC), in consultation with the Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, to study and report to Congress: (1) the extent to which small businesses may be harmed by abusive trademark enforcement tactics; and (2) the best use of Federal Government services to protect trademarks and prevent counterfeiting. A report submitted to Congress in April 2011 by the DOC included three recommendations, the second of which was to engage the private sector regarding continuing legal education programs focused on trademark policing measures and tactics. Accordingly, the USPTO convened this public meeting of interested intellectual property associations and other interested stakeholders to discuss the possibility of creating private sector continuing legal education programs regarding the proper protection of trademark rights.

*Milestone – Conference on Patent Statistics [**completed**]*

In November 2011, the USPTO hosted a conference on "Patent Statistics for Decision Makers" to explore advances in the analysis of patent information in the context of changing legal, economic, competitive, and technological landscapes. Patent data is increasingly used in sophisticated analyses, helping experts to investigate innovation, the advancement of science, and technology-related activities. Patent information is also employed by industry to do competitive analysis and to help plan R&D and technology strategies and in government to gather important information about the patent system and its performance. Advances in computing power and the availability of patent databases have expanded the possibilities for

conducting statistical analysis and research, while the demand for patent statistics is rising as economic performance is increasingly tied to technological innovation.

*Milestone – Public hearings on Prior User Rights Study and International Protection Study [**completed**]*

In October 2011, the USPTO released two Federal Register Notices seeking written comments and announcing two public hearings for two studies the agency is required to conduct under the America Invents Act. The USPTO reports for both studies are due in mid-January 2012.

"The objective of the written comments and hearings is to collect information from the public on the scope of the two studies," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO David Kappos. "Public participation in both the Prior User Rights Study and the International Patent Protection Study is necessary to assist the agency in preparing for Congress the most informed and accurate report possible." The public hearing on Prior User Rights Study took place in October at the USPTO's campus in Alexandria Virginia, to seek input on several topics including: experiences relating to the use of prior user rights in foreign jurisdictions; the frequency or regularity with which individuals engage in business abroad and opinions as to why prior user rights are or are not needed in the particular jurisdiction(s); experiences in analyzing the effect of prior user rights on innovation rates in selected countries; and views as to whether there are any legal or constitutional issues with placing trade secret law in United States patent law.

The public hearing on International Protection Study also took place in October at the USPTO's campus in Alexandria, Virginia, with an additional public hearing held at the University of Southern California in November. Input was requested on several topics including: how important is international patent protection to small business; at what point in the growth of small companies does international patent protection become important; what challenges interfere with the growth and competitiveness of small companies if international patent protection is not sought early in the innovation process; and what specific role does international patent protection play in the successful internationalization strategies (such as franchising, exporting, or foreign-direct-investment) of small businesses and does this role differ by industry or sector.

*Milestone – Roundtable on Streamlined Patent Reexamination Proceedings [**completed**]*

In June 2011, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) held a public roundtable to solicit public opinions on a number of changes being considered by the USPTO to streamline the procedures governing *ex parte* and *inter partes* reexamination proceedings. The changes are intended to achieve faster, more efficient resolution of the substantial new question of patentability (SNQ) for which reexamination is ordered. The changes being

considered may be divided into three categories: changes to both *ex parte* and *inter partes* reexaminations, changes specific to *ex parte* reexamination, and changes specific to *inter partes* reexamination. After considering public opinion on the matter, the USPTO may seek to adopt one or more of the proposed changes or a modified version thereof, or other changes suggested by the public, through a rule making or through internal operational changes as appropriate.

*Milestone – Roundtable on Trademark Disclaimer Practice [**completed**]*

In June 2011, the USPTO hosted a roundtable discussion on trademark disclaimers, featuring panelists representing different perspectives within the trademark community. Because the underlying basis for a disclaimer requirement often is the subject of differing viewpoints, both the USPTO and applicants may expend time and resources addressing and supporting these differing viewpoints. The roundtable addressed various possibilities with regard to disclaimers, ranging from eliminating disclaimers altogether, to requiring disclaimers regardless of unitariness, to maintaining the status quo. A short paper and a webcast of the event are available on the USPTO website at
http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/notices/initiatives_events.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.

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 (OS)

Office of the Secretary is the general management arm of the Department and provides the principal support to the Secretary in formulating policy and in providing advice to the President. It provides program leadership for the Department's functions and exercises general supervision over the operating units. It also directly carries out program functions as may be assigned by the Secretary, and provides, as determined to be more economic or efficient, administrative and other support services for designated operating units. The Office of the Secretary consists of the Secretary, certain Secretarial Officers, designated staff immediately serving those officials, and a number of "Departmental offices" which have Department-wide functions or perform special program functions directly on behalf of the Secretary.

The table below shows a list of initiatives for *Office of the Secretary (OS)*

Table 14 - OS Initiatives

Operating Unit	Project	Status	Estimated / Actual Completion
Office of the Secretary	**Publishing Public Schedule Data for Secretary Online**	**On-hold**	4th Quarter 2012
	Expanding Video Streaming for More Commerce Meetings	**Canceled budget**	N/A

- *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, this was originally planned to begin posting it on Commerce.gov and Data.gov by the end of 2010. Currently the public schedule is tweeted out via

@CommerceSec but is not available on the website. The department is working to integrate this feature with a target of 4th Quarter 2012.

- ***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 had planned to meet core new media objectives relative to streaming meetings or events in 2011. However, due to budget this objective has been canceled until such time that it is economically feasible.

How Commerce will Identify and Publicly Release More Information

*E*ffective 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

*A*ll 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

*T*he 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 Nataional 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. 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 new 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, 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 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/FOIAWeb site.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.

FOIA Lifecycle Review Process

Commerce used a lifecycle approach to build a way ahead for our FOIA processing. The current environment was made up of various FOIA processes. The department itself is a decentralized environment consisting of 12 individual bureaus/operating units, plus the Office of the Secretary (OS) and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Two operating units share one FOIA lead. The actual FOIA work environment utilized pen and paper, Government Off-The-Shelf (GOTS) spreadsheets and simple databases, and COTS for processing and tracking FOIAs. In this

environment, the department utilized a departmental FOIA officer and 13 FOIA leads to facilitate and orchestrate the FOIA processing.

In order to improve FOIA processing, the department began a review of existing processes and tools in order to develop a long-range plan to streamline and expedite FOIA processing. During this review, it was noted that the overall volume of the department was low in relationship to the volume of other departments. While reviewing this workload, it was found that improving the tracking was the first major hurdle in order to manage mandatory reporting to the Department of Justice and to decrease chronic and significant backlogs. The long-range goal was to find an integrated tracking system which would allow full electronic workflow with information sharing throughout the department and if possible across federal agencies that work on overlapping policy areas. Those areas confuse requesters, thus causing requests to move around and cause further delays. In making this a long-term objective, the department determined they would be able to build on existing best practices while looking forward to accomplish streamline workflow with electronic publication.

The review formulated the following:

- Need for Improved Tracking and Reporting
- Developed Strategy
    - Find Immediate Interim Solution
    - Develop Target End-State Goals
    - Find a way to achieve the End-State
- Results
    - Interim – FOIA Tracking Access Database
    - End-State – Partnered Developed Integrated FOIA Tracking Module

FOIA Review and Results

Commerce found its environment contained FOIA offices using pen and paper, spreadsheets, GOTS Access databases, and COTS being utilized for tracking and reporting. Based on the results of the review, it was determined that an interim solution could be developed from existing GOTS Access databases to a single solution for those who were utilizing pen and paper, spreadsheets, and GOTS Access databases.

In order to create a timely interim solution, the Access databases were evaluated. It was determined that three of them had critical features for tracking and reporting and that a hybrid of the three would be the best in terms of a solution. This hybrid was developed and deployed for utilization during FY 2012. This database was also made available free to any federal agency that wanted to utilize or review its capabilities. It should be noted that this database is only an automated tracking system with general reporting capabilities.

The sub agency utilizing the COTS product had a significant investment as well as a streamlined workflow which made it capable of meeting all the goals and objectives for departmental reporting. The cost of the COTS product to become a viable departmental solution was too great in the current reduced budget environment. This sub agency agreed that as they proceed in their program lifecycle that they will review the capabilities and cost-effectiveness of moving to a different solution when appropriate. This is normal in a program lifecycle managed process.

In part of the review and evaluation to find a long-term solution, the agency looked into government-wide efforts and found that none existed. The review determined that the ongoing developmental work at Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) showed promise in all aspects to achieve the department mid-term and long-range objectives with a planned cost model that was palatable to the budget constraints faced by the federal government. Review of the EPA proposal for a FOIA module led the department to determine that a partnership would be appropriate for its long-term objectives. In moving to an automated tracking and processing system with a web-based public interface, the Department will increase transparency and collaboration by allowing requesters to easily submit a request and track their progress. This process will allow the department to achieve its long-range goal of an integrated FOIA system that allows full workflow management along with NARA compliant electronics records management of FOIA request and responses. The FOIA Module will help to streamline and improve efficiency of the Department's internal processes by moving requests electronically through a Department-defined workflow that will also collects metrics for reporting and status publication. Utilizing a web-based shared service environment [Software as a Service (SaaS)], the Department will achieve considerable cost savings over commercial tools which require expensive licenses and separate maintenance contracts. There is more on the FOIA Module under the Flagship Initiative section in this plan.

Declassification of Records

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

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. This site is regularly updated with fresh content from across Commerce. 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). This capability assists 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.

Social Media Use

*T*he Department's current use of Facebook, 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:

- Creation and publishing of 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 was completed in 2011. A continual review and ongoing assessment of this guidance will ensure that Commerce stays current on changes in the environment and the impact of those changes on information and knowledge sharing;

- Develop a system that allows Departmental officials to monitor official social media usage to ensure the adequacy and appropriateness of interaction with the public; and

- 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.

Responsiveness

*C*ommerce's open government work is continuing to focus 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

*C*ommerce 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. The flagship initiative section is laid out to cover flagship initiatives previously undertaken by the Department as well as new flagship initiatives the Department is undertaking.

Previous Flagship Initiatives

*T*his section of the flagship initiatives covers those initiatives from version 1 of the Commerce Open Government Plan. These initiatives have been implemented and are under continuing lifecycle management by their perspective operating units within the department.

Deepwater Horizon Response Tracking

*T*he 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 Website – 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 Gulf Response site houses ERMA Gulf Response Web site (http://gomex.erma.noaa.gov) 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
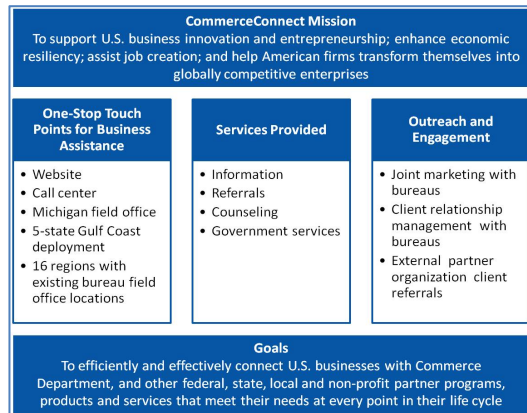
Figure 1 - Complementary Missions

*B*usinesses 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 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.

Figure 2 - Commerce Business Assistance Programs

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 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

Figure 3 - Common Client Challenges

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.

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

Figure 4 – CommerceConnect Overall Performance

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.
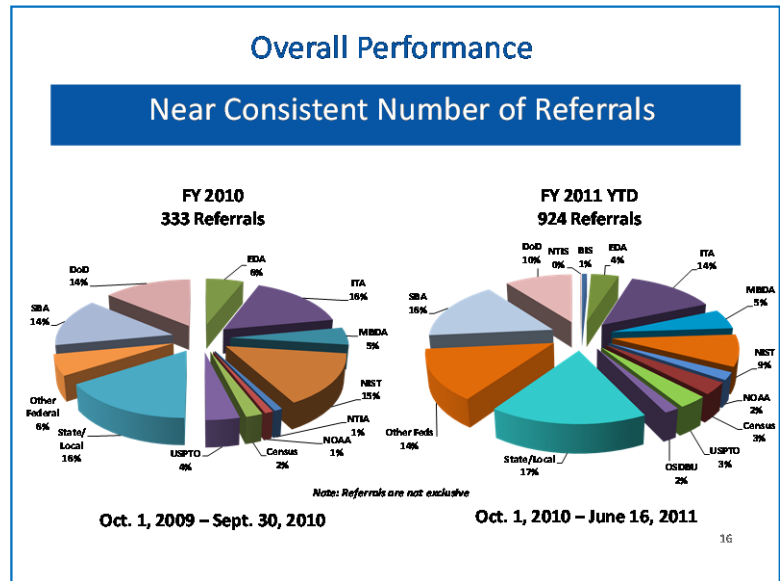
National Export Initiative (NEI)

*N*EI 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 involved the creation of an Export Promotion Cabinet that reports to the President and involves 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 is 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 included 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

*C*ommerce'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. 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.

New Flagship Initiatives

*T*his section of the flagship initiatives covers those initiatives that are new for version 2 of the Commerce Open Government Plan. These initiatives are in support of the Department core mission that creates the conditions for economic growth and opportunity by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and stewardship informed by world-class scientific research and information.

BusinessUSA

*O*ver the past three years, the government has spoken with thousands of business owners and officials across the government to hear what works and what doesn't when you deal with the government. Entrepreneurs – especially small business owners – stated that they do not have the time or resources to navigate the complex maze of government agencies and need a one stop shop where they can locate all the assistance needed during every stage of their business development.

BusinessUSA is an interagency effort, which is focused on improving the way business interacts with the federal government as a means to support growth and jobs creation. The interagency team is made up of Office of Management and Budget (0MB), Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of the Treasury (DOTreas), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Small Business Administration (SBA), Import-Export Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and General Services Administration (GSA) worked together on an initiative to meet the goals of the October 28, 2011, Presidential Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies entitled "Making it Easier for America's Small Businesses and America's Exporters to Access Government Services to

Help them Grow and Hire," that directs a first wave of changes focused on both small businesses and businesses of all sizes that want to begin or increase exporting including the creation of BusinessUSA, a centralized online platform with a diverse mix of program information and other resources within the first 90 days. While the efforts to achieve near-term goals were being worked by the interagency team a second effort in parallel was working to establish midrange and long-term plan that would focus on sustainability and further outreach across all business communities thereby enabling the United States to make strides forward in the jobs creation and business sustainment arena.

BusinessUSA is a new online platform, to help businesses and exporters of all sizes find information about available federal programs without having to waste time and resources navigating the federal bureaucracy. BusinessUSA is about providing great customer service and giving Americans the government they deserve.

Today, BusinessUSA combines information and services from 10 different government agencies through one consolidated website and coordinate telephone support that utilizes a single 800#. The BusinessUSA Web site already presents hundreds of business resources, in one online location.

This "No Wrong Door" approach for businesses and exporters is generated by creating a common platform to match businesses with the services relevant to them, regardless of where the information is located or which agency's website, call center, or office they go to for help. BusinessUSA is a platform designed to make it easier than ever for businesses to access services enabling them grow and hire from the day they need technical assistance to start a business, continuing on to the day they start building a product and need financing, all the way through the day they are ready to export and need help breaking into new markets overseas.

BusinessUSA is intended to modernize the federal government's web presence and help streamline the process for today's innovators and entrepreneurs allowing them to access information enabling their ability to make better decisions.

Designed from the ground up with the customer in mind, BusinessUSA was built with the active feedback of U.S. businesses and relevant online communities and, to the extent possible, and continues encouraging businesses to provide feedback that can be incorporate as the site is refined. BusinessUSA website provides an easy-to-use mechanism to provide feedback directly and utilizes the information provided to maximize the capabilities made available to customers. For example, as BusinessUSA moves forward, it will integrate related state and local government services, as well as those of private sector partners.

As more federal agencies publish content through web services, the more BusinessUSA will be able to highlight the most relevant information and programs from across the government.

Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) Module/Portal

*C*ommerce is partnering with EPA and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to develop a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Module/Portal that will offer substantial cost savings and enhance capabilities over existing government FOIA systems.   The FOIA Module/Portal will provide a single interface through which the public can submit requests to any participating agency, eliminating the need to find the contact information for multiple agencies.   The system will automatically assign tracking numbers to requests, which the requester could use to automatically view the status of the request, eliminating the need to wait for manual replies from agencies.   Agencies will also be able to generate e-mails to requesters through the system to seek clarifying information or send invoices for fees, reducing mail delays and postage costs.   When an agency identifies records responsive to a request, it will have the ability to add them to the system.   Consultations and referrals to other agencies will occur within the system for participating agencies, reducing the need to send documents around.   Because the current consultation and referral process is a frequent source of delays and dead-ends for FOIA requests, improvements in timeliness here will be very welcome.   Released documents can be uploaded to a public website, and the requester would be notified of their availability.   This critical feature will improve transparency by making released documents fully available to the general public, rather than delivered only to the requester.   It will also stop agencies from processing multiple requests for the same materials over and over.   The FOIA module will supply the participating agencies a fully compliant records management system, the ability to collect metrics throughout the workflow process as defined by the agency, and it will generate full Department of Justice Annual Report automatically.

The core functionality for the FOIA module can be found in Table 15 – FOIA Module/Portal Agency Core Functionality.

Table 15 - FOIA Module/Portal Agency Core Functionality

FOIA Module/Portal Agency Core Functionality	
Accept Requests Online	• Allow requester to pre-populate their information • Provide status to requesters • Create communications (i.e. letters via email) between agencies and requesters

FOIA Module/Portal Agency Core Functionality

Track Requests in a Case File	• Process and track FOIA request • Break down requests into multiple tasks • Multi-track processing (Simple, Complex, Expedited) • Track time spent on requests (the list shifts from starting with –ing words to not… breaking down, track, assign…) • Assign case numbers • Start and stop the clock according to rules • Keep an online folder of all documents related to a request (*including notifications to requesters*)
Manage Deadlines	• Start/Stop the clock • Generate backlog reports • Monitor workload • Notify FOIA professionals based on 10- and 20-day deadlines • Close cases when fees are not paid (*according to business rules*)
Calculate Fees	• Track fees and fee waiver processing • Generate invoices • Deduct what is free of charge (i.e. first 100 pages) • Manually adjust recorded time • Distinguish between search and review time
Research and Upload Records	• Store consultations, referrals, and letters • Send tasks to others with instructions about which records to search • Upload scanned documents
Publish Electronic Records	• Review/sign the case file to approve redactions and fee calculations • Issue Partial/incremental releases • Send system-generated email notifications to requesters
Accept Appeals Online	• Track status and outcome of litigation and appeals • Issue supplemental release after appeal • Forward copies of processing to Appeals unit
Prepare the Annual Report	• Prepare the report in the required format with the required data structure • Use dashboards to display these metrics throughout the year, including trends
Search and Retrieve	• Searching (including metadata and full-text)

Geospatial Platform

NOAA's Geospatial Platform provides NOAA customers, partners, and staff members with a centralized platform for discovering and accessing much of NOAA's distributed geospatial data, services, and applications. The NOAA Geospatial Platform is supportive of the national

Geospatial Platform, an initiative based in the Fiscal Year 2011 Presidential Budget, with the goal of ultimately increasing access to geospatial data, is designed to become a component of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The Platform will offer access to trusted geospatial data, services, applications, and infrastructure assets. By delivering access to geospatial assets that are built once and used many times, the Platform will increase information sharing across various levels of government and the private sector, allowing for the reuse and adaptation of geospatial assets. This multi-purposing and availability of assets can lead to cost-savings, wider use of geospatial capabilities, and higher quality assets.

The NOAA Geospatial Platform is based on a commercial GIS Portal product, and was released internally to NOAA staff in February and is currently in its content population phase. In addition to making content available to the public, the site also allows for internal collaboration among NOAA's geospatial community via private groups. Within these private groups, NOAA staff may add, create, and share content of similar themes (e.g., severe weather, sea level rise, ocean observations, etc.) with their colleagues. In addition to facilitating data discovery and access, the NOAA Geospatial Platform also provides users with a collaborative, web-based mapping application that allows users to visualize trusted NOAA data with their own data sets. The project team will begin advertising the site to the public beginning in April 2012.

VI.   Conclusion

*D*epartment 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 – 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.

Open Government Initiative

TRANSPARENCY • PARTICIPATION • COLLABORATION

DATA.GOV

EMPOWERING PEOPLE

OPEN GOV

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
OPEN GOVERNMENT PLAN

PUBLISHED MARCH 2012