Computer-Based Resources

Description

A variety of databases and software are available to assist you in tracking information about your site, learning about other similar sites, planning site activities, and developing materials to use in community involvement activities. Some computer-based resources also are available to the public for obtaining site information.

Using the Resource

When to use

Use of computer-based resources is most effective when:

- You lack the time to design your own tracking system.
- You need to enter site or other data regularly into a tracking system.
- You are looking for information about another site to assist in your own site activities.
- You need information about a new community or technology.
- You need a sleek, professional handout for a particular audience.
- You want to quickly communicate with a large audience.

Do not use computer-based resources when:

- You lack sufficient knowledge about a resource to be able to use it properly and risk creating misinformation or entering inconsistent data.
- You rely solely on computers as your means for communicating.

How to Use

Some example resources are listed below. Information on each is attached:

- Comprehensive Environmental, Response, and Liability Information System (WasteLAN)
- Electronic Mail
- Internet
- LandView
- Superfund Document Management System (SDMS)

Products that can be created using computer-based resources:

- Reports on tracking activities
- Exhibits, Tab 13
- Fact Sheets, Tab 15
- Mailing Lists, Tab 23
- Maps and Aerial Photographs, Tab 24
- Presentations, Tab 29
- Public Notices, Tab 33

Last Updated:
September 2002

Computer-Based Resources

Each database has its own setup requirements, which you should be able to run yourself. However, if you are unsure how to gain access to a computer-based resource, consult your regional Information Management Coordinator (IMC) or LAN Administrator for instructions.

Tips

- Before trying to access a computer-based resource, find out whether your computer is capable of running the program.
- Take advantage of available training.
- Enter information consistently and regularly.
- Let your community know about computer-based resources they can use to obtain site information.
- Using computer-based resources may mean extra learning time up front, but, in the long run, they are extremely useful and efficient.

Related Tools/Resources in the Toolkit

- Exhibits, Tab 13
- Fact Sheets, Tab 15
- Mailing Lists, Tab 23
- Maps and Aerial Photographs, Tab 24
- Public Notices, Tab 33
- Presentations, Tab 29

Outside Sources of Information

- See the "EPA Home Page: Databases and Software" for information on public access to various databases: *www.epa.gov/epahome/Data.html*

Electronic Mail

Description

Electronic mail (E-mail) systems are electronic mailboxes that enable you to send and receive messages and attached documents via computer. While many people already know the basics of E-mail, few take advantage of its full power and range as a communications tool.

Using the Resource

When to Use

Internal and external E-mail is available to you at EPA. Internal E-mail arrives at its destination almost instantaneously and is limited to a Local Area Network (LAN), which means that it usually circulates only within a building or office. External E-mail can be sent via the ***Internet*** to virtually any location, but it can take several minutes to hours to reach its destination. E-mail is used best in conjunction with more traditional means of communication.

See Internet, Tab 10

Use E-mail to:

- **Exchange files with colleagues, *Community Groups,* or newspapers**. E-mail allows you to attach files to your messages.
- **Reach a large group**. E-mail's group mailing list function allows you to send one message to multiple parties simultaneously.
- **Post a public message**. E-mail messages and attachments intended as public notices of the release of new documents and upcoming events may be sent an electronic bulletin board**.**
- **Communicate over long distances**. External E-mail, including international E-mail, usually travels the ***Internet*** free. However, ***Internet*** providers charge a fee to set up an E-mail account. Individual users, including community members, must also pay a small monthly or hourly service charge for ***Internet*** service.

See Community Groups, Tab 4

Do not use E-mail when:

- **Unsure of the recipient's computer software**. Some messages sent via the ***Internet*** are encoded and must be decoded by the recipient. Formatting features, such as bullets, columns, and underlining, may appear scrambled. Also, some attached documents can only be opened by the same program in which they were written.
- **Audience does not have access to or is not familiar with E-mail**.

Because E-mail travels unsecured across the ***Internet***, unauthorized users may have access to your E-mail. Therefore, consider all E-mail messages public information. For this reason, some people may not want their E-mail addresses made public.

Since many community members do not have access to the ***Internet***, you may want to provide them with hard copies or communicate with them via phone or fax.

How to Use

Getting Started

Determine who in the community has access to E-mail and is willing to use it. Develop a ***Communications Strategy*** that may include telephone trees or group faxes to inform members of the community who lack E-mail access. Contact your Regional Manager to find out your Region's procedures for connecting to E-mail.

See Communication Strategies, Tab 3

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Electronic Mail

Legal Requirements

EPA guidelines concerning the use of E-mail require that all government employees preserve records that document the functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the EPA. Federal regulations stipulate that these records be properly stored and preserved, available for retrieval, and subject to appropriate approved disposition schedules. Personal materials are not subject to EPA's records disposition schedules under the Federal Records Act (FRA). E-mail messages also may be considered EPA records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

For more information on the legal responsibilities of EPA employees who use E-mail, see "Legal Requirements Concerning the Creation, Maintenance and Disposition of Electronic Mail Messages" in the "Outside Sources of Information."

Attaching Files to E-mail

Attaching text, faxes, or files to an E-mail message is an easy way to send drafts or other documents to colleagues or the community for review. If you want to protect the attachment from being altered by recipients, send it in Portable Document Format (PDF). PDF files are "read-only," and cannot be altered.

File transfer of lengthy or graphic-intensive documents may cause the recipient's E-mail system to run slowly. Also, the file may be irretrievable upon arrival. Such documents may have to be sent in hard copy or electronically by some other means, such as an electronic bulletin board.

Using Group Mailing Lists

Your LAN Administrator should be able to help you create group mailing lists from which you can send the same message to a many individuals simultaneously. Group mailing lists save a lot of time.

Establishing Electronic Bulletin Boards

Electronic bulletin boards are storage devices for public messages or notices. Sending messages to an E-mail bulletin board is similar to posting hard copy messages in community centers or other high visibility areas.

Emoticons

People often "talk" on E-mail the way they do on the phone, but inflections, such as laughter and tongue-in-cheek facial expressions, are lacking. If you want to include inflections, standard symbols called "emoticons," are available (see text box).

Common Emoticons

:-) happy

:-(disappointed

;-) winking, comment tongue-in-cheek

:-D laughter

Other Helpful E-Mail Features (Optional)

- **Return Receipt**: This feature sends you a confirmation notice when your message has reached its destination. It does not indicate whether your message was read.
- **Address Book**: You can keep your most frequently used E-mail addresses in a personal address book for easy access.
- **Message Log**: The message log keeps track of all messages you've sent.

Examples

Example 1: Newspaper Announcements

When a CIC needed to publish a public notice in a newspaper, she first found the E-mail account of the newspaper's editor. After preparing the public notice in WordPerfect (WP), she sent an E-mail message with the attached WP file to the editor specifying the dates the notice should appear. She then saved the message and file in accordance with the "Legal Requirements Concerning the Creation, Maintenance and Disposition of Electronic Mail Messages." The CIC also faxed the public notice to the newspaper to ensure that the newspaper had a hard copy from which to proof the WP attachment. The newspaper editor sent a brief reply confirming that the notice had been received and would be published on the dates specified. This exchange took only a few minutes, instead of the hours or days a request by mail or in person might have taken. The electronic transfer also decreased the risk of typographical errors, since the newspaper did not have to retype the notice.

Example 2: It's in the Mail

When a CIC needed to communicate with a large population in a community, he researched whether key businesses, community groups, and other interested citizens used E-mail. Since most of these people did, he created a group mailing list for all of them. He was then able to send messages simultaneously about upcoming events and other information on current site activities to everyone on the list.

Tips

- E-mail lets you send messages from one computer to another.
- E-mail is quick and usually inexpensive, especially for sending messages internationally.
- Follow the federal requirements for E-mail use.
- E-mail messages are comparable to postcards; they are neither private nor confidential.
- Put your E-mail address on your Region's home page.
- Take advantage of E-mail's file attachment, return receipt, group mailing list, message log, and address books features.
- Use phone calls, faxes, and other alternatives to E-mail, especially for those in the community that do not have E-mail access.
- When appropriate, use emoticons to clarify your intent.
- When preparing electronic mailing lists or sign up sheets, ask for E-mail addresses.

Electronic Mail

Related Tools/Resources in the Toolkit

- Communications Strategies, Tab 3
- Community Groups, Tab 4
- Community Profile, Tab 8
- Internet, Tab 10
- Mailing List, Tab 23
- Public Comment Periods, Tab 31
- Spokesperson, Tab 39

Outside Sources of Information

- *Legal Requirements Concerning the Creation, Maintenance and Disposition of Electronic Mail Messages: www.epa.gov/records/policy/*
- Managing Records: A Quick Reference Guide for Electronic Mail and Other Documentary Materials (Also found at: *www.epa.gov/records/)*
- *It's In the Mail: Common Questions About Electronic Mail and Official Records: www.epa.gov/records/*
- *Environmental Management Tools on the Internet: Accessing the World of Environmental Information*. Katz, Michael and Thorton, Dorothy. St. Lucie Press: Delray Beach, FL. 1997. This publication can be obtained through St. Lucie Press.

Description

The Internet is an electronic gateway to a variety of multimedia (audio, ***Video***, photographic), database, and textual resources for use in communicating with the public and other audiences. Sometimes referred to as the "information superhighway," the Internet provides key resources for searching and posting information. The Internet's powerful, intuitive search technologies can help you find specific information quickly, communicate with the public, and recommend information resources to others.

See Videos, Tab 45

Although community access to the Internet varies, Superfund Reform Initiative #20 calls on EPA to facilitate stakeholder access to Superfund information and related tools via the Internet. EPA Internet users should be familiar with the legal requirements for sending ***Electronic Mail (E-mail)*** to the public.

See Electronic Mail, Tab 10

What You Need to Know

The World Wide Web, or simply "the Web," is a rapidly growing subset of the Internet, used for distributing interactive multimedia documents. Because the Web is graphics-based and easy to use, individuals, schools, companies, and other organizations are setting up Web pages.

When to Use

Internet resources can be helpful to you for:

- **Accessing information**—A suite of powerful software tools is available to help you retrieve information to use in explaining technical information to the public;
- **Disseminating information**—You can arrange to have pertinent files and general Superfund information made available to the public through the Internet or electronic bulletin boards in accordance with EPA's publishing procedures for Internet use; and
- **Communicating with others**—By using the attachment feature you can send and receive drafts with other people.

You should verify information retrieved from the Internet because there are no safeguards on the accuracy of information posted on the Internet. Contacting the primary source of the information is one way to ensure you have accurate and updated information.

Use the Internet when you need to:

- **Research a specific topic**—The Internet can lead you to sources of information from private, public, and academic sectors about specific topics, such as the demographics of the community near your site;
- **Obtain information quickly from a variety of sources**—One of the Internet's greatest advantages is its quick access to numerous information sources; or
- **Obtain current information**—Web site information may be updated easily and is, therefore, often more current than hard copy information.

Do not use the Internet when:

- **You are unsure what type of information to look for**—You need to be able to narrow your search criteria to find the most relevant information;
- **A "clean," comprehensive copy of a document is needed**—Not all Internet versions of documents include the layout and graphics seen in the original paper copy, which are often critical in the comprehension and readability of a document provided to the public;

- **A presentation tool is needed**—The Internet is best used as a research tool rather than as a presentation tool; there are specific software programs designed for presentations; or
- **Many other users are using the Internet**—Internet traffic and equipment limitations can restrict the speed of Web searches.

Rather than depend entirely on the Internet, you should provide alternative forms of communication, such as paper copies, to individuals who lack easy access to computers. At the same time, you should encourage people without computers to use the Internet at a local library. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Network Neighborhoods program provides Internet access to selected communities (see below, "List of Attached Tools/Information").

How to Use

Searching the Internet for Relevant Web Sites

Various Search engines are available to identify Web sites that relate to your chosen topic. Some, for instance, only search for specific types of Web sites (e.g., business, legislative). To use a search engine, go to the search engine's home page (see text box). The search engine will ask you to provide key words or phrases to search on. The results of the search will be listed with links to each Web site. When you find a useful site, you may bookmark it for quick use next time.

Helpful Search Engines

- WebCrawler: http://www.webcrawler.com
- Yahoo: http://www.yahoo.com
- AltaVista: http://www.altavista.digital.com
- Infoseek: http://www.infoseek.com
- HotBot: http://www.hotbot.com
- Lycos: http://www.lycos.com

Numerous Web sites are available for you to use as primary sources of hazardous waste data. See below for more detailed descriptions and copies of key Web pages. EPA also maintains an "Intranet," or internal "Internet" system that is restricted to use by EPA computers only. The EPA Intranet may be helpful when searching for resources not available to everyone.

Posting Information on the Internet

The first step in Internet publishing involves asking yourself if the Internet is the appropriate distribution vehicle for your document. Consider these factors before publishing:

- **Potential audience**—Consider the size of your audience and how many individuals in that audience have easy access to the Internet. It may be more cost-effective to distribute large documents to an extremely small audience by some means other than the Internet.

Tips for Posting Information

- Clearly define your audience.
- Compare the cost to post information on the Internet with other media.
- Avoid large graphics unless they are absolutely necessary. A Web page should take no more than 80K of memory.
- To ensure the security of your files and easy viewing, consider using PDF or HTML file formats.

- **Preparation cost**—In general, publishing documents on the Internet is inexpensive. However, costs can vary depending on the time involved in preparing and formatting the document. For example, reformatting documents with numerous tables, charts, or graphics can be time-consuming, and therefore expensive.
- **Size of document**—Distributing extremely large files (greater than 1.4 megabytes, the capacity of a 3.5-inch floppy) via the Internet can be a problem.
- **Graphics**—Documents that require a lot of graphics can take a long time to download.

To start the publishing process, contact your Regional Internet Manager. *Your Internet Manager can give you technical assistance in posting information on the Internet.* See the "List of Attached Tools/Information" below for examples of Internet submission forms and home page guidelines.

Creating Web Site Files

Files posted on the Internet can be in several formats, mainly Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) with or without graphics, Portable Document Format (PDF), and word processing applications. HTML and PDF formats are generally recommended for most needs because they are the most user-friendly and secure versions available.

- **HTML—** HTML files are the cornerstone of Internet home pages. They allow information to be read by any Internet browser software, such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Explorer. They also allow the user to link to other Web sites. HTML documents may contain text only or text and graphics. Providing both versions is helpful to your audience because users with slow computers generally prefer to view documents without graphics. If you create a "text only" version, you may want to place critical information from the graphics in text format.
- **PDF—** PDF allows a file to appear exactly as it does on paper, including complicated formatting, such as color, graphics, and columns. Since it is a "read only" format, no other user can alter the file. A user must download the PDF file to view it through an application called Acrobat Reader, which is available for downloading free from the Internet at *www.adobe.com*.
- **Word Processing Applications—**Files may be posted in their original software format, such as Word Perfect or Word. A user can then download the document onto his or her hard drive and alter it in the appropriate word processing application.

Who to Contact About the Internet

The Regions each have at least one Superfund Internet contact who can help you with specific Superfund Internet policies or guidelines. Headquarters Internet contacts also can help you set up a home page, post information, find information, and other Internet-related activities.

Internet

See Fact Sheets, Tab 15; Videos, Tab 45

Examples

Regional Offices have used Internet home pages to post ***Fact Sheets***, news releases, site pictures, and even ***Video*** footage that have helped community members participate in decision making.

Example 1: Posting the Latest Information

In one Region, concerned community members were continually calling a CIC for information about EPA and site activities. The CIC couldn't keep up with all the calls and found that he was frequently giving different people the same information. After confirming that the majority of his audience had access to the Internet, he decided to create a Web site about the Superfund site and post all fact sheets and other current information on that site. He placed the Web address on all hard copy documents, announced the Web address at meetings, and informed many persons individually. He also informed everyone that they could always contact him directly with questions or information requests.

Example 2: Information Sharing

A CIC learned about a Superfund site near one she was responsible for and searched the Internet to obtain information about that site. She discovered that the community affected by her site overlapped the community affected by the other site. She also learned that the contaminants of concern were similar for both sites. Based on this information, she teamed with the CIC from the other site, and together they eliminated many duplicative activities and created one Web site with information about both sites.

Example 3: Putting Technology to Work

A community member, concerned about the potential health effects a cleanup technology, asked the CIC for more technical information than had been provided previously. Within about 15 minutes, the CIC logged onto the Internet, entered a few key words into a search engine, and found several sites that provided more detailed information on the technology than was in the general site fact sheet. This information satisfied the community member's inquiry. Later, when the proposed treatment plan was presented at a public meeting, this community member helped convince the community that the remedy was in the community's best interests.

Tips

- Determine how many community members have access to the Internet.
- Follow Headquarters and Regional procedures for uploading, maintaining, and downloading information on Web pages.
- Know who the key Internet personnel are in your office or Region.
- Consider which format (PDF, HTML, other) will be best for your audience.
- Seek help from your LAN administrator to learn how to avoid computer viruses.

Related Tools/Resources in the Toolkit

- Communications Strategies, Tab 3
- Community Profile, Tab 8
- Electronic Mail, Tab 10

- Fact Sheets, Tab 15
- Videos, Tabs 45

Attached Items Within the Resource

- Attachment 1: OSWER Internet Quick Reference Guide
- Attachment 2: Useful Internet Web Sites

Outside Sources of Information

- *Environmental Management Tools on the Internet: Accessing the World of Environmental Information.* Katz, Michael, and Thorton, Dorothy. St. Lucie Press: Delray Beach, FL. 1997. Available from St. Lucie Press.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Network Neighborhoods: *www.hud/gov/nnw/nnwindex.html*

Attachment 1: OSWER Internet Quick Reference Guide

This reference guide will help you understand how to post materials to the various OSWER Internet Web sites. You may use the process outlined in this guide to have material posted or removed and links to other sites added or removed from a Web site. The OSWER/OERR Internet/Intranet Request Form is a key component of the process of developing and modifying information for the Internet. The form is available from each OSWER office and from OERR's LAN.

Five Key Considerations To Posting or Removing Materials From the Internet

1. Clearly define the audience before submitting a request to post information to the Internet. Avoid posting materials containing large graphics because they take too long to load on the screen and to download.
2. If possible, convert your materials to an Internet-ready format, such as HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), PDF (Portable Document Format), or TXT (text). If you are not familiar with converting documents to these file types, your Internet Manager can help.
3. Complete a copy of the OSWER Internet Submission Form, available on OERR's LAN (s:\oerr\internet\subform.wpd). If you do not understand a particular item on the form, refer to the OSWER Internet/Intranet Submission Form Instructions document or ask your Internet Manager for help.
4. The submission form will have to be signed by the Division or Center Director before submitting it to the Internet Manager.
5. Provide the Internet Manager with the completed form and electronic and hard copy versions of the document(s) to be posted to the Web site. If you are requesting links you need only submit the signed form with the appropriate information.

Rules of Thumb

- EPA applies the Lowest Common Denominator rule to make information usable to nearly everyone. Therefore, Web pages and Web sites should be developed so they can be viewed with older Internet browsers such as Mosaic or Netscape 1.1.
- CGI (Common Gateway Interface) scripts may be used, but they can present a security problem to the EPA Web server. A CGI script must be developed in PERL (Practical Extraction and Report Language), and tested in a cgi-bin on a test area of the EPA server. A CGI checklist (found on the EPA Intranet) must be filled out and faxed to John Shirey after loading the CGI program to a test area.
- Java, Java Script, and Java Applets are not recommended because not all browsers support Java, a violation of the Lowest Common Denominator rule.
- Frames are not recommended because they also violate the Lowest Common Denominator rule.
- All Web documents must have an EPA Symbol at the top of the page and a standard footer at the bottom. The footer includes a point of contact, date of last revision, and full URL (Web address) of the Web page. Navigation aids such as a mapped bar or forward and back buttons are recommended.

File Size

- PDF and TXT files over 500K in size should be separated into several files at logical breaks within the document. HTML files should range in size from 5K to about 80K.
- Links to files larger than 100K should include an explicit note about file size.
- Documents of significant size or length should be converted to PDF format.

Internet-Ready Conversion Tips

File Conversion

- Almost any file can be converted to HTM using a variety of software programs including the Internet Assistant for Microsoft Word.
- Almost any file can be converted to PDF using Adobe Acrobat software.
- When converting official EPA documents to PDF, HTM, or TXT files, try to maintain as much of the original formatting as possible so the documents look like EPA documents when viewed on the Internet.
- Documents in WordPerfect or MS Word can be converted to TXT documents by saving them as "Text Only" or "ASCII" files. Graphics cannot be used in text files and most document formatting also will be lost.
- Complex documents with graphics, tables, or formulas should be converted to the PDF format.

Other Tips

- On the hard copy of the document(s) to be posted, you may specify text that you want to link to another document. To do this, circle the text to be linked and provide correct URLs for where it is to be linked.
- Unless large graphics are absolutely necessary, avoid them. A Web page should not exceed 80K.

Reference Materials

- IRM Policy, Standards, and Guidance (www.epa.gov/irmpoli8/index.html)
- VPWEB - A Practical Guide to HTML Publishing and Resources (members.aol.com/rick1515/index.htm)
- How Do They Do That With HTML? (www.nashville.net/~carl/htmlguide/)

Attachment 2: Useful Internet Web Sites

EPA WEB SITES

EPA Home Page: www.epa.gov

EPA's home page gateway to other EPA sites. Site also includes a search tool.

Superfund Web Site: www.epa.gov/superfund

Includes background information on the Superfund program, relevant community tools, general Superfund publications, information about Community Advisory Groups, community training, TOSC, frequently asked questions and TAGs. Also provides information targeted for kids and school projects, including an environmental glossary. For a more technical perspective, the site provides specific information on sites, technical programs, and program initiatives.

RCRA/Superfund Hotline: www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hotline/

The Hotline has its own home page.

EPA Regional Offices: www.epa.gov/region<X>

Replace the <X> with the Regions number to reach its home page.

***Federal Register*—Waste Documents: www.epa.gov/docs/fedrgstr/EPA-WASTE**

Links to EPA Waste documents listed in the *Federal Register* from 1994 to the present.

Integrated Risk Information System: www.toxnet.nlm.nih.gov

IRIS contains EPA carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic health risk and regulatory information on over 600 chemicals. The risk assessment data has been reviewed by and is used by EPA.

Other Federal Agencies/Government

ATSDR Home Page: atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov:8080/atsdrhome.html

Access to the Hazdat Database provides access to information on the releases of hazardous substances from approximately 1,300 CERCLA sites and from other emergency events, and on the effects of hazardous substances on the health of human populations; and ToxFAQs that answer questions about exposure to hazardous substances found around hazardous waste sites and human health effects.

Department of Interior: www.usgs.gov/doi

Contains links to all U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) sites. Also covers USGS highlights through articles and descriptions of current activities.

Department of Transportation: www.dot.gov

Provides a search engine of the National Transportation Library and the 14 Administrative offices of DOT.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: www.hud.gov

This home page contains consumer information and describes HUD's community programs.

HUD: StepUp Program Link: hud.gov/jobtrain.html

Step-Up is HUD's primary Job Training program, includes forms and information on pilot sites.

NTIS: Federal World Home Page: www.fedworld.gov

Allows you to search Federal, civilian, and military government databases.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: www.fws.gov

The FSW homepage contains information on endangered species, migratory birds, environmental contaminants, and conserving coastal areas. Information can be gathered from a national to a local level.

U.S. Geological Survey: www.usgs.gov

Featured pages include news releases, products, education, fact sheets (including environmental subjects), Internet resources, and science topics.

NASA: www.nasa.gov

NASA homepage provides information on education, earth sciences, the news room, and space shuttle missions.

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

Provides search capabilities to find information on the museums, events/activities, resources/tours, and membership opportunities.

U.S. Navy: www.navy.mil

Official site of the U.S. Navy. Links to information services about naval operations, job opportunities, and other relevant sites.

U.S. Department of Energy: www.doe.gov

Department of Energy's homepage.

U.S. Dept. Of Energy Office of Environmental Management: www.em.doe.gov

Provides public information on environmental management newsletters pertaining to environmental health, regulatory information on State environmental regulations, waste management information, and environmental restoration.

U.S. Department of Justice: www.usdoj.gov

Department of Justice's Homepage.

Weed and Seed Program: www.usdoj.weedseed.org/

Describes DOJ's Weed and Seed training and technical program, which supports inner city revitalization efforts through improving the quality of life by reducing crime and helping the local community.

FEMA Regional Offices: www.epa.gov/swercepp/pubs/fema.html

Access to regional information.

U.S. House of Representatives: www.house.gov

This site contains the schedules of House activity, and gives you access to members and additional Capitol Hill info.

U.S. Senate: www.senate.gov

This site contains the schedules of Senate activity, and gives you access to members and additional Capitol Hill info.

White House: www.whitehouse.gov

Describes current programs at the White House, including a description of Federal services and reports on the Administration's latest activities.

Library of Congress Legislative Information: thomas.loc.gov

Thomas presents a wealth of legislative information online from the last two Congressional sessions.

LandView III

Description

LandView III, which is an innovative software tool formatted like an electronic atlas, is a vital resource to CICs planning community outreach. It displays location or "spatial" information on EPA-regulated sites, demographic and economic information from the 1990 U.S. Census, jurisdictional information (*e.g.*, cities, counties, congressional districts), and key geographic features (*e.g.*, roads, rivers, railroads, area boundaries). LandView III's mapping component allows the user to create, view, and modify maps quickly and easily. The user also can import information from other databases to obtain more current local information.

LandView III contains extracts of key information from five EPA databases in addition to the 1990 demographic and economic data from the Bureau of Census. Data from Superfund's WasteLAN system allows users to create a map of an identified Superfund site. Drawing on information from the Aerometric Information Retrieval System (AIRS), LandView III can pinpoint air monitoring positions and point source emissions facilities related to an identified site and neighborhood. LandView III can identify permitted facilities under the ***Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)*** within a specified area, and identify TRI-regulated and NPDES-permitted facilities (Toxic Release Inventory System and National Permit Compliance System databases, respectively).

See Other EPA Programs, Tab 27

Using the Resource

LandView III is an indispensable tool for CICs planning community outreach. It also provides Superfund communities with a variety of site-specific information and tools to enhance their participation throughout the Superfund site decision making process.

When to Use

LandView III can help CICs characterize communities in terms of their demographics, housing counts, household income estimates, labor force, and educational attainment within a specified distance from a Superfund site. This information is needed to develop the ***Community Involvement Plan*** and ***Community Profile*** and to determine whether to designate a site as an ***Environmental Justice*** site where low-income or rural communities shoulder a disproportionate amount of risk of adverse health effects from contaminated properties. LandView III also provides important information for developing ***Communications Strategies,*** information packets, and educational programs that target the community's needs.

See Community Involvement Plans, Tab 7; Community Profile, Tab 8; Cross-Cultural Communications, Tab 12; Communication Strategies, Tab 3

LandView III has other applications. It can help determine potential future land use by examining the current mix of residential and industrial properties in a defined area. It is useful in presenting complicated environmental information, census data, and market trends to interested community members.

How to Use

Getting Set Up

The minimum configuration to run LandView III:

- An IBM or Compatible PC, 486-class processor, or Macintosh with a 68020 processor
- 8 Megabytes (MB) random access memory (RAM)
- 10 MB free hard disk space
- VGA color monitor

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- 2X CD-ROM drive; and
- Windows 3.1 (for PC), System 7.0 (for 68K Mac), or System 7.1.2 (for Power Mac)

To maximize performance, the recommended configuration is:

- PC with 586 or Pentium-class processor, or Macintosh with Power PC processor
- 16 MB RAM
- SAGA color monitor
- 4X CD-ROM drive; and
- Windows 95 or Windows NT (for PC), or System 7.1.2 or higher (for Macintosh)

Specific Capabilities of LandView III

- **Desktop Mapping:** Display, search for, and identify map objects and locations.
- **Thematic Mapping:** Choose and set census boundaries, NPL, non-NPL, and archived sites as well as other map features in various colors and patterns.
- **Population Characterization:** Identify populations for any radius around any point in the United States.
- **Printing:** Print custom maps and reports.
- **Import Other Spatial Data Sets:** Create new layers of spatial data by using any program that supports dBase file structures. Further information is included in the on-line HELP screens.

Accessing LandView III

LandView III is available on CD-ROM and is divided into state as well as U.S. summary data. Copies can be purchased by contacting the U.S. Bureau of the Census at (301) 457-4100. Individual discs are $99 each. LandView III also can be downloaded by county of choice by connecting to the U.S. Census Bureau's ***Internet*** site entitled "Tiger: the Coast Digital Map Database." The address for the site is *www.census.gov/ geo/ www/tiger/.* Also available from this ***Internet*** site is information related to LandView III:

See Internet, Tab10

- Product description
- Technical documentation and tutorial
- Downloadable software and sample data (per county of choice); and
- Ordering information for LandView III

An abbreviated version of LandView III for a single county may be downloaded for free from *www.RTK.NET:80/LandView.* An attachment to this resource contains instructions for accessing the free mapping program.

Tips

- LandView III—with its statistical and graphical representations of key environmental, geographic, and demographic information—provides important insights into how to target Superfund community involvement activities.
- Use LandView III as a first step in developing the ***Community Involvement Plan*** and ***Community Profile***, and in identifying whether a site should be designated as an ***Environmental Justice*** site.

- Use LandView III to present complicated information about a site in a manner that empowers community members to participate in decision making.
- Purchase LandView III on CD-ROM or download it directly from the ***Internet*** *(see above, Accessing LandView III)*.

Related Tools/Resources in the Toolkit

- Communications Strategies, Tab 3
- Community Involvement Plans, Tab 7
- Community Profile, Tab 8
- Cross-Cultural Communications, Tab 12
- Internet, Tab 10
- Maps and Aerial Photographs, Tab 24
- Presentations, Tab 29
- Risk Communication, Tab 37
- Other EPA Programs, Tab 27

Attached Items Within this Resource

- Attachment 1: Installation and Setup Instructions for Loading the Free LandView III Mapping Program from the Internet
- Attachment 2: Overview of LandView III Databases

Outside Sources of Information

Questions about LandView III can be directed to the following customer service or hotline numbers:

- For information regarding the purchase of LandView III or for questions regarding the census data, contact the Bureau of Census, Customer Service at (301) 457-1128.
- For questions regarding EPA information included in LandView III, contact EPA's RCRA, Superfund and EPCRA Hotline at (800) 424-9346, Monday-Friday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm EST.
- For questions or problems when using LandView III, please refer to the U.S. Census Bureau's "LandView III Technical Documentation and Tutorial Page" located at *www/tiger/lv3tech.html*

Attachment 1: Installation and Setup Instructions for Loading Free LandView III Mapping Program from the Internet

To install the free LandView III mapping program by county of choice, the following files must be downloaded into an otherwise empty folder (e.g., LV3) from RTK NET at *www.RTK.NET:80/landview/.* The files are compressed and self-extracting. To decompress them, either go to "My Computer," find their icons in the correct folder and click on them (Windows 95), or type their name in the Windows "Run" box (Windows 3.1).

- LVPROGRM.EXE — LandView III program (compressed)
- LVxxxxxD.EXE — Environmental and other data (compressed) for county of choice
- LVxxxxxM.EXE — Modified TIGER maps (MARPLOT files for county of choice)

Important Note: LandView III was originally designed to run from CD-ROM, and part of the program tries to read from the CD-ROM at startup. If your computer has a CD-ROM drive, you will get a fatal error unless you have a CD-ROM in your drive. It can be any CD; the contents of the disk do not matter.

Attachment 2: Overview of LandView III Databases

Census Data

The "Census Data" database contains selected 1990 demographic and economic census information for the Census Bureau, including population characteristics and economic and housing characteristics. These data are available for a number of groupings, including Alaskan native regions, census block groups, congressional districts, counties, metropolitan areas, American Indian reservations, states, and other groupings.

Air Facilities

The "Air Facilities" database contains information maintained in EPA's Aerometric Information Retrieval System (AIRS). Facility information on air quality and point source emissions is included in LandView III.

Hazardous Waste Facilities

The "Hazardous Waste Facilities" database includes information on amount of waste generated or managed at facilities that treat, store, and dispose of RCRA hazardous wastes or are classified as large quantity generators under RCRA. The data was obtained from EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information System (RCRIS) and the Biennial Reporting System (BRS).

Superfund Sites

Information on Superfund sites was obtained from the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS). Data on three types of Superfund sites is contained in LandView III, in accordance with the process used for prioritizing sites for cleanup actions: (1) Superfund NPL (National Priorities List) sites; (2) Superfund Non-NPL sites; and (3) Superfund No Longer of Concern sites, which are the approximately 30,000 sites that have been included in CERCLIS in the past, but for which EPA requires no further action under the Federal Superfund program. For all three types of Superfund sites, information is provided on site location, incident category, contamination, and contacts.

Toxic Release Inventory Facilities

The Toxic Release Inventory System (TRIS) contains data submitted to EPA by regulated facilities concerning listed chemical and chemical categories (approximately 300 toxic chemical and compounds). Information in LandView III from TRIS includes facility location, chemical quantities and Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes, medium of chemical release (air, water, underground injection, land disposal, offsite) and pollution prevention data (e.g., recycling, energy recovery, treatment and disposal).

Wastewater Discharge Facilities

Information on the more than 75,000 regulated facilities that discharge municipal and/or industrial wastewater into navigable waters of the United States is obtained from EPA's Permit Compliance System (PCS).

Data in LandView III on these permitted dischargers include facility location, facility SIC code, and information on the type and quantity of discharges.

Other LandView III Files

LandView III also includes files from other databases that provides information on:

- EPA air quality monitoring sites, including data on ambient air concentrations of carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, ozone, lead, particulate and sulfur dioxide
- Over 2,000 watershed boundaries, including data on watershed conditions (quality and contamination indices and susceptibility and vulnerability assessments)
- Ozone non-attainment areas
- Over 75,000 dams throughout the United States and its territories, including nearby towns and level of hazard

- Schools, hospitals, religious institutions and cemeteries
- U.S. highways and waterways
- Nuclear sites
- Brownfields pilots
- Airports
- Zip codes; and
- Mexican and Canadian boundaries, roads, and railroads

Superfund Document Management System

Description

The Superfund Document Management System (SDMS) is an electronic imaging system. Rather than microfilm Superfund documents held in Regional site files, SDMS can electronically image and store them on CD-ROMs.

A CD-ROM module allows selected SDMS images and related index material to be downloaded and stored on a CD-ROM. From there, the material can be placed in an ***Information Repository,*** saving a tremendous amount of space. SDMS site file documents will be available on-line from the LAN, and are already available at some work stations in the Regions.

See Information Repository, Tab 21

Using the Resource

When to Use

Use this resource when you need to:

- Locate detailed information from legal documents, or
- Review site-related documents on-line

This resource is not effective when:

- Viewing large documents; they tend to be more difficult to review on-line than on paper
- Viewing colored documents that appear as black-and-white
- Examining detailed photographs or maps that cannot be imaged in full detail

SDMS is currently available in the majority of EPA's Regions. Some Regions have an additional module that allows the public to access documents in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Documents in the public access module are tagged and copied to a temporary cache file.

How to Use

Rather than riffling through folders of papers, a person can search on a key word or phrase and identify documents that contain the specific information desired. Site file documents imaged into SDMS include those found in the Administrative Record, which are also available in hard copy or microfilm at the ***Information Repository,*** documentation of site work, and public participation information, such as press releases, ***Fact Sheets***, and materials provided to the public by potentially responsible parties.

See Fact Sheets, Tab 15

Access to SDMS requires a license, provided by the Superfund Records Manager. Work stations need to be configured to run SDMS. Contact the Superfund Records Manager for more information.

Tips

- If you don't use SDMS often, take notes on how you did queries to save time later.
- You will get better results if you enter specific queries, rather than depend on "wild cards" (*e.g.*, use "nplsite" instead of "npls").

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Related Tools/Resources in the Toolkit

- Fact Sheets, Tab 15
- Information Repository, Tab 21
- Media, Tab 25
- Resource Books, Tab 35

WasteLAN

Description

WasteLAN is an information system that enables Superfund staff to share comprehensive data across EPA programs and will, eventually, link with other federal partners and the public. WasteLAN, formerly called CERCLIS 3, provides a diversity of information regarding Superfund sites. Through data screens and formatted reports, a CIC can access WasteLAN for a site description and location, summaries of site activities (assessment, remedial, removal, enforcement), financial information, remedy information, and risk data. WasteLAN provides summaries of community involvement activities, such as ***Public Meetings***, ***Information Repositories***, ***Community Groups***, and site ***Contacts***.

See Public Meetings, Tab 32; Information Repositories, Tab 21; Community Groups, Tab 4

Using the Resource

When to Use

When a community has specific questions about a site, the CIC can use WasteLAN to obtain a snapshot of Superfund site activities and data. CICs query WasteLAN to extract specific information such as site description, site history, contaminants, environmental effects, response actions, ***Contacts,*** and community activities.

WasteLAN can be used as a research tool to compare Superfund sites across the country or within a Region. For example, sites with similar media and contaminant characteristics can be identified and site information reports printed for all sites with a common identifier (e.g., zip code, county, congressional district, federal facility, ***Brownfields***, site type).

See Brownfields, Tab 1

A specific Community Involvement section is available in WasteLAN for CICs. Information in this section is related to the community involvement project schedule, which is used to plan and report all community involvement activities (remedial, removal, responsible party, and federal facilities). The CIC can record and review specific information regarding any ***Technical Assistance*** provided to the organization, such as a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) or Technical Outreach Service to Communities (TOSC). ***Community Group*** affiliations are tracked in WasteLAN with ***Contact*** names, addresses, and group characteristics.

See Technical Assistance for Communities, Tab 41

When planning a ***Public Meeting*** for instance, CICs may use WasteLAN as a resource for information on the physical characteristics and accessibility of public buildings and facilities. A record of ***Public Meetings*** related to the site is available on WasteLAN through the project schedule. To help citizens, CICs can identify appropriate repositories of site-related documents through WasteLAN's ***Information Repository*** screen.

How to Use

The following PC configuration is required to run WasteLAN:

- IBM or compatible PC, 496 or higher (Pentium is recommended)
- Windows 3.1 operating system (Windows 95 is recommended)
- VGA color monitor
- 8 Megabytes (MB) system memory (16 MB is recommended); and
- Connection to EPA's Local Area Network (LAN)

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Accessing WasteLAN

Contact your LAN Administrator to install WasteLAN application files on your computer. The WasteLAN database resides on a server of the LAN and fulfills most regional needs. However, the National WasteLAN database at Headquarters also is available. The WasteLAN System Administrator will provide you with a WasteLAN user ID and password. Security features installed in WasteLAN ensure unauthorized access to information that can be modified.

Contact your Regional Information Management Coordinator (IMC) about WasteLAN training opportunities.

Specific Capabilities

- Superfund Site Profiling—Display, print, or export information regarding site location, description, history, media, contaminants, and other characteristics.
- "Like Site" Queries—Query regional or national databases to find sites with similar characteristics, location, or technical data.
- Site Activity Planning—Enter planned start and complete dates for community involvement activities at a site.
- Progress Tracking—Review the project schedule for all site activities or only community involvement activities to determine progress and overdue tasks.
- Public Meeting Location Ranking—Determine if a facility is appropriate for a planned ***Public Meeting***.
- ***Information Repository*** Directory—Maintain a list of all public and government locations that store documents related to a specific site.
- Community Organization Resource—Track community organizations interested in a Superfund site, and record any ***Technical Assistance*** provided to these organizations.
- ***Contact/Mailing List*** Maintenance—Maintain an "address book" of all EPA, community, and government contacts.

See Mailing List, Tab 23

Looking Ahead

WasteLAN users regularly provide suggestions and requests for additional capabilities to be integrated into WasteLAN. Many sections of WasteLAN, particularly the community involvement area, will be undergoing significant enhancement as the product expands to serve the Superfund community.

Tips

- Use WasteLAN to help plan community involvement activities—the ***Community Involvement Plan***.
- Review information on sites similar to yours to enhance and speed up your community involvement planning.
- Provide comments to WasteLAN contacts about features you would like improved or new features you would like incorporated into the system.

See Community Involvement Plans, Tab 7

Related Tools/Resources in the Toolkit

- Brownfields, Tab 1
- Community Groups, Tab 4
- Community Involvement Plans, Tab 7
- Information Repository, Tab 21
- Mailing List, Tab 23
- On-Site Activities, Tab 26
- Public Meetings, Tab 32
- Technical Assistance for Communities, Tab 41