

February 29, 2000

SECY-00-0052

For: The Commissioners

From: Stuart Reiter /RA/
Acting Chief Information Officer

Subject: RESPONSE TO SRM 001109A RESULTING FROM MEETING HELD
NOVEMBER 9, 1999, ON NRC INTERACTIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON
MATERIALS AND WASTE ACTIVITIES

Purpose: To inform the Commission of the status and completion plan for Item 5 of SRM
991109A, concerning "NRC Web Page and Access to Information".

Discussion:

As a result of a public meeting on NRC interactions with stakeholders on materials and waste activities, the Commission directed the staff to provide the status of three activities. These activities, on-going actions, status, and completion plans are discussed below.

(1) Improving NRC's Web site

Action:

- In conjunction with current efforts underway to improve the NRC web site, review other major web sites (such as but not limited to OSHA, EPA, cadc.uscourts.gov, and thomas.loc.gov web pages) as models for possible improvements of the NRC site.

Status:

The OCIO, in coordination with the Program Offices and Regions, will evaluate NRC's web site and 20 other sites, including those mentioned in the SRM and 16 other sites selected by Government Executive Magazine ("Best Feds on the Web," October 20, 1999) as Top Federal Sites for 1999. The criteria we plan to use are based, in part, on those used by Government

Contact:
Francine F. Goldberg, OCIO
301-415-7545

Executive Magazine in its evaluation. We will involve the members of NRC's Web Redesign Working Group, composed of representatives of the offices and regions, in this process. The criteria we plan to use fall into the following broad categories: content (including degree of orientation to stakeholders), navigation and searching, content maintenance, and design and layout.

Action:

- Solicit the views of stake holders who are frequent users of NRC's and other web sites as well as the views of others with experience retrieving information from the web, such as members of the general public, researchers, and representatives of the library community. The staff should actively meet and hold discussions with these individuals in the development of an improved NRC web site.

Status:

The OCIO will involve external stakeholders in a series of workshops or focus groups and hands-on usability studies prior to and during the development of the design prototype. The OCIO has contacted the Executive Director of the Library of Congress /Federal Library and Information Center Committee about their willingness to participate in stakeholder workshops to assess the NRC public web site. Their initial response is that they are willing to participate. The OCIO will also involve the following categories of outside stakeholders: licensees, students and teachers, members of public interest groups, media representatives, and others. Members of the Web Redesign Working Group will also participate in these meetings.

Action:

- Work with the new NRC Communications Manager to identify and implement goals for the public site to support NRC's strategic plan.

Status:

The OCIO briefed the NRC Communications Manager on December 14, 1999, about implementing the site redesign to accommodate the goals for the public site to support NRC's Strategic Plan, and will continue to coordinate Web redesign activities with him to ensure that they support the agency's overall communications plans and strategies. The Communications Manager is also actively involved in the Web Redesign Working Group. The OCIO has developed site objectives that are directly linked to the agency's performance goals. These objectives (attached) have been provided for comment to the offices and regions and were also discussed, reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Council on February 15, 2000.

Action:

- Ensure that the public Web site is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Status:

The OCIO reviewed and revised the public web site for ADA compliance in March 1999 in response to a request for such a review by the Department of Justice. The OCIO has also included a summary of legal requirements, that includes ADA compliance, in the Statement of Work for the web site redesign contract.

Completion Plan for Improving NRC's Public Web site:

- Develop web objectives that support the NRC Strategic Plan (complete, see Attachment)
- Benchmark NRC public Web site against 20 top Federal sites (Q2, FY 2000)
- Obtain input from staff and stakeholders (Q2/Q3)
- Establish content and design approach that meets Web objectives, incorporates input from staff and stakeholders, and reflects best practices from benchmarking (Q2/Q3, FY 2000)
- Develop prototype design based on input from staff and external stakeholders (Q3, FY 2000)
- Conduct usability study of prototype with participation of staff and stakeholders (Q3/Q4)
- Finalize design (Q4, FY2000)
- Provide status update on implementation (September 30, 2000)

(2) Facilitating Information Exchange with Agency Stakeholders

Action:

- Work with NMSS and OSP to explore the costs for the re-establishment of the "list servers" to reach out actively to stakeholders.

Status and Completion Plan:

OCIO has setup public list servers for a number of offices including OSP (examples are listed at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NEWS/elecinfo.html#nrclists.>) The initial cost for setting up additional list servers is minimal; however there can also be a significant operational impact on offices who maintain the lists. OCIO has had discussions with NMSS and OSP, and we will continue to work with offices to help them explore and deploy list servers and other options for reaching out to stakeholders, as they deem appropriate. For example, many offices use the Web for disseminating information, and OPA also uses an automated fax capability to distribute press releases to the media.

(3) Facilitating Information Availability for Stakeholders without Internet Access

Action:

- Review, update, and consider expanding the range of information resources currently available (e.g., PDR 800 number, the "Citizen's Guide to NRC Information") to improve awareness of access to agency information for stakeholders without Internet access.

Status and Completion Plan:

The NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) will continue its longstanding information services that address the needs of members of the public who do not have Internet access. All publicly available NRC information, whether it is posted on NRC's Web Site, in ADAMS, or elsewhere, is also available to the public by calling an 800 number to reach NRC's Public Document Room (PDR). The PDR prints outreach materials on request for the public (e.g., a summary of PDR resources and services or the entire PDR Users' Guide). In addition, the OCIO manages a contract at the PDR for producing for the public, at a fee, copies of NRC documents from paper, microfiche, and electronic formats. The PDR's "Standing Order" program is continuing, whereby the public, for a fee, can automatically receive paper or microfiche copies of selected categories of documents. The public may continue to contact the PDR via an 800 number to request information, including searches and printed versions of information posted at our Web site. In addition, it is worth noting that members of the public who do not have internet access from their homes or offices are often able to access NRC's Web site from other locations such as public libraries.

In the first quarter of FY 2001, OCIO will review and update the "NRC Citizen's Guide" to reflect changes to our public information program, such as public availability of the Agency Document Access and Management System. This information has already been added to the NRC Information Digest (1999 Edition), published in November, 1999.

Action

- Consider, for example, enhanced outreach to public librarians to enlist their support in helping those who are not Internet-aware or who do not have Web access in their homes.

Status and Completion Plan:

The OCIO has consulted with the Executive Director of the Library of Congress/Federal Library and Information Center Committee on means to reach public librarians. Consultation with the Executive Director of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Services was recommended and will be pursued.

The OCIO will also review the cost effectiveness of supporting membership in the American Library Association, participation in its conferences in order to interact with public librarians, and placing agency information materials in the publications of the Public Library Association.

The primary target group of public librarians for the NRC consists of those responsible for the collections of the former Local Public Document Rooms (LPDRs), especially the 1981+48x microfiche collections (73 in number). These collections remain in libraries in the vicinity of nuclear power plants and other facilities, either retained by libraries that were LPDRs or moved to libraries of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). The OCIO will:

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- Send a letter to the current holders of the microfiche collections, offering assistance in access to ADAMS documents.
- Seek to make a presentation to the attendees of the next local conference of the FDLP (fall of 00)
- Discuss with FDLP an article about NRC, PDR, ADAMS, etc. in their newsletter.

Stuart Reiter
Acting Chief Information Officer

Enclosures:

1. Objectives for External Web Site

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NAME	F. Goldberg:FFG	J. Schaeffer:JBS	W. Kane:WFK	P. Lohaus:PHL	E. Hayden:EH	W. Travers:WT	S. Reiter: LS for SR
DATE	02/ 15 /2000	02/ 16 /2000	02/ 16 /2000	02/ 16 /2000	02/ 18 /2000	02/ 23/2000	02/ 28/2000

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Objectives for the External Web Site:¹

- **Increase public confidence in the NRC by**
 - **Providing information that enhances the ability of stakeholders to participate effectively in the regulatory process**

Examples: public meeting notices, documents for comment, rulemaking information, licensing activities, inspection and enforcement activities, reportable events, etc.
 - **Providing information that enhances the ability of the general public to understand NRC's mission, goals, and performance**

Examples: strategic plan, performance plan, NRC organization, Commission activities, educational materials, etc.
 - **Making it easy to find desired information**

Examples: improved search engine, ADA compliant implementation, consistent page design, site topic indexes, improved navigational tools and public feedback mechanism
 - **Ensuring the timeliness and accuracy of information at the site**

Examples: Establish accountability for quality of information at the site, establish automated monitoring of site information ownership, disposition dates, currency, and hyperlinks
- **Make doing business with the NRC more efficient and effective by providing easy access to necessary information as well as tools for conducting business electronically via the Web**

Examples: Vacancy announcements for job applicants, procurement plans for prospective contractors, licensing information for applicants, web forms and tools for electronic submittal of information, etc.

¹ Endorsed by Executive Council on February 15, 2000