

Electronic Management Tools for New Idea Generation in the Federal Workplace

Prepared by the Innovation Tools Subgroup
For the White House Innovation and Information Policy Group

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I. Introduction and Overview

To support the White House Innovation and Information Policy Working Group's exploration of technological platforms that encourage innovative activity within the US Government [USG], an Innovation Tools Subgroup was formed in June 2009. The Innovation Tools Subgroup was led by staff members of the US Department of Health and Human Services, US Department of Agriculture, and the Executive Office of Science and Technology Policy. The Subgroup conducted its field work, which included agency site visits, platform demonstrations and an environmental scan, during July and August 2009.

This technical paper represents a synopsis of the Innovation Tools Subgroup's findings. It includes:

- an overview of the context for those interested in the deployment of idea generation tools within the federal workforce;
- a description of the functionalities and capabilities of electronic tools for facilitating idea generation and management;
- a synopsis of the leading idea generation tools that currently exist within public and private sectors;
- and a discussion of management lessons learned for idea generation tools.

The scope of this analysis is limited to use of idea generation tools within an organization. While public engagement (for government) or customer base (for business) is an important application of these tools, the focus of this paper is limited to idea generation within federal organizations.

II. Background

There is a growing recognition across many branches of the USG that better mechanisms are needed for harnessing the collective talent and expertise of agency employees to solve problems. All too often, identifying and connecting innovative thinkers who are most capable of generating truly pioneering solutions can be challenging. Many factors contribute to this. First, identifying idea generators can be difficult to locate in large organizations, particularly those in which employees are scattered geographically. Second, there may be many creative thinkers who do not have job titles or classifications that are typically associated with "innovation" and thus they may be overlooked in the problem-solving process. Third, multiple employees may be working on related angles of a common problem but do not know of their colleagues' interests and have limited mechanisms for sharing ideas. Fourth, while in non-governmental sectors, social networking tools such as Facebook and LinkedIn have revolutionized communication and problem-solving; these types of social networking platforms are unavailable to many federal employees due to security prohibitions. Finally, when promising ideas are identified, few mechanisms exist for obtaining feedback across the organization, or for evaluating promising ideas in a manner that involves a broad range of stakeholders. The result is that many good ideas go at worst unrecognized and at best remain underdeveloped.

Currently, problem-solving and communication across the USG is typically conducted in a linear, hierarchal fashion that reflects an organization's structure and chain of command. A hypothetical example of how problem-solving is typically conducted may help to illuminate some of the issues. Let's say for argument's sake that a series of adverse events occur related to the use of a regulated medical product, but the cause and nature is not yet understood. In response to this event, the Director of Agency X might hold a staff meeting with his top advisors and division directors in which he charges them to provide him with creative ideas for mitigating the occurrence of future events and/or to improve response measures. As a result of the staff meeting several things could happen. Division directors could issue memos to their staffs soliciting innovative ideas to provide in response to the request for risk management strategies. Other possibilities include: the development of an internal agency task force comprised to explore possible options; the hiring of outside consultants to assess agency processes and make recommendations; the issuance of a formal Request for Information (RFI) to solicit public input; and the development of internal options memos and white papers by the Agency's policy, planning, and evaluation staffs.

While any of the approaches discussed in this hypothetical example might yield innovative ideas, there are aspects of the current problem-solving approaches with the USG that are inefficient. First, many of the scenarios listed above may be lengthy in their time frame, with some approaches taking as long as several months to a half year to implement. Second, all of the above scenarios rely on linear communication methods, such as bi-directional emails or Federal register communications. In a linear communication mode, the requestor is privy to all of the inputs from responders, but the responders are rarely aware of inputs by other responders, thus making it difficult for collaborative approaches to problem-solving. When a request for information generates a large number of responses, decision-makers often have few objective mechanisms [other than counting the number of times an idea is proposed] for distinguishing between good and bad ideas. Third, geographical distance can serve as a barrier; only those closest to headquarters may be invited to participate in the discussions. Moreover, because solution-generation is often consolidated in the hands of a few select members who are assumed to be in the best position to generate innovative ideas based on their rank or job classification, the process may inadvertently pass over some of the most promising idea generators. It may also fail to garner feedback from those employees who are closest to the front lines and may have valuable insights into the workability of a given solution. Another potential downside of such an approach is that even when a good idea is generated, it can be difficult to develop the broad support for implementation downstream, particularly from those on the front lines of program delivery. The limited lack of input from those on the front lines may leave a broad swath of government employees feeling disconnected and disempowered, contributing to morale issues over time. For complex problems, input, revision, and reshaping of ideas works best with team input, especially from those near the front-lines. However, today's decision-making structure do not often allow for such broad inputs.

Furthermore, changes in the larger business environment [i.e., advances in technology, automation, and the transition to a paperless workplace] are necessitating more

analytically complex, executive functions throughout all branches the government. Increasingly, problem-solving is becoming more data-driven and responsive to real-time inputs. To maximize the benefit of cutting edge computing tools such as simulation, visualization, and prediction models, the “mashing up” of a variety of perspectives and the merging of disparate datasets is necessary.

The advent of web 2.0, and new connectivity software programs (such as blogs and wikis) that promote social networking have opened up a whole new array of technological possibilities for identifying idea generators and harnessing the collective intelligence of an organization to identify, refine, and promote the most promising ideas. As government employment expands to include a growing number of members of the millennial generation, who are comfortable utilizing social networking tools such as Facebook and MySpace, many employees are eager to harness the power of electronic tools for enhancing connectivity and productivity.

Finally, the interest in harnessing better uses of electronic platforms for crowdsourcing and idea generation may be driven by the success of the Obama Administration in utilizing electronic platforms during the campaign. Since taking office, President Obama has undertaken two initiatives that support increased participation in decision-making processes and better uses of data within the federal government. The Open Government Initiative is aimed at propelling agencies to be more fully transparent in their work, participatory in soliciting ideas and expertise, and collaborative in how they experiment to use new tools and techniques for developing open government policy. The Data.gov initiative seeks to increase public access to high value, machine readable datasets generated by the executive branch of the USG. Both of these initiatives allow for the development of real-time, data-driven decision-making. By making data sets available via publicly-accessible web portals, the data.gov initiative is allowing analysts to combine data sets in ways that may provide new forms of analytics and new ways of understanding and solving problems.

III. Overview of Electronic Tools to Facilitate Idea Generation and Management

In the past few years, a new generation of web-based tools utilizing social media concepts has emerged to facilitate idea generation and management. Provided below is a brief overview of the functionalities and enabling capacities of these types of tools.

These tools have several broad functionalities:

- ***Idea Generation.*** At a basic level, these tools provide an online forum where employees can submit ideas on how to improve the organization. Idea generation programs generally allow employees to initiate suggestions or submit comments on a pre-determined set of topics of interest to the organization, and/or can allow for open-ended idea generation. Agencies can also use these tools to issue broad “challenge questions” to their employees. More advanced tools allow for collaborative spaces where individuals can collectively refine and improve ideas.

- ***Idea Evaluation and Selection.*** The tools provide an electronic forum for evaluating and selecting the most promising ideas. The most basic of these tools allow users to comment on postings as a method of evaluation; more advanced tools allow users to rate ideas using a scaled system [for example, one star for poor ideas and five stars for excellent ideas]. The most technologically simple program provide each employee with one, equal vote; more sophisticated systems assign points to reviewers and weigh the comments and votes based on a commenter's track record and value to the organization. The most technologically advanced idea generation tools allow for prediction modeling to assist organizations in determine which ideas are most likely to be successful.
- ***Program Implementation.*** Once ideas are recommended for implementation, these tools can play a vital role in communicating the implementation process to the user community. Usually this is done through written updates and postings on the tool's website or through electronic mail to the user community.

In addition, the process functionalities provided by these tools can generate secondary benefits that contribute to the innovative capacity of an organization, such as:

- ***Expertise Locator.*** Electronic idea generation tools allow employees working in disparate parts of the organization to find each other and to share common interests. They essentially enable employees with similar interests to “talk,” educate, inform each other and build online communities related to shared professional interests.
- ***Communication Catalyst.*** Electronic idea generation tools can facilitate broader and faster communications about problems, priorities, and solutions between leadership and an organizations' employee base. They also allow for more direct, two-way communications between the workforce and senior leadership.
- ***Employee Engagement.*** By allowing *all* employees, regardless of their position in the organization to participate in the idea generation and evaluation processes, there is a secondary gain of increased value perception of workforce engagement (flattening of silos and hierarchical structures). Employees are given a voice to improve their organization by submitting ideas that can initiate change and can also provide meaningful feedback about initiatives that will affect them and those that they serve.
- ***Process Facilitation.*** Electronic idea generation tools can facilitate employees' willingness to adopt new ideas. Better uptake in change management is likely to occur within the workforce if they understand the purpose behind change and how problems will be solved. Also, by providing employees and managers with a public forum to learn about ideas being proposed in other parts of the organization, it can have the secondary benefit of spreading best practices across the organization.

It is important to note that collaborative knowledge management tools go well beyond the initial act of generating problem-specific solutions. The tools can facilitate idea generation throughout the entire innovation lifecycle (idea generation, piloting/refinement, selection of the best ideas, implementation, adoption and evaluation) thus, leveraging internal capacity to a greater extent. Therefore, in order for idea generation to occur throughout, it is necessary that a tool:

- identify a “real” problem
- develop initial ideas that address that problem
- refine good ideas into better ones that are sustainable, replicable, and scalable
- develop ideas to promote implementation and adoption of the best ideas
- exploit high risk investment in order to obtain maximal health impact (e.g. development of a single platform that can be used for multiple infectious disease detection or for distribution of health content including chronic, injury, infectious disease, health promotion etc).

Thus, having a proper tool helps lay the foundation for the best overall solution; a solution that addresses the aforementioned issues by utilizing ideas from different perspectives and disciplines, while also producing results that are sustainable, replicable and scalable.

IV. Examples of Private and Public Sector Idea Generation Tools

The Innovation Tools Subgroup identified a handful of the leading idea generation tools currently being utilized in the public and private sectors.

Within the Federal government, the Subgroup identified the following three tools: the IdeaFactory, which was developed by the US Department of Homeland Security’s Transportation and Security Administration; The Sounding Board, which was developed by the US Department of State; and the Idea Lab, which was developed and implemented by the US Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Subgroup attended presentations and demonstrations of three of these tools, and also held in-depth conversations with program managers and technical experts associated with these tools.

Within the private sector, the Subgroup identified the following tools: Spigit, Google Moderator, IdeaScale, and Salesforce. Because the focus of this review is on the adoption of idea generation tools within the USG, and no federal entities have yet implemented commercial idea generation software programs, the Subgroup did not conduct extensive reviews of these commercially-developed tools.

These seven tools do not represent the full extent of available tools, but provide an important starting point for understanding the landscape of current idea generation technology and practice.

Provided below are brief descriptions of the tools. They address the tool's background and purpose, technical platform characteristics, organizational location and idea management, and usage and metrics. The appendices contain more detailed information about the IdeaFactory, The Sounding Board, and Idea Lab.

a. Tools Used in the Federal Government

i. *IdeaFactory* (TSA)

(1) Background of IdeaFactory

The IdeaFactory has been integrated into the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA)'s culture and business processes since the tool's inception in April 2007. The program was launched at the request of TSA's Administrator to address three key needs at TSA: 1) How TSA could engage employees and ensure that every member of its large (50,000+) workforce at more than 450 airports and other locations could have a voice in the way the agency and its operations evolve; 2) How TSA could collect constant, fresh input and perspectives on improvements to keep the agency flexible and effectively mitigate security threats; and 3) how TSA could disseminate information about new and existing programs, initiatives, and policies to front-line employees and provide a forum for communication.

(2) Technical Platform Characteristics for IdeaFactory

The IdeaFactory is an ASP.NET web application built on a Microsoft .NET platform using Microsoft IIS as the web and application server and Microsoft SQL Server 2005 as the database engine. Beyond the licensing requirements for Microsoft Windows Server and Microsoft SQL Service, the application relies upon a licensed component, the Telirik control, for authoring and editing rich text in web forms. TSA staff and contractors maintain and manage its source code. Configuration files allow the modification of some of the user interface elements without rebuilding the application. Idea categories presented in pick lists can be changed via a configuration file, for example, and skinning of the application for agency branding can also be done outside of the application source code. Extensive data is collected and reported by the system. Administrative screens allow IdeaFactory program managers to view and summarize metrics and generate reports. IdeaFactory is compliant with ADA Section 508.

The IdeaFactory has gone through three major iterations. Its first most basic version was created internally by TSA staff in the course of six weeks. Since then, the tool has undergone two major upgrades by external contractors to build on the basic functions (e.g., posting, commenting, and rating ideas), to include more advanced functions such as the ability to query and analyze the database (for example, by the popularity of an idea; status of an idea or comment; or profile and use patterns of an author or commenter). The most recent version of the tool allows users to set up profiles so that they will receive notification when new ideas or comments in their area of interest are posted; it will also

allow IdeaFactory administrators more creativity in how they present their idea (e.g. through the use of video/audio files and text formatting).

A white paper further discussing the IdeaFactory tool is available in appendix A.

(3) Organizational Location and Idea Management at IdeaFactory

The IdeaFactory was initially developed by and implemented at the Transportation Security Administration. The tool is in the process of being rolled out across the entire Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and is expected to be deployed at all 22 DHS agencies by January 2010.

The IdeaFactory is managed by the Office of the Deputy Administrator at TSA. The resource investment to implement and maintain the TSA IdeaFactory within TSA includes approximately five full-time employees. These include a program manager, deputy program manager, one program analyst, two contractors to support the program team, and a part-time contractor to assist with IT issues.

The IdeaFactory is housed on the TSA intranet, with a prominent link displayed on the main landing page. Currently, the tool can only be accessed on TSA computers [as opposed to through remote log-in]. Consideration is being given to allowing users to access it at home to increase use of the tool, though such a change may pose security issues.

Log-in to the IdeaFactory tool is enabled through user authentication into the TSA network's Windows domain and Active Directory. A policy decision was made by the Integrated Project Team that stood up the tool that all postings to the site require attribution. Recognition of a user's credentials and name is automatic, so IdeaFactory can and does display the author's name next to each idea that is submitted.

To submit an idea or comment, users can click on any of the 15 pre-determined categories (e.g., human resources, information technology, improvements to the tool, etc). These categories are configurable and categories can be added and deleted in response to patterns of use.

All users are allowed one vote per idea and all votes are weighted equally. Ideas garnering 75 votes and a score of 4.0 out 5.0 by the user community are considered "threshold" ideas and are guaranteed a formal evaluation in response by the appropriate program office. In addition, the IdeaFactory team and program office subject matter experts review the ideas and select the most promising ones (regardless of overall score) for review as well. Because most ideas involve more than one program office, ideas receiving support at the program office level are then subjected to a cross-functional review by the IdeaFactory Review Board (this board is comprised of 15-20 person representing leadership from program offices, relevant staff offices such as legal and budget, and IdeaFactory program managers).

All submissions are posted immediately to the internal site and do not receive review prior to posting. The site is, however, reviewed daily by IdeaFactory program managers who have the discretion to remove inappropriate comments or ideas, or to merge ideas that are similar in nature. Notably, there is also a strong community policing aspect to this tool: an icon on the IdeaFactory tool allows users to report abuses of the system such as inappropriate language or disparaging comments directed at an individual. These reports are sent directly to the IdeaFactory program managers, and are reviewed immediately.

Enthusiasm for the IdeaFactory is maintained through constant feedback on the status of ideas and recognition of good ideas and the personnel who helped to create the ideas. Idea status updates on the most promising ideas (and their impacts) are provided on IdeaFactory's landing page. They are also captured in a monthly newsletter. As ideas are approved for implementation, both the idea and the creator are recognized for their contribution to TSA. The methods utilized by TSA to reward innovators are discussed in more depth in Section IV of this paper.

A key governing element of the IdeaFactory is a "TSA IdeaFactory Terms of Use" agreement that employees must sign electronically each time they access the tool. The agreement addresses a wide range of issues including conditions for use of IdeaFactory, the identification of participants, the exchange of sensitive security information, ownership of submissions, liability for comments, rights of the administrators, and terms of use violations. The "TSA IdeaFactory Terms of Use" can be found in appendix B.

Classified security information cannot be posted or commented on using the IdeaFactory. However, users can submit ideas and comment on Security Sensitive Information [SSI]. Postings that involve SSI receive a special demarcation indicating the sensitivity of the material. Program editors pay special attention to these types of postings.

(4) Usage and Metrics for IdeaFactory

Since its inception, it is estimated that nearly half of the agency's workforce (over 25,000 employees) have accessed IdeaFactory at some point in time. Approximately, 150 new users visit the site per week; 6,000 users visit the site each month; and over one-third of visitors actively contribute to the site. Usage spikes in response to challenge questions from TSA as well as external events that put TSOs on high alert. As of June 2009, over 9,200 ideas have been submitted; over 252,000 ratings have been applied to those ideas; and over 75,000 comments have been posted. It is estimated that 10 new ideas are submitted each day, and on average each idea receives 9 comments and 23 ratings. Of the approximately 300 ideas submitted a month, about 50 garner enough support to receive program office review. Generally about 1-2 ideas a month proceed to the implementation phase. According to a user survey conducted by TSA, over 66% of employees indicated that IdeaFactory was "important" and over 61% agreed that it was "beneficial."

Since it was established two years ago, the IdeaFactory has led to the implementation of 45 national programs, policies, or procedures at TSA. Ideas generated through this tool have improved TSA culture and operations – including changes to Standard Operating Procedures and new initiatives that have improved job satisfaction, increased retention and improved quality of work life. For example, TSA has used the program to obtain ideas from the field force on how best to allocate employee bonuses and how to develop an employee advisory council. The tool has also been used to support a cost-saving challenge question (the top ideas are currently being vetted) and the agency will utilize a management directive that will allow the idea generator to receive as a bonus a certain percentage of the savings. The tool has also been used to help the organization clarify its communications to the public (for example, with regards to the TSA policy disallowing liquids onto flights, the TSA website was changed to clarify that the term “children” excluded “infants/toddlers” who are allowed to bring on small amounts of liquid onto flights). In the areas of job satisfaction and retention, some of the most promising ideas that have been developed include the development of a Job Swap board (e.g. a website that allows TSOs that meet certain criteria to post their interest in swapping job locations) and a “Day in the Life” which encourages senior leadership to spend a day at an airport working alongside TSOs so they gain first hand understanding of the challenges facing TSOs on a daily basis. The average time from idea submission to implementation of an agreed upon action is about 2 to 3 months.

In May 2009, the White House featured IdeaFactory in its Innovations Gallery as a model of Open Government, recognizing its compliance with President Obama’s first executive order mandating transparency, participation and collaboration within the government (available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/innovations/IdeaFactory/>).

ii. *The Sounding Board (Department of State)*

(1) Background of The Sounding Board

The Sounding Board program was launched in February 2009 by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to enable the 55,000 domestic and overseas employees at the US Department of State to submit concrete ideas for innovation, reform, and improvements to transform the way the agency does business. The Sounding Board tool was announced at Secretary Clinton’s first town hall meeting for employees in which she underscored the importance of serving as good stewards of scarce taxpayer resources and invited all employees to contribute their ideas and suggestions about how to make the Department work in new, smarter, and more effective ways to advance the nation’s foreign policy goals.

(2) Technical Platform Characteristics for The Sounding Board

The Sounding Board tool is an enhanced blog built on the free Movable Type software. It is accessible via the State Department’s intranet. The first iteration of this tool was developed internally within 48 hours, and it has since been refined. State Department

contractors maintain and manage the application's PERL and PHP source code. The Sounding Board software can run on various systems because its underlying Movable Type platform can run on a stack of free open-source software, or on Microsoft Windows Server with the addition of open-source software. There are no additional software components licensed for the application. Work is underway to add a user authentication component via Active Directory. Currently, users are required to enter their name - or a name - in a web form, so the application is dependent upon self-identification of its users. The site is 508 compliant as a result of work done early with the State's accessibility experts.

The current version of The Sounding Board provides basic functions such as allowing users to post ideas and to comment. Most recently, status notes indicating the status of an idea have been added to the site. The next iteration, The Sounding Board 2.0, may offer voting functionality and ranking features as well as a more prominent display of success metrics on the landing page of the site. In addition, there is interest in adding more sophisticated analytical functionality through advanced filters, dashboard functions, and more sophisticated uses of crowdsourcing.

A white paper and screen shots of The Sounding Board tool are available in Appendices C and D.

(3) Organization Location and Idea Management of The Sounding Board

The Sounding Board is technically housed under the State Department's Executive Secretariat. However, in practice, management of The Sounding Board is a collaborative, co-sponsored inter-office effort. The Sounding Board has one full-time manager. In addition, five staff members from a variety of offices within the State Department contribute time to the running of the site (all of these staff have full-time employment elsewhere at State and must balance contributing to The Sounding Board with their other work). They serve as: two site editors, a technical advisor, a new media advisor, and a collaboration policy advisor.

Ideas can be submitted anonymously or can be attributed, though the default option is "for attribution." Users who wish to remain anonymous enter their name as "anonymous" in the user-name field. Users post their submission idea in a free text format and one of the editors will assign a category (or categories) to the submission. A field is also available for users to identify comma delimited tags to help guide the categorization of their submissions. Guidelines for submissions are provided on the website. It is recommended that ideas suggest "newer, smarter, ways of enabling our nation's foreign policy goals" as opposed to providing any foreign policy recommendations. They should reflect general ideas and recommendations with the broadest possible impact, not ones that are individual-specific. In terms of content, it is requested that submissions address a description of the idea; the possible impact/savings; the resource requirements; and any obstacles or challenges.

All ideas are reviewed by an editor before being posted on the intranet. Entries that don't meet the guidelines of professionalism or would require external Departments to take implementing action are not published. In addition, two other categories of ideas are not published on the intranet, but are forwarded on to the program offices: 1) ideas with foreign policy goals and 2) submissions that expose significant management or security vulnerabilities. Those ideas that are promising and meet The Sounding Board's guidelines are forwarded on to program offices, who may add comments to the idea. At the next stage, program offices may choose to begin implementing the ideas or the program editor may share the most promising ideas with the Secretary of State. A benefit of The Sounding Board is that it has allowed for a decentralized mix of grassroots implementation alongside more traditional input from offices and bureaus. Many of the ideas implemented thus far have been so as a result not of a top-down mandate, but instead a working-level enthusiasm and dedication to the idea. For example, one recent idea suggested State sponsor an Iftar celebration for its Muslim employees. The conversation included voices representing the offices of Legal Affairs and also Civil Rights, as well as many employees who liked the idea. After looking into the issue, Legal decided that State could not legally sponsor the event for employees. However, an employee affinity group, the South Asian-American Employee Association, buoyed by the positive reactions of many on The Sounding Board, offered to host the event themselves. This is an example of how a community of motivated people worked collaboratively, and creatively, to implement an idea.

Use of the tool relies on an honor code. Guidelines are posted on The Sounding Board web site to address the recommended content of entries and publication criteria, as well as expectations for accountability, ownership and control of ideas, professionalism, and etiquette. Community users keep the conversations constructive and organized by "flagging" inappropriate remarks, identifying accidental duplicates and misplaced items and posting of comments that encourage supportive idea sharing. A copy of the guidelines is available in appendix E.

(4) Usage and Metrics for The Sounding Board

In the seven months since The Sounding Board was launched, it has received over 750 idea submissions; 430 of which have been published after editorial review. These ideas have received nearly 2,200 site comments. Ideas primarily fall into the categories of human resources and information technology; other topics include topics such as facilities, public diplomacy, and suggestions on how to improve The Sounding Board itself. Examples of successful initiatives that have resulted from submissions include the initiation of a plan patterned after Freecycle.org through which security officers around the world can share excess equipments. Another success has been the development of a "Green Community Blog" to allow employees from different offices [particularly those abroad] to connect in promoting environmentally-friendly policies in their worksites. In its current version, the site is heavily reliant on human editors to report on metrics; a future planned upgrade will likely automate some of these analytical functions.

The Sounding Board tool was online in early February. An additional challenge question component was added to the tool and was launched June 3 via video (see appendix F). The challenge question, issued by the Secretary was: “What are the three things you need to be more effective and efficient in your job?” Data gathered on this question through The Sounding Board are being analyzed and will be presented to the Secretary.

iii. IdeaLab (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/HHS)

(1) Background

CDC’s workforce consists of approximately 9,000 government employees and 5,000 contract staff. CDC’s staff is geographically dispersed across 19 US facilities (7 of which are located in the metropolitan Atlanta area) and 54 countries. In addition, select agent and biosafety considerations physically restrict personnel movement and open access to other scientists. Resultantly, employees in disparate parts of the organization are working on similar problems or related aspects of a similar problem; yet, they lack a mechanism to find each other and to work collaboratively. The average age of CDC employees is 46 years and 25% of the workforce is within 5 years of retirement imposing a need for efficient on boarding, mentoring, and knowledge retention strategies. CDC, as with most large organizations, actively strives to address isolation and lack of connectivity that impedes the development of innovative solutions to pressing health problems.

The IdeaLab was formally launched in August 2009 to “connect people and make good ideas better.” The aim of IdeaLab is to accelerate the creation of expertise, information and tools that people and communities need to protect their health by leveraging internal capacity and maximizing the impact of existing and new programs. IdeaLab is a peer-to-peer network that provides a mechanism for agency-wide idea generation and problem solving through harnessing the collective wisdom of CDC staff stationed around the world.

(2) Technical Program Characteristics for IdeaLab

IdeaLab was developed by the Office of Strategy and Innovation at CDC using the open source WordPress publishing platform. Publicly available WordPress plugins for voting, user login, and notifications, as well as, some custom code for unique layouts and information presentations were used to provide additional functionality. WordPress was utilized to build IdeaLab because the software and most plug-ins were already “preapproved” by CDC’s Information Technology group. This decision accelerated the development time horizon by reducing delays due to software certification and accreditation. As per its assessment, IdeaLab complies with the HHS Blogging Standard (as it applies to internal blogging requirements) and is compliant with HHS Policy for Section 508 Electronic and Information Technology.

An overview, including screen shots of the IdeaLab tool is available in appendix G.

(3) Organization Location and Idea Management of Idea Lab

IdeaLab was initially piloted by CDC's Office of Strategy & Innovation and was formally launched enterprise-wide in August 2009. The tool allows users to post "Ideas" or "Help Wanted" requests, provide comments directly to other user's posts, and vote on the quality of the posts and comments of others. Submitted ideas are categorized according to CDC organizational goals and related ideas are affinity grouped using tag clouds. A side tool bar allows users an easy means to view most recent posts, comments, and identify discussion topics. Ideas range from short inquiries (such as the help wanted post, "Who else conducts genomics within the organization") to full blown proposals on which staff would like feedback (such as proposals for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act). Additionally there is a weekly "Featured Challenge" that highlights a challenge that has broad agency interest across multiple national Centers and Offices. A "Did You Know" section that will take the form of quizzes that educate employees about important health matters and CDC programs is in development. In the future, CDC is interested in using IdeaLab or a similar tool that is external facing to invite the general public to suggest ideas or help CDC staff solve challenging public health problems.

Currently, IdeaLab administration and moderation requires less than 1 FTE. The entire system and software are secure inside the CDC firewall and staff login with their CDC user ID and Password to post or comment on IdeaLab. This enhances security and minimizes off topic posts and comments because each post is attributable to a specific user ID. Posts and comments are made in real time, though the administrator has the option to remove inappropriate posts. A "Terms of Use" is posted on IdeaLab and contains a description of IdeaLab, posting guidelines, privacy, intellectual property, restrictions on posting sensitive information, and a liability clause. The Terms of Use can be found in appendix H.

(4) Usage and Metrics of Idea Lab

Currently, Omniture, a product compatible with CDC's web analytics platform, is used to track usage metrics. IdeaLab was recently launched, thus, meaningful statistics about its use and uptake are unavailable at this time. However, anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that the tool has potential for connecting employees from disparate parts of the organization. Examples include, introduction of multiple groups from across CDC with shared interests in genetics research; questions on cultural sensitivity/symbolism relating to a child health marketing campaign addressed by a colleague with personal experience with the culture; and ideas shared about how to incorporate physical activity in the workplace.

b. Commercially-Developed Idea Generation tools Utilized in the Private Sector

It is worth noting that the Subgroup identified a handful of commercially-developed idea generation tools that are currently being utilized in the private sector. While none of the federal entities we studied for this project utilized a commercially developed project it is

useful to make note of the availability of these programs. The four leading programs we identified included: Spigit, Google Moderator, Ideascale, and Sales Force.

i. Spigit

Spigit is a collaboration platform that uses gaming-theory to encourage and sustain participation in idea generation. Virtual currency can be earned by participants according to the value of their contribution. Currency can then be used in the company store, invested in the platforms predications market or idea trading market as well. The system uses RepUrank™ to rank employees, customers and partner interactions that are independent of existing ties. This allows for the most useful and popular idea to be propelled and not just popular, high ranking people. Other unique capabilities of Spigit include: the ability to observe the evolution of ideas over time; access to a community-wide overview; and view a stats page containing information regarding topics with the most community contributions and hotspots indicating the community driving force. The use of Spigit does require software. Pricing for the software is flexible in an attempt to meet the exact needs of the consumer.

ii. Google Moderator

Google Moderator was designed to maximize the efficacy of question and answer sessions by gathering and prioritizing the questions and opinions for any one group of people. Issues are voted on by participants and then receive a popularity rating. Based off the user-induced rating, questions are sequenced so as to allow the most pertinent questions to be addressed first. Participants not only have the ability to vote on questions but, they can also suggest topics for discussion. However, the topic board is only used as a tool for identifying valuable questions and does not become a discussion board. The tool, which requires a Google account for both owner and participant, can be obtained for free using Google App Engine.

iii. Ideascale

IdeaScale fosters better business decisions derived from consumer comments and suggestions. Similar to Google Moderator, IdeaScale provides participants with the ability to vote on topics put forth by other consumers. In response to the votes, the topic assumes the correct place in the hierarchy of importance. The tool allows business communities to “supercharge” interaction, allowing for real time editing of ideas as well as a comments section so businesses can leave comments for customers assuring that their voice is heard. Companies such as Microsoft, Unisource, Choice Hotels International and the Mozilla foundation utilize IdeaScale to achieve optimal business decisions. Software is not required to access this portal and several options are available ranging in price from free to an option that costs \$99/month.

iv. *Sales Force*

Salesforce is a customer relationship management [CRM] tool that utilizes a cloud-computing model to manage budgets and customers simultaneously, ultimately influencing the company's rate of return [ROI]. The unique cloud-computing technology allows for the development, packaging and immediate deployment of applications without the need for infrastructure or software. Salesforce has been implemented by a gamut of different entities ranging from businesses to nonprofit groups and people in the public sector and even includes areas like life sciences and manufacturing. The first application of Salesforce is free with additional options available based off a per user/month fee.

V. Summary – Considerations and Lessons Learned

During its two months of research on idea generation tools, the Subgroup identified a series of considerations and lessons learned. These include questions to ask before adopting an idea generation tool; considerations with regard to buying, building, or borrowing a system; best practices and management lessons learned; and the identification of several challenges and risks associated with adopting idea generation tools.

a. *Questions to Ask Before Adopting an Idea Generation Tool*

Once an organization becomes aware of the impact an idea generation tool can have on promoting internally-driven innovation, there may be an inclination to immediately adopt one. Federal departments and agencies that have successfully deployed idea generation tools suggest that entities wishing to adopt such a system first go through a rigorous set of questions assessing their readiness for this type of tool. The kinds of questions organizations should ask themselves relate to strategic issues (i.e., What do you want your community to achieve? What problem within the organization is your tool designed to address? How long is your “community” intended to last? How will you publicize your community? Will you require users to self-identify or will you allow for anonymous submissions? How will you define success?); idea evaluation (i.e., How will you determine which ideas should get evaluated? Who will conduct the evaluation? What process will be used to evaluate the ideas? To what extent will the process be centralized or decentralized? How will a cross-functional review of ideas be ensured?); management issues (i.e., Where will the program be housed? How will the leadership be engaged to support this process? How will employees be rewarded for their suggestions and comments?); organizational culture (i.e., Is the culture of the organization ready to adopt an idea generation tool? If so, would the organization be best served by starting with only part of the organization or rolling it out enterprise-wide?); and technical issues (i.e., Does the agency's enterprise architecture support such a system? Does the current IT environment support the privacy and security aspects of these programs? How will compliance with section 508 requirements be ensured?). The OSTP, TSA and State Department have developed useful checklists that federal entities may wish to review in

assessing their readiness to adopt idea generation tools. These can be found in appendix I.

A “Community of Practice” is being established within the Federal Government around the development of idea generation tools. A first project for such a group is likely to involve the development of a comprehensive checklist that organizations can use to assess their readiness to implement an idea generation tool.

b. Considerations with Regard to Buying, Building, or Borrowing a System

Once an organization has determined that it can successfully answer the threshold questions posed in part (a) of this section, another major decision point will be whether to purchase a commercially-developed idea generation software product, develop one internally using available resources (or contractors), or adopt an existing tool from another federal agency. Each of these routes has benefits and drawbacks. Commercial software can be expensive. Moreover, it may have more functionality [e.g. prediction capabilities, idea reward “currency,” etc] than is not warranted in many federal environments. To date, most agencies have chosen to build their own software. Most have done so using internal staff and available platforms that conform to their IT environments. In the case of TSA, which has the most advanced tool, major upgrades have been done annually by external contractors with expertise not available in-house. One advantage of developing a tool is the ability to customize it to the organization’s need. On the other hand, as an increasing number of organizations become interested in adopting idea generation tools, it becomes inefficient and uneconomical for each federal entity to build the code from scratch. The adoption of a tool from another agency is only recently becoming an option as a result of broader interagency discussions that have emanated from the work of this Subgroup. Currently, a number of federal entities are exploring the possibility of adopting TSA’s IdeaFactory; and TSA is in the process of outlining the terms of the sharing of its tool. Currently, at least two federal agencies [the US Department of Agriculture and the Housing and Urban Development Authority] are on course to adopt the IdeaFactory by mid-Fall. Several other agencies are likely to follow suit. Moreover, the “Community of Practice” that is being established within the Federal government (which was discussed in part (a) of this section) will provide an important platform for entities to discuss issues and best practices related to the buying, building, and borrowing of tools.

c. Management Lessons Learned

In the two months the Subgroup spent assessing idea generation tools and interacting with program managers who oversee idea generation tools, a number of management lessons and best practices became evident. The examples are drawn most heavily from TSA’s IdeaFactory because this program has the most extensive experience; woven into the discussion are examples from the other programs as well as from the private sector. Clearly, each organization has a unique culture, and it is impossible to ascertain the full extent to which the examples cited below apply to each and every federal organization.

Discussed below are the six important learnings about idea generation tools gained during the Subgroup review:

- ***Learning #1: Senior and mid-level leadership support and participation are essential.*** Commitment from agency leadership and mid-level organizational management are essential ingredients to the success of these tools. The Subgroup heard during interviews with program management that “Success has nothing to do with technology” and instead “it has to do with leadership, bi-directional response and culture.” Thus, it is critical in the early stages of a tool’s adoption to focus on obtaining buy-in from both top and mid-level leadership; this is as critical as any time spent perfecting the technology. Leadership involvement with the roll-out of the tool (as discussed in learning #4) is essential. Leadership engagement is also necessary for on-going communications with agency staff about the value of the tool, as well as the reward system.

A number of the program managers we interacted with stressed that obtaining buy-in from mid-level management (e.g. the program offices which would ultimately be reviewing, responding to, and potentially adopting the innovations) can be among the most challenging aspects of successfully running an idea generation tool. Some of the greatest challenges related to a “cultural fear” of the tool and the ways in which it might threaten the organizational hierarchy; this fear can be particularly poignant for mid-level management who may view the tool as a mechanism through which employees can buy-pass their supervising authorities.

Ensuring dedicated resources, such as office liaisons, associated with each program office can be a useful strategy to ensure that promising innovations will be assessed at the program office level. Another useful strategy is to make sure that each program office is represented on a cross-functional review team that must bless an idea before it is submitted to senior leadership. It also appears that organizationally housing the program management team within the highest possible echelon of an organization’s hierarchy maximizes the chance of success and signals to the rest of the organization the importance of employee-based idea generation tools.

Learning #2: Significant human capital is needed to successfully manage an idea generation program. During the course of its interviews, the Subgroup heard many times from program management that it is relatively easy to set up an idea generation program; the more challenging part relates to ensuring that the organization has an infrastructure and process in place to deal with the suggestions. The Subgroup was also cautioned by many familiar with idea generation tools that while an idea generation tool it can ultimately lead to cost-savings for the organization, the tool creates work upfront and does require a set of dedicated resources to be successful. Because these tools are relatively new, it is hard to assess the optimum program staff size needed to manage an idea generation program. The State Department is utilizing a collaborative approach to managing its idea generation program. Six persons contribute to the running of the program: one full-time program manager, assisted by time “lent” from five additional staff across the State Department. The TSA currently

employs the equivalent of five full-time FTEs to manage the IdeaFactory tool for a workforce of 50,000. As the TSA tool is expanded to new settings (e.g., enterprise-wide across DHS and in other federal agencies) of different-sized employee pools, it will be instructive to re-visit the question of the optimal ratio of program staff to employees.

Regardless of the size of the program management team and the organizational structure, the major functions that must be covered include: monitoring the tool's website and reading every idea to ensure compliance with the submission guidelines and reviewing each item for possible elevation to the next phase of process; adjudicating ideas and distributing them to the appropriate program offices; identifying key trends by conducting daily, weekly, and monthly site analysis; pinpointing ongoing requirements for user-interface improvements to enhance user experience; interfacing with all stakeholders and working to optimize the site and business processes to increase engagement; developing and launching strategic communication efforts; designing and documenting program processes, and identifying areas for improvement; and tracking progress against a strategic plan for the program.

- ***Learning #3: Long-term success is dependent on acknowledgement of the innovators.*** Sustained engagement by the workforce is dependent on recognizing both the innovators and the value of the suggestions submitted; with the ultimate acknowledgement of value demonstrated through actions taken in response to ideas and comments. Thus, the “reward and recognition component” of idea generation program’s strategy is integral to its long-term success.

It appears that recognition by top leadership (such as through announcements or rewards ceremonies) in acknowledging a successful idea can go a long way in enticing employees to continue to submit ideas and provide comments. While in some cases monetary rewards have been utilized within the federal government (for example, TSA has recently offered a bonus that will represent a portion of the savings accrued in response to a cost-saving challenge), it does not appear that a financial reward is the motivator or needs to be.

During the course of its reviews, the Subgroup identified a number of notable reward practices. For example, the TSA recognizes the success of idea generators through mechanisms such as: a signed letter and certificate of appreciation from the TSA Administrator; recognition and stories in various internal newspapers; a feature story link or webcast on the TSA’s intranet home page; as well as the opportunity for the idea creator to help with the implementation of the idea. In several instances, the idea generator has been invited to TSA headquarters to participate in the implementation of the idea. The State Department’s program does not yet have a formal rewards program, but is experimenting with some promising ideas. For example, they are trying to highlight both the people who initiated ideas as well as the people who took the initiative to implement the ideas by adding “status icons” to the ideas. Their program manager has also composed “case studies” to post to the site, so that people

have a better sense of exactly how an idea was implemented. They also plan to do videos wherein people who have implemented ideas from The Sounding Board are interviewed. A challenge for all program managers in developing a rewards program is working out how/whether to reward an individual or a group, considering that idea generation sites are very collaborative and the final product of implementation may not exactly match the initial idea, but may instead be a reflection of that idea and the comments, suggestions, and questions of the site community.

A number of program managers indicated the importance of tracking program metrics (i.e., number of comments received, types of ideas generated, average popularity rating, number of ideas implemented, etc) as a parallel strategy that is essential for demonstrating value of the tool. However, the tracking of metrics can be slightly more challenging to obtain with blog-based tools that don't have sophisticated databases attached to them and do not contain explicit voting or rating functions.

- ***Learning #4: A good communications and growth strategy is essential for the roll-out & continued community engagement (support has to be built up – it doesn't happen the day of the launch).*** The program managers interviewed for this project emphasized that the communication and marketing strategy for the tool needs to begin with a well-planned and executed roll-out followed by regular, direct, transparent communications to the employee base. Both of these functions need to involve significant engagement from senior leadership. Also, as government agencies embrace social networking tools, it is critical to develop a strategic plan that addresses how idea sharing tools will integrate with existing programs.

It appears that seeding the roll-out with a challenge question, attention grabber, or “incentive” led by senior leadership can be an effective strategy. In the case of IdeaFactory, the TSA Administrator launched the tool via a webcast to the entire TSA employee base. The Sounding Board was announced by Secretary Clinton at a TownHall meeting; and the very first entry on the site was from the Secretary herself (see appendix J). The CDC recently launched IdeaLab through enterprise communications, articles on “Connects” (its intranet home page newsletter – See appendix K) and plan to integrate the idea building platform as part of internal innovation competitions. The CDC is also exploring the use of incentives (e.g. preferred parking, lunch with leadership) and the creation of rapidly changing content (health games, polls, quizzes) to promote employee engagement and high quality idea generation.

It is important not to expect immediate success with idea generation tools; “site readership” and use is built over time as these tools gain acceptance within the employee community. In terms of promoting continued community engagement, the Subgroup identified a number of notable practices. First, access to the tool needs to be made easy. By providing a link to the idea generation tool on the main landing page of the organization's intranet, the tool becomes readily visible and available and is likely to promote employee use. Second, direct, transparent communications are necessary to grow the user base and institutionalize the tool as a conduit for

innovation. A monthly newsletter, such as TSA's "IdeaFactory Illuminator," appears to be a useful tool for highlighting promising ideas, providing status updates, and featuring stories about the idea generators (See appendix L). Third, it is important for an organization's leadership to mention the tool and its value in its agency-wide communications and speeches.

Because of the high level of resources needed to publicize and market good ideas, the Subgroup believes it is optimal to have a strong link between the program managers overseeing an idea generation tool and the public affairs and communications functions of an organization.

- ***Learning #5: Importance of building a culture around the tool.*** A key message we heard from nearly all the program managers we interviewed is that a "build it and they will come" philosophy does not apply to idea generation tools. The importance of developing a culture in which idea generation is promoted, celebrated, and rewarded cannot be understated. For this reason, a number of program managers we spoke with advocated an iterative and gradual approach to the development and implementation of these tools. While an organization could build or purchase the fanciest software available with all the bells and whistles, the organizational culture may not be ready to accept it. Thus as a matter of practice it may be best to develop a first generation tool, such as a blog or simple idea generation software, and improve the software over time in response to the organizations' uptake of the tool. This is the approach being taken by TSA, State and CDC.

One advantage that TSA had with building an innovation culture around the IdeaFactory is that the tool was launched just a few years after the organization was formed. Moreover, TSA is an organization comprised of a relatively homogeneous workforce (e.g. the largest proportion of its employees are transportation security officers). By contrast, despite enthusiasm about the benefits of an idea generation tool for the broader organization in terms of enhancing communication and collaboration, the cultural integration of the Sounding has been more challenging at the State Department, which is an older and more diverse organization in terms of employee functions. Furthermore, there are cultural aspects of social networking software that run counter to the traditional style of diplomatic communications, and can pose challenges in making employees feel comfortable utilizing these types of tools. For example, junior Foreign Service Officers are explicitly advised during training sessions at the State Department that they should not publicly engage [e.g. outside of the State Department] in tools such a blogging.

Over the coming year, as idea generation tools gain wider acceptance across the federal government, it will be instructive to analyze how transferable these tools are to a wide range of USG cultures. For example, IdeaFactory will be rolled out enterprise-wide to 25 DHS components, many of whom are joining the Department of Homeland Security as "transfer units" with their own cultural histories and norms (i.e., US Coast Guard, FEMA, and the US Secret Service). Likewise, it will be instructive to follow how agencies such as CDC engage a diverse work force in terms

of rank, position, and duty location and seek to build an innovation culture around idea generation. There will likely be many best practices, cultural challenges, and management lessons that emerge as a result of a broader adoption of idea generation software across the federal government.

- ***Learning #6: Site moderation and rules of engagement are critical.*** Given the organizational and cultural challenges associated with implementation of these tools as well as the potential for abuse (discussed below), it is critical to provide users and program managers with rules of engagement. Those that we interviewed for this research project made clear that it is only through strategic, vigilant and consistent moderating, that idea generation tools can provide users with a safe, fair, and reliable environment within which to share ideas.

As discussed in learning #2, site moderation is an intensive effort that requires significant resources. For example, TSA program staff monitor the tool's website on a daily basis, reading every idea to ensure compliance with the submission guidelines and reviewing each item for possible elevation to the next phase of process; adjudicating ideas and distributing them to the appropriate program offices; and identifying key trends by conducting daily, weekly, and monthly site analysis. Program staff at the Sounding Board has also found that as volume on the site increases, more staff time is needed to moderate the site. There is not enough long-term evidence to indicate whether such intensive moderation will be necessary in future years as organization grows more comfortable with the use of idea generation tools. However, it appears that the need for moderation and continued vigilance is unlikely to cease.

One way to ensure clear rules of engagement is to provide users with a "Terms of Service" that explicitly states the terms of participation and makes clear that idea generators may not disrupt the orderly conduct of official business, make defamatory remarks, or reveal protected information; yet, at the same time they will not subject to retribution for their ideas. TSA requires each user to electronically sign the form when accessing the site. Other programs make the Submission Guidelines available on the site. Because the development of both the Terms of Service and Guidelines can be lengthy and complex to develop, federal agencies wishing to adopt idea generation tools may wish to refer to the ones already developed as a starting point.

d. *Challenges Associated with these Tools: Potential Risks and Challenges*

In the course of its research, the Subgroup also identified a number of potential risks and challenges related to the use of idea generation tools that federal agencies should consider before deciding to adopt such tools. The Subgroup identified potential risks and challenges relating to: organizational relationships, abuse of the tools, security, and Section 508 compliance. Because these tools have only been utilized in a handful of federal agencies, and in most cases for less than a year, the collective experience does not exist to provide answers about this extent of "risk" posed by these tools; it can only lead an analytical observer to raise issues.

On the organizational relationship front, idea generation tools allow for a new relationship between rank-and-file employees and leadership. Because they allow for direct communication of ideas between employees and leadership they may challenge the current hierarchy. Such tools may also raise issues with middle management, who may find issues aired in public through these tools that have not first been brought to their attention. Moreover, by harnessing the collective wisdom of the crowd and ideas from all employees (including those at the bottom of the GS-scale) it may challenge traditional notions of who constitutes an “expert” within the organization. A second concern may relate to abuse of the system and whether employees would spend an excessive amount of time online as a result of access to idea generation tools. The experience at TSA cannot answer this question as nearly all of their employees are transportation security offices (TSOs) who are not stationed at desks and use this tool during breaks. As these tools gain more experience at State, CDC, DHS, HUD, and USDA and are used primarily by desk staff, this will be an important issue to explore. A third issue relates to external input. Currently, the idea generation tools are housed on federal entities’ intranets and not accessible by the public. A next evolution of these tools may be able to provide access to the public. This, however, may raise a number of security issues, especially with those systems whose entry point is based on an authentication protocol. A related issue to making the tools publicly facing will be the increase in workload associated and the responsibility to respond to ideas and comments. Agencies, such as DHHS, which have sought public input on issues such as health reform, are finding the management of externally-generated comments to be intensive. A final issue relates to ensuring compliance with Section 508 (29 U.S.C. 794d), which requires that Federal agencies’ electronic and information technology is accessible to people with disabilities. Within many Federal government agencies, there are no agreed upon standards for what constitutes compliance with this law for electronic tools that are used internally; and, furthermore, because of novelty and fast-paced growth of social working tools, there remain many issues to be resolved with regards to the law’s implementation vis a vis these platforms. As a variety of agencies perform Section 508 compliance reviews and pilot these tools, additional experience will be gained to answer this question.

As the social networking tools gain acceptance across the federal government, there will also be the question of how idea generation tools mesh with existing platforms and which types of tools are best suited for which purposes. For example, idea generation tools are a terrific forum for stimulating innovation and building new ideas; they are less-well suited for discussions among employees. Thus, it will be critical to ensure that organizations are using the optimal tools for the intended purposes, and that there are appropriate linkages between the platforms so that employees can direct their creative energies in the most appropriate places.

Acknowledgements

The subgroup would like to thank the program and technical staff at the IdeaFactory, Sounding Board, and Idea Lab for the time they spent demonstrating the tools and discussing program management and technical issues associated with the deployment of idea generation tools. Their insights into the inner workings of these programs were invaluable. The Subgroup is also very grateful to these individuals for the written materials and program documentation that they provided for this technical report.

Members of the Innovations Tools Subgroup

The following members participated in the Innovation Tools Subgroup and contributed to the drafting of this technical report:

Elizabeth Kittrie, HHS
Gregory Downing, HHS
Karl Gudmunds, USDA
Joanne Andreadis CDC/HHS
Robynn Sturm, OSTP
Kumar Garg, OSTP

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APPENDIX A

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) IdeaFactory Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Implementing IdeaFactory at TSA

IdeaFactory has been integrated into TSA's culture and business processes since its inception (April 2007) and serves as a conduit for innovation, employee engagement and internal communications. The program was launched at the request of TSA's then Administrator to address three key needs at TSA:

- How TSA could engage employees and ensure that every member of its large (50,000+) workforce at more than 450 airports and other locations has a voice in the way the agency and its operations evolve;
- How TSA could collect constant, fresh input and perspectives on improvements to keep the agency flexible and effectively mitigate security threats; and
- How TSA could disseminate information about new and existing programs, initiatives, and policies to front-line employees and provide a forum for communication.

Today, IdeaFactory helps drive innovation and supports a culture of transparency and active engagement within TSA across all levels and offices. In May 2009, The White House featured IdeaFactory in its Innovations Gallery as a model of Open Government, recognizing its compliance with President Obama's first executive order mandating transparency, participation and collaboration within the government.

The vision for TSA's IdeaFactory is to support TSA's core values of Innovation, Team Spirit and Integrity by fostering a community that engages employees and encourages collaboration to initiate innovative change.

What is IdeaFactory?

IdeaFactory is a Web-based tool that uses social media concepts to enable innovation and organizational collaboration within the agency. IdeaFactory empowers TSA employees to develop, rate, and improve innovative ideas for programs, processes, and technologies – directly, without filter to the entire TSA community. The IdeaFactory community submits ideas, provides comments on how to improve new concepts, and endorses ideas that should be recommended for implementation. This starting point for innovation gives 50,000+ field and headquarters employees a virtual voice in how the agency should operate and evolve.



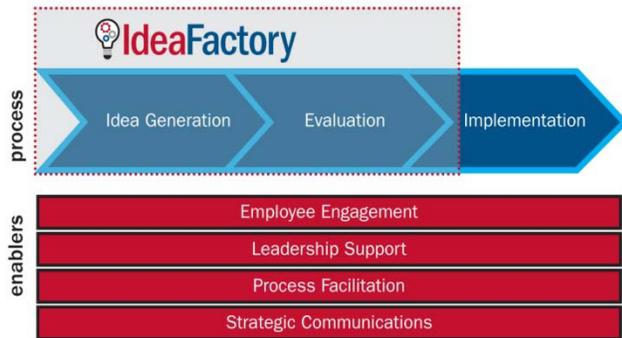
The screenshot displays the IdeaFactory web application interface. At the top, the logo for IdeaFactory is visible, along with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) logo. The main navigation bar includes links for 'Build New Idea Here', 'Ideas', 'Recent Activity', 'My Profile', 'Join Discussion', and 'My Groups'. A user profile section for 'megan.kenny' shows '1 idea', '225 ratings', and '9 comments'. The featured idea is 'CALM CHECKPOINT' by Lawrence Estrada, submitted on 5/15/2009. It has 47 ratings, a 4-star average rating, and 6 comments. Below the idea, there is a 'TSA Dictionary' section with a definition for 'Advancements'.

The site has also evolved as a way to enhance two-way communications between a dispersed workforce and Senior Leadership, while also providing a space for employees to communicate with each other.

APPENDIX A

IdeaFactory Enables Innovation

The IdeaFactory tool is the conduit that enables the overall innovation process, consisting of three phases:



1. **Idea Generation.** Employees submit their ideas online regarding how to address mission-related topics, including operations, security and policy.
2. **Evaluation and Selection.** Ideas are evaluated and considered for implementation by IdeaFactory's Review Board.
3. **Program Implementation.** Once ideas are recommended for implementation, IdeaFactory

facilitates and communicates the implementation progress to the greater IdeaFactory user community.

Evaluation Process

An engaged, cross-functional team comprised of representatives from all TSA offices is the "heartbeat" of the IdeaFactory process. To properly evaluate ideas, all offices must work together to assess, agree to an idea and set aside resources to implement. The IdeaFactory evaluation process brings together leaders from offices across the agency, helping to forge new relationships and enable cross-functional collaboration. A realized benefit of IdeaFactory to the TSA program offices is the ability to implement new initiatives in a more expedient fashion due to the support that the collaboration creates.

In addition to implementing initiatives, the evaluation process enables the workforce to stay connected to Headquarters. Using IdeaFactory, information is passed to the workforce on programs already implemented, myths, upcoming pilots, etc., all due to the ideas and comments submitted that spur discussion at the leadership level.

Keys to Success

IdeaFactory is a conduit for innovation from the bottom up, but to be effective, it must be well planned and managed through the following critical components of maintaining a successful program:

- **Senior leadership's support and participation.** Buy-in and support from senior leadership is integral to success.
- **Moderation.** Through strategic, vigilant and consistent moderating, IdeaFactory provides users with a safe, fair and reliable environment within which to share ideas.
- **Communications.** Transparent, direct and regular internal communications to the general TSA population are intensive and necessary to grow the user base and institutionalize IdeaFactory as the conduit for innovation. As the communications process evolves, resources dedicated to targeted outreach provide high value for increasing usage and improving the quality of ideas.
- **Business processes.** In order to successfully manage the in-take of ideas, business processes must be developed and integrated into the program.

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- **Office Liaisons.** Dedicated resources within each office are critical and must serve as subject matter experts to help determine which ideas are viable solutions/programs.

Resource Investment

The resources necessary to implement and maintain TSA's IdeaFactory is a team of five people who:

- **Monitor** the site to ensure Terms of Use compliance
- **Identify key** trends by conducting daily, weekly, and monthly site analysis
- **Adjudicate** ideas and distribute to appropriate program offices **Interface** with stakeholders and optimize business processes to increase engagement
- **Develop** and launch strategic communications efforts
- **Design** and document program processes and identify areas for improvement
- **Identify** ongoing requirements for user-interface improvements to enhance user experience
- **Track** progress against a strategic plan for the program

Recognition and Rewards

Innovation is one of TSA's core values. It has been proven that recognition and reward programs further support the desire for employees to be engaged with their employers. To support this, IdeaFactory looks to publicly recognize employees who generate new ideas. As ideas from IdeaFactory are approved for implementation, both the idea and the creator are recognized for their contribution to TSA. Recognition may include a signed letter and certificate of appreciation from TSA's Administrator, local recognition in his or her honor and regular stories in various internal newsletters to promote the idea implementation and impact on TSA, and, at the discretion of the program manager, the opportunity for the idea creator to help with the implementation of their idea.

Potential Risks and Mitigations

- **Sensitive information.** IdeaFactory allows Sensitive Security Information, a special category of information, to be posted on the site as long as it is tagged. This is monitored by the appropriate offices and allows users to participate in in-depth conversations about Standard Operating Procedures or other security-related topics.
- **Self-policing.** By using IdeaFactory, employees agree to all of the Terms of Use (TOU). Failure to comply fully with the TOU or any related laws, rules, and regulations may result in corrective action, including discipline, up to and including the termination of an employee's access to the site. Therefore, all employees understand that IdeaFactory is an extension of their professional roles and any unprofessional behavior is mitigated through self-policing and formal monitoring via "report abuse" functionality.
- **Challenges to implementing new ideas.** Fresh ideas are less likely as the site matures, thus decreasing the pool of implementable ideas. While the IdeaFactory Team can read and consider every idea, it is impossible to implement and respond to all ideas. However, input to improve current programs and procedures remains strong.
- **Allocated staffing.** Staffing needs may include program and project management, communications support, moderators, idea vetting coordination and technical support.

APPENDIX A

Results at TSA

In two years, TSA has implemented 45 national programs, policies, or procedures as a result of ideas that were submitted to IdeaFactory—ideas that have improved TSA culture and operations—including changes to Standard Operating Procedures and new initiatives that have improved job satisfaction, increased retention and improved the quality of work life. In addition, over 9,000 ideas have been submitted; nearly 250,000 ratings have been applied to those ideas; and over 75,000 comments have been posted. More than 25,000 employees have accessed IdeaFactory.

TSA IdeaFactory Terms of Use

Last Updated: January 9, 2009

The following terms of use govern the use of the IdeaFactory. They are not exhaustive or inclusive, and TSA reserves the right to modify them at any time. The terms of use include any laws, regulations, or policies incorporated by reference (e.g., the TSA Management Directive on Employee Responsibilities and Conduct). Changes to the terms of use are effective immediately upon posting. By using the IdeaFactory, employees agree to all of the terms of use. Failure to fully comply with the terms of use or any related laws, rules, and regulations may result in corrective action, including discipline, up to and including an employee's removal.

Purpose of the IdeaFactory

The IdeaFactory is a Web-based tool designed to enable innovation and organizational collaboration within the agency. This should be accomplished through user submission of ideas that can result in the creation of national programs or initiatives, changes in the Standard Operation Procedures, or local practices. The IdeaFactory is a special forum for the submission of *ideas* on improving TSA; it is not an open-forum for complaints.

General Conditions for Use of IdeaFactory

The use of the IdeaFactory is subject to [TSA Management Directive 1100.73-5 Employee Responsibilities and Conduct](#) (pdf 142KB). Employees are reminded that their conduct at work directly affects the proper and effective accomplishment of their official duties and responsibilities. Employees must perform their duties in a professional and businesslike manner throughout the workday. While on or off-duty, employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not adversely reflect on the TSA or negatively affect its ability to discharge its mission, cause embarrassment to the agency, or cause the public and/or TSA to question the employee's reliability, judgment, or trustworthiness. The posting of any unprofessional, false, misleading, profane, or defamatory material will not be tolerated, and such material will be removed from this web site. Complaints and/or posts that include threatening, harassing or confrontational content; a suspected or actual breach of transportation security; or involve other similarly serious matters will be reported to appropriate authorities for action. These conditions, and all following terms of use, apply to all posts on the IdeaFactory, including, but not limited to, ideas, comments, personal signatures and information posted on the "My Profile" page.

Employees are accountable for the statements they make and the views they express. An employee's public criticism of TSA, its management or employees on matters of public concern (defined as a matter of political, social, or other concern to the community) may be constitutionally protected. However, this protection may be limited to the extent that

APPENDIX B

the speech in question disrupts the orderly conduct of official business, concerns protected information, or where such statements adversely affect the efficiency of the service of this program. For example, defamatory, irresponsible, false or disparaging statements about employees may disrupt the orderly conduct of official business or adversely affect the efficiency of the service.

Information discussed or ideas exchanged on this site may not be released or discussed outside of TSA.

Identification of Participants

Use of the IdeaFactory is limited to TSA employees and contractors who are logging on to the TSA intranet through networked TSA computers or personal computers using the TSA Virtual Private Network (VPN). All comments will be identifiable by the individual's name or username. Employees and contractors who use the IdeaFactory must log on using their own, TSA-assigned username. A user may not post content for other users. Posting content using group user IDs is also prohibited.

Exchange of Sensitive Security Information (SSI)

TSA employees must safeguard and handle appropriately all SSI and other sensitive but unclassified information (SBU) to prevent unauthorized disclosure to persons not having a need to know the information in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations directives and policies, including [TSA MD 1100.73-5](#). **SSI must be protected as required by [49 C.F.R. part 1520](#) and [DHS MD 11042.1](#).**

No Posting of Classified, Privacy Act, Proprietary or Procurement Sensitive Information

NO Classified, Privacy Act-protected, and proprietary or procurement sensitive information can be posted on this web site. If you have an idea that may contain or involve such information, please report it appropriately through your supervisor.

No Taking Credit for Another's Ideas

Submission of material to the IdeaFactory constitutes the submitter's guarantee and warranty that the material (1) is original with the submitter, (2) does not violate the rights of any third party or any local, state, or federal law, including the right of publicity, right of privacy, or any other proprietary right, and (3) is correct and/or accurate to the best of the submitter's knowledge or ability to make it so.

APPENDIX B

Submissions Become TSA Property

All comments and suggestions submitted to the IdeaFactory become the property of TSA upon submission. The submitter expressly waives any right to any compensation in return for the submission. The submitter also grants TSA and its designees all right, title, and interest in such material, including without limitation any copyrights and other legal or equitable rights in and to the materials submitted. The TSA shall have the right to use, disclose, reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly, in any manner and for any purpose, and to have or permit others to do so. The rights waived by the submitter shall include, without limitation, the irrevocable right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, combine with other works, alter, translate, distribute copies, display, perform, and license such material, and all rights therein.

Merges

The IdeaFactory Moderator may consolidate posts into older submissions that address a similar underlying idea. The user will receive an e-mail from the IdeaFactory confirming his or her idea has been "merged" with an older idea, and will be directed to the original idea.

No Unsolicited Proposals

Employees are generally precluded from doing business with TSA because of the potential for an actual or apparent conflict of interest. See [5 C.F.R. part 2635](#), and in particular [5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.703, 2635.704, and 2635.705](#). This website may not be used for the submission of proposals or bids to transact any business of any nature with TSA. Employees who have independently developed intellectual property that they believe may be of interest to TSA may submit unsolicited proposals as provided in the [TSA Unsolicited Proposal Manual](#) (pdf); they may not use the IdeaFactory for that purpose.

No Endorsements

Comments posted on the IdeaFactory that appear to constitute endorsements of commercial products or services will be removed. Any references to commercial entities, products, services, or other nongovernmental organizations or individuals that remain on the site are provided solely for the information of employees using the IdeaFactory. These references are not intended to reflect the opinion of TSA, DHS, the United States, or its officers or employees concerning the significance, priority, or importance to be given the referenced entity, product, service, or organization. Such references are not an official or personal endorsement of any product, person, or service, and may not be quoted or reproduced for the purpose of stating or implying TSA endorsement or approval of any product, person, or service.

APPENDIX B

No Use for Submission of Claims

The IdeaFactory may not be used for the submission of any claim, demand, informal or formal complaint, or any other form of legal and/or administrative notice or process, or for the exhaustion of any legal and/or administrative remedy. The submission of matter to this website does not constitute the filing of an administrative claim under the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Contract Disputes Act, a formal or informal complaint under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Equal Pay Act, or the Civil Service Reform Act, or an administrative claim or demand under any other federal statute or regulation giving rise to a claim for relief against the United States for which an administrative process is provided by law or policy.

No Limitations on Use by TSA

TSA does not guarantee that material submitted to the IdeaFactory will be used for the purposes intended by the submitter. Matter submitted to this website becomes the property of TSA upon submission and TSA may use it for any lawful purpose. Among other things, TSA may investigate or refer for investigation by federal, state, or local law enforcement authorities any matter that may relate to a violation or potential violation of civil or criminal law or regulation.

No Guarantee of Reply

The IdeaFactory is not a way to enter into a dialogue with TSA officials; it is intended as a mechanism for employees to exchange ideas and propose solutions. There is no requirement for site managers to act upon or reply to all matters submitted to the IdeaFactory. All statements posted on this site reflect the individual views of TSA employees and are not official statements of TSA (unless specifically designated by the site managers as an authorized agency statement).

No TSA Liability for Comments of Others

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APPENDIX B

Terms of Use Violation

If an employee's submission violates the Terms of Use, his or her posting will be removed from the site by the IdeaFactory moderator. The moderator will also send a notification email to the employee indicating why the posting was removed.

After two violations, the employee will receive an e-mail notice warning him/her that a third violation will result in a two month suspension of access to the site.

After three violations, the employee's access to the IdeaFactory site will be suspended for two months.

Normally, after the two-month suspension period, the employee will again be permitted to use the site. In the case of a subsequent violation, an employee will received a Final Warning e-mail notification that the next violation may result in the permanent termination of the employee's access to the IdeaFactory site.

If at any point an employee violates the Terms of Use by posting a substantial deviation from the terms of use, such as a direct or implied threat of violence, then the employee's access may be immediately suspended.

Applicable Law

The use of the IdeaFactory and the interpretation of these terms of use shall be governed by and enforced in accordance with federal law.

APPENDIX C

State Department “Sounding Board”

At Secretary Clinton's first Town Hall Meeting with State Department employees, she reinforced her commitment to securing the resources needed by the State Department and USAID to strengthen two critical pillars of our American foreign policy: diplomacy and development.

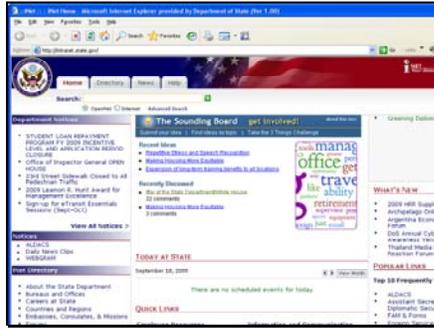
Secretary Clinton also underscored the importance of serving as good stewards of scarce taxpayer resources and invited all employees to contribute their ideas and suggestions about how to make the Department work in new, smarter, and more effective ways to advance our nation's foreign policy goals. Toward that end, the Secretary announced the launch of a new website - the Sounding Board - that will provide a forum where employees can submit concrete ideas for reforms and improvements to transform the way we do business.

The Sounding Board enables domestic and overseas employees to submit ideas for Department innovation and reform. In the four months since we've launched the site, we've seen it grow into a communication vehicle that has enabled employees to network with others of similar interest, that has allowed management to dispel rumors and give employees the information they need and want to hear, and that has helped employees share their ideas, as well as their concerns, with a large audience. To date, we've received over 430 idea submissions; we've published nearly 300 of those after careful editorial review. Employees have embraced the opportunity to discuss and debate the ideas: we have nearly 950 site comments. Ideas primarily fall into the categories of HR and IT, but also include topics such as Green Initiatives, Facilities, Public Diplomacy, and we even receive suggestions on how to improve The Sounding Board itself.

In the next phase of the project, we will collect answers to the Secretary's recent video challenge, asking: “What are the three things you need to be more effective and efficient in your job?” This data will help us to prioritize the issues State faces, and once we have an informed sense of which problems on which to focus, we will return to our cache of good ideas and look to those to help us address the top concerns in the Department.

APPENDIX D

Slide 1



This is a screenshot of the State Department intranet homepage. As you see, we've added a large, central section to promote The Sounding Board. It dynamically lists the three most recently published ideas, as well as the two ideas most recently commented on. We use the space on the left to advertise new site features and challenges. Appropriately, this addition to the intranet homepage is itself the result of an idea we received on The Sounding Board. Discussion and viewership jumped when we began showing links to the new ideas and discussion, and has remained high ever since.

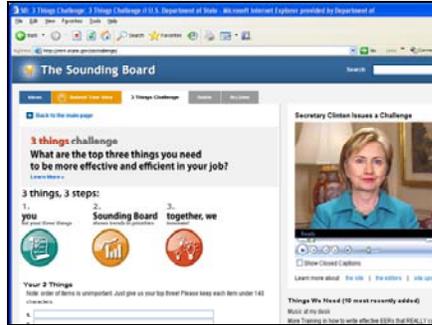
Slide 2



The main page of the site as of Friday, Sept 18, 2009. We usually display ideas at top (left column) but sometimes have messages from the site editors that we keep at the top for a short time. The status icons on the right shows how many ideas have seen action of some kind.

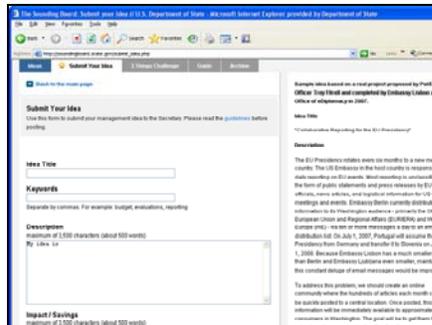
APPENDIX D

Slide 3



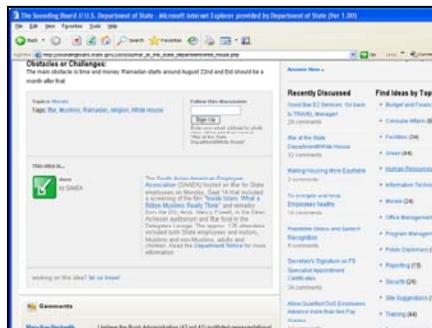
This is the 3 Things Challenge page. We've let this run all summer, and are about to close the challenge in order to review and publish the results. Secretary Clinton made this video to issue the challenge. It has closed captioning for 508 compliance.

Slide 4



The idea submission form asks users for a title, keywords, a description, impact/savings, resource requirements, and obstacles or challenges to implementation. Submitters may include their name and email or may submit their idea anonymously.

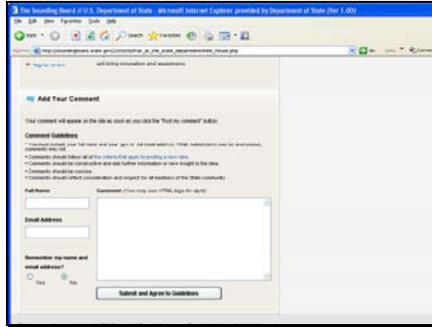
Slide 5



Status icons describe the action that an office or group has taken on any given idea. The description allows us to give more details, including links, dates, or contact information. We encourage decentralized idea implementation by giving credit to those who take the initiative (ex. above: "done by SAAEA")

APPENDIX D

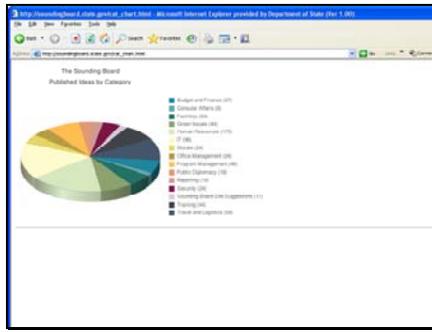
Slide 6



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "The Sounding Board of U.S. Department of State - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://www.soundingboard.gov". The page content includes a heading "Add Your Comment" and a sub-heading "Your comment will appear on the site to read as you like the 'Public Comment' section." Below this, there are "Comment Guidelines" listed as bullet points. A form with fields for "Full Name" and "Email Address" is visible, along with a "Submit and Agree to Guidelines" button.

Readers may comment on any idea. Comment guidelines are clearly displayed above the submission form. Any reader can “flag” a comment for review by the site editors (see top of screenshot).

Slide 7



This is the breakdown of published ideas by category. HR is the largest, but other issues are well represented too. Here, we use Google Charts to dynamically build the most up-to-date representations of the data.

APPENDIX E

Submission Guidelines

The Sounding Board is designed to solicit your ideas and suggestions for Department innovations and reform. The goal is to provide clear and well-defined proposals for review and action by Department management.

Content Guidelines

The key adjective is "concrete" - your ideas should be based on facts and focused on "big picture" initiatives. Each initial submission should include the following information, which should be completed to the best of your knowledge.

1. **Description:** Describe the issue your idea addresses, and how. Your entry is limited to 500 words. Additional information may be requested if your idea is accepted for further consideration.
2. **Impact/Savings:** We're looking for ideas that have enterprise-wide application. Who will benefit? How will it improve overall performance? What savings will the Department or posts realize?
3. **Resource Requirements:** What is the anticipated cost of the initiative? Be aware of "hidden" costs that might not be obvious, e.g. time commitments, training requirements, etc.
4. **Obstacles or Challenges:** During this exciting time of change and innovation there are still existing challenges and obstacles. Remember -- it's good to think outside of the box. But in a world composed of multiple boxes, one nestled inside another, it is important to check around and see why the box you want to burst out of is already re-taped on one side or the other. This is the challenge.

Publication Criteria

5. Submissions should be professional and appropriate in tone.
6. Submissions should be germane to the mission of the Sounding Board, i.e., they should suggest newer, smarter, and more effective ways of enabling our nation's foreign policy goals (see Sounding Board Governance); therefore, submissions with foreign policy recommendations will not be published, but will be forwarded to the Office of Policy Planning (S/P) for consideration.
7. Submissions should reflect general ideas and recommendations with the broadest possible impact, not ones that are individual-specific. Editors will not publish submissions that are restricted to a specific individual's experience.

APPENDIX E

8. Submissions that expose significant management or security vulnerabilities will be reviewed and forwarded to appropriate offices but will not be published.
9. Submissions should not address issues that are the exclusive purview of other government agencies or branch of government (i.e. Congress). The Sounding Board is available only on OpenNet+ and unavailable for other agencies to represent their views. Therefore editors will only publish entries that do not require other agencies to take implementing action.

Issues not meeting these guidelines should still be sent to the [Secretary's Suggestion Box](#). Administrative questions should be submitted to [Ask Admin](#).

Accountability

The default setting is "for attribution." We want to know where our best and brightest ideas are coming from! However, we understand if not everyone wants the spotlight of fame. If you prefer to submit your idea anonymously, you omit your name and email address on your submission.

Ownership and Control

You should expect and accept that your idea may change based on the input of others. The final proposal may be very different from the original concept.

The Sounding Board seeks to draw on the collective knowledge, expertise and experience of everyone in the Department, in both domestic offices and overseas posts. Everyone, including the Secretary, may read it.

Which leads us to...

Professionalism

The Sounding Board is not a chat room, venting forum, or advice column. It is a place to begin discussing solutions; to exchange ideas about how to make the best case possible for the resources we need to conduct foreign policy, how to manage our current resources more efficiently and make the broadest possible impact across the Department. All contributors must keep their language, conduct, and contributions professional, civil, and to the point.

Etiquette

Assume the good intentions of others.

If another user has posted something that is incorrect or incomplete, assume

APPENDIX E

that this was an honest mistake. The normal standards of collegiality apply on this site.

If something is wrong or missing, change it or add to it.

Do you see something that needs more information or input? Go ahead and make the comment yourself. You have the power to create articles and comments - use it. Encourage your colleagues to do the same. Even if you start with a single idea, that is far better than nothing, and others can build on your contribution.

Use plain language. Keep it concise.

This is just what we do as professionals, whether writing for the Secretary, revising the FAM, or writing for each other. Use the least number of words possible to convey your information in as straightforward and easy to comprehend a manner as possible. Remember - more is not always better. Using gratuitous acronyms, jargon, and inside references will reduce your entry's effectiveness.

(For more information about plain language writing, visit PlainLanguage.gov or the [FAM-X plain language project](#).)

APPENDIX F

Video transcript:

- **Transcript: Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton Video Taped Remarks for The Sounding Board**

Hello everyone. I want to thank each of you for contributing to The Sounding Board. I am really pleased to see how this idea has been embraced. It's an opportunity to discuss how together we can reach our diplomatic and development goals and you have shared some really practical ideas that are already producing change.

I'm excited to hear of The Department's enthusiasm for greening initiatives. And based on your ideas from Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security is beginning a program to distribute excess supplies. Similarly, because of the dialogue generated on The Sounding Board, people self-organized and created Green Teams to bolster our greening diplomacy initiatives. The Department's passion has come through loudly and clearly, and I'm eager to help you continue this work.

You've also identified some complex issues that do not lend themselves to immediate or easy solutions. They will require more careful review and consideration which we will be giving them. I urge you to continue your involvement in these conversations and keep the suggestions coming, because I and the senior leadership in the State Department are listening.

What I also hear from some of you that is you're frustrated. You have identified bureaucratic impediments that appear at times to stand in the way of you doing your job. And, I know that the people in this department, the people who serve in the State Department and at USAID are our most important asset. You can't have "smart" diplomacy if we don't have smart people empowered to do the jobs that you are doing. So, you need the best tools and resources, which is why I have asked Congress to provide the budget we need to get the job done. But in the meantime, I appreciate the efforts you're making to do the most with the resources you have.

So now, I turn to you again with an important question: What are the top three things you need to be more effective and efficient in your job? Very soon, you will see a new forum on The Sounding Board that gives you the opportunity to provide your answer. I'm very proud of everyone's effort thus far to build The Sounding Board -and the State Department - into a community of innovative professionals. You're really raising the bar for collaborative problem solving within our Federal Government -and given your energy and enthusiasm, I can't wait to see what you come up with next. Thanks so much.

APPENDIX G

IdeaLab is an idea building tool we're launching "to connect people and make good ideas better". The aim is to better leverage internal capacity and to maximize the health impact of existing and new programs. This is the first tool that provides a mechanism for agency wide idea generation or problem solving capability through crowd sourcing of all CDC staff stationed throughout the world. Our aim is to refine this product through rapid prototyping and to create an external face to engage the public. Users can post both ideas and challenges. A voting functionality will be added shortly.

APPENDIX G

IdeaLab

Connecting people to make good ideas better.

Search Ideas & Challenges 

[Home](#) [All Posts](#) [FAQ](#) [Challenges](#) [Ideas](#)

[Log in](#)

Welcome To IdeaLab!



Welcome to CDC's IdeaLab! The CDC community is made up of incredible individuals that have a wealth of knowledge accumulated over a lifetime of personal and professional experiences.

The purpose of the IdeaLab is to make great ideas -even better- by capturing and more fully utilizing CDC's *collective* knowledge. This CDC-wide shared work space is designed to let *individuals share or seek ideas* from colleagues physically located all over the world. As you enter this portal, you will have the opportunity to use your insights and experiences to help colleagues build high impact solutions to important public health challenges and help support CDC's role as a steward of the public's health.

Random Post

Economic Stimulus: Evidence-based Food Resources Intervention Network in High Risk Communities

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On June 24, 2009 czk7 said in Genomics at CDC
"Does anyone know whether there are CDC researchers that are studying methods to link perso..."

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APPENDIX G

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physical activity supply Adults game
performance protection health system
integration safety C&A **Food** injury
application Development Software
consumption capacity building Prevention
modeling Software platforms Women DB
DSS Applications
community health
information technology prevention
Sustainability distribution Food Deserts
Education Health home ITSO SQL Support
health protection tools **genomics**
Stimulus
administration Built environment PHR
Equity Surveys policy
What is this?



Random Post

Health Run: The Nation's Health Protection Game

Browse Posts

Most Recent Posts

All Posts

Recent Comments

On June 24, 2009 czk7 said in Genomics at CDC

"Does anyone know whether there are CDC researchers that are studying methods to link perso..."

Add IdeaLab to your favorites.

Easy means to browse posts and read comments using side tool bar.

Viewers can quickly get a sense of the range of ideas within **IdeaLab** with a glance at the tag cloud (left arrow). Larger words signify that a larger number of ideas use the same tag word (e.g. in this example, most entries have to do with the ideas for "stimulus" proposals). A click on a tag word leads you to a line listing of relevant idea submissions. Alternatively, viewers can browse ideas using CDC Health Protection Goal categories (right arrow). Even with limited distribution, the tool has already helped groups across CDC with common interests in genomics find each other.

APPENDIX G

“Research/Technology” IdeaLab topics:

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Genomics at CDC

Tags: [Ideas](#), [Research/Technology](#), [genomics](#)

March 19, 2009, 18:21pm by admin

My idea is to identify CDC scientists and projects related to genomics - so that we can identify common interests and potential areas of collaboration. If you conduct genomics related research or utilize genomics in your work - please let us know who you are and what you do.



Rating: 3.0/5 (2 votes cast)

9 Comments | Topics/Tags: [Ideas](#), [Research/Technology](#), [genomics](#) |

Comments:

[zje8](#) says on 27 Mar 2009 ; 14:45 |

We have a genomics working group organized by Jay Gee and Scott Sammons that meets the first monday of each month. All are welcome and we are always looking for new ideas !

Contact Jay if you'd like to be added to the e-mail list.

[elx9](#) says on 27 Mar 2009 ; 15:15 |

Does the genomic working group discuss research in progress? We would be interested to know if others are working on microarray analysis.

[eneuhaus](#) says on 06 Apr 2009 ; 6:27 |

Yes, the Pathogen Genomics workshop discusses research in progress. Please join us today, Monday, (04/06) at 10am in Bldg. 19 in 247/248.

[eneuhaus](#) says on 06 Apr 2009 ; 6:59 |

Pathogen Genomics members:

Please let us know which of the genome research centers you are currently using, have used, or plan to use for your genome sequencing requirements. We would like to find out about:

Random Post

[Encouraging Women to Undertake a Fall Prevention Exercise Program](#)

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[All Posts](#)

Recent Comments

On June 24, 2009 [czk7](#) said in [Genomics at CDC](#)

"Does anyone know whether there are CDC researchers that are studying methods to link perso..."

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“Healthy People” IdeaLab topics:

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Category: Healthy People

Health Run: The Nation's Health Protection Game

March 16, 2009, 11:23am by admin

No Comments | Topics/Tags: Healthy People, Ideas , Education, game, modeling, prevention, Stimulus |

CDC National Health Policy and Law Institute

March 16, 2009, 11:19am by admin

No Comments | Topics/Tags: Healthy People, Ideas , capacity building, health system integration, policy, Stimulus |

HealthImpact.net Performance and Evaluation Enhancements

March 16, 2009, 11:15am by admin

No Comments | Topics/Tags: Business Operations, Healthy People, Ideas , health information technology, performance, Stimulus |

Encouraging Women to Undertake a Fall Prevention Exercise Program

March 16, 2009, 11:12am by admin

No Comments | Topics/Tags: Healthy People, Ideas , Adults, Health, injury, Prevention, Stimulus, Women |

Economic Stimulus: Evidence-based Food Resources Intervention Network in High Risk Communities

March 16, 2009, 11:04am by admin

No Comments | Topics/Tags: Healthy People, Healthy Places, Ideas , community, Equity, Food, Food Deserts, Sustainability |

Influencing Personal Health Records to Support Public Health

March 3, 2009, 19:35pm by admin

No Comments | Topics/Tags: Healthy People, Ideas , health protection, PHR, tools |

Random Post

Health Run: The Nation's Health Protection Game

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On June 24, 2009 czk7 said in Genomics at CDC

"Does anyone know whether there are CDC researchers that are studying methods to link perso..."

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APPENDIX G

Expansion of select topics:

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Health Run: The Nation's Health Protection Game

Tags: [Healthy People](#), [Ideas](#), [Education](#), [game](#), [modeling](#), [prevention](#), [Stimulus](#)

March 16, 2009, 11:23am by admin

HealthRun—The Nation's Health Protection Game Different stakeholders have different ideas about what it will take to reform and transform the current health system and position America as a healthier nation. Sorting through the options is challenging because many modifiable aspects of the health system, such as insurance coverage, behavioral risks, environmental safety, and workforce capacity, are often considered separately rather than as part of a large dynamic enterprise. This is where HealthRun comes into play. Grounded in an evidence-based computer simulation model, developed by CDC's Syndemics Prevention Network, the game allows players to see and feel what various interventions could accomplish. Players (public health decision-makers, policy developers, etc.) may tailor their strategies using more than a dozen intervention options, and then explore the consequences over a simulated 25-year period. Behind the scenes lies a mathematical model, with a transparent causal structure and several hundred interacting elements, which anchors the game to empirical data and insights from the research literature. The game is not intended to yield precise forecasts, but rather to support experiential learning about how the health system functions and, more importantly, to inspire effective action in the real world. It is meant to be used in multi-stakeholder groups, with a trained facilitator, to support visioning, strategy design, and leadership development.

HealthRun offers a more comprehensive and neutral framework in which advocates of different transformation strategies can come together, test their proposals, identify potential shortcomings, and work together to craft a package of interventions that cuts through the current clutter and inertia to reveal a practical way forward.

A core of trained facilitators is necessary for the appropriate play and distribution of the concepts held within the game. This project would fund immediate completion of the game development, allow for training of facilitators, allow for production of support materials, and then lead to game diffusion.

A significant increase in the awareness of appropriate and desirable health policy interventions is an immediate health output. An increase in the number of training sessions and partners engaged would also be expected.

□



Rating: 4.0/5 (1 vote cast)

No Comments | Topics/Tags: [Healthy People](#), [Ideas](#), [Education](#), [game](#), [modeling](#), [prevention](#), [Stimulus](#) |

Add a Comment

Name (required)

Random Post

Transforming the built environment to support safe and healthy living and lifestyle choices

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[All Posts](#)

Recent Comments

On June 24, 2009 [czk7](#) said in [Genomics at CDC](#)

"Does anyone know whether there are CDC researchers that are studying methods to link perso..."

[Add IdeaLab to your favorites.](#)

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Encouraging Women to Undertake a Fall Prevention Exercise Program

Tags: [Healthy People](#), [Ideas](#), [Adults](#), [Health](#), [injury](#), [Prevention](#), [Stimulus](#), [Women](#)

March 16, 2009, 11:12am by admin

Nonfatal fall injuries are the leading cause of emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations among people aged 65 and older, (CDC 2009) and these injuries disproportionately affect the health and quality of life of older women. Falls resulted in more than \$19 billion of direct medical costs for adults aged 65 and older. Given the growing population of this age group, these costs may reach \$54.9 billion by 2020. In a study of nonfatal unintentional fall injuries among older adults treated in EDs, the gender difference was striking. Women's injury rates were 40% to 60% higher than men's, and their subsequent medical costs due to falls are two to three times higher than men's. Hip fractures, one of the most serious and debilitating consequences of falling, also disproportionately affect women. Just over one-third of non-fatal falls were fractures, and they make up for 61% of costs – or \$12 billion. In 2004, the hip fracture rate for women 65 and older was 70% higher than the rate for men.

A number of systematic reviews have evaluated intervention strategies to determine what works. The 2003 Rand Report concluded that fall prevention programs as a group effectively reduced the risk of falling by 11% and the monthly rate of falling by 23%. Outside the clinical setting, the most effective single approach was exercise, whether in individual or group settings, and a recent systematic review and meta-analysis found that the most critical component for effectiveness was balance training.

Phase 1: Conduct focus group testing to determine the perceived risk, barriers to exercising, and how to best implement the prevention program. The data and information collected during this effort would be used to inform program development of ways to conduct future outreach, elements to encourage older adult women to participate in fall prevention exercise programs and guide program implementation.

Phase 2: Implement the program in up to 10 community settings. As an additional prevention focus, state grantees would also work with state chronic disease programs, women's health, and immunization programs to provide opportunities to reach these vulnerable populations and facility staff through this program.



Rating: 3.0/5 (1 vote cast)

No Comments | Topics/Tags: [Healthy People](#), [Ideas](#), [Adults](#), [Health](#), [injury](#), [Prevention](#), [Stimulus](#), [Women](#) |

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APPENDIX G

IdeaLab

Connecting people to make good ideas better.

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Economic Stimulus: Evidence-based Food Resources Intervention Network in High Risk Communities

Tags: [Healthy People](#), [Healthy Places](#), [Ideas](#), [community](#), [Equity](#), [Food](#), [Food Deserts](#), [Sustainability](#)

March 16, 2009, 11:04am by admin

Background

More than 36 million Americans face a constant struggle against hunger and 2008 exacerbated the problem with a severe downturn in the U.S. economy. The current year is witnessing an increase in unemployment, loss of homes and increases in the cost of food. The US Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formally known as the Food Stamp program, provides critically needed relief as a federal assistance program using a system of authorized retailers through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) debit card system. Though the SNAP program is administered through the Department of Agriculture (USDA), benefits are distributed by individual states through local communities. During times of recession, when pressure in under-served communities is especially difficult, SNAP can stimulate economic activity by providing an influx of federal funding at the state level. [1] Based on a FY2006 USDA study of households receiving SNAP benefits, 49% of all participants are 18 years old or younger and 61% live in single-parent households (primarily headed by women) with an average gross monthly income of \$673. [2] Many individuals that receive or are eligible to receive SNAP benefits reside in low-income neighborhoods with limited access to affordable and nutritious food. Individuals who live in these "food deserts" have an increased prevalence of health problems including childhood obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic disease. The diets of lower socioeconomic groups tend to be rich in inexpensive energy dense foods (meat products, fats, full cream milk, sugars, and potatoes) with little intake of vegetables, fruit and whole wheat bread. [3], [4] In large part, the traditional industrial supply and distribution systems have left low-income communities bereft of access to reasonably priced fresh and healthy food. These socioeconomic health inequities need to be addressed through the establishment of sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people.

Project Description

The focus of this project is to bring together community-based organizations, local farmers and farm cooperatives, local social service and health departments, and other agencies to create a zone of opportunity in existing food deserts that stimulates local sourcing of food using an existing network of commerce – the SNAP program.

The funds requested would enable the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) to convene federal, state, community, and private sector partners to pilot innovations in alternative food production and distribution systems with special emphasis on local food sourcing. An important NNPHI member is the Public Health Institute based in Oakland, California, which has an extensive portfolio of existing projects that could be leveraged to support this work. Public Health

Random Post

[Bioinformatics/Genomics](#)

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Recent Comments

On June 24, 2009 [czk7](#) said in [Genomics at CDC](#)

"Does anyone know whether there are CDC researchers that are studying methods to link perso..."

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1. Get feedback on your idea from your other 15,000 (or so) CDC colleagues to pilot and refine your idea before you pitch it own your own
2. Be inspired by ideas posted by your colleagues
3. Let your opinions be heard by voting on what you think are great ideas/comments
4. Identify potential stakeholders or partners that are interested in your idea
5. Solve tough work-related problems (surely someone has done this before!)
6. Self organize and pool resources with other folks that might benefit from your idea

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3. Posts and comments that make unsupported accusations
4. Posts or comments that contain personal identifying or private medical information about a third party, especially information restricted from release under the Privacy Act and other applicable Federal laws
5. Posts submitted using group, team, or project etc. login names. (For example a post by IdeaLab would **not** be allowed)

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Prior to posting, please check that others have not already posted similar Ideas or Help Wanted topics prior to posting your own. The IdeaLab moderator may merge posts that

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address a similar underlying concept. The users will receive an email confirming his or her idea has been merged and will be directed to the new location.

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Communities@State questionnaire

Version 2.3 • Revised August 14, 2007

A community requires a significant commitment of time and resources so it is important to clarify what you want to achieve, how you plan to run the community and how you plan to win and sustain support for it. This questionnaire will help you to shape and guide your plans, and it will give eDiplomacy input on setting up and supporting your community.

Starting a community is an experiment. Moreover, communities evolve, changing to meet new circumstances. That said, it is important to be as specific as possible in answering the following “start-up” questions. Your chances for success are much better if you know who you want to reach, what you want to do for them (and vice versa), how you will measure success, and how you and colleagues will manage the effort.

Experience also shows that it is important early on to secure executive buy-in for your effort. Your supervisors need to understand and support your efforts and accept the goals of increased information-sharing. If not, you and we will waste time and resources setting up a community that cannot be launched or sustained.

Section One (“Issues for Planning Your Community”) below briefly discusses important considerations about the community. Section Two contains the Questionnaire) itself. Please type your responses directly into the Questionnaire and return it to the Knowledge Management Action Team (address below).

Also, if you need further information about the questionnaire or the Communities @ State initiative, please e-mail the KM Action Team.

Knowledge Management Action Team collective address

KMTeam@state.gov

Communities @ State homepage

<http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state>

Diplopedia article about Communities @ State

http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Communities_@_State

Issues for Planning Your Community

Strategic Issues

GOALS: What do you want your community to achieve? Please be specific: for example, instead of "Sharing information," you might put "To provide a forum for reporting officers in WHA to share solutions to problems." If there are multiple purposes, please list all of them. The greater the sense that your community is making a difference to its participants and having an impact in the organization, the greater the chances for success (and the more fun it will be to participate). The following suggestions are illustrative:

- Publish information
- Generate discussions about issues or events
- Provide a place for colleagues to make and answer requests for help
- Develop "best practice" solutions
- Develop a network of interested and knowledgeable people

DURATION: How long will your community last? Will it run for a fixed period and then be retired and archived; run for a trial period and then be extended if successful; or run indefinitely?

PARTICIPANTS: Who should participate in the community? You should try to identify a primary group whom you wish to participate actively in the community by providing content and commentary. Then think of additional target audiences. The primary participants and additional audiences may be in State, other agencies, or both. The answers to these questions will affect your outreach activities and may determine which of several networks should host your community.

EXCLUSIONS: Is there anyone you do *not* want to participate? Web logs are essentially open forums. Communities in Communities @ State will be accessible at a minimum to OpenNet and AIDNet users. Most will also be available to the USG interagency community on Intelink-U or SIPRNet. The community will not be accessible to the general public unless it is specifically set up for participation by non-USG members (a capability that is not yet available). If you want to restrict State or USG access to your discussions, other technologies may better fit your needs.

MARKETING: How will you publicize your community? Some suggestions: advertising on listservs; posting links on Web sites you control, or asking for links on other sites; including its address in your office's e-mail signatures; including the address in cables you send; e-mailing people privately; Department Notices. (eDiplomacy will

APPENDIX I

make a sustained effort to promote web logs in general, but you will have to promote your web log individually.)

DEFINING SUCCESS: How will you know you're succeeding? The measures below are illustrative. You should develop relevant, clearly defined, specific and measurable goals for your specific community.

- Grow to XX visits per month by the end of six months.
- Regularly engage at least XX people from key audiences/organizations in discussion groups by the end of six months.
- Provide expert response to all requests for help within 24 hours.
- Based on queries and discussions, propose three new "best practices" every year.
- Use comments and discussions to develop ideas for at least one in-depth report or analysis each quarter.
- Survey community members once a year.
- Candidates for assignments cite participation in/management of the community as a factor in their bidding.

Content Issues

NAME: What do you want to call your community? You can use a formal name, or you can use a catchy name that people will remember. eDiplomacy will review the suggested name to ensure that it appropriately projects the scope and purpose of the community, facilitates design and operation of the community site, and is compatible with other initiatives and programs.

OTHER RESOURCES: What links do you want to display on the sidebar? These are static links that will not change without changing the template. They should be to sites and/or documents that are of enduring importance.

LOGO: Do you wish to include an official logo or other graphic? We encourage displaying an official logo or other distinctive graphic at the top of the community site, and using photos, charts and other graphics to tell your story. However, the logo or graphics must be reasonable in size. Many diplomatic posts have limited bandwidth, and the "heavier" the pages are with graphics, the harder it is for those posts to look at your page.

ORGANIZING CONTENT: What topics will you use to organize your content? The web logs' items are divided into topics. Please list the topics you want to start with (you can always add more). Five to ten topics are fine for most web logs.

APPENDIX I

Management Issues

Most communities use two basic categories of participants. *Administrators* can add or delete "entries" and comments and modify the community homepage; they require a password to log in. *Readers* can comment on articles – they do not need to log in to leave a comment – but otherwise have no capability to alter the blog.

If useful, you can add two other categories of participants. *Authors* can log in and contribute an entry but otherwise cannot modify the community blog. *Guests* may provide an entry without logging in. The choices you make on these categories will depend on the degree of access you are willing to grant others to encourage content and participation in your community. As *administrator*, you always retain ultimate control over (and responsibility for) your site.

WHO WILL RUN IT? Who is the primary community administrator? How much time are you willing to spend per week administering the web log?

WHO IS/ARE THE SECONDARY COMMUNITY ADMINISTRATOR(S)? Each community should have at least one alternate administrator. We encourage you to have even more, to share the workload of managing the community, to ensure that FAM requirements for community site supervision are met, and to increase participation. However, please name only those people who will actually manage the web log. (Under the terms of the web log software license, sharing usernames is prohibited. Please note that people who leave comments on the web log are not considered users.)

MANAGING CONTENT: How often do you plan to post new content? Generally, it is better to post your content as short items more frequently, rather than long or many items less frequently. If you are only able to post content periodically, this should be explained on the community site.

MANAGING EXCHANGES: How do you plan to manage comments, questions and discussions? A major distinction between a blog-based community and a regular website is the blog's capability to serve as a forum for comments, questions, and threaded discussions. This provides an important opportunity and imposes a responsibility. As a community administrator, how will you encourage people to participate actively? Moreover, you should plan to intervene actively to initiate a discussion or draw it in fruitful directions, and to answer questions promptly. In addition, [5 FAM 777](#) requires the community administrator to check the community site at least once every business day.

EXECUTIVE SUPPORT: How do you plan to achieve and show your supervisors' support? You will need your leaders' support for your work on and goals for the community. Before you and eDiplomacy commit the time and resources fully to develop the community site, you should discuss the project with your supervisors, ensure that they are comfortable with the time you will spend on it, with the overall goals, and with the practical aspects of a community that is open to a potentially large and general Department or interagency audience.

The Questionnaire

Strategic Issues

1. GOALS: What do you want your community to achieve?
2. DURATION: How long will your community last?
3. PARTICIPANTS: Who are the primary community participants and, if appropriate, additional audiences you want to engage in the community?
4. NETWORK: Considering your intended audience, choose one of the three networks on which to host your community:
 - Intelink-U** – an inter-agency SBU network. OpenNet users have automatic access; others with a .gov email address can request a login.
 - OpenNet** – SBU network, limited to users with OpenNet access (includes most USAID personnel).
 - SIPRNet** – Classified, inter-agency network. Available to USG personnel cleared up to the secret level.
5. EXCLUSIONS: Unless specifically designated for public access, your community will be internal to State or the USG. Is there anyone in State or other USG agencies that you do *not* want to participate?
6. MARKETING: How will you publicize your community?
7. DEFINING SUCCESS: How will you know you're succeeding?
8. LAUNCH DATE: When do you want to announce your community to your audience?

Content Issues

9. NAME: What do you want to call your community?
10. OTHER RESOURCES: What links do you want to display on the sidebar?
11. LOGO: Do you have an existing logo or graphic that you wish to use on your community site? (If not, the Communities team will work with you to make one.)
12. ORGANIZING CONTENT: What topics will you use to organize your content?

APPENDIX I

Management Issues

13. WHO WILL RUN THE COMMUNITY?

- Who is the primary community administrator and how much time are you willing to spend per week administering the community?
- Who is/are the secondary community administrator(s) [people who will actually contribute entries and manage the community]?

14. MANAGING CONTENT: How often do you plan to post new content?

15. MANAGING EXCHANGES: How do you plan to manage comments, questions and discussions?

16. EXECUTIVE SUPPORT: Does your supervisor support this initiative?

Site Features

Although eDiplomacy will work with you to personalize your community site, we have limited resources to support this popular program. As such, we use standard layout templates, and so we are unable to accommodate major deviations from the design of these templates. Within the standard design templates are some mandatory features. These are:

- **Search:** A search box in the top right corner of the site allows your readers to search all site entries by keyword.
- **RSS Syndicate:** One link in the sidebar to the site's code for RSS allows readers to receive your new entries as news feeds.
- **Subscriptions:** This box on the sidebar allows readers to add their own email address in order to receive automatic email notifications when new entries are posted to the site. Readers manage their own subscription; they can add or remove themselves from the list at any time.

We also have several other optional features. Please indicate which of the following features you wish to add to your community:

- Guest entries:** Allow readers to post a new entry without logging in. By adding this feature, you relinquish some immediate control over addition of content to your site although you retain ultimate authority to delete material. The benefit of this feature is that it enables others to participate more fully in the community by initiating content and discussions, without adding to the task of administering passwords. (Please e-mail the Knowledge Management Action Team (kmteam@state.gov) if you have further questions about this feature.)

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- Upcoming Events:** Show an “Upcoming Events” subsection in a sidebar that highlights events that are important to your community.
 - Tagline:** Explain the purpose of your site in a short, pithy statement that appears on each page, just below the site name and logo. If you want a tagline, please include it here:
 - “About this site” page** - add a permanent link to an entry which describes your site.
- OR-
- Welcome message** - include a short message (photograph optional) to appear on the main page only. A good technique to increase and demonstrate executive buy-in to the community is to get your leader – the Ambassador or DCM, your Assistant Secretary or relevant Deputy Assistant Secretary – to provide a welcome message for the site.
 - Newsfeeds** - add headlines to your site with RSS feeds. Please indicate which feeds you’d like, if any (Washington File, Wall Street Journal, etc.):
 - Logo** - help “brand” your office or initiative by including your logo at the top of each page. You will need to provide eDiplomacy with a .JPG or .GIF file of your logo.
 - Design details** – further your branding by requesting particular colors or fonts for your site. Please indicate here:
 - Publicity** - increase your audience with a link to your site on various State resources, including Diplopedia, the iNet page, and the Communities @ State home page.

APPENDIX J

Idea Name & Number:		Liaison Name/Office:	
Creator Name:		Supporting Offices:	
Idea Summary:		Program Manager:	
		When will Idea be implemented?	

	Decision Criteria	Description	Evaluation Notes
Initial Evaluation	Strategic Fit	Does the idea align with TSA's mission, vision and core values? Does it tie to one of TSA's strategic goals?	
	Business Need	How much of a business need is there for the idea to solve a problem? Will it improve process efficiency or have other operational benefits?	
	Legality	Is the idea in violation of law or regulation or is there language in the appropriations that prohibit the issue from moving forward?	
	Duplication of Effort	Does the idea replicate an existing process or effort?	
Impact	Employee Impact	How will the idea impact TSA employees? Consider health, safety, morale, quality of life, the employment process, job satisfaction, etc.	
	Cost	What will the idea cost? Is the idea funded and, if so, for what budget year? What is the cost effectiveness of the idea (ROI, NPV, etc.)?	
	Security Risk	How does the idea impact the security risk? Consider both likelihood of an event occurring and the consequence of the event.	
	Customer and Stakeholder Impact	How does the idea impact the traveling public; other government agencies, including DHS; our perception in the media; Congress; or industry stakeholders?	

Approval (AA or rep.):	Print, Signature
------------------------	------------------

APPENDIX K

Questions to Ask Before Choosing a Technology Platform for Idea Generation, Challenges, or Prizes

Draft September 2, 2009

A critical precursor to choosing a technology platform for idea generation, challenges, or prizes is a clear articulation of the program goals and a detailed walk-through of what users and agencies will do and experience at each stage. The following questions will help reveal the program and administrative needs that must be taken into account when selecting a technology platform.

Framing Questions

- What defines success? At the outset, it is important to determine what metrics and performance criteria would define success (new ideas or innovations, broad participation, improved morale). E.g., what is the newspaper headline describing the program at launch and then again one year later?
- Is this a long-term or short-term effort? There are many ways to collect ideas or spur innovation: in a short burst (idea/innovation contest with a deadline or multiple deadlines), or a more long-term program of feedback that exists going forward. Is the desire to institutionalize an ongoing feedback mechanism for employees or to run discrete short term initiatives leading to measurable outcomes?
- Who will participate and how public will the system be? It is important to determine who the target audience for such a program is. Will it only be open to agency employees, or also to a broader community (other federal employees, expert communities, beneficiaries, general public)? If a broader community is engaged, will each group participate in the same forum? Separate forums? Also, will such a system be internal (accessible only to participants) or will idea suggestions, comments, critiques and ratings be openly accessible? Finally, will participants need to create a profile and log in to participate?
- What constitutes a useful proposal? It is important to consider what input you want to receive from participants. Will participants have to follow a format? For idea challenges, will you want on-point answers to a specific question one at a time, or a number of topics all together? Or will you want a blank canvas for whatever suggestions participants have on their minds? Will you accept or require multimedia (e.g. videos)?
- How will top ideas be identified? Will the participants themselves vote ideas up or down? Will there be a committee that evaluates submissions? Who would be on that committee? Or will there be clear victory criteria (e.g. technical specifications for an invention) that will determine the winner?

Organizational Questions

APPENDIX K

- What are your time and financial constraints? Does the challenge need to be launched within a certain time frame? Do you have funds available for establishing the challenge (e.g. outsourcing management of it entirely, hiring consultants for its design, or paying for elaborate customization of the technology platform)? Do you have funds available for its ongoing management (e.g. staff, software as a service)?
- Who will manage the program? It is important to identify an organizational home for the program in order to ensure it is appropriately and consistently supported and managed.
- Who else in your agency or organization needs to know about the program? Whose buy-in do you need in order to for the program to be successful (e.g. legal, communications, IT)?

Functionality

- How important is it to you to give participants the ability to post/comment/rate? Type and quality of participation will vary based on what participants can do. Will users be able to (1) post ideas, (2) post comments on all ideas, (3) and rate all the ideas?
- How important is it to you to give participants the ability to personalize the system? Increased participation can result in a system where users can personalize it to their interests and use. Will the system, as the number of ideas grow, allow participants to limit viewing to certain topics, and thereby personalize their interaction?
- How important is it to you to give participants the ability to collaborate or form teams? If participants will be able to form teams, will there be shared space available for team collaboration in the forum?

Role of Your Team

- What role do you want your senior leadership to play? Both for increasing the profile and for glory incentives of the program among participants, and as a mechanism for fostering communications, it is worth considering degree of senior leadership involvement. E.g., will the head of your agency or organization speak about the program, post questions, and highlight innovations? What other incentives will be given to participate (e.g. meeting with leadership if a participant's idea is chosen)?
- Will there be active staff moderation of the forum? Active staff moderation can improve the quality of the forum dialogue, but it requires dedicated staff. Will staff be dedicated to (1) moderate activity that is flagged as inappropriate, or (2) pre-review all submissions?

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Experience of Participants

- How will participants learn about the forum? Ensuring that your target audience knows about the forum is a key factor in the quality of input you will receive. In addition to email to employees and/or other expert networks, how will awareness be raised (e.g. involvement by senior leadership, media coverage)?
- What will motivate people to participate in the forum? Some people will participate in the forum for the sheer enjoyment of doing so, but others may need official recognition or other specific incentive. The incentive should be tailored to the potential participants you are trying to attract. If you are asking for a full invention, you may need to offer a significant financial reward or market access. If you are asking for ideas, you could consider non-monetary incentives (e.g. visibility, the opportunity to meet a distinguished individual, or participation in implementation).
- What will be the feedback mechanism? Demonstrating that participants are being heard is critical in maintaining buy-in and continued participation. It is important to consider what will be the manner of determining and showcasing innovations resulting from the project, and to generally recognize top ideas. Will feedback be provided throughout the full process, or only through recognition at the end?

APPENDIX L

- **Welcome to The Sounding Board**

Posted by [Secretary Clinton](#) on 9 February 2009

About the editors

Welcome to The Sounding Board - a place I hope you will visit often. The Sounding Board is a place where I hope we can all engage in sharing creative and collaborative ideas to make our agency smarter, more efficient, and more effective.

We know we have very difficult tasks confronting us and as a team we can work together to apply our talents and energy across the world to share better ideas, better methods, and better ways of executing that can help us meet those tasks and challenges.

I want and need to hear from you. Let's build on our conversation today by using this site as a place to share your ideas and together we can improve the way our Department is run.

I am looking forward to hearing your ideas and hope we can create an open dialogue that will allow each and every one of us to think forward, be open and help generate ideas and policies. I look forward to discussing this with you in the coming days and weeks.

APPENDIX M

National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne, and Enteric Diseases Website and Newsletter article

“IdeaLab Web Site Offers Tool for Sharing Ideas”

Wednesday, 26 August 2009



Jay Gee, Ph.D., is a Research Biologist in the Bacterial Zoonoses Branch of DFBMD. Well before starting at CDC seven years ago, Jay remembers visiting his uncle, Danny Jue, at CDC and being inspired by the work being done here. "In those earlier days staff would often informally drop by each others' labs during the workday to swap ideas," says Jay. "With increasing security and safety considerations, those days are over. With card key restrictions, scientists may meet by appointment when there is a specific project to be discussed, but less often do they meet to informally chat. I think that some of the silos that may form are due to this walling off of personnel from each other and the dearth of informal venues for conversation.



Jay Gee collecting samples in the Northern Territory, Australia.

"The success of social networking Web sites as well as the comments section accompanying news articles on major news Web sites indicates the potential for a new way of informally swapping ideas," says Jay. "The IdeaLab initiative at CDC may be one answer to the question of how CDC staff can share ideas when it is not easy to meet face to face." He hopes that CDC staff will appreciate how topics are organized on the website to make it easier to find threads of conversations compared to trying to find key info in e-mail correspondences that might get lost in an inbox. "The IdeaLab Web site also provides a way for CDC staff as far apart as Fort Collins and Puerto Rico to contribute to conversations in a way that they could not before. I hope that the initiative increases in popularity and more staff visit the Web site."

Check out IdeaLab at <http://blogs.inside.cdc.gov/IdeaLab>.

The IdeaFactory Illuminator

Vol. 2, Issue No. 8 – August 2009

Two Detailees Visit the IdeaFactory



TSO Randy Skelton, left, and TSO Brent Atwood set up a booth in the HQ cafeteria to promote awareness of the IdeaFactory to program offices.

Recently, TSO Randy Skelton of Charlotte Douglas International Airport spent 30 days on detail at TSA headquarters in Arlington, VA working with the IdeaFactory. He was joined for a few days in August by TSO Brent Atwood from Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

Together, Randy and Brent set up an IdeaFactory Awareness booth in the cafeteria at TSA headquarters to help educate program offices on ways to use the IdeaFactory to their advantage. Spanning over two days, Randy and Brent were able to tell almost 100 HQ employees the benefits of the IdeaFactory from a field employee point of view.

Separately, Randy and Brent had different objectives for their time spent with the IdeaFactory. Randy was the winner of a challenge in 2008 for his idea “Set Up and IdeaFactory Awareness Day at the Airport” and was invited to spend a 30-day detail with the IdeaFactory team to implement his idea.

Randy enjoyed his time at HQ and getting to see how the IdeaFactory operates on a daily basis. “While working as part of the IdeaFactory Team at headquarters, I was able to review and comment on daily submissions from the field and experience the processes involved, from start to finish, in



View
TSO
Brent

Atwood's Webcast

Ever wondered how the IdeaFactory team evaluates challenge submissions? The wait is over! Now you can enjoy an inside look at the evaluation process courtesy of TSO Brent Atwood!

In June, the IdeaFactory launched a challenge sponsored by St. Louis TSO Brent Atwood to find the next IdeaFactory challenge topic, based on Brent's idea, “Idea Factory Challenges.”

Earlier this month, Brent traveled to headquarters to help evaluate the submissions to his challenge and documented the entire experience on camera!

Look for the video on TSA TV here.

H1N1 Update

The Department reissued guidance for mask usage related to the H1N1 flu on Monday, August 17 and TSA will follow that guidance. This guidance continues to place TSOs and FAMs in the medium risk category, which means they are not required to wear masks when interacting with

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the life of an idea,” Randy said. “This was an eye-opening experience. I had no idea that so many different people are involved from the employee in the field to the Acting Administrator.” Randy was even fortunate enough to have the opportunity to sit down with Gale Rossides and speak with her for a few minutes, an experience that ended up being one of the highlights of his detail.

Brent spent only two days at headquarters and was brought in to help evaluate the entries to his June challenge, asking IdeaFactory users to submit their ideas for future IdeaFactory challenge topics. For more on how Brent documented his visit at HQ, see “View TSO Brent Atwood’s Webcast” at the top right of the newsletter.



Acting Administrator Gale Rossides spent some time chatting with TSO Randy Skelton during his visit.

Brent looks forward to having more opportunities to return to headquarters in the future. “It was a very unique experience in getting to see where the Idea Factory office is located and how the Idea Factory is run, and how ideas are reviewed and evaluated,” he said. “It was a pleasure to meet the Idea Factory Staff, and all the other people affiliated with the site. I had a great time and I hope to be able to return to HQ again in the future and work with them on future projects.”

passengers on a regular basis. If you want to wear a mask, TSA will make both N95 respirators and surgical masks available to you. We currently have N95s on hand and we are in the process of purchasing and distributing surgical masks to the field. Wearing the surgical mask requires no additional training or medical evaluation.

There is no medical clearance, training, or fit testing for voluntary use of either the N95s or surgical masks. But, to ensure that employees use the PPE properly and in the event that we come to a mandatory use in the future, TSA is rolling out training and a N95 respirator use program to medically clear and fit test employees.

For the latest information on the H1N1 virus, check out the [H1N1 Informational website](#).

Headquarters Corner



Acting AGM for Workforce Utilization William Byrne recently responded to the concerns many employees have been expressing about staffing across the country. Here’s what he had to say:

“Each airport’s SAM09 TSO Allocation Letter was sent to the FSDs in September 2008. This letter outlined specific FTE to be used for Playbook activities. Specifically, the allocation letter provides guidance that the Flexible Security Allocation (FSA) FTE and BDO ADASP FTE should be the primary allocations



Current TSA Activity

New responses to your ideas

We are constantly working to get responses to the ideas you post. Here are some of our latest responses:

“Offer the TSA Canine Handler Position to TSA Employees” –TSA initiated a program in 2008 that created TSA led explosive detection canine teams. There are currently over 100 of these positions nationwide and more are posted on USAJobs often so keep checking for your chance to apply.

“Shake Your Snow Globe Like a Polaroid Picture (Allow Snow Globes)” -- **All snow globes remain prohibited.** TSOs are not expected to try and determine if the liquid amount in the round sphere is less than 3.4 oz.

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used to conduct Playbook activities. In particular, the FSA allocation is the primary source of Playbook FTE and is additional FTE. The BDO ADASP Allocation should also be used for Playbook.

We appreciate the challenge the airports are facing of balancing so many tasks and we are mindful that this is the peak period for many airports. As evidence of the amount of time you are all devoting to Playbook this year, the MOR reflects the nationwide actual performance at nearly double the goal or 173%. While this performance is commendable, it is above and beyond the level that was planned and funded."

To read the entire response, check out the comment section of [this idea](#).

STSOs/LTSOs/TSOs may not use their discretion to allow them into the sterile area. The liquid inside snow globes could be easily replaced with a variety of clear liquid explosives and resealed making detection virtually impossible.

"Update OLC" – In reference to TSO technical training, OTT is working with the OHC-OLC to identify all outdated training in order to archive materials as appropriate. OTT would appreciate your support in helping us identify any outdated OLC technical curriculum that you believe should be made inactive. Please send your suggestions to the TRC at TSATraining@dhs.gov and title the message "Outdated OLC Materials".



IdeaFactory
Q&A:
Expert BDO
Kenneth
MacLeod, Chicago
O'Hare

International Airport
Welcome to our Q&A feature, where we ask IdeaFactory users the same five questions to give you a better picture of your fellow users! Expert BDO Kenneth MacLeod has been with TSA for almost 7 years.

Q: Why do you use the IdeaFactory?

A: I use the IdeaFactory as an avenue to voice my opinions and ideas to the rest of the workforce, as well as the Administration Management.

I also like the opportunity to offer my experience in evaluating others ideas.

Q: What impact do you think it has on the TSA workforce?

A: Although we have not seen tremendous changes from the IdeaFactory ideas, it shows that Management is receptive since some of the best ideas have been explored and implemented.

Q: What's your favorite idea you've ever seen on the site – yours or someone else's?

A: I like the ideas related to creating a long sleeve sweater to match the new blue uniforms.

It was implemented and people have jumped at the opportunity to be comfortable while on the job.

Q: Other than checking out and posting ideas to the IdeaFactory (of course!), how do you spend your spare time?

A: Well, I have 3 children and a second job, so spare time is something I do not remember.

Q: What would you like to tell your fellow employees about the site, TSA or yourself?

A: I am a firm believer in the TSA's mission. I believe that the IdeaFactory is a great site that allows employees a voice to a national audience of peers. I will continue to use this site going forward and look forward to reading your ideas.

We Asked You: Unusual Items at the Checkpoint

Welcome to the new "We Asked You" feature in *The Illuminator*. Here you will find some of the best answers we received from our We Ask You ideas. First up: unusual items found at the checkpoints.

There were several great stories posted about strange things employees have encountered at the checkpoint. One of the best has to be Erica Williams' story of the woman who covered her body with dimes to ward off the evil spirits.



"I've been with TSA since 2002 and I've come across some weird things. I was a Supervisor at the checkpoint and a woman came through the WTMD and all of the zone lights lit up. She had another pass and the TSO asked her to remove anything metal. She said she didn't have anything. The HHMD TSO took her into the screening area and begin the search.

This woman alarmed from her feet to her shoulders in every spot. But when you did a pat down you felt nothing, and I mean nothing. I even took over and re-wanded the woman. I found nothing.

Needless to say the next move was a private screening, we had her remove one layer of clothing because she had on 3 (with the privacy drape of course) still we felt nothing. I asked again "what do you have on your person." She then asked me if I was an evil spirit, my response "uh, no ma'am, but hold that thought." She then replied "I keep the evil spirits away." I then radioed for a female LEO to assist. The LEO had her remove her clothing and I was amazed at what she had. . .

She used scotch tape to hold thousands of dimes all over her body from the bottom of her feet to her shoulder blades. So the next time you get an alarm remember no matter how sane and sweet the passenger looks, something could be very loose up top. Don't



OSO Picture Contest: Priorities in Action

Here is your chance to have your photo or handiwork prominently displayed at TSA Headquarters! OSO is holding a photo contest to highlight the 5 OSO Priorities. We are appealing to your creativity and imagination to demonstrate what the 5 OSO Priorities mean to you. The contest will be open to all OSO employees, those who work at an airport or at headquarters, beginning on August 20th, 2009 and running for 6 weeks, through September 30th, 2009.

Your submission must somehow demonstrate, emphasize or reflect one of the 5 OSO Priorities, or the Priorities as a whole. Encouraged creations include; photographs, drawings, paintings or anything tasteful that can be displayed at TSA Headquarters!

As a reminder the 5 OSO Priorities are: Mitigate the Threat, People Matter, Support the Field, Work as a Team, and Make TSA the Place to Work. [Click here](#) for complete descriptions of each priority.



Submissions will also be open to voting on Idea Factory by your OSO peers! The other appropriate submissions will be displayed at headquarters. The top vote getters for each priority and for the multiple priority category, will earn a special presence in headquarters. These six submissions will be displayed outside of the OSO AA's office!

Email all submissions to – OSOPhotoContest@dhs.gov. If your submission is artwork, please take a high resolution photo and email the photo. If you really desire the actual artwork displayed, send your request to the above email and arrangements can be made.

Guidelines:

- Submissions must be static media, no video.
- All photographs submissions must be a minimum 5.0 megapixel resolution. The final product will be displayed in 14x11format.
- Checkpoint cameras may be used ONLY with the permission of your supervisor.
- Any inappropriate or offensive submissions will be deleted.
- No disruption of daily operations

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give up until you resolve all alarms. “

- No photographs of x-ray equipment or x-ray images will be allowed (enter standard OD language).
- All submissions are subject to final review by OSO leadership.

The [IdeaFactory Illuminator](#) is a newsletter available through subscription or from the IdeaFactory front page. Would you like to know when a new Illuminator is posted? Subscribe from your “My Profile” page! We’ll send you an e-mail previewing the new issue. Questions? E-mail the IdeaFactory team at IdeaFactory@dhs.gov.