

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE: PROPOSAL TO STUDY AGENCY COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL WEBSITE POLICIES

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Study Objectives

The overall purpose of the proposed project is to better understand the degree to which Federal agencies are aware of and have responded to current information policies that affect the management and operation of Federal websites. More specifically, study objectives include the following:

- Determine the degree to which a selection of agency web managers and related staff are aware of the various information policies affecting the operation and management of these websites.
- Determine the degree to which a selection of agency websites have responded to and complied with these various information policies in the management and operation of their websites.
- Assess the degree to which the various information policies actually assist agencies in operating successful websites and propose possible policies that should be considered for improved management and operation of their websites.
- Make specific recommendations to the agency as to how its websites might better respond to and address the various information policies currently in place.

Ultimately, the study will assist agencies to determine how well they are responding to the existing information policies that affect the operation and management of Federal websites and improve the usefulness, impact, and management of those websites.

Timeline and Tasking

The study would be a five to seven month effort depending on the depth of investigation require by an agency or group of agencies. It would have the following general phases and tasking:

Phase I: Project Organization (one month). In this first phase the investigators will develop detailed project tasking. They will meet with appropriate agency staff to obtain a better understanding and knowledge of their websites. Agency staff will provide the investigators with a range of internal documents and reports related to their website management. The investigators will (with the assistance of agency staff) identify a sample of agency websites to be used for the assessment. And the agencies each will establish a single point of contact for the study as well as a small advisory committee that can assist in study activities and logistics.

Phase II: Data Collection (two-four months). During this phase the investigators will use a range of methods to obtain data that will answer the study objectives outlined above. These

methods may include interviews with key informants at participating agencies; log analysis; policy analysis; surveys; focus groups; usability assessments; and content analysis of websites. The investigators will provide a draft report of preliminary findings at the conclusion of this phase.

Phase III: Final Report, Recommendations, and Dissemination (two months). Based on the findings from the data collection, the investigators will produce a final report that will summarize the degree to which the websites successfully respond to the information policies as outlined in Chapter 2. The report will also offer specific recommendations for (1) how these policies might be improved, and (2) how the agency can better utilize these policies for improved management and operation of their websites. The investigators will also, with the assistance of participating agencies, disseminate project findings and recommendations within the agency and the larger Federal community via an Executive Briefing session.

These proposed Phases and general tasking are likely to be modified and refined to best meet the needs of the participating agencies during Phase I of the study.

Budget

The investigators propose a project budget in the range of \$60,000 - \$75,000 for this five-seven month study. McClure and Sprehe, as Co-Principal Investigators would contribute a predetermined number of days per month on the project. They would hire additional staff, 2-3 graduate research assistants at 20 hours per week. Other resources would be used for travel, communications, supplies, copying, etc. This budget assumes that agency liaisons will be able to work with the investigators and can draw upon some assistance from agency staff in the completion of the study.

Study Products

A number of study products will result from this effort, including:

- A final report that offers specific recommendations to the participating agencies on how they might better respond to and comply with various information policies for improved management of and services from their websites.
- The report will also provide a set of procedures that the agencies can use in the future to develop an ongoing program to insure adequate awareness of and compliance with new information policies affecting website management and operation.
- A revised and expanded Chapter 2 (*Information Policies Affecting Federal Websites*) based on the findings from the study.
- An Executive Briefing session for selected agency officials that would increase agency knowledge of policies affecting the management and operation of Federal websites and how those websites might be improved.

These products provide an important set of tools and strategies by which agencies can continue to improve and develop their websites.

Importance of the Study

The investigators' work in Chapter 2, *Information Policies Affecting Federal Websites* will provide an important tool to agencies that can assist them to better manage and operate their websites – and be in compliance with the existing policies affecting website management. The procedures and findings from the study are also likely to benefit other agencies that are learning how to deal with the various information policies affecting website development.

In addition, the study will significantly raise the visibility of the importance and use of agency websites. The project will also demonstrate how agencies are taking a leadership position in addressing the range of Federal information policies that affect website management and operations. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the study will result in agency websites that are more successful in meeting agency mission and goals, more successful in meeting user information needs, and more successful in how they are managed and operated.