

U.S. Department of Transportation FY 2006 E-Government Act Report

1. Provide a brief overview of your agency's implementation of the Act including a description of an internal agency-specific E-Government initiative. The description of the initiative must:

- Describe how the initiative is transforming agency operations;
- Explain how your agency maintains an ongoing dialogue with interested parties to find innovative ways to use information technology for the initiative;
- Identify external partners (e.g., Federal, State or local agencies, industry) who collaborate on the initiative;
- Identify improved performance (e.g., outcome measures) by tracking performance measures supporting agency objectives and strategic goals;
- Quantify the cost savings and cost avoidance achieved through implementing the initiative (e.g., reducing or eliminating other investments in information technology); and
- Explain how this initiative ensures the availability of government information and services for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities.

In FY 2006, the Department of Transportation (DOT) addressed core reporting requirements of the E-Government Act of 2002 as follows:

- *The status of implementing electronic government initiatives:* DOT continues to be an active participant and leader in implementing the President's Management Agenda, e-Government initiatives. This includes implementing e-Authentication, e-Payroll, e-Training, Integrated Acquisition Environment, e-Travel, GovBenefits and Business Gateway. This leadership and support will continue as these efforts are fully implemented over the next couple of years.
- *Compliance by DOT with the E-Gov Act of 2002:* DOT participates in the implementation of e-Gov initiatives, ensuring that privacy provisions are followed, monitors its websites for Section 508 compliance, and ensures the security of information, networks, etc.
- *How electronic government initiatives of the agency improve performance in delivering programs to constituencies:* DOT promoted and maintained an ongoing dialogue with interested parties to find innovative ways to use IT. DOT achieved this by working with vendors to find better ways to serve its customers and employees. An example of this is the Federal Highway Administration's, Application Access Redesign Project described below. In addition, DOT improved Service Delivery through Teamwork and Collaboration. DOT achieved this by working in collaboration with State governments to improve efficiency and effectiveness in government. An example is the Federal Motor Carrier's Electronic Document Management System described below.

Federal Highway Administration's, Application Access Redesign Project:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has a large number of external customers who need to use FHWA applications. This ever-increasing external customer base includes State Department of Transportation (DOT) partners, State Highway Departments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and other Federal Agencies. In FY 2006, the FHWA made a major change to the way our enterprise applications are accessed by external customers. This project is called Application Access Redesign (AAR). Until now, the Federal-aid program and other applications that are essential to FHWA's core business process have been accessible to FHWA's external customers only through a private pay-for-service network called AAMVANet. AAMVANet is based on outdated, 1980's-vintage technology. In addition, use of AAMVANet requires complex configuration of communications technology and close coordination of federal data communications and security personnel with their counterparts in external customer organizations. In an effort to improve program availability, security, and access, FHWA has taken an important step in its journey to realizing the benefits of e-technology with AAR, which permits access to Federal-aid partners through the Internet, and which has rendered the current AAMVANet network as optional.

In addition, until now, FHWA's increasingly mobile workforce has had to rely on a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection to access Federal-aid and other applications remotely, such as when they are traveling or telecommuting. There is a charge for VPN, use of VPN requires that software be loaded on the workstation, and use of VPN is complex for non-technical customers. AAR permits remote access to FHWA personnel through the Internet without the use of VPN.

By using the Internet, AAR has made access to Federal-aid and other applications easier, less expensive, and more flexible while still maintaining an acceptable level of security. Under AAR, external customers and FHWA personnel using remote access need only a web browser to access FHWA applications. The complexities and expense associated with AAMVANet and VPN are no longer necessary.

Federal Motor Carrier's Electronic Document Management System:

A major initiative at FMCSA in FY2006 has been to streamline the management of records throughout the Agency by transitioning an increasing number of documents and processes into the Agency's Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). EDMS is a self-contained, online system that allows for advanced retrieval, transmission, and archiving for Agency records.

The success of this E-Government initiative has been due to the ongoing dialogue between the FMCSA Office of Information Technology and other groups within the Agency. Moreover, the Agency involved its safety enforcement personnel, administrative support and customers to identify their document access needs and other elements of their regular work flows.

EDMS is in compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disability Act. EDMS users are government employees with assigned computer workstations and internet access, and there are procedures in place for providing requested documentation to citizens on an as requested basis.

The system has had a transformative effect, significantly reducing the time and expense involved in the transfer, scanning, storage and retrieval of records, particularly those dealing with safety enforcement and compliance review. There have also been cost savings and avoidance through automation of records management processes and more efficient storage and supervision.

2. Describe your process for determining which information will be made available on your agency's public website and the Internet as required in Section 207(f)(2) of the Act. Your description must:

DOT is a diverse organization comprised of the Office of the Secretary, the Surface Transportation Board, the Office of the Inspector General and 10 Operating Administrations, each with varying processes for prioritization and posting agency information. DOT Operating Administrations include:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
- Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA)
- Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC)
- Maritime Administration (MARAD)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

While specific processes for determining what information is posted to the internet and when will vary by each Operating Administration, there is a standard set by DOT policy that sets a guideline for the Department as a whole. This policy requires each Operating Administration to make all accurate, final version non-classified information that supports the mission of the organization, available to the public via the Internet, provided that information is not prohibited by any laws or regulations from being posted.

Processes for determining what information to make available to the public vary depending on the size and structure of each DOT organization. Requests to make new or modified information available to the public stem from a variety of sources, such as the content owner or a request or question received from a web site visitor. In addition, members of DOT organizations meet regularly to discuss changes and updates to their web sites, including updating and adding content as it becomes available. Each organization individually determines what approval is necessary to allow posting information to public web sites to be sure no information that is classified prohibited by law is mistakenly posted. These include weekly meetings to discuss and approve information or formal written requests requiring signature validation.

Organizations also utilize a variety of tools and input to determine what information to make available on their sites, such as usability studies, surveys, web site feedback and other methods. For example, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT's largest organization, utilized a website customer satisfaction survey that asked web visitors what information they were looking

for when visiting the site and used the results of this survey to determine what information to provide to the public. DOT has also found that including the opinions expressed by the public in determining what information to post on DOT web sites is the most effective way of providing web site users with the information they are looking for.

DOT has also conducted customer satisfaction surveys and a full usability study to better structure the Departmental Web site and provide documents requested by the public. DOT strives to post information in a timely manner after it has been developed or released and many DOT organizations post alerts or have banners on their web sites to notify visitors that new information is available for viewing.

Include a copy of the priorities and schedules for making your information available and accessible.

Copies of the priorities and schedules for DOT and each of DOT's operating administrations have been attached to this report.

Explain how and when such final determinations, priorities, and schedules were available for public notice and comment;

Priorities and schedules were made available for public notice and comments by links posted on the homepages of DOT Operating Administrations' web sites. This was an FY2005 effort, with final completion across all DOT web sites in September 2005.

DOT regularly reviews emails and questions submitted through the web sites to determine if there is additional information that would be helpful to users visiting the site and how to best publish this information.

Provide the link where final determinations, priorities, and schedules can be found on your principal Federal agency public website; and

DOT's priorities and schedules can be located at the following link:
<http://www.dot.gov/webpublishing.htm>. This web page also contains links to the priorities and schedules for each of DOT's Operating Administrations' main web sites.

Identify progress to date for permitting searching of all files intended for public use on the website, displaying search results in order of relevancy to search criteria, and providing response times appropriately equivalent to industry best practices.

DOT has made the Google Search Engine available to all Operating Administrations to use on their Web sites, to facilitate the search of the files on their web site. This engine delivers documents using a ranking algorithm that supplies the documents in order of relevancy to the search term, with response time equivalent to industry best practices. It is published DOT policy that all public web sites contain a search function that is equivalent or better to the Google search engine that is in use.

All but two organizations within DOT have implemented to date the Google Search Engine or are planning for implementation during FY2006. The exceptions are two smaller web sites, for

which more basic search solutions have been implemented to better search the limited number of pages contained in the site.

A majority of the organizations have opted to make the function available in their page frames, meaning the search engine is available on all pages of their web site. In addition, several of the larger DOT organizations have undertaken an effort to determine what information is most important to the visitors that frequent their web sites through usability studies, surveys, web site feedback and other methods. The result of these analyses has been the restructuring of the web sites to facilitate the timely location of documents and modification of the search function to prioritize search results according to the most frequently requested types of documents.

3. Describe how your agency's information dissemination activities are coordinated with its FOIA operations in order to improve both access to and dissemination of government information to the public. Your description must include a link to your agency's Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan and FOIA Improvement Plan. You must also describe specifically how you are fulfilling your responsibilities under three provisions of the Act:

- **Section 207(d), "Categorizing of Information;"**
- **Section 207(e), "Public Access to Electronic Information;"** and

As stated in DOT 2006-2011 IRM Plan

(<http://cio.ost.dot.gov/DOT/OST/Documents/files/irmplanfy2006.doc>), information is a critical Departmental resource, second only to human resources. This is a major challenge in and among itself because it is vital not only to DOT's daily operations, but is also an essential element in fulfilling our mission to ensure the safe, effective and secure operation of the entire transportation system. Further, in the course of our work, DOT generates a wide variety of information and information products for public use. Some DOT information products can and do have a clear and substantial impact on important public policies and private sector decisions. Pursuant with Section 515 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (PL 106-554), the CIO has implemented Agency-wide Information Quality guidelines that establish and apply high standards of quality to government information prior to public dissemination to maximize the quality, utility, objectivity, and integrity of the information. The guidelines also guarantee affected members of the public the opportunity to request correction of perceived misinformation. Dissemination activities are also coordinated with DOT's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) operations.

The FOIA home pages for the Department and its operating administrations provide electronic (web) access to a variety of departmental information through electronic reading rooms and links to various departmental web sites.

The Departmental FOIA Officer and the CIO's office meet quarterly to discuss the impact and potential benefits of various E-Government initiatives on the Department's FOIA program. Meetings include topics such as information dissemination, web publishing schedules, categorization, and data quality. The Department provides links to these various ongoing activities on its FOIA home page to help FOIA requesters find information that is available without a FOIA request.

In its FOIA Action Improvement Plan (www.dot.gov/foia), the Department outlines a strategy for making electronically available those records described in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2). The plan also calls for a review and sharing of “best practices” in the area of proactively posting information on departmental web sites. These activities will be completed by the Departmental FOIA office in close coordination with the CIO’s office. The FOIA requester community will benefit from the resulting increased proactive posting of information on the Department’s websites.

In addition, DOT is addressing improved dissemination and categorization of information through development and use of its enterprise architecture. DOT’s Data Architecture components includes a taxonomy (data categories), data models and standards to support public access and interchange of government information. The DOT Data Architecture aligns with Federal requirements, such as the Data Reference Model, and cross governmental standards, to accomplish improved search ability of transportation information across agencies in a cost effective, collaborative manner.

- **If your agency funds Federal research and development (R&D) activities, Section 207(g), “Access to Federally Funded Research and Development,” including how your R&D information is available through Radius, Science.gov, or other means.**

Operating Administration	R&D Program	Links for websites where R&D information is posted	Type of information posted (<i>Refer to codes below</i>)
FAA	AST Research Program	http://ast.faa.gov/aboutast/r_and_d.htm	F-AST R&D Plan
FAA	Reusable Launch Vehicle Operations and Maintenance	http://ast.faa.gov/files/pdf/RLV_OM_Guidelines_revD_032905_final.pdf	F-AST Research Report
FAA	Reusable Launch Vehicle Safety Validation and Verification Plan	http://ast.faa.gov/files/pdf/VV_Guide_9-30-03.pdf	F-AST Research Report
FAA	Flight Safety Systems	http://ast.faa.gov/files/pdf/DO3_Report_final.pdf	F-AST Research Report
FAA	FAA Research Program	http://research.faa.gov	F- R&D WEBSITE LINKS
FHWA	FHWA Research, Development, and Technology Program	http://www.tfrc.gov/	B, F- RD&T's FY 2006/2007 Performance Plan
FHWA	Research Project Status Summary	http://www.tfrc.gov/about/06084/index.htm	A, B
FHWA	Corporate Master Plan for Research and Deployment of Technology & Innovation	http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/policy/cmp/03077.htm	F- guiding principles, commitments, and key actions for FHWA research
FHWA	Research Categories	http://www.tfrc.gov/research.htm	B
FHWA	R&D Facilities and Test Equipment	http://www.tfrc.gov/about/labs.htm	B
FHWA	Transportation Pooled Fund Program	http://www.tfrc.gov/site/active.htm	B

Operating Administration	R&D Program	Links for websites where R&D information is posted	Type of information posted (Refer to codes below)
FHWA	FHWA Research, Development, and Technology Program	http://www.tfhr.gov/	B, F- RD&T's FY 2006/2007 Performance Plan
FMCSA	FMCSA Research Program	http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/facts-research/facts-research.htm	A, B, C, E, F - R&T Strategic Plan, reports, briefs, events calendar
FMCSA	CVISN	http://cvisn.fmcsa.dot.gov	B, C, F – reports, summaries, events calendar
FTA	FTA National Research and Technology Program	http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/StrategicResearchPlan.doc	F-Strategic R&D Plan
FTA	FTA National Research and Technology Program	http://www.fta.dot.gov/research.html	F – General information
FTA	FTA National Research and Technology Program	http://rip.trb.org/	A, B, C, D, E
FTA	FTA Transit Cooperative Research Program	http://rip.trb.org/	A, B, C, D, E
PHMSA	Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program	http://hazmat.dot.gov (Content has been developed and is awaiting approval. It is expected to be posted in the near future, at which time a more specific website address can be provided. Parallel TRB coverage was initiated on September 7, 2006 at http://www4.trb.org/trb/crp.nsf/reference/appendices/HMCRP+Overview)	A, B, C, D, E
PHMSA	Pipeline Safety Research & Development Program	http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/matrix/	A, B, C, D, E
RITA	University Transportation Centers Program	http://utc.dot.gov/	A, B, C, D F - Program history, research results, university themes, brochure
RITA	Hydrogen Portal	http://www.rita.dot.gov/agencies_and_offices/research/hydrogen_portal/index.html	B F- Hydrogen Roadmap
RITA	Volpe National Transportation Systems Center	http://www.volpe.dot.gov/	A, B, C, F- research reports, strategic plans, SBIR awards, general information
NHTSA	Enhanced Stability Control	http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/vrtc/ca/esc.htm	B
NHTSA	Biomechanics	http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/vrtc/bio/vrtc_bio.htm	B, C
NHTSA	Human Crash Simulation	http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-	B

Operating Administration	R&D Program	Links for websites where R&D information is posted	Type of information posted (Refer to codes below)
		50/HumanCenteredResearch.html	
NHTSA	CIREN	http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-50/ciren/CIREN.html	B
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration Research and Development Programs	http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/226	A, B, C
FRA	FRA Research Reports	http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/1621	A, B, C, E
FRA	FRA Research Results	http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/917	A, B, C

Type of information posted

Code A - the dates upon which the task or award is expected to start and end;

Code B - a brief summary describing the objective and the scientific and technical focus of the task or award;

Code C - the entity or institution performing the task or award and its contact information;

Code D - the total amount of Federal funds expected to be provided to the task or award over its lifetime and the amount of funds expected to be provided in each fiscal year in which the work of the task or award is ongoing;

Code E - any restrictions attached to the task or award that would prevent the sharing with the general public of any or all of the information required by this subsection, and the reasons for such restrictions; and

Code F – other information, please specify

In addition to the information listed above, the Department’s Budget Office annually provides information to Radius and Science.gov.