

POLICY ISSUE (Information)

April 3, 2012

SECY-12-0050

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: STATUS OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S
RESPONSE TO THE OPEN GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Commission of the status of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) Open Government Plan, dated April 7, 2010, and to provide an addendum to the plan that will be published by April 9, 2012.

SUMMARY:

This paper transmits the first biennial addendum (enclosed) to the agency's original Open Government Plan (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML100980489) that the NRC staff published in response to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Directive M-10-06, dated December 8, 2009. In accordance with current OMB guidance, the staff will publish the addendum on the NRC's Open Government webpage by April 9, 2012. This paper reports on the agency's progress in meeting the commitments outlined in its original plan. Major goals for the next two years are presented in the addendum.

BACKGROUND:

On March 10, 2010, the Commission was informed through SECY-10-0025, "Status of NRC's Response to the Open Government Directive," of staff action taken in response to OMB's Open Government Directive, issued in December 2009. The directive addressed action in three distinct areas: (1) publishing Government information online, (2) improving the quality

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of Government information, and (3) creating and institutionalizing a culture of open government. In the directive, each agency was asked to develop an Open Government Plan to serve as a public roadmap detailing how the agency would incorporate open government principles into its core mission objectives. The NRC published its Open Government Plan on April 7, 2010, (revised June 7, 2010). The OMB Directive also called for each agency to update its plan every two years. Current OMB guidance notes that the updated plan should include two new initiatives to be completed within calendar year (CY) 2012 and two more within CY 2013. Furthermore, one of the initiatives should be a new flagship initiative.

DISCUSSION:

The NRC's Open Government Plan has served the agency well as a roadmap for guiding its Open Government program. In line with the directive, the plan addresses how the NRC will improve transparency and further integrate public participation and collaboration into its activities. The plan also focuses on identifying and publishing information online in open formats to promote additional analyses. The directive also calls upon agencies to develop a flagship initiative to further advance openness. While the agency already has built a strong foundation of openness policies and practices that guide its regulatory activities, during the last two years the agency has taken advantage of new technologies to take these practices to the next level.

We are pleased that the NRC was able to meet or exceed each goal it established in its Open Government Plan. The following discussions on transparency, participation, collaboration, and flagship initiatives highlight the NRC's accomplishments to date and identify goals for our Open Government program over the next two years.

Transparency

Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about the NRC's activities. More specifically, public stakeholders must have timely access to clear and understandable information on the NRC's role, processes, activities, and decision making.

The NRC's initial Open Government Plan discussed existing practices the NRC uses to conduct its regulatory responsibilities in an open and transparent manner to keep the public informed of its regulatory, licensing, and oversight activities. The plan described what the NRC already is doing to promote transparency in its operations, including (1) its policies, management controls, and performance measures, (2) its key information dissemination channels, and (3) its participation in Federal transparency initiatives. The plan also provided an action plan for improving transparency through the publication of high-value datasets, policy changes, expansion of web streaming, use of new tools for public communication, and improvements to the ADAMS and the NRC public website.

In 2010, the NRC launched its Open Government website, which significantly improved the NRC public website's facility locator feature and search capabilities, and exceeded dataset publication goals. In 2011, the agency exceeded its dataset publication goals again and launched a significantly redesigned public website. Since the redesign, the new site's scores on content, look-and-feel, and transparency have continued to improve.

Commenting on the NRC's website, a January 2012, article in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* noted the following:

...the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) website is a gold mine of information. It has comprehensive collections of documents, organized by topic area as well as by facility location. Searches generate results that include titles and descriptions of the documents available. And in December, the NRC announced enhancements — be still my heart! — that include a more powerful and versatile search engine and the ability for users to save searches as web links for streamlined access to frequently used documents. The NRC even has a free service that automatically notifies subscribers about new documents on selected topics.

Looking forward, the NRC will continue to focus on transparency through a Plain Writing Initiative and by identifying opportunities to improve the customer experience for users of the Public Document Room. We will also maintain the collection of high-value data already published and publish additional high-value data, in open formats, as opportunities arise.

In addition, the staff plans to use the Open Government Plan to update the Commission on its progress in meeting the high-profile communication elements contained in SRM-S12-0010, "Engagement of Stakeholders Regarding the Events in Japan."

Participation

Participation encourages and enables members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that the NRC can make regulatory decisions with the benefit of information from a wide range of stakeholders. These stakeholders must have meaningful opportunities to participate in the NRC's regulatory processes.

The NRC's initial Open Government Plan discussed how the agency encourages and provides for participation through public meetings, hearings, conferences, symposia, and workshops. At www.nrc.gov, the public can learn about public meetings, comment on proposed rules and draft documents, learn how to petition the agency to take an enforcement action, participate in hearings, or ask the NRC to consider changing or establishing a regulation. As with transparency, an action plan was developed to explore the use of new media and tools for enhancing public participation.

In 2010, the agency used web technology to promote meeting participation, introduce subscription-based information services, and put in place the infrastructure for social media. In 2011, we launched three social media initiatives: the NRC Blog in January, Twitter in August, and YouTube in September. Our blog quickly became a valuable communications channel for events in Japan and for providing information about earthquake and flooding events affecting nuclear facilities in the United States. For example, while daily blog views normally average just under 500 per day, after the event in Japan this number spiked to more than 5,700 views in a single day.

The NRC will continue to focus on growing opportunities for stakeholder participation through a continued focus on social media, use of virtual meetings, and increased visibility of rulemaking and other NRC documents open for comment.

Collaboration

Collaboration improves Government effectiveness by encouraging partnerships and cooperation across Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments and with international regulatory authorities.

The NRC's initial Open Government Plan discussed the extensive network of regulatory, State, and Tribal governments, international organizations, and nonprofit and private entities with which the NRC partners. The plan noted that the agency would review key existing internal and external collaborative activities to assess how collaboration with its partners could be further improved.

Many of the accomplishments cited in our discussion of participation also contributed to furthering our collaboration programs. Examples include the introduction of social media technologies and our increased use of virtual meetings, which made it easier to collaborate with our regulatory partners. In particular, in January 2011, the NRC enabled staff access to LinkedIn for professional networking with colleagues outside the agency.

Looking forward, the NRC will continue to focus on growing opportunities for collaboration through social media and web conferencing technologies within industry and Government workgroups as we did in 2010 and 2011. An area of particular interest is the opportunity for further collaboration with Agreement States through the introduction of web-based licensing.

Flagship Initiative

The OMB Directive noted that each agency should introduce a flagship initiative as cited below.

Each agency's Open Government Plan should describe at least one specific, new transparency, participation, or collaboration initiative that your agency is implementing (or that will be implemented before the next update of the Open Government Plan).

Current OMB guidance notes that a new flagship initiative should be part of the agency's updated plans.

A key element of the NRC's initial flagship initiative, "Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement," was to strengthen the NRC's engagement and communication channels with the public and agency stakeholders by using web 2.0 technologies. These technologies included social networking, citizen engagement, media streaming, and virtual meeting tools. These same technologies also were used to increase the visibility and effectiveness of the NRC's public website, which was redesigned to better address the informational needs of site visitors, improve their site experience, and foster greater public engagement.

"Mobile NRC," our next generation flagship initiative, will strengthen the ability of the agency's stakeholders who use smart phones or other mobile devices to engage with the NRC and better understand its regulatory mission. By providing more ready access to regulatory information, both NRC stakeholders and staff will benefit.

The NRC will incorporate mobile-friendly web pages into its public website. We'll use quick response codes on NRC publications and at media events to make it easier for members of the public to access information by scanning a barcode from their mobile phones and tablets. In addition, the agency will assess its public applications to determine if mobile capabilities should be incorporated to improve the user experience, enhance public participation and, where appropriate, strengthen collaboration in NRC regulatory activities.

RESOURCES:

NRC offices already are addressing actions required to advance the NRC's initiatives under the Open Government Directive. Some of these actions can be implemented with existing agency resources. Resources for additional planned actions, such as increased use of web-based technologies to transform NRC interactions with stakeholders and the public, will be addressed using the NRC's planning, budgeting, and performance management process.

COORDINATION:

The Office of the General Counsel has reviewed this paper and has no legal objection. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this Commission paper for resource implications and has no objections.

/RA Darren Ash for/

R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure:

[Open Government Plan Addendum](#)

cc: SECY
OGC
OCA
OPA
CFO



U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Open Government Plan Addendum

Activities for 2012 - 2013

April 9, 2012

Message from the Chairman



I am pleased to present this addendum to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Open Government Plan outlining activities for 2012 through 2013. The NRC has a long history of commitment to openness and transparency, and this updated plan will help to guide our efforts as we move forward.

Published in 2010, our first Open Government Plan provided an opportunity to implement the Directive issued by the Office of Management and Budget on December 8, 2009. We are now two years into this initiative, and we have much progress to report. As you will read in this addendum to our plan, during the past two years we have successfully begun to use social media services, redesigned the agency's website, www.nrc.gov, made finding documents easier, and published a significant amount of raw data in formats that enable stakeholders to more easily analyze our information.

Increased stakeholder engagement has long been a goal of the NRC and the agency is fully committed to using new technologies to help the public better understand and participate in our work. Over the past two years we have provided more opportunities for stakeholder and public engagement and have worked to improve the experience of those who participate.

To increase engagement opportunities, we have provided subscription-based services to keep stakeholders informed, expanded the use of virtual meeting and Web conferencing technologies, increased the agency's capacity for webcasting from 50 to 100 meetings per year, and introduced new channels for engagement through our Blog, Twitter feed, and YouTube site. In addition, we've made special efforts to reach out to the public on topics of high interest, such as concerns raised by the events at the Fukushima Daichi nuclear plants in Japan and the effects of the Missouri River flooding on the Fort Calhoun nuclear plant in Omaha, Nebraska.

To improve the experience of participants, we have expanded our internal meeting best practices Website and our meeting facilitator and advisor program. We currently have about 20 active facilitators and plan to add more in the near future. These men and women are skilled participation specialists who assist the staff in planning and conducting more effective meetings.

This addendum describes how we will build on our accomplishments over the past two years by increasing our focus on the use of plain language, continuing to strengthen our use of social media, improving the rulemaking comment process, and furthering collaboration with our state regulatory partners. In addition, we will continue to make use of technology innovations by providing mobile access to key agency content.

I hope you will carefully review our plan and share your thoughts and ideas with us. As an organization, the NRC is dedicated to continuous improvement, and we invite you to help us be the best nuclear safety regulator we can possibly be.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory B. Jaczko". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chairman, Gregory B. Jaczko



U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Open Government Plan Addendum Activities for 2012–2013

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Introduction

On December 8, 2009, Peter R. Orszag, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), sent a memorandum to the heads of executive departments and agencies directing them to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration set forth in the President's Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, dated January 21, 2009. Because of its long history of openness, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) welcomed this opportunity and has participated fully in the President's [Open Government Initiative](#).

One of the actions identified by OMB was the development and publication of open government plans describing how each agency will improve transparency and integrate public participation and collaboration into its activities.¹ In response, the NRC developed its first [Open Government Plan](#), which was published on the agency's [Open Government Web page](#).

Since its creation in 1975, the NRC has viewed openness as a critical element for achieving the agency's mission to regulate the Nation's civilian use of radioactive materials and thereby protect people and the environment. As a result, the agency has built a strong foundation of openness policies and practices that guide its regulatory activities. Over the last 2 years, the agency has taken advantage of new technologies to take these practices to the next level.

This addendum to the NRC's initial plan, published on April 7, 2010, and revised on June 7, 2010, provides a synopsis of the significant progress the NRC has made under its Open Government Program to date and outlines plans to continue this progress over the next 2 years.

Approach to Building the Open Government Program for 2012–2013

The NRC's Open Government Advisory Group, composed of representatives from the agency's public affairs, internal communications, and information technology organizations, oversees the agency's Open Government program. The advisory group was established by the Deputy Executive Director for Corporate Management (DEDCM) on August 12, 2010, with the purpose of providing operational oversight, performance assessment, and progress reporting on commitments reflected in the agency's Open Government Plan. The advisory group meets monthly and provides quarterly updates on the program to the DEDCM.

On December 6, 2011, the advisory group hosted a Webinar to solicit stakeholder input about activities to include in the next revision of the NRC's Open Government Plan, to be published in April 2012. As indicated in the meeting notice and agenda, the goal of the Webinar was to obtain feedback on the agency's Open Government accomplishments in 2010–2011, the high-value datasets published so far, and the goals pursued in our flagship initiative to enhance stakeholder engagement. We also hoped to learn what new initiatives stakeholders would like us to pursue as we establish our Open Government roadmap for the next 2 years.

To guide this discussion, we worked with a meeting facilitator who used an approach that focused on soliciting from participants their views of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities,

¹ See U.S. Office of Management and Budget, "Open Government Directive," December 8, 2009, Section 3a, p. 4.

and threats (SWOT) or challenges a program faces. This approach is often referred to as a SWOT analysis. We asked for these views on each of the cornerstones of our Open Government program: transparency, public participation, and collaboration.

In addition to the December 6 Webinar, we collected stakeholder views from responses to various blog posts and from feedback received from the agency's 2011 strategic planning stakeholder meeting. All of this feedback was summarized in a [worksheet](#) published at our public web site. The NRC's internal Open Government Working Group also provided input.

What We Learned

While we received comments on each of the cornerstones of our Open Government Program, our efforts on transparency drew the most input. A considerable focus of the transparency-related section of our April 2010 plan dealt with the publication of high-value datasets. In total, we have published 29 datasets and 1 data mining tool. We have not received any requests for additional data either during these meetings or in response to a February 2, 2011, blog posting on this topic. We received positive feedback on our introduction of social media tools (blog, Twitter, YouTube) and our initial efforts focusing on plain language. Individual difficulties were noted in accessing our phone directory and in passing information on to us through data.gov. One commenter suggested that the public would benefit from a more dynamic interaction with the agency's support groups through the use of live chat. A more robust frequently asked questions (FAQ) facility to allow site users to quickly find the answers to their questions was also suggested. It was also recognized that there is a tradeoff between openness and security. On the topic of collaboration, while the NRC's participation in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its assistance to other countries was noted, stakeholders felt more could be done at the IAEA—and, more generally, in international issues and in promoting the NRC's nuclear regulatory model in other countries.

Looking Forward to 2012–2013

We are encouraged by the feedback we have received to date. With this addendum to our Open Government Plan, we commit to expanding on the progress we have made to further enhance transparency, participation, and collaboration during the next 2 years.

The discussion that follows reviews our accomplishments to date, lays out our approach to measuring and monitoring progress, and discusses planned initiatives to further transparency, participation, and collaboration. We also introduce our new flagship initiative, *Mobile NRC.*, which builds on the foundation put in place by our first flagship initiative, *Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement*. Attachments A, B, and C provide our Dataset Download Statistics (as of February 9, 2012), Open Government Milestones Commitments for 2012-2013, and a List of Web Addresses for Hyperlinks Used in the Plan.

A. Accomplishments and Highlights, 2010–2011

On April 7, 2010, the NRC published its Open Government Plan to serve as the roadmap for agency activities in support of President Obama's Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government. On June 7, 2010, Version 1.1 was published. The plan has served the agency well as a roadmap guiding our Open Government program to date. As we revisit the plan—as called

for in the OMB's Open Government Directive—and build the roadmap for the next 2 years, it is worthwhile to review our accomplishments to date.

1. 2010 Highlights

In 2010, the NRC's Open Government Program focused on enhancing stakeholder engagement (our flagship initiative), publishing high-value datasets, and building a foundation for work to be done in 2011. This focus yielded the following accomplishments in 2010:

- We implemented new subscription-based services on our public Web site to enable stakeholders to keep abreast of the most current agency news and activities.
- We enhanced stakeholder involvement in public meetings by expanding the use of Web event and virtual meeting technologies.
- We furthered collaboration within industry and Government workgroups by using Web conferencing technologies.
- We exceeded target goals for publishing high-value agency datasets at data.gov in open formats that enable stakeholders to download, manipulate, and analyze the data.
- We launched the [NRC's Open Government Web site](#) on February 4, 2010, as scheduled. We subsequently began reporting progress quarterly against our Open Government Plan commitments in a [milestone inventory](#) and posted a [dashboard](#) that highlights significant accomplishments and plan changes.
- We enhanced the facility locator to provide detailed information for each operating nuclear power reactor.
- We implemented significant improvements to the agency's Web-based search capability.
- We established the foundation for the introduction of social media technology to further citizen engagement.

2. 2011 Highlights

In 2011, the NRC focused on building on the foundation established in 2010, yielding the following additional accomplishments:

- We introduced social media technology and made significant progress in our social media program:
 - We launched the NRC blog in January. The blog has proven especially useful in enabling quick public communications during and after events in both Japan and the United States:
 - On average, the blog has just under 500 views per day; immediately after the event at Fukushima, views peaked at just over 5,700 in a single day.
 - During the week of August 22, 2011, blog posts provided information on earthquake response and hurricane preparation at nuclear power plants.
 - Daily views of the blog peaked at more than 1,000 during the Missouri River flooding event.
 - We enabled staff access to LinkedIn in January for professional networking with colleagues outside of the agency.

- We launched the NRC Twitter account in August. Within 2 days, the NRC had 400 followers, by the end of 2011 the number of followers had grown to more than 1000 and many different organizations and individuals were —retweeting” our tweets, greatly expanding the agency’s reach.
- We launched the NRC YouTube channel in September. The first video featured NRC employees talking about their experiences on 9/11, and its effect on their lives. Subsequent videos consisted of segments of some important Commission briefings, videos previously produced but not extensively distributed, and new content.
- We continued publishing high-value datasets:
 - We formalized our process for identifying, prioritizing, and publishing datasets, including the option for stakeholders to receive e-mail notifications when new datasets are published.
 - To foster use of the NRC’s high-value datasets, we publicized their availability in a February 2, 2011, blog post and at the annual Regulatory Information Conference.
 - Through Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, we’ve published 29 datasets—considerably more than the 17 identified in the agency’s Open Government Plan.
 - Data.gov selected our dataset of U.S. nuclear power plant inspection reports to be featured on the rotating pane of its home page.
 - We added a licensee event report application to data.gov, allowing searches for licensee event reports based on a variety of criteria.
- We launched a significantly redesigned public Web site with greatly improved search capabilities:
 - The redesigned site features a modern look and feel.
 - New search capabilities allow site visitors to use a single search to easily retrieve information from the NRC’s entire public Web site, as well as the extensive collection of more than 700,000 publicly available documents in the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS).
 - Since the redesign, the new site’s scores on content, look and feel, and transparency have continued to improve, as reported in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI).
 - The NRC Web site was recognized as “a gold mine of information” in the 2012 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.
- We further improved search capability for the NRC’s public documents based on stakeholder feedback.
- We expanded the agency’s Open Government Web site to serve as an “umbrella” for the following related initiatives and plans:
 - Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service and the Customer Service Plan
 - CIO Council’s .Gov Reform Initiative and Web Improvement Plan
 - Plain Writing at the NRC

B. Measuring Progress

The NRC’s Open Government strategic direction is set forth in the latest version of the [NRC Strategic Plan](#) in the first objective, —Openness,” under —Organizational Excellence.” The plan explicitly addresses the three components of openness—transparency, participation, and collaboration—and contains six strategies for making improvements. The [agency’s Information](#)

[Technology/Information Management Strategic Plan](#), published in December, contains two goals supporting openness.

Goal 1 of that plan is *Effective Information Access* (NRC staff and stakeholders can quickly and easily access the information they need). Associated with Goal 1 are several measures directly related to transparency:

- the public's score for information access—overall NRC score on the ACSI for Federal Web sites
- the public's score for search effectiveness (a subelement of the ACSI)
- the public's score for online transparency (a subelement of the ACSI)
- the number of timeliness targets met for key information dissemination channels (Freedom of Information Act requests, public meeting notices, and publication of ADAMS documents)

As noted on page 5, ACSI stands for the [American Customer Satisfaction Index](#). The NRC uses an independent service to report scores for the NRC's public Website using the ACSI methodology, which is also used to reports scores for over 100 other federal and local government services.

Goal 3 of the plan is *Effective IT Infrastructure* (i.e., the NRC's IT infrastructure is available, cost effective, and responsive to agency business needs). Associated with Goal 3 is the following measure related to participation:

- increase in the annual number of virtual meetings held, including both Web streaming and Web conferencing

The NRC monitors these measures quarterly and measures progress annually. Table 1 shows the performance results for these six measures at the end of the last 3 fiscal years. The NRC began executing its Open Government Plan in April 2010.

Table 1
Open Government Performance Results 2009 – 2011

Measure	2009 (Baseline)	2010	2011	Long-Term Target
Public's score for information access on a scale of 1–100	72	72	74	73
Public's score for search effectiveness on a scale of 1–100	69	69	70	70
Public's score for online transparency on a scale of 1–100	N/A ²	76	78	80
Number of targets met for information dissemination timeliness (maximum is 4 out of 4)	N/A ³	4	4	4
Increase in the number of virtual meetings held	N/A	N/A	150/month (baseline)	168/month (12% increase)

The table shows noticeable improvement in the measures. Of particular note are the scores that are benchmarked against other organizations in the ACSI results reports. The overall score of 74 for the NRC's public Web site now exceeds the average score for public sector Web sites (72) by 2 points and the average regulatory agency score (67) by 7 points. The NRC score of 78 for online transparency exceeds the average public sector score (75) by 3 points and the average regulatory agency score (71) by 7 points.

C. Transparency

Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about the NRC's activities. More specifically, this means that public stakeholders must have timely access to clear and understandable information about the NRC's role, processes, activities, and decision making.

“Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about what the Government is doing.” (Open Government Directive)

The NRC's Open Government Plan discusses existing practices the NRC uses to conduct its regulatory responsibilities in an open and transparent manner to keep the public informed of the agency's regulatory, licensing, and oversight activities. Section III.A describes what the NRC is already doing to promote transparency in its

² ForeSee began evaluating this metric in Q2 of FY 2010, and the NRC did not begin participating until Q4 of FY 2010, so we have no data prior to that time.

³ The then-current measure was modified.

operations, including (1) its policies, management controls, and performance measures, (2) its key information dissemination channels, and (3) its participation in Federal transparency initiatives. Section III.B provides an action plan for improving transparency through the publication of high-value datasets, policy changes, expansion of Web streaming, use of new tools for public communication, and improvements to ADAMS and the NRC public Web site.

We are pleased that the NRC was able to meet or exceed each goal it established for itself in 2010 and 2011. As noted above, we have re-designed our public website, and have seen improvements in user satisfaction scores. A January 2012 article in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* gave the NRC's Web site this very favorable review:

...the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) website is a gold mine of information. It has comprehensive collections of documents, organized by topic area as well as by facility location. Searches generate results that include titles and descriptions of the documents available. And in December, the NRC announced enhancements—be still my heart!—that include a more powerful and versatile search engine and the ability for users to save searches as web links for streamlined access to frequently used documents. The NRC even has a free service that automatically notifies subscribers about new documents on selected topics.

Looking forward, the NRC will continue to focus on transparency through an initiative on plain writing and by identifying opportunities to improve the customer experience for users of our Public Document Room (PDR). We will also maintain the collection of high-value data already published and publish additional high-value data, in open formats, as opportunities present themselves.

In addition, the staff plans to strengthen its communications on high-profile topics by utilizing a combination of tools such as public meetings, improved web pages, use of plain language and social media. This is in response to Commission direction regarding NRC's engagement with stakeholders following the March, 2011 Fukushima events in Japan.

1. Focus on Plain Writing

In its Final Guidance on Implementing the Plain Writing Act, dated April 13, 2011, OMB stated that —plain writing is writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and consistent with other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience. Such writing avoids jargon, redundancy, ambiguity, and obscurity.”

The NRC takes that definition a step further. We believe that plain writing is communication our intended audience can easily understand the first time they read or hear it. It's *not* overly casual or unprofessional, and it doesn't strip out necessary technical details to “dumb down” the information or “talk down” to the reader.

We realize that language that is plain to some readers may not be plain to others. We know we've succeeded, however, if our writing enables our intended audiences to do the following:

- find what they need
- understand what they find

- use what they find to meet their needs

To this end, the agency instructed managers to familiarize themselves with the requirements of the Act, and to encourage staff to take appropriate training. A new online course, specifically tailored to the Plain Writing guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget, was made available to all employees and the Commission has directed staff to make greater use of plain language when speaking to the public about high profile events, such as the nuclear accident at Fukushima-Daiichi in Japan. Additionally, staffs are reminded to use plain language through periodic articles in the agency's in-house newsletter, the NRC Reporter. Finally, a new pilot project is beginning that will attach an interactive "widget" to some of the agency's most widely read online documents, to gather feedback from stakeholders on the documents' readability.

OMB instructed Federal agencies to publish annual reports that describe their continuing compliance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010. Consistent with that guidance, we will report our progress and compliance by April 13, 2012, and will update that report each year. Those annual reports will appear in the plain writing section of the NRC's Open Government Web site.

In addition, we survey agency stakeholders on an annual basis as part of our self-assessment of the NRC's Reactor Oversight Program. These surveys include questions to assess our success in issuing inspection reports that are relevant, useful, and written in plain language. See [Stakeholder Feedback](#) on the NRC Web site for a discussion of the survey results since 1999.

2. Improve Public Document Room Services

The NRC PDR staff helps the public find NRC documents in the agency's extensive electronic, paper, and microfiche collections. The PDR staff also assists the public in using ADAMS, an online document and records management repository.

Key customer groups include members of the general public; licensees; stakeholders; official visitors to the NRC; and Federal, State, and local government officials.

A challenge facing the PDR is a current lack of a systematic way to find out from customers their desires for improvements to PDR services. The NRC plans to set up a simple voluntary survey for customers to provide feedback about their PDR experience; the agency will make changes in response to this information. Starting in 2012, rating percentages and feedback comments from the survey will be published on the public NRC Web site twice each year (in May and November). Starting in early 2012, monthly summaries of survey results will be provided to the Chief of the Technical Information Center Section.

3. Publish and Maintain High-Value Datasets

We will continue to monitor the use of the data we have already published (Attachment A), and we will continue to post usage statistics. We will maintain the currency of published data and publish additional high-value datasets in open formats as opportunities present themselves.

D. Participation

Participation allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so the NRC can make regulatory decisions with the benefit of information from a wide range of stakeholders. These stakeholders must have a reasonable opportunity to participate meaningfully in the NRC's regulatory processes.

The NRC is responsible for developing, implementing, and enforcing policies that are well informed and effective. To do so, the agency recognizes that the public must be informed about, and have a reasonable opportunity to participate meaningfully in, its regulatory processes and (where appropriate) its decision making.

“Participation allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that their government can make policies with the benefit of information that is widely dispersed in society.”
(Open Government Directive)

Section IV.A of the NRC's Open Government Plan discusses how participation is encouraged and provided for through public meetings, hearings, conferences, symposia, and workshops. Also noted is the NRC's use of its Web site, where the public can learn about public meetings, comment on proposed rules and draft documents, understand how to petition the agency to take an enforcement action, participate in hearings, or ask the NRC to consider changing or establishing a regulation. Section IV.B of the NRC's Open Government Plan notes the agency's plans to explore the use of new media and tools for enhancing public participation.

In all aspects of its work, the agency is committed to making public participation as expansive and meaningful as possible.

Over the last two years Web technology was employed to promote meeting participation, and subscription-based services and we launched three social media sites.

Looking forward, the NRC will continue to focus on growing opportunities for stakeholder participation through a continued focus on social media, use of virtual meetings, and increased visibility of rulemaking and other NRC documents open for comment.

1. Strengthening Social Media Services

Social media capabilities introduced in 2011 have enhanced relationships between the NRC and stakeholders by promoting a sense of common community. The NRC will continue to use and refine the use of current social media tools, increasing content within NRC's current social media channels. In addition, new tools will be assessed as opportunities present themselves. In 2012, a new NRC photo gallery was launched on the Flickr photo-sharing site to give the public a pictorial look at what the NRC does and to increase transparency and participation. For example, we anticipate that these photos will help the media report more effectively on stories about facilities the NRC regulates.

2. Expand the Use of Virtual Meetings

To continue to enhance outreach and stakeholder involvement in public meetings, virtual meeting technologies such as Web streaming and Web conferencing will continue to be promoted within the agency. The use of these technologies enables members of the

public to participate, regardless of their physical location. The NRC also will explore incorporating use of other collaborative tools—such as wikis—that increase workgroup efficiency and improve results by enabling easy access to reference materials, online brainstorming, and the development of collaborative work products. The use of targeted community portals when registered and secured access is required to participate in discussions and exchanges of nonpublic information also may be considered.

3. Increase the Visibility of Rulemaking and Other NRC Documents Open for Comment

The NRC is redesigning and consolidating its “Documents for Comment” Web pages to provide a one-stop location for all rulemaking and other NRC documents currently open for comment. In keeping with the recently adopted recommendations from the Administrative Conference of the United States, the new page will be readily available from the NRC homepage. The NRC staff will assemble a list of all dockets on www.regulations.gov that contain documents currently open for public review and comment. The entry for each document available for comment will link directly to the docket for the action. With one click, members of the public will be able to view the document open for comment, access any additional supporting information on the NRC activity, and easily submit electronic comments. The new page will serve as a source for pushing out information on those documents available for comment via RSS and Twitter feeds and will contain additional alert features. The NRC will complete this activity in Q4 of FY 2012.

E. Collaboration

Collaboration improves the effectiveness of Government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation across Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments and with international regulatory authorities.

In the coming years, the NRC will confront a variety of challenges, including ensuring the safety and security of existing and proposed nuclear power plants and other licensed facilities and materials, preparing for emergencies, and storing and disposing of high-level radioactive waste. The NRC recognizes that meeting these challenges will call for the highest levels of collaboration among its own employees, cooperation and partnership with other Federal and non-Federal government agencies, and collaboration with nonprofit and other private entities.

“Collaboration improves the effectiveness of Government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of government, and between the Government and private institutions.” (Open Government Directive)

Section V.A of the NRC’s Open Government Plan notes the extensive network of regulatory agencies, State and Tribal governments, international organizations, and nonprofit and private entities with which the NRC partners. Section V.B of the NRC’s Open Government Plan noted a review of key existing internal and external collaborative activities to assess how collaboration with our partners could be further improved.

Many of the accomplishments reported above under our discussion of participation also contribute to furthering our collaboration efforts. Included here is our introduction of social

media technologies and our expansion of the use of virtual meetings. For example, in January 2011, the NRC gave its staff access to LinkedIn for professional networking with colleagues outside of the agency.

Looking forward, the NRC will continue to focus on growing opportunities for collaboration through a continued focus on social media and through the use of Web conferencing technologies to further collaboration within industry and Government workgroups as we have done in 2010 and 2011. One particular area of note is the opportunity for further collaboration with Agreement States through the introduction of Web-based licensing.

1. Further Collaboration with Agreement States—Web-Based Licensing

The NRC is working towards streamlining the current paper-based materials licensing process and making the new system easy to use for applicants and Agreement States (States that have signed agreements with the NRC that authorize them to regulate certain uses of radioactive materials). Key users of this system include current and potential materials licensees, Agreement States, and other Federal agencies that need NRC and Agreement State data for license verification. This effort will provide an opportunity for Agreement States to avoid the costs of developing their own licensing systems and will further collaborative efforts between Agreement States and the NRC. Further cost saving and collaboration will be achieved over time as this system becomes the single source for authoritative license information for all parties. Through participation in the annual meetings for the Organization of Agreement States and the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, the NRC staff meets with the agency's regulatory partners in the Agreement States. This and the continued coordination efforts with Agreement States and NRC regional offices after system deployment (Beginning in Fall 2012) will provide opportunities to solicit feedback.

F. Flagship Initiative—Mobile NRC

The NRC has selected Mobile NRC as its flagship initiative to expand the agency's stakeholder community and engage a broader public audience by promoting and taking advantage of new mobile-friendly capabilities. The use of the Worldwide Web and mobile technologies has become commonplace, providing more creative and cost-effective ways to engage current and new stakeholders in the agency's regulatory processes. The NRC's flagship initiative will focus on employing these technologies to foster public engagement.

1. Overview of the Initiative

A key element of the NRC's initial flagship initiative was to enhance the NRC's engagement with the public and agency stakeholders by employing Web 2.0 technologies. These technologies include social networking, citizen engagement, media streaming, and virtual meeting tools. The same technologies were also used to increase the visibility of the NRC's public Web site, which was redesigned to better address the informational needs of site visitors, improve their site experience, and foster greater public engagement.

The NRC's next generation flagship initiative will expand upon previous successes and promote greater use and support for mobile capabilities. According to Nielsen, approximately 44 percent of Americans now own smartphones, up from 18 percent just 2 years ago. This growth is expected to continue as more consumers and enterprise users are attracted by the new

features and applications available on these phones. The mobile Internet is also gaining traction. Nielsen found that the number of smartphone users surfing the Web on their devices has increased by 45 percent since 2010. The Mobile NRC flagship initiative will strengthen the ability of the agency's stakeholders who use smart phones or other mobile devices to engage with the NRC and better understand its regulatory mission. By providing more ready access to regulatory information, both NRC stakeholders and staff will benefit.

The NRC will incorporate mobile-friendly Web pages for popular information into its public Web site, where the information is of high public interest. We will use quick response (QR) codes on NRC publications and at media events to make it easier for members of the public to access information by scanning a barcode with their mobile phones and tablets. In addition, the agency will assess its public applications to determine whether mobile capabilities should be incorporated to improve the user experience, enhance public participation, and, where appropriate, strengthen collaboration in NRC regulatory activities.

The NRC's Open Government Web page will be used to introduce new technologies to assess their usability and value to the agency and its stakeholders. Table 2 shows the engagement tools and improvements that may be included in this initiative, their benefits, and the open government principles they support.

**Table 2
Mobile NRC - Framework**

Open Government Principle			Enhanced Engagement Improvements and Tools	Key Benefits
Transparency	Participation	Collaboration		
✓	✓	✓	<p>Mobile Strategy</p> <p>The NRC will develop a unified mobile strategy to introduce mobile capabilities that improve the user experience and enable greater transparency, participation, and collaboration. This strategy will lay out a plan to provide incremental mobile capabilities over time to address specific business objectives and effectively use resources. For example, the NRC will explore and evaluate potential use of new mobile Web application technologies for use with NRC public applications. These technologies can enable implementation and use of rich, mobile-friendly forms to solicit feedback on public meetings or register for upcoming events to foster broader participation. They can also be used to enhance existing Web applications to improve the mobile user experience and foster greater transparency, participation, and collaboration with the public. Use of mobile Web technologies in strategic ways will help the NRC to deliver these capabilities to a wider audience and in a more cost-effective and supportable manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve information accessibility to enable the public to participate and collaborate, regardless of location. ➤ Encourage the use of NRC and industry information in new and innovative ways. ➤ Enable information sharing and participation from any remote location with an Internet connection and a mobile device. ➤ Reduce implementation and support costs by using standards-based mobile Web technologies and common approaches.

Table 2
Mobile NRC - Framework

Open Government Principle			Enhanced Engagement Improvements and Tools	Key Benefits
Transparency	Participation	Collaboration		
✓	✓		<p>Quick Response Codes</p> <p>The NRC will use QR codes to enhance the public's ability to quickly and easily access NRC information and Web sites from smartphones. QR codes are two-dimensional bar codes that can be read or scanned by smartphones or tablets with a bar code reader application. These barcodes are placed on publications, marketing materials, posters, Web sites, or any medium that provides sufficient contrast to be scanned by the smartphone reader. They are used in marketing campaigns, advertising, recruitment, and as a communication channel targeted toward smartphone users. A smartphone with a camera and reader can be used to quickly access content such as a Web site (using its uniform resource locator (URL), contact information, a text message, or a video (using a URL). QR codes have been widely used in Japan and Asia for years, and their popularity has grown in Europe and the United States as a result of growth in smartphone availability and usage. The NRC conducted a pilot of this technology and will expand use more broadly to enhance engagement with stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage more active participation from a broader audience. ➤ Support information outreach (e.g., the Japan crisis, Regulatory Information Conference, NUREGs, media events) and increase public awareness by making it easy for mobile users to quickly access regulatory information, regardless of where they are. ➤ Promote communication and information sharing to foster greater participation in public meetings, industry conferences, and public events by allowing mobile users to easily get to NRC information on their mobile devices before, during, and after these events. ➤ Use in recruiting activities, such as job fairs, that are designed to maintain a strong regulatory workforce; enable mobile users to quickly access job announcements; and discuss areas of interest with the NRC.

**Table 2
Mobile NRC - Framework**

Open Government Principle			Enhanced Engagement Improvements and Tools	Key Benefits
Transparency	Participation	Collaboration		
✓	✓	✓	<p>Mobile-Friendly Web Pages</p> <p>The NRC’s public Web site serves as the central information portal that provides access to information resources, tools, and services to the public. This Web site will incorporate new mobile-friendly Web pages for information determined to be of high interest. The mobile Web pages will serve as the launching point to gradually introduce new mobile capabilities that make it easy for mobile users to quickly find and access NRC regulatory informational resources while on the go. New mobile capabilities will be assessed, based on their value in achieving business objectives, and incorporated into the NRC’s unified mobile strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better engage, inform, and educate the public. ➤ Improve site usability, organization, search, and access to tools for mobile users. ➤ Foster information sharing, innovation, and engagement through use of common tools and open standards that enhance mobile capabilities.
	✓		<p>Pilot a mobile-friendly Web form for the Public Meeting Feedback System to enable the public to complete a survey for any public meeting using handheld devices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide flexible alternatives for submission of survey information to encourage feedback from a wider audience. ➤ Enable the public to submit feedback quickly and easily after meetings, from any location.

Attachment A – Dataset Download Statistics (as of February 9, 2012)

Data Set Name	Open Format	Pub Date (Actual)	Status Date	Cumulative Downloads to Date	Last Month's Downloads	Average Monthly Downloads
U.S. Nuclear Power Reactor Plant Status	CSV	1/15/2010	2/9/2012	1,729	32	72
U.S. Commercial Nuclear Power Reactors	XLS	1/14/2010	2/9/2012	1,631	27	68
U.S. Nuclear Power Plant Inspection Reports	XLS	1/5/2011	2/9/2012	782	25	60
NRC Commercial Contracts of Value Greater Than or Equal to \$100,000	XLS	1/14/2010	2/9/2012	992	16	41
Performance Indicators of Operating Reactors	CSV	10/17/2011	2/9/2012	121	17	40
Event Reports for Operating Reactors	CSV	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	525	24	33
U.S. Nuclear Research and Test Reactors (Operating): Demographic Data	XLS	1/14/2010	2/9/2012	768	12	32
Generic Issues	XLS	11/22/2011	2/9/2012	56	10	28
Licensee Event Report Search Tool	Data Extraction Tool	12/20/2010	2/9/2012	293	20	23
Cancelled U.S. Commercial Nuclear Power Reactors	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	351	17	22
Expected New Nuclear Power Plant Applications	XLS	7/30/2010	2/9/2012	353	8	20
U.S. Commercial Nuclear Power Reactors Permanently Shut Down - Formerly Licensed to Operate	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	320	15	20
List of Nuclear Materials Licensing Actions Received	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	299	15	19
Materials Environmental Reviews Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	296	13	19

Data Set Name	Open Format	Pub Date (Actual)	Status Date	Cumulative Downloads to Date	Last Month's Downloads	Average Monthly Downloads
Tribes Physically Located within fifty miles of a Nuclear Power Plant	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	308	13	19
Dry Spent Fuel Storage Licensees	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	291	12	18
Fire Event Data from Licensee Event Reports	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	291	13	18
New Reactor Licensing Applications (An Estimated Schedule)	XLS	7/30/2010	2/9/2012	327	11	18
NRC Significant Enforcement Actions	XLS	7/5/2011	2/9/2012	123	19	18
U.S. Nuclear Research and Test Reactors Under Decommissioning Regulated by the NRC	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	282	13	18
Waste Incidental to Reprocessing Key Documents	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	283	13	18
Dry Spent Fuel Storage Designs: NRC-Approved for Use by General Licensees	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	273	15	17
Estimated Schedules for Uranium Enrichment License Applications: AREVA Enrichment Services	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	267	10	17
Estimated Schedules for Uranium Enrichment License Applications: GE Laser Enrichment Facility	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	267	8	17
Findings From Fire Inspections	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	275	17	17
NRC Biennial Evaluated Emergency Exercise Schedule	XLS	7/30/2010	2/9/2012	308	4	17
Status of Uranium Recovery Facility Applications, Reviews, and Letters of Intent	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	252	8	16
U.S. Independent Spent Fuel Storage Casework	XLS	9/30/2010	2/9/2012	260	9	16
Reactor Pressure Vessel Steel Embrittlement	XLS	9/21/2011	2/9/2012	49	7	12

Data Set Name	Open Format	Pub Date (Actual)	Status Date	Cumulative Downloads to Date	Last Month's Downloads	Average Monthly Downloads
Status of NRC Regulated Materials Sites Currently Undergoing Decommissioning	XLS	5/11/2011	2/9/2012	79	9	10

Attachment B – Open Government Milestone Commitments 2012-2013

This attachment summarizes the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s (NRC’s) key Open Government milestones discussed in this plan.

Action Item	Date
Transparency	
Release an annual report describing the NRC’s compliance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010.	April 2012 (annually thereafter)
Publish the results of the Public Document Room survey.	May 2012 November 2012 (biannually thereafter)
Maintain high-value datasets and publish monthly usage statistics.	ongoing
Participation	
Launch the Flickr photo-sharing site as a component of the social media initiative.	January 2012
Leverage best practices from the quick response (QR) code pilot to implement their use for the Regulatory Information Conference.	March 2012
Deploy the redesigned —Documents for Comment” Web page.	June 2012
Standardize broad use of QR codes to support public outreach, meetings, and events based on lessons learned.	June 2012
Implement a mobile-friendly Web form for the Public Meeting Feedback System.	December 2012
Develop a unified mobile strategy to support mobile capabilities for NRC staff and public stakeholders.	February 2013
Identify and implement select mobile-friendly Web pages of high public interest.	TBD
Collaboration	
Complete deployment of Web-based licensing.	December 2013

Attachment C – List of Web Addresses for Hyperlinks Used in the Plan

Reference	Hyperlink	Web Address
Page 2	Open Government Initiative	http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/documents/open-government-directive
Page 2	Open Government Plan	http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/philosophy/nrc-open-gov-plan.pdf
Page 2	Open Government Web page	http://www.nrc.gov/open
Page 3	Worksheet with Results of SWOT Analysis with Stakeholders	http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/contactus/open-gov-prelim-swot-feedback.pdf
Page 4, Bullet 5	NRC's Open Government Web site	http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open.html
Page 4 Bullet 5	Open Government Milestone Inventory (as of December 31, 2011)	http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/evaluating-progress/ogd-milestone-inventory.html
Page 4 Bullet 5	Open Government Dashboard (as of December 31, 2011)	http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/evaluating-progress/open-gov-dashboard.html
Page 5	NRC Strategic Plan	http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1614/v5/index.html
Page 5	agency's Information Technology/Information Management Strategic Plan	http://pbadupws.nrc.gov/docs/ML1135/ML11357A125.pdf
Page 6	American Customer Satisfaction Index	http://www.theacsi.org/
Page 9	Stakeholder Feedback	http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/program-evaluations.html#section3
Page 11	www.regulations.gov	http://www.regulations.gov/