Recommendations for Agency Open Government Plans

Include plans for increasing proactive disclosure and improving FOIA performance

The Open Government Directive, which created the agency open government plans, emphasized that agencies should both publish useful information online proactively as well as strive for improvements in disclosure in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The open government community places high importance on both issues. We hope that each agency's plan will describe the agency's process for identifying, prioritizing, and posting proactive disclosures on its website (or include an initiative to develop a proactive disclosure process). Additionally, we hope that each plan will outline the agency's goals for improving or sustaining its performance in providing information under FOIA, including responsibly reducing backlogs.

> *Examples to consider:* DHS[1], OPM[2]

Consider tackling one of the "open government challenges"

(See enclosure)

Make plans as specific and clearly understandable as possible

If we can't understand the description of an agency's planned initiative or if the plan is significantly lacking in detail, it's hard to provide meaningful feedback or effectively monitor the status of the initiative. While some initiatives may be nascent and not yet well-defined, in general it is helpful to be specific in the plan description and to be mindful of the plan's public audience in avoiding jargon.

> *Examples to consider:* USDA,[3] Department of Commerce[4]

Use the agency's /open page to solicit ideas and communicate updates

Consultation with stakeholders, including the open government community, is an important aspect in developing an effective open government plan. One simple way to have a more effective consultation is to solicit ideas through the agency's /open page.

Of course, the point of writing an open government plan is not merely to have a plan, but to develop ideas for implementation within the agency. In order to keep stakeholders updated about the plan's implementation, agencies should post regular status updates on their /open pages.

> *Examples to consider:* EPA,[5] NASA[6]

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[1] See pp. 19-20, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/dhs-open-government-plan-v2.pdf
[2] See p. 21, http://www.opm.gov/about-us/open-government/reference-materials/governmentplan_v20.pdf
[3] http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-open-gov-plan-v2.0.pdf
[4] http://open.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/DOC Open Government Plan v 2_0_2012-04-03 Final_0.pdf
[5] http://www2.epa.gov/open/track-our-progress-quarterly-reports-and-highlights
[6] http://open.nasa.gov/plan/progress/