

We appreciate the public interest and willingness to contribute to our effort to evaluate open government at federal agencies. We are heartened by the number of times this framework has been visited by web users and shared with friends. We are particularly heartened that we have received thoughtful and substantive feedback from the open government community.

We received one recommendation that the list of participating organizations be expanded to include more people from the participation and collaboration communities. We have been in open contact with several national organizations and experts from those communities throughout this process, although they have not signed on as official participants. We welcome participation from anyone with a commitment to increasing the federal government's openness, participation, and collaboration. To get involved in this project, please contact afuller@openthegovernment.org.

The section on "Web Accessibility" garnered the most comments. We agree that the title could be confusing given that it is commonly used when discussing accessibility for disabled users. The section has been re-titled, "'Usability and Technical Openness.'" The description for the evaluation in this section is admittedly general at this point, and we appreciate many of the technical comments we received regarding standards for this section. We are passing all of these comments along to the institution that has agreed to head up this evaluation, the Armstrong Institute for Interactive Media Studies at Miami University of Ohio. We expect results of the evaluation before the end of the year.

We also received substantive several comments on the "Core Accountability" section. In response to the observation that several of the items on the list are broad, vague, or could be interpreted in different ways, our partner, OMB Watch, is coordinating work to better define the type of information that an "open" agency should make available, and is adding examples of agencies making the information available, where possible. A new draft is available here:

<http://www.openthegovernment.org/otg/ExpandedFloor.pdf>

Directions for our volunteer evaluators will specify that if information is not found on an agency's website after 5 minutes, an item cannot be considered "satisfied;" however, it may still be "partially satisfied." The directions will also include specific instructions on how the search should be conducted.

We appreciate that there are items on this list some people care about more than others. Also, people will disagree on what is most important. The items on this list are not weighted so as to avoid that value judgment. When we produce our results, however, we will strive to make the data available in as open a format as possible. Users hopefully will be able to sort and re-use our data to reflect their interests and priorities.

On the "Progress Against Plan" section, we received both substantive and technical comments. On the technical side, the framework is arranged to stress the importance not only of agencies meeting deadlines, but also thinking about the use and impact of their efforts to become more open, participatory, and collaborative. The "technical" answer also relates to some of the substantive comments we received. Our aspiration is by asking agencies to evaluate the "use" and "impact" along with "availability," there is less of a likelihood that weak, unambitious, plans that are easily met will score well overall. Ambitious agencies will likely be rewarded in the "use" and "impact" categories.

We also appreciate the comments regarding how to encourage agencies to give an honest assessment of their performance. All agency self-evaluations will be reviewed by our volunteer evaluators, many of whom have a relationship with the agency.

While some of the other comments we received are substantive and valuable, they are outside the current purview of this project. For example, it is hard to analytically measure an agency's response to whistleblower complaints.