



Leadership 201 — Action Learning Scenario July 2014

Engaging Employees in the Major Digital Changes Happening at the USGS

How can:

1. leadership most effectively communicate with and engage employees about Web Re-Engineering and other major digital projects?
2. employees most effectively submit suggestions, ideas, and concerns about Web Re-Engineering and the like to the appropriate levels of leadership?
3. employees most effectively stay informed about what is happening around the USGS and inform others of their own web and other digital activities?

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Issue

Web-enabled mobility technology, real-time access, social and collaborative cloud-based tools, and extensive mobile and tablet device use are just a few of the many shifts transforming the Web and changing the government's digital landscape, as well as new opportunities and challenges.

The White House, the Department of the Interior, and Congress have all made it clear: the Federal Government needs to improve its digital services and information and make those services and information more accessible. The implications for the USGS are massive: we have some of the most abundant and useful stores of data in government, but we also have one of the largest and most unwieldy web presences (over 400 .gov web sites consisting of 3.2 million web pages) in government. Web Re-Engineering and similar efforts are designed to advance our mission by making our science more available, engaging, and useful to anyone in the world, on any device, and by allowing our scientists to focus on world-class science content instead of technological issues. However, there is much concern and confusion among our employees about how that will take place and what it will mean for their control of their content. How should our leadership and related teams work with employees on Web Re-Engineering efforts and the like in a meaningful, timely, and efficient manner, and support employees' awareness of web and digital activities happening around the USGS?

Background material

- [White House Digital Government Strategy](#)
- [White House Open Data policy](#)

- [State of the Digital USGS: Web Re-Engineering Edition](#)

Why This Matters to the USGS

Almost 50 percent of the world accesses web content via mobile devices, and that number will be closer to 75 percent in about two years. Less than 3 percent of USGS web sites are mobile ready. This is just one example of why we must act now to get our digital presence in order, but the only way this will work is if our employees and our leaders understand where we are going, are invested in and accountable for getting there, and have channels and tools by which to work together.

Leadership Challenge

The Survey's digital existence is its primary existence as far as most of the world is concerned — our viability and relevance depends on getting it right. In order to create a workforce engaged in creating the digital future of the USGS, two-way communication, both up and down and side to side, plays a critical role. Messages to employees must get their attention, and be understandable and credible, and in the vein of two-way communications, employees need to know that their opinions count. And this all needs to happen in an organization with thousands of people in hundreds of locations across the country. The goals of this Action Learning Scenario are to:

1. help USGS executives envision and identify the most efficient channels/methods and spokespeople for communicating and building trust with employees about Web Re-Engineering and other digital issues, and
2. help USGS information technology/web leadership develop strategies and recommendations that directly engage employees in the problem-solving process.

Questions/Ideas to consider in your Action Learning Scenario discussions

1. What are the most effective means of getting critical, timely information about Web Re-Engineering and the like to employees?
2. What behaviors and actions can you suggest to senior leaders to communicate with and listen to employees about digital/technological topics?
3. How do we ensure that employee input helps transform our digital presence?
4. How do we identify Survey opinion leaders whom employees are most receptive to and who should convey critical messages?