



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**OPEN  
GOVERNMENT  
PLAN**

**MAY 9, 2011**



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## Letter from the Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick F. Kennedy



The Department of State has a longstanding history and commitment to sharing information with the public about the diplomatic work that we conduct domestically and overseas. The ways in which we communicate internally, with other agencies and organizations, and to the public have changed significantly with the development of new technologies and social media, and they will undoubtedly continue to change as further advances in communication are discovered.

The several components of the Open Government Initiative have brought further momentum to the Department of State's ongoing efforts to increase transparency and provide information to the public. This initiative has allowed us to review how we can improve access to our information. Our Open Government website (<http://www.state.gov/open/>) provides a central location where you can follow the Department of State's efforts on key initiatives including the release of datasets at [www.data.gov](http://www.data.gov) and the use of funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. Additionally, the Open Government Initiative is raising awareness of the various other ways that you can receive information from us through Facebook™ and Twitter™ or share your thoughts and ideas with Secretary Clinton through "Text the Secretary." This kind of collaboration, which was once unimaginable, allows you to take a more active role in providing feedback to the Department of State.

This plan was developed by a team of employees led by the Department of State's Chief Information Officer. The Open Government team is composed of employees from throughout the Department of State who are working vigorously and enthusiastically to provide an unprecedented level of access to operations within and information generated by the Department of State. We welcome your feedback on how we can improve this plan, which is a living document that will continue to change and evolve as your ideas are shared and incorporated. We look forward to hearing from you.

---

Patrick F. Kennedy  
Under Secretary for Management  
U.S. Department of State



## Executive Summary

The Department of State is pleased to issue this updated Open Government Plan. The plan reflects the personal commitment of the Secretary of State as well as that of the entire Department of State to the principles and practices of Open Government. The plan focuses on the three imperatives of Open Government:

- Transparency – providing information to enable the American people to view the Department of State’s activities and products, and ensure accountability for results;
- Participation – enabling the public to engage on issues of importance and make their voices heard; and
- Collaboration – sharing information and ideas, and working cooperatively with partners around the world to promote the foreign policy interests of the United States.

The Department of State is responsible for carrying out the nation’s foreign policy and representing the United States abroad. It is essential that that we take every opportunity to engage the American people as we do this vital work on their behalf. Our era is one in which news from around the world is accessible to everyone on a moment-by-moment basis.

Reflecting this new era, the Department of State has invested heavily in the use of social media tools, such as Facebook™, Twitter™, blogs, and wikis for internal collaboration and external engagement. In the days following the disastrous earthquake in Haiti, U.S. citizens rushed to our blog site, <http://blogs.state.gov>, to pose questions and, more importantly, to offer assistance.

The Department of State must continually be prepared to engage the public in our work, which is why the Department of State’s web site presents up-to-date information on the issues of the day in foreign affairs and development assistance. Our Open Government plan invites your feedback and comment. The principal focus of this plan is to build on the work currently underway and expand our engagement with all of our stakeholders. The plan describes the work we are doing in the three areas noted above, and also presents three flagship initiatives that we will be rolling out:

- The Virtual Student Foreign Service, one of Secretary Clinton’s priorities, establishes internships at U.S. colleges and universities to engage in digital diplomacy with our embassies around the world. This initiative leverages the power of technology and extends the reach of our efforts, while also engaging American students in the active conduct of diplomacy;
- HumanRights.gov, a Department of State web site, is another priority of the Secretary and an integral element of U.S. foreign policy devoted to exchanging information to promote human rights around the world; and
- ForeignAssistance.gov, which the Department of State participates in, was created in response to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and President Obama’s Open Government Initiative.



## Introduction

At the direction of the President, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued an Open Government Directive (M-10-06) on December 8, 2009 to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration which form the cornerstone of an open government. Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about what the Government is doing. 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. 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. In order to meet the spirit and intent of the OMB memorandum, the Department of State will need to take the following steps toward the goal of creating a more open government:

- Publish government information online to increase accountability, promote informed participation by the public, and create economic opportunity, each agency shall take prompt steps to expand access to information by making it available online in open formats. With respect to information, the presumption shall be in favor of openness (to the extent permitted by law and subject to valid privacy, confidentiality, security, or other restrictions);
- Improve the quality of Government information available to the public by having senior leaders make certain that the information conforms to OMB guidance on information quality, and that adequate systems and processes are in place within the agencies to promote such conformity;
- Create and institutionalize a culture of open government by creating an unprecedented and sustained level of openness and accountability in every level. Senior leaders will strive to incorporate the values of transparency, participation, and collaboration into the ongoing work of the agency; and
- Create an enabling policy framework for Open Government by implementing emerging technologies that open new forms of communication between a government and the people. It is important that policies evolve to realize the potential of technology for open government.

The Open Government Plan emphasizes our commitment to providing information to the public through discussion of our flagship initiatives and reports on the efforts underway to ensure better transparency, participation and collaboration. The plan concludes with a “next steps” section describing how it will be updated.

This plan is a living document and will be updated quarterly to include new initiatives and update existing ones that have been expanded and revised. Changes will be made in the plan as a result of new or modified directives, in response to lessons learned through execution, from input from other organizations, and from suggestions from the public. All changes to the plan will be subject to Open Government Working Group review prior to being posted on the public Open.Gov web page.



### ***Department of State Mission***

The Department of State is the cabinet agency with lead responsibility for formulating and carrying out the nation's foreign policy. The Department of State operates in Washington, DC and in nearly 200 countries, with over 285 locations world-wide. State's major program areas include diplomacy, border security, U.S. citizen's services, and foreign assistance.

Department of State Mission Statement:

*Advance freedom for the benefit of the American people and the international community by helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system.*

The Department of State, being the diplomatic arm of the U.S. Government, generates mostly narrative documents, treaties, and inter-governmental agreements. The fundamental activities of diplomacy are based on human contact, generation of trust, and the establishment of common dialogue to both further ties, as well as resolve conflict in a peaceful manner between nations. Most of these activities involve nuance of language in creating a shared understanding. Unlike regulatory agencies, the Department of State does not generate a significant amount of structured data. Many of the databases are also sensitive in nature, such as the Passport databases which are the private records of Citizen's travel.

The Diplomatic record is published in [The Foreign Relations of the United States](#) and has been since the eighteenth century. Much of this information is now available electronically at [Data.gov - The Foreign Relations of the United States](#).

In recent years the Department of State's mission has become broader, as global issues have become more complex and interconnected. Today, offices in the Department of State focus on a wide spectrum of issues beyond traditional bilateral diplomacy, including counterterrorism, nuclear arms proliferation, climate change, human rights, institution building, and international trade and finance. The complexity of these issues requires extensive collaboration with other U.S. Government agencies at overseas posts and in Washington, as well as with foreign governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, and other partners. Further information on the Department of State's goals, objectives, strategy, and budget can be found at <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/c6113.htm>.

### ***Commitment to Open Government***

The Department of State recognizes that a key part of its mission is to engage the American public on the nation's foreign policy. The explosive growth in the Internet and social media tools has enabled much greater citizen participation than was ever before possible. These abilities create great opportunities to engage the public and harness the energy and innovativeness of U.S. citizens to promote our foreign policy interests around the world.

State has been actively engaging American citizens and businesses for many years, making available valuable and practical information about traveling to foreign countries, studying abroad, educational exchange opportunities, citizen services, conducting business overseas, and trade and exports. In addition, the Department of State maintains an active program to declassify and release a broad range of historical information concerning foreign policy and international affairs.



Through the Bureaus of Public Affairs, International Information Programs, Educational and Cultural Affairs, and numerous overseas posts, the Department of State has been active in social media, enabling collaboration with U.S. and foreign publics through Facebook™, Twitter™, and blogs.

In the past decade, major events have greatly increased the prominence of foreign affairs with the U.S. public. Since September 11, 2001, Americans have become much more focused on issues such as counterterrorism, promotion of democracy and human rights, international law enforcement, and international finance and trade.

The Department of State's leadership, beginning with Secretary Clinton, is excited about the opportunities presented by the Open Government Initiative. We all recognize the importance of collaboration, engagement, partnerships, and accountability. Even as this plan is being finalized, State has taken the first steps to implement the Open Government Initiative. We have created an Open Government web site, linked to the Department of State's home page. The web site provides access to available datasets and represents a start at efforts to engage the public more dynamically, solicit input, and increase collaboration. The URL for the site is <http://www.state.gov/open/>.

State's mission also includes making international information available to the public. The Bureau of Consular Affairs provides detailed travel information for all countries, via the Internet on <http://travel.state.gov>. The first-ever quantitative assessment of online open government efforts recently found this site to be one of the highest ranking in online transparency. State.gov also scored high in this transparency project, which surveyed more than 36,000 citizens who visited 14 federal sites during the fourth quarter of 2009. For more information on the study, see [http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng\\_20100216\\_1403.php?oref=topnews](http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng_20100216_1403.php?oref=topnews).

The Department of State also provides passports to U.S. citizens and visas to citizens of foreign countries seeking temporary or permanent admission to the United States. Additionally, the Department of State provides services to U.S. citizens overseas, as well as support for U.S. businesses seeking to establish or expand international business.

### ***Leadership and Broad Involvement in Open Government***

Secretary Clinton is personally committed to Open Government. She participates regularly in public forums and has been actively engaged with a wide range of stakeholders in pursuing U.S. foreign policy objectives. The Department of State's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has been designated as the senior official accountable for the quality and objectivity of, and internal controls over the Federal Spending information publically disseminated<sup>1</sup>. The Chief



Figure 1: Secretary Clinton addresses the current group of Department of State interns serving for the spring 2010 session. (State Dept. photo)

<sup>1</sup> Per OMB Memorandum M-10-06 of December 8, 2009 the senior official is "accountable for the quality and objectivity of and internal controls over the Federal spending information publicly disseminated through such public venues as USA sending.gov or similar websites. The senior accountable official also participates in the agency's Senior Management Council or similar governance structure for the agency-wide internal control assessment pursuant to the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act."



Information Officer (CIO) has been designated as the lead Department of State official for overall operational implementation of the Open Government initiative. Each bureau, lead by an Assistant Secretary, will be responsible for the information originating in that bureau.

Past efforts and successes will provide a springboard for fulfilling the requirements of the Open Government Directive. Looking forward, the Department of State's bureaus will participate in Open Government, by contributing datasets for posting for the public and by participating in public events and collaboration opportunities. This approach will provide a rich information exchange with the public and will ensure that all aspects of the Department of State's broad mission and expertise are reflected in Open Government efforts.

The plan has been developed collaboratively, under the direction of an Open Government Working Group composed of leading bureaus currently active in outreach and engagement. The CIO has taken lead responsibility for drafting the plan with input from all stakeholders. The Open Government Plan is being closely coordinated with other efforts such as the development of a new Information Technology Strategic Plan, ensuring that efforts related to the Open Government Initiative will receive priority for resources.

The Department of State is committed to transparency and excited about further engagement and collaboration with American citizens.

### ***Our Open Government Plan***

This plan is designed to advance the President's Transparency and Open Government initiative and promote the Secretary's priorities in engagement and collaboration. It explains the steps the Department of State has already taken and presents a plan for broad collaboration and engagement in carrying out its diplomatic mission. The plan begins with a description on how the Department of State will address the three guiding principles of Open Government:

- Transparency;
- Participation; and
- Collaboration.

The plan then contains a presentation of the three Flagship Initiatives we are pursuing, and concludes with next steps, including our plans to invite the public to participate by providing feedback on our Open Government Plan and on our specific initiatives.

The plan will be easily accessible through the Department of State's Open Government website shown in figure 2 below.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

SECRETARY CLINTON MEDIA CENTER TRAVEL CAREERS BUSINESS YOUTH & EDUCATION

ABOUT STATE POLICY ISSUES COUNTRIES & REGIONS ECONOMICS & ENERGY ARMS CONTROL & SECURITY DEMOCRACY & GLOBAL AFFAIRS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY & PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSISTANCE & DEVELOPMENT

Home » Open Government Initiative

## Open Government Initiative

Transparency \* Participation \* Collaboration

*"My Administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration."*

**OPEN GOV**  
WHITEHOUSE.GOV/OPEN

—President Barack Obama, January 21, 2009

The Open Government Directive and the Progress Report to the American People lay out how the Obama Administration is breaking down long-standing barriers between the Federal government and the people it serves. The Directive instructs agencies to take immediate, specific steps to open their doors and data to the American people.

President Obama signed the Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government as his first executive action, ushering in a new era of open and accountable government meant to bridge the gap between the American people and their government.

[Learn More»](#)

### Public Engagement Activity

Share your comments on State's Open Government Plan.

We also want your help on how we can:

- Work better with others inside & outside the government.
- Solicit feedback from the public.
- Improve the availability & quality of information.
- Be more innovative & efficient.

[Ground Rules and Terms of Participation»](#)

### Featured Datasets

OpenState  
**SHARE YOUR IDEAS**

Participate Innovate  
Transparency  
Collaborate

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**Open Government Plan**

The Department of State has a longstanding history and commitment to sharing information with the public about the diplomatic work that we conduct domestically and overseas. Read the [Open Government Plan](#).

**Foreign Assistance Dashboard**

The Foreign Assistance Dashboard provides a view of U.S. Government foreign assistance funds and enables users to examine, research, and track aid investments in a standard and easy-to-understand format. [Learn more.](#)

**State @ Work**

The U.S. Department of State manages America's relationships with foreign governments, international organizations, and the people of other countries. See [state @ Work](#).

**How We Are Doing**

Figure 2: Department of State Open Government Web Site (www.state.gov/open)



## Transparency

This section identifies concrete steps to be taken to increase visibility into State's historical records and operations. As indicated below, the Department of State has made much progress in providing easy public access to important datasets. This plan builds on our past successes to ensure even greater openness and transparency.

### *Datasets*

The Department of State creates and disseminates datasets about U.S. foreign policy, international diplomacy, and global issues. The data supports analysis of U.S. foreign policy initiatives and trends and is used by experts in specific issue areas as well as experts in the process of diplomacy. The data is also used by the general public to explore the history of U.S. international relations.

The Open Government initiative provides an opportunity to increase access to and use of the datasets available to the public. Datasets that are currently available are located on the Data.gov website, and new datasets will be published there as they are made available. These datasets may be found either by doing a search for all Department of State datasets; or by directly accessing the URL at [www.data.gov - State Datasets](http://www.data.gov - State Datasets). The datasets can also be accessed through the Department of State's Open Government page at [www.state.gov/open](http://www.state.gov/open).

### *Strategic Action Plan for Data Set Publication*

The Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM) has the lead responsibility for coordinating the publication of datasets under this initiative. IRM is continuously working with key bureaus to identify datasets of interest to the public. All of the Department of State bureaus are asked to contribute datasets. Using IdeaScale™<sup>2</sup> the public will be able to provide input as to level of interest and priority to guide the publication schedule for <http://data.gov>. When these datasets are identified, the Department of State will issue a publication schedule. IRM will monitor public use and perceived value of each data set and provide feedback to bureaus.

The most recent data call was issued on October 8, 2010 to 26 Bureaus and Offices. The data call brought responses from several bureaus which had not previously participated in the original request for data at the early implementation of data.gov in December 2009. Also during recent months, the Department of State was approached by the non-profit Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD), based in France, to sponsor them in publishing the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and their OECD Family and Regional Databases to data.gov. At this writing, the Department of State has successfully coordinated and published four very valuable datasets to Data.gov on OECD's behalf. OECD's interest is ongoing and we anticipate a continued relationship and more datasets coming. It is the first such publication for data.gov, because current membership does not extend to NGOs. This ongoing relationship and publishing effort on the Department of State's part may be a catalyst for that data.gov to expand its membership in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> General Services Administration (GSA) provided feedback tool to gather input from the public.  
<http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/open/engagementtool.shtml>



Additionally, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), has initiated a parallel government transparency public information site specifically for legal datasets. At this writing, the Department of State has identified more than 14 significant legal documents and digests which will be published in the coming months under the new moniker.

An example of a recent dataset publication on data.gov is shown in Figure 3.

**DATA.GOV**  
EMPOWERING PEOPLE

HOME DATA TOOLS COMMUNITY METRICS DIALOGUE GALLERY WHAT'S NEW

### PISA 2009

The OECD PISA program, created in 1997, reviews the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of 15 year olds. The PISA program goes beyond the examination of whether students have mastered their school's curriculum and asks if their knowledge will translate into skills needed in adult life.

**VIEW MORE**

#### Most Popular Datasets

1. US GAAP RSS Feed of XBRL Financials
2. Worldwide M1+ Earthquakes, Past 7 Days
3. FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer - Web Map...
4. Climate Reference Network HourlyO2 Product
5. 1987 Toxics Release Inventory data for Guam

SEARCH OUR CATALOGS

Search our catalogs.. **SEARCH**

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HOME DATA TOOLS COMMUNITY METRICS DIALOGUE GALLERY WHAT'S NEW

### PISA 2009

DATASET SUMMARY	
Agency	Department of State
Sub-Agency/Organization	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
Category	Education
Date Released	12/07/2010
Date Updated	12/07/2010
Time Period	2009 school year
Frequency	Every three years
Description	The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) was created by the OECD member countries in 1997 to produce direct assessments of student performance, on a regular basis in an efficient, timely and cost-effective manner; and to provide more relevant and powerful indicators of human capital. PISA produces assessments of reading literacy, mathematical literacy, scientific literacy and a gr <a href="#">(more)</a>

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	<b>CSV</b> 750.0 MB
XLS	KML/KMZ
Shapefile	Maps
RDF	PDF

Cannot find data you are looking for? [Suggest other datasets!](#)

**DATASET RATINGS**

Figure 3: Example of Data.Gov Dataset



**Transparency Initiatives**

The Department of State is committed to improved transparency and the benefits it provides to the public. The following table indicates the extent to which the Department of State is currently engaged with various transparency initiatives and directives.

Transparency Initiative/Guidance	Status of State Activity
Data.gov: <a href="http://www.data.gov">www.data.gov</a>	State has posted numerous high value datasets.
eRulemaking (Regulations.gov): (use keyword: “Agency: DOS” in the search box to find all Department of State activities) <a href="http://www.regulations.gov">www.regulations.gov</a>	State provides funding to EPA in support of the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS). State provided an open comment period to the public on regulations.gov for a new proposed rule to change the schedule of fees for consular services.
IT Dashboard: <a href="http://www.it.usaspending.gov">www.it.usaspending.gov</a>	State posts monthly IT project data as part of USASpending.gov.
Recovery.gov: <a href="http://www.recovery.gov">www.recovery.gov</a>	State reports regular ARRA expenditures.
USAspending.gov: <a href="http://www.usaspending.gov">www.usaspending.gov</a>	State reported assistance and grants figures in Feb 2010.
GovBenefits.gov: <a href="http://www.govbenefits.gov">www.govbenefits.gov</a>	State provides funding to Department of Labor to support this site, and provides information re Department of State managed benefit programs for U.S. citizens.
Regulatory Plan: <a href="http://www.state.gov/open/">www.state.gov/open/</a>	State has provided a preliminary plan for improving Regulation and Regulatory Review by publishing current and future regulations on the Internet.

Table 1: Transparency Initiatives



**Informing the Public**

Engagement with the public is crucial to ensuring an informed citizenry regarding the foreign policy issues and priorities of the U.S. Government. The Department of State offers various opportunities for public participation in virtual events conducted over the Internet as well as physical events, such as public meetings, briefings, and press conferences.

Secretary Clinton and other senior Department of State officials participate in these forums regularly and are eager to engage with U.S. citizens and other stakeholders. On March 31, 2010, the Secretary addressed a Haiti Donor’s Conference to express her appreciation and gratitude for the outpouring of generosity that followed the earthquake. The response to the Haiti crisis is illustrative of the Department of State’s work in informing the public, providing opportunities for U.S. citizens and others to engage, and promoting collaborative efforts to help Haiti respond.



Figure 4: Secretary Clinton, third from right, meets with Haiti's President Rene Preval, third from left, to discuss conditions in the country following Tuesday's deadly earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 16, 2010.

Planned Event	Description and Purpose	Planned Date
Daily Press Briefing	To inform the press on daily developments in foreign policy. Not open to public, but both text and video of the briefing are made available within hours of event via <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/index.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/index.htm</a> .	Daily, M-F.
Special briefings, including teleconferences	To inform the press on specific foreign policy initiatives. Not open to public, but both text and video of most are made available within hours of event via <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/index.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/index.htm</a> .	Several times per week, M-F.
Historical meetings	To discuss foreign policy in a historical context. Not open to general public, but proceedings are made available via <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho">www.state.gov/r/pa/ho</a> soon after the events.	Several times a year.
NGO Conferences	To brief and create dialogue opportunities with specific organizations and audiences on topics that they have expressed an interest in. Events not open to general public, though membership through NGOs and other organizations is open to public. See <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/pl">www.state.gov/r/pa/pl</a> to get involved.	Several times a year.

Table 2: Upcoming State Public Events



The Department of State's web site provides a mechanism to obtain information about U.S. citizens in Haiti, including the people-finder shown below:

### **Person Finder: Haiti Earthquake**

English | [Français](#) | [Kreyòl](#) | [Español](#)

What is your situation?

[I'm looking for someone](#) | [I have information about someone](#)

Currently tracking about 55100 records.

PLEASE NOTE: All data entered will be available to the public and viewable and usable by anyone. Google does not review or verify the accuracy of this data.

[Embed this tool on your site](#) - [Developers](#) - [Terms of Service](#)

<http://www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/ha/earthquake>

### ***Records Management, Declassification, and Processing of FOIA and Congressional Requests***

The Department of State operates an ongoing program to manage its extensive collection of official records. A sizable staff of experts is engaged in reviewing documents, cable traffic, and other information to ensure proper disposition and to release as much information as possible to the public.

The records the Department of State maintains are of great interest to professional historians and international affairs experts as well as to the general public. Accordingly, the records management activities receive high priority, and will be a key component of the Open Government work.

### **Records Management Program**

The visibility of the Records Management Program in the Department of State has risen dramatically in recent years. A vibrant Records Liaison Program that includes all bureaus and overseas posts is in place. A dynamic intranet website that is easy to use walks Department of State personnel through the steps of effective records management. Records Management training courses are now available at the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute including a new Files and Records Management Distance Learning course in which over 700 Department of State employees have enrolled to date.

These efforts have dramatically increased records management awareness throughout the Department of State. In addition, the Department of State continues to be a leader in the management of electronic records by achieving 100% compliance with the requirement to identify and schedule all electronic records by the end of FY '09 and incorporating records management functionality requirements into its annual CPIC rating process for electronic information systems. Additionally, the Department of State's new messaging and archiving system, SMART, captures e-mail and other documentation thus enriching the historical record. For more information on the Department of State's Records Management Program, visit <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/136600.pdf>.

### **FOIA Request Processing Operations**

The Department of State has a centralized FOIA Program, with one office receiving and coordinating the processing of all requests made to the Department of State. The Department of State's E-FOIA



website (<http://www.state.gov/m/a/ips/>), which includes the FOIA Electronic Reading Room, collections of declassified documents, and other major publications such as congressional testimony, contains a wealth of information for the public on the Department of State's information access programs. The Department of State has proactively released and posted substantive records on topics such as human rights issues in South and Central America and secret or "ghost" detainees. The site also contains FOIA Annual Reports and Chief FOIA Officer's Report.

Not only are the substance of the Department of State's records of a global nature, but the records themselves are also maintained globally. The Department of State maintains records domestically, and at hundreds of posts located world-wide. FOIA requests made to the Department of State vary in size from requests for a single document to requests that are both voluminous in size and complex in scope, requiring the review of thousands of documents, frequently retrieved from multiple sources both domestically and overseas. Many of the Department of State's records contain national security information and are classified pursuant to executive orders. The review of these records often requires coordination not only with other Federal agencies, but with other governments, before an appropriate release determination can be made.

Due to the Department of States global structure and the nature of its record holdings, it faces great challenges in achieving full compliance with the time limits of the FOIA. The Department of State remains committed to achieving the fullest possible compliance, with the greatest level of customer service. FOIA requests are processed incrementally, with responses made to requesters as segments are completed, instead of waiting until the conclusion of all processing. For a more in-depth description of the Department of State's FOIA program staffing, organizational structure, and process for analyzing and responding to FOIA requests, please visit <http://www.state.gov/m/a/ips/> and review the most recent FOIA Annual Report as well as the Department of State Information Access Guide/Manual.

In the interest of transparency, it should be noted that the Department of State's backlog of requests is steadily increasing. The backlog at the end of fiscal year 2008 was 4,327, and at the end of fiscal year 2009 the backlog was 8,784. The overall number of requests received by the Department of State rose from 5,909 in 2008 (consisting of 1,676 consultations and 4,233 direct requests to the Department of State) to 10,717 in 2009 (consisting of 6,014 consultations and 4,703 direct requests to the Department of State).

Given this volume of requests, the central FOIA office continuously evaluates the Department of State's program and FOIA process, and modifies the structure and process to promote increased efficiency. A number of initiatives have been identified that should lead to a more effective system for responding to requests. IRM is currently working with the FOIA office to identify most frequently requested information and to see if that information can be made into data sets for public consumption to reduce the above backlogs.

Measures taken to increase efficiency include the following:

- Activities related to FOIA requests in litigation are time-consuming, labor-intensive and deadline-driven, and have long placed a heavy strain on FOIA resources. To alleviate this, the Department of State has realigned resources to pilot a separate litigation team, which will enable the core FOIA workforce to focus on processing cases;



- A Rapid Response Team has also been established to handle the most pressing work, allowing FOIA analysts to maintain focus on processing requests. This group will also be responsible for processing the thousands of FOIA referrals sent by other agencies to the Department of State for coordination;
- The Department of State has established a task force dedicated to the processing of the 250 oldest FOIA cases;
- A team of contractors has been engaged with extremely rigorous production metrics to supplement a shortfall in our FOIA workforce; and
- The Department of State has completed initial recruitment efforts to hire area students, who will be trained in FOIA casework. This program is in its tenth year and has proven to be an investment in building a corps of FOIA experts. Once on board in late May, the students will work full time over the summer, assisting in the backlog reduction effort.

### **Declassification Programs**

Substantial resources have been dedicated to the Systematic Review Program, an initiative to make Department of State records 25 years and older available to the public. Since the enactment of EO 12958 in 1995, the Department of State has reviewed 90 million pages of records for declassification and forwarded them to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) where they will be made available to public researchers. This commitment to the declassification of State's historic records has enhanced government transparency and increased the public's understanding of foreign policy. For more information on Department of State Declassification Programs visit <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/136600.pdf>.

In addition, IdeaScale™ will be used to solicit input from U.S. citizens that will be helpful in prioritizing the records to be declassified and posted. As permanent record series become 25 years old, they will be reviewed for declassification.

These record series are described in the Department of State's Records Disposition Schedules [see link above]. The Department of State establishes priorities among the eligible series based on guidance from the National Archives and Records Administration and input from the public. Citizens wishing to make recommendations for priorities among the permanent record series can visit the Open Government site and register their recommendations.

### ***Congressional Requests***

The Bureau of Legislative Affairs (H) coordinates legislative activity for the Department of State and advises the Secretary, the Deputy, as well as the Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries on legislative strategy. H facilitates effective communication between Department of State officials and the Members of Congress and their staffs. H works closely with authorizing, appropriations, and oversight committees of the House and Senate, as well as with individual Members that have an interest in Department of State or foreign policy issues. H manages Department of State testimony before House and Senate hearings, organizes Member and staff briefings, and facilitates Congressional travel to overseas posts for Members and staff throughout the year. H reviews proposed legislation and



coordinates Statements of Administration Policy on legislation affecting the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The H staff advises individual Bureaus of the Department of State on legislative and outreach strategies and coordinates those strategies with the Secretary's priorities.

The Secretary of State is the principal Congressional Relations Officer of the Department of State. H supports the Secretary by ensuring that the administration's foreign policy priorities are reflected throughout the legislative process. H coordinates the annual testimony provided by the Secretary to Congressional committees with jurisdiction over State programs to explain Department of State priorities and budget requirements. The bureau succeeds in its overall mission by seeking passage of relevant foreign policy legislation and appropriations, obtaining advice and consent to treaties, as well as confirmation of the President's Department of State and Ambassadorial nominees by the Senate.

The Assistant Secretary advises the Secretary of State on legislative matters, directs the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, and acts as the Department of State's principal liaison with the Congress.

The Bureau of Legislative Affairs is headed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary, and three Deputy Assistant Secretaries. The bureau's organization is designed to work closely with congressional oversight committees and leadership. It consists of four offices: the Office of Senate Affairs; the Office of House Affairs; the Office of Regional, Global, and Functional Affairs; and the Executive Office.

#### **Office of Senate Affairs**

The Office of Senate Affairs is responsible for the Department of State's day-to-day interaction with the U.S. Senate and its principal oversight committee—Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as the several other Senate Committees with interest and jurisdiction over the conduct of foreign affairs. This office tracks and works with Senate members and staff on foreign policy-related legislation, keeping Department of State officials informed of committee positions, and advancing Administration foreign policy goals on the Hill. The office also carries the responsibility for managing the Department of State's nominations and confirmation process and the ratification of treaties.

#### **Office of House Affairs**

The House Affairs Office is responsible for the Department of State's liaison with Members and Committees of the U.S. House of Representatives. It facilitates hearings, briefings for Members and staff, outreach to oversight Committees, and communication between the House of Representatives and the Department of State.

H's "mission" on Capitol Hill is located in B-330 of the Rayburn House Office Building. This liaison office provides a full range of Department of State support services to Representatives, Senators, Congressional Committees, and their staffs.

#### **Office of Regional, Global, and Functional Affairs**

The Office of Regional, Global, and Functional Affairs tracks the Department of State's full range of policy issues of interest to the Congress. The office's Legislative Management Officers are the principal substantive liaison officers between Department of State bureaus and Congressional offices. It works in close cooperation with the Department of State bureaus in briefings on administration policy and manages Congressional appearances of Department of State witnesses for foreign policy hearings.



### **Executive Office**

The Executive Office of the Bureau of Legislative Affairs (H/EX) is responsible for Legislative Operations with oversight of Department of State support activities provided to Members of Congress and their staff. It facilitates official foreign travel of Member and staff delegations; responds to written, telephonic and electronic communications by Members of Congress; oversees the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance process for official testimony before Congress; maintains records of all relevant hearings; and provides basic administrative support for the bureau.

The Office annually handles approximately:

- 1,500 pieces of legislation;
- 300 congressional hearings;
- 8,000 pieces of congressional correspondence;
- 500 congressional reports and notifications;
- 18,000 congressional inquires; and
- 2,000 congressional overseas travelers.

### **Legislative Reference Unit**

The Legislative Reference Unit (LRU) oversees the coordination and clearance functions of the Bureau of Legislative Affairs with respect to all Department of State programs and activities. This office monitors all significant legislation involving the Department of State and serves as the liaison in the legislative clearance process, coordinating views between OMB, National Security Council, and other executive agencies. Items maintained in this legislative clearance process include: Presidential executive orders, proclamations, Statements of Administration Policy (SAP), enrolled bills, and reports (including testimony) on pending legislation.

The LRU coordinates the review, preparation, and submission of transcripts of Congressional hearings, insuring that appropriate editorial changes are made in accordance with Committee guidelines. The LRU maintains a library of hearings, transcripts and Questions for the Record (QFRs) involving the Secretary, Department of State principals, and other Department of State witnesses. In addition, the LRU is responsible for coordinating and maintaining the system that identifies, tasks, and tracks reports to Congress, required by law and by legislative history, which are prepared for signature and submission by the Secretary of State or the President.

### **Congressional Correspondence Unit**

The Congressional Correspondence Unit (CCU) receives and tracks all written correspondence from Members of Congress, including requests for testimony, briefings, documents, and speaking engagements. The CCU also responds to telephone inquiries from congressional offices seeking information related to Department of State programs, policies and publications.



### **Congressional Support Unit**

The Congressional Support Unit (CSU) helps facilitate official foreign travel for Members of Congress and their Staff. The CSU is responsible for all substantive aspects of Congressional travel including notification to Posts abroad, compilation of itineraries and scheduling. On a policy level, the CSU is responsible for successful coordination of Congressional (CODEL) and Staff (STAFFDEL) delegation travel to foreign posts in support of the President of the United States' foreign policy objectives.

### **Congressional Travel Office**

The Congressional Travel Unit (CTU) facilitates official foreign travel arrangements for Members of Congress and their Staff. The trips are usually identified by one of three categories:

- Congressional Delegation (CODEL): led by a Member of Congress (Senator/Representative);
- Staff Delegation (STAFFDEL): led by a Professional Staff Member; and
- Non-Delegation (NODEL): led by a Member of Congress (Senator/Representative) in a non-official capacity. (No Congressional funds are expended.)

You can find more information about the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, including a list of its senior officials, at <http://www.state.gov/s/h/index.htm>.



## Participation

Participation is a key element to ensure continued transparency in an open government. The Department of State plans to continue to provide and expand on a range of opportunities for the public to interact with Department of State officials and offer their opinions, questions, and feedback both in the U.S. and abroad. This is useful in assessing public opinion and tracking reactions to U.S. positions, events and policies. For example, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs manages [ExchangeConnect](#) which is “an International network that highlights first person stories about culture, communities, and exchange program experiences.” U.S. Embassies engage local audiences as well through a variety of on-line means.

As noted above, the Department of State is active in the social media arena, and has a sizable following among Facebook™, Twitter™, and blog users. In the aftermath of the recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, a vast number of compassionate U.S. citizens contacted the Department of State through social media to seek ways that they could help. The Department of State’s goal is to provide a variety of forums through which U.S. citizens can participate actively in their government and U.S. foreign policy.

The Department of State amplifies the reach of U.S. foreign policy to domestic and global audiences through new media and web-based communication technology. The Department of State’s three guiding principles for all social media efforts are engagement, transparency, and serving as an alternative to traditional media. These principles guide new expansion efforts and help build lasting relationships with new sectors of the public. The efforts outlined below will support Secretary Clinton’s directive to Implement 21st Century Statecraft and use modern technologies to engage with the public.

### ***Web Video***

The Department of State provides video for [video.state.gov](#), [America.gov](#), U.S. embassy websites, and several blogs. Video is also made widely available on social networking platforms such as YouTube™, Facebook™, and Flickr™. These video products cover a variety of subjects from senior staff remarks and briefings, to videos that feature elements of U.S. Public Diplomacy. The Department of State plans to increase the volume and availability of web video products, both live and on-demand, by 25% by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011.

### ***Blogs***

DipNote, the Department of State’s official blog at [blogs.state.gov](#), gives the public context, clarity, and behind-the-scenes insights on U.S. foreign policy from Department of State employees who are directly engaged in the work of diplomacy. Department of State employees post entries daily on critical issues, such as climate change and food security, and share with the public the work they are doing in countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

DipNote recently passed 15,000,000 page views and 13,000 comments by the public. More than 2,500 individuals and organizations subscribe to DipNote via RSS feeds. DipNote is available for the iPhone and Blackberry. The Department of State plans to increase active engagement between Department of State officials and public commentators by 25% by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011.



### *Twitter™*

Twitter™ is a free “micro-blogging” service that allows for quick, frequent information distribution online. The Department of State uses Twitter™ to disseminate information during the Secretary’s travels, highlight key points made during the daily press briefings and high-profile public speeches, and communicate directly with the public by responding to their questions. The Department of State also corrects misinformation using Twitter™.

The Associated Press covered the Department of State’s use of Twitter™ in March 2009, when rumors and web-postings alleged that Madagascar’s ousted President Ravalomanana had been granted refuge in the U.S. Embassy. Realizing that this might lead to mob action against U.S. personnel and facilities, Department of State staff used Twitter™ to “tweet” a rebuttal to the rumors, quickly defusing the situation. [Department of State - Twitter](#)



Figure 5: Sample of Department of State's Twitter™ Page

The Department of State plans to increase targeted use of Twitter™ 30% by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011.

### *YouTube™*

The Department of State maintains several YouTube™ video channels featuring public affairs, public diplomacy, and U.S. embassy videos. Videos include remarks by Secretary Clinton, daily press briefings, special video collections based on foreign policy issues and interviews with U.S. diplomats. "[Statevideo](#)," the main Department of State channel, boasts over 1.3 million video views and 3,600 subscribers. The Department of State plans to increase the volume and availability of YouTube™ video products by 25% by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011.

### *Interactive Travel Map*

The Bureau of Public Affairs created an interactive map to track Secretary Clinton’s foreign travel. To date, Secretary Clinton has traveled more than 260,000 miles as Secretary of State. The map enables users to see where the Secretary is at any given time, calculates miles traveled (throughout the trip and cumulatively as Secretary), displays photos from the road (posted on Flickr™), and features the Secretary’s remarks and blogs. This program is also integrated with the Department of State’s Facebook™ page. The direct link is <http://www.state.gov/secretary/trvl/map/>. The map has 2,341,594 page views since inception on Feb. 28, 2009.



The Department of State plans to add greater interactivity and opportunities for users to directly engage with Department of State officials. The Department of State will also begin featuring several maps, from which the user will be able to create their own combined maps based on an individual's interests.

### Facebook™

The Department of State maintains a presence on Facebook™. Several U.S. embassies and consulates also maintain Facebook™ pages (e.g. U.S. embassy in Jakarta has 302,000 fans). The Department of State's public diplomacy efforts are also featured on Facebook™ (e-Journal on Facebook™ has 102,000 fans).

The Department of State plans to increase its active engagement with the public using Facebook™ by 25% by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011. See [Department of State - Facebook™](#).

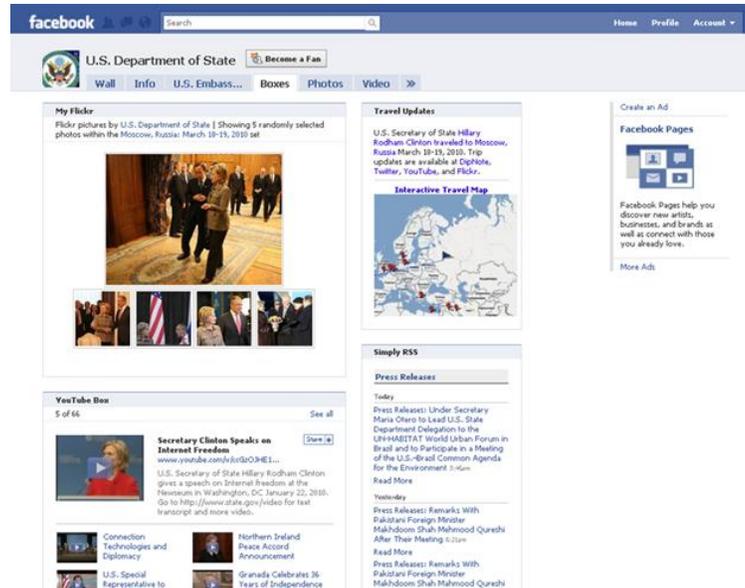


Figure 6: Sample of Department of State's Facebook™ Page

### Text the Secretary

“Text the Secretary” is a mobile and interactive forum in which the public can submit questions to Secretary Clinton. This new program invites people from around the world to send the Secretary questions via text message and the Department of State homepage. Anyone can use this program, especially given that text messages are far more popular than email in many locations around the world (Inside U.S.: 90822, Outside U.S.: 202-255-6299). The Secretary has received thousands of text messages. Representative responses are then featured on the state.gov website. This feature is part of Secretary Clinton’s broad message of diplomacy-through-dialogue and a dialogue that is not just government-to-government.

### ExchangeConnect

ExchangeConnect is an international social network managed by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs that highlights first-person stories about cultures, commonalities, and exchange program experiences. The social network currently has 30,000 members. The Department of State plans to continue and expand the ExchangeConnect social network by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011.

### Web Chats

The Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs hosts CO.NX!, offering LIVE multimedia events with experts on important topics. The Department of State plans to implement similar efforts to engage both domestic U.S. and international audiences by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011.

### Podcasts (Audio and Video)

The Department of State produces podcasts for download on popular platforms such as iTunes™. These podcasts include Secretary Clinton's remarks, daily press briefings, and various special features.



The Department of State plans to increase the volume and availability of its podcast products 40% by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, FY2011.

### ***Increase Use of Mobile Technologies***

Secretary Clinton announced support from the United States for the first Pakistani mobile phone-based social network, Humari Awaz (“Our Voice”) during her visit to the country October 29, 2009. The Humari Awaz platform leverages SMS technology and enable Pakistanis to build mobile-based networks around shared interests, themes and subjects. In addition to linking friends and families, the network also helps a range of other users - from farmers and resellers who want to share market prices, to businesses that wish to communicate with their staff on the road, to news outlets that want to share information with targeted groups. U.S. support for the program covers the costs of the first 24 million Humari Awaz messages. The program already surpassed the 24 million message mark and began charging a minimal fee for messages on March 12, 2010. Despite the network being phased into a fee for service model, over 80% of its original participants still actively use the service.

The rampant level of crime in Mexico is fueled by the drug trade. So the Department of State implemented a program in Mexico to restore anonymity to crime fighting using the tools of technology by allowing people to send free, anonymous text messages to report crimes.

Technology is transforming the African continent. In East Africa alone there are approximately 50 million mobile phone subscribers and an increasing number of mobile web users. Across the region, the number of IT graduates and tech entrepreneurs is exploding, providing new opportunities to foster social and economic growth. Apps 4 Africa was a contest to highlight the talent of local developers in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania and to leverage the power of digital technology to make a better world. The challenge was to build the best digital tools to address community challenges in areas ranging from healthcare to education and government transparency to election monitoring.

The Department of State will continue to support similar efforts to use mobile technologies as a means for social engagement in 2011.

### ***Corridor***

eDiplomacy is currently implementing a Department of State Professional Networking Service with the following goals:

- Widespread, effective and secure use of Professional Networking to improve the ability of State employees to find and contribute knowledge anywhere, anytime;
- Identify and collaborate with others in State who have shared interests, expertise, experience and knowledge that can help an individual to better perform his or her job;
- Share knowledge with a large but undetermined audience via social tagging;
- Reinforcement of other knowledge sharing tools; and
- Improved networking and information for the assignment process and identification of skills or skill gaps in the workforce.



Corridor will make it simple for individuals to create personal websites available to others on the network to:

- Publish a professional profile;
- Identify a professional network;
- Tag and share information and knowledge resources of potential interest to others;
- List or link to knowledge contributions such as published articles;
- List affiliations such as online communities; and
- In parallel to technical development of the platform, work with other offices to provide governance and guidance that satisfy security, privacy and other Department requirements;



## Collaboration

One essential element of diplomacy is collaboration. The Department of State has done much in recent years to go beyond in-person collaboration and use technology in innovative ways, and we have plans to expand these efforts in new directions. The goal is to create and sustain an environment in which collaboration and cooperation are the norm, and a suite of state-of-the-practice tools are readily available to support collaboration in many different ways.

A challenge that the Department of State faces in this area is that the work often involves classified and other sensitive information. This requires robust risk management programs and appropriate IT security in place to ensure that Department of State can fulfill its mission and share information broadly, while protecting sensitive information assets appropriately.

The Department of State's effectiveness is highly dependent on its ability to work in partnership with many different kinds of organizations. The Department of State collaborates actively with the U.S. public, citizens of other countries, other Federal agencies, non-federal governments (including tribal governments), non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and foreign government agencies.

Examples of current collaboration initiatives include the following:

### *Collaborating with the Public*

- DipNote - The Department of State's Official Internet Blog. DipNote is a place to share stories, discuss experiences and inspire new ideas on the important foreign policy issues of the day.
- Department of State is active in Facebook™, Twitter™ and other social media sites.
- Travel and other information are available to the public via [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) and to other Federal agencies via Intelink-U.

In addition, IdeaScale™ will be used to solicit input from U.S. citizens that will be helpful in updating and enhancing the OpenGov website.





### *Internal Collaboration at the Department of State*

- Diplopedia – The Department of State’s internal unclassified online encyclopedia. Just as people create and edit articles on public wikis on the Internet, Department of State personnel are using Diplopedia to create a broad, informative and expanding reference tool for knowledge-sharing about the Department of State, its programs and offices, and other international affairs subjects.
- Communities @ State - This initiative enables and encourages Department of State personnel with shared professional interests to form online communities to publish information, connect with others, and discuss issues. Transcending organizational boundaries and geographic constraints, these websites use a simple blogging tool to allow online community members to easily and quickly publish deliberative content. By choice of the community administrators, most of these online communities are available to members of the interagency foreign affairs community.
- The Sounding Board – An collaborative website where all Department of State employees can share ideas or participate in ongoing conversations on new, smarter, and more effective ways of enabling our nation’s foreign policy goals.
- Listservs – A listservs is type of electronic mailing list, allowing for distribution of email to multiple subscribers. A listservs maintains lists of electronic email addresses of people with common interests. Sending something to that list automatically gets forwarded to everyone on that list.

Improving the speed with which information is shared with other agencies is one of our key goals. This kind of collaboration is especially important when dealing with such vital topics as counterterrorism, international crime, law enforcement, and emergency response. The ambassador at an embassy overseas must be able to collaborate and communicate reliably with all Americans working inside and outside the embassy. A cornerstone of our approach to achieving this goal is the development of a Foreign Affairs Network (FAN). The FAN will provide other U.S. agencies operating at posts overseas with a standard configuration of hardware, software, and telecommunications to enable access to Department of State IT resources as well as home agency capabilities.

[Department of State - @work](#)



Figure 7: Sample of Department of State's "State @ Work" page



The Department of State welcomes feedback from other agencies and the public. The Department of State is interested in innovative ideas for enhancing collaboration. The Department of State will use IdeaScale™ to solicit feedback on the Open Government Plan. IdeaScale™ will also be used to continue to solicit feedback on how the Department of State can enable public dialogue and a more open government.



## Flagship Initiatives

To promote transparency, participation and collaboration with the public, the Department of State is currently undertaking three new initiatives, Virtual Student Foreign Service, HumanRights.gov, and ForeignAssistance.gov. All three initiatives are priorities of Secretary Clinton and represent innovative ways of engaging the U.S. public and other stakeholders to further the U.S. diplomatic mission. In addition to providing direct results, these three initiatives will also serve as demonstration projects. We will assess their effectiveness and seek to generalize lessons learned for applicability to future Open Government initiatives.

### *Virtual Student Foreign Service*

The Department of State has designated the Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS) Program as a flagship initiative. The VSFS was announced by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on May 13, 2009 at New York University's commencement. As Secretary Clinton said:

"...over the next year the Department of State will be creating Virtual Student Foreign Service Internships to harness the energy of a rising generation of citizen diplomats. Working from college and university campuses, American students will partner with our embassies abroad to conduct digital diplomacy that reflects the realities of the networked world."

The VSFS Program was established on a pilot basis during the summer of 2009 and included 37 diplomatic posts and approximately 40 students. Objectives related to analyzing the pilot and instituting the program more broadly are:

- Significantly expand the VSFS level of participation to include domestic offices as well as additional overseas posts;
- Establish processes to actively reach out to college audiences in order to recruit additional highly qualified and motivated students;
- Establish tiered participation opportunities for students involved in the VSFS program, e.g., full participants will be paired and work extensively with specific Department of State offices / posts, while associate participants may only work as part of a "crowd sourcing" approach on individual issues, or on elements of larger, on-going efforts; and
- Develop and aggressively track both qualitative and quantitative diplomatic and management results achieved via the student and post collaboration projects.



Figure 8: VSFS at <http://www.state.gov/vsfs/>

Currently, there are over 100 intern positions available that will be virtually assigned to 46 diplomatic posts.



### ***HumanRights.gov***

The Secretary's speech on December 14, 2009 strongly affirmed our nation's view that human rights, democracy, and development go hand-in-hand, as she outlined our approach to "making human rights a human reality."

The Secretary emphasized:

"...we support change driven by citizens and their communities. The project of making human rights a human reality cannot be just one for governments. It requires cooperation among individuals and organizations within communities and across borders. It means that we work with others who share our commitment to securing lives of dignity for all who share the bonds of humanity."



**Figure 9: Secretary Clinton with members of Menteng Elementary School #1 Children's Choir waving to the crowd in Jakarta, Indonesia. (State Dept. photo)**

To further this vital human rights agenda, the Department of State is leading a new U.S. Government initiative to establish a HumanRights.gov website on the Internet. This new site will serve as the Federal Government's focal point for information sharing and collaboration with external partners on human rights issues.

This effort was initiated by the Administration and the White House's National Security Council in order to improve the quality and availability of human rights information, and to help strengthen outreach and engagement on human rights matters. Currently a great deal of human rights information is scattered among the web sites and databases of numerous Federal agencies, making it difficult to find and obtain. There is no central repository or web site, and no central U.S. Government Internet presence for engagement on human rights issues. This new HumanRights.gov web site will provide such a central repository and enhanced engagement platform.

### ***ForeignAssistance.gov***

The ForeignAssistance.gov site was created in response to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and President Obama's Open Government Initiative. As part of the efforts to pursue greater transparency in government, the Administration has developed an Aid Transparency Agenda for Action, of which this Foreign Assistance Dashboard is an important part. The U.S. Government is committed to making information on foreign assistance programs more transparent, accessible, and compatible with international standards.



The Aid Transparency Agenda for Action will enable us to pursue the following objectives:

- Make foreign aid more useful for development. Greater aid transparency accomplishes this objective by assisting recipient governments to better manage their aid flows and by empowering citizens to hold governments accountable for how assistance is used;
- Increase the efficacy of our foreign assistance. With a clearer understanding of what we are doing, where, and to what effect, the U.S. will be better positioned to maximize the impact of our resources and investments; and
- Increase international accountability. Greater access to information about assistance will help developing country governments and international civil society to hold donors accountable for the quantity and quality of aid flows.

On the ForeignAssistance.gov site is Foreign Assistance Dashboard. The goal of the Dashboard is to enable a wide variety of stakeholders, including U.S. citizens, civil society organizations, the Congress, U.S. Government (USG) agencies, donors, and partner country governments, to examine, research, and track USG foreign assistance investments in an accessible and easy-to-understand format.

The Foreign Assistance Dashboard offers data in two ways: through the pre-defined charts and graphs on the website and through the complete datasets. The data page enables users to generate personalized tables through manual queries and download machine-readable datasets. The full set of data available on the website can be downloaded.

The Dashboard is still in its early stages of development. Future versions will incorporate budget, financial, program, and performance data in a standard form from all USG agencies receiving or implementing foreign assistance, humanitarian, and/or development funds. The Dashboard currently contains Department of State and USAID budget and appropriation data.



## Next Steps

### Actions

The Open Government Task Force, CFO, and CIO will work together to ensure that this plan is a living document, updated and revised regularly. In the coming weeks, we will develop the following information to continue refining and fleshing out the plan:

- A schedule for datasets, declassified information, and other information to be published for the balance of this fiscal year
- A plan for assessing and incorporating feedback on this initial plan
- A dashboard for ensuring transparency and for keeping the Secretary and other senior officials informed of our progress on a regular basis

### Schedule and Status

The schedule and status is shown in Table 3 below.

Initiative	Milestones	Anticipated Date of Completion
Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS)	Double number of participants.	January 2011
	Develop plan to scale VSFS.	January 2011
Human Rights.Gov	Develop initial website.	January 2011
Foreign Assistance.gov (New)	Launch website prototype, including USAID and DoS foreign assistance data and baseline functionality.	September 2010
	Establish more extensive foreign assistance data standards with inter-agency working group.	December 2010
Web Video	Provide video for video.state.gov, America.gov, U.S. embassy websites, and several blogs.	Completed
	Increase the volume and availability of web video products, both live and on-demand, by 25%.	Q4, FY2011
Blogs	Make DipNote available for the iPhone and Blackberry.	Completed
	Increase active engagement between Department of State officials and public commentators by 25%.	Q4, FY2011
Interactive Travel Map	Create an interactive map to track Secretary's foreign travel.	Completed
	Add greater interactivity and opportunities for users to directly engage with Department of State officials.	Q4, FY2011
Twitter™	Use Twitter™ to disseminate information regarding the Secretary's travels, daily press briefings, high-profile public speeches, and communicate directly with the public by responding to questions.	Completed
	Correct misinformation using Twitter™.	Completed
	Increase targeted use of Twitter™ by 30%.	Q4, FY2011



Initiative	Milestones	Anticipated Date of Completion
YouTube™	Create YouTube™ video channels featuring public affairs, public diplomacy, and U.S. embassy videos, to include remarks by the Secretary, daily press briefings, special video collections based on foreign policy issues, and interviews with U.S. diplomats.	Completed
	Increase the volume and availability of YouTube™ video products by 25%.	Q4, FY2011
Facebook™	Create a Facebook™ presence for the Department of State and several U.S. embassies and consulates.	Completed
	Increase active engagement with the public using Facebook™ by 25%.	Q4, FY2011
Text The Secretary	Create a mobile and interactive forum named “Text the Secretary” in which the public can submit questions to Secretary of State.	Completed
ExchangeConnect	Create an international social network managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs that highlights first-person stories about cultures, commonalities, and exchange program experiences.	Completed
	Expand the ExchangeConnect social network.	Q4, FY2011
Web Chats	Host LIVE multimedia events with experts on important topics.	Completed
	Implement efforts to engage both domestic U.S. and international audiences.	Q4, FY2011
Podcasts	Produce podcasts for download on popular platforms such as iTunes to include the Secretary's remarks, daily press briefings, and various special features.	Completed
	Increase the volume and availability of its podcast products by 40%.	Q4, FY2011
Data.gov	Produce datasets for Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD).	Completed
	Make a available 45 data sets to Law.gov.	Q3, FY2011
Regulatory Compliance	Produce a plan for public access of regulatory compliance and enforcement.	Completed
	Update the plan with Bureau compliance plans.	Q3, FY2011

Table 3: Schedule and Status of Initiatives