

2009 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-E-15VT

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Vermont
Assign Program Category (applicant): Administration

1. **Program Name:** CMS
2. **Administering Agency:** Department of Information and Innovation
3. **Contact Person (Name and Title):** J. Casey Faiman,
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

Vermont's Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS) is a simple-to-use system for state employees to easily update and input timely content to streamline their existing websites and to facilitate website redesigns. Offered at no cost to the state, the system ensures the security and accessibility of new websites, allows personnel to conform to state web standards, and offers complimentary training to enable employees to update their web content to allow citizens, businesses and others to quickly and conveniently find what they need from Vermont state government.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 2, 2009 to be considered.

Launched in August 2007, the ECMS has been operational for 17 months.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

In late 2006, the State of Vermont entered into a long-term contract with Vermont Information Consortium (VIC) to deliver e-government services for the citizens, businesses, and employees of the state. The Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS) was envisioned by the state to be one of the first services created because it would help alleviate several issues at once:

- Inconsistencies in naming, URL conventions, and look and feel across state websites
- Excessive costs associated with website redesigns, often paid to outside vendors
- Lack of internal control to handle routine maintenance
- Lack of central control over adherence to security and accessibility standards

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

Work on the ECMS began in January, 2007 when VIC selected an open source content management solution as the platform for the Vermont ECMS. While the system offered core functionality helpful to most users, VIC recognized the need to customize the platform to meet the needs of the state, and they embarked immediately with this task in mind. Monthly webmaster meetings were set up to identify the individual needs of state entities and to determine which entities would become early adopters of the system.

By summer 2007, over twenty departments had come forward for website redesigns, and a CMS preparation checklist was put together to help individual agencies. With so much enthusiasm for the new website development solution, project management was needed and so MS Project was set up by VIC to determine tasks, roles and milestones to ensure success through the process.

In August 2007 the Enterprise Content Management System was officially launched by VIC and the State. Two departments were already queued up for new websites which were subsequently launched through the system in October. Two additional websites followed by December, twelve more in 2008, and so far in 2009 three more sites have been implemented through the system.

Although the number of department websites launched by the ECMS would seem to indicate more of an automated process, each site launch represents a trajectory of work between the department and VIC that follows a similar process. Broadly, the process includes introductory meetings, sitemapping, template design, content creation, coding, testing, and training. Aimed at empowering the non-technical employee with the ability to update web content, the process usually takes between two and six months for each department.

At the end of 2008 VIC announced a quarterly list of CMS feature upgrades. The first list included new features such as ‘Save as Draft’ functionality, web slices, page tools, and webforms.

A partial timeline of the ECMS:

Date	Activity or Strategy
October, 2006	State signs long-term contract with VIC; Identifies ECMS as a top priority
January, 2007	VIC identifies open-source platform to build ECMS, begins development
February, 2007	Monthly state webmaster meetings begin
June, 2007	Key departments identified for inclusion in ECMS
August, 2007	ECMS Launches; Trainings Begin; Online User Manual created
October, 2007	2 websites launched : http://www.greenmountaincare.org/ and http://www.pursuevt.org/
December, 2007	2 additional websites launched: http://dii.vermont.gov/ and http://aoa.vermont.gov/
2008	12 additional websites launched
November, 2008	Quarterly upgrades announced
2009 (so far)	3 more websites launched

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

The Vermont ECMS is a new and cost-effective way for state employees to create and maintain web content and redesign their existing websites from within their own departments. Not only does the Vermont approach help empower employees to keep their web content up-to-date, but it also helps them to streamline communications and serve their constituents on a real-time basis.

It is also innovative in the following ways.

State Integration & Uniformity

By creating an enterprise system that also adheres to a set of state web standards, users of the ECMS gain a common look-and-feel that citizens, businesses, and other visitors to state websites will easily recognize as fitting with the state's brand or image. Primary navigation, header and footer images, a common banner and state logo that appear in the same place on all pages ensures that users are able to quickly access the information they are seeking—the main aim of government websites. Changes to the statewide look-and-feel can be applied seamlessly as there is a distinct separation between look and feel and the content itself. All sites are 508 and ADA compliant.

Site Organization

The ECMS helps state agencies take inventory of their existing web presence as a team, catalogue its strengths and weaknesses, and chart a strong Internet presence for the future. With this more holistic approach, they are better able to organize their content, target different user groups, and present a cohesive picture of their agency. Because the website is no longer the sole responsibility of the agency webmaster, the website becomes a more democratic enterprise with many different members contributing to its success.

Human Resources, Control, & Response Time

A core benefit of the CMS is that it has been customized for non-technical users, which frees up IT personnel overburdened with administrative duties. With the ECMS, managers and others can be granted access control to edit and update their websites or individual pages, and given the ability to create menus, tables, and forms. One of the most appreciated features of the ECMS is that once a site is launched and agency personnel trained, the agency gains the ability to update content quickly, and at their own speed.

Vermont's Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS) has enabled the state to streamline its common look-and-feel

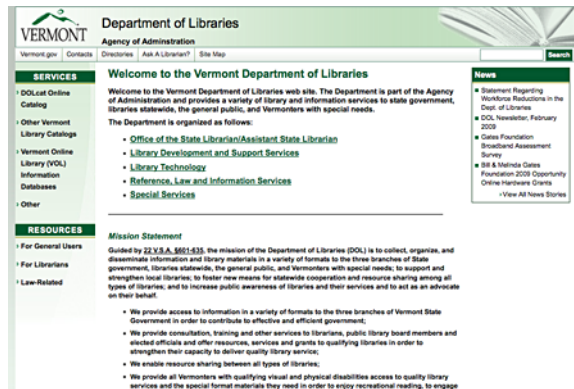
***Inconsistent designs**
Before ECMS:

Department of Libraries



***Common look-and-feel**
After ECMS:

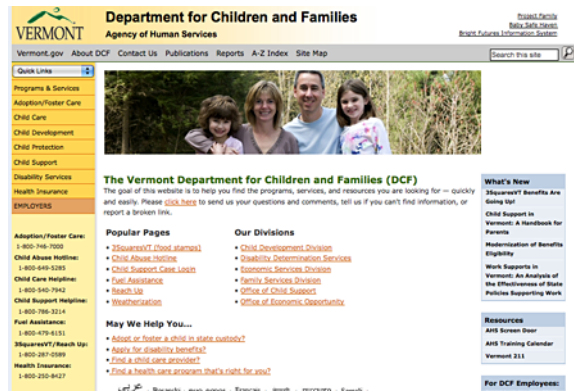
Department of Libraries



Department of Children & Families



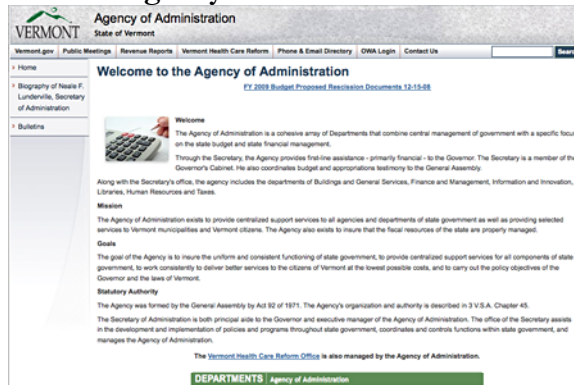
Department of Children & Families



Agency of Administration



Agency of Administration



14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

Because the state is in partnership with VIC, there were no start-up costs for the ECMS. With the exception of time devoted to training and learning the system and the input of the actual content, Vermont agencies and departments do not pay for the ECMS, nor do they pay for maintenance, support or hosting of their websites.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs?

There are no annual operational costs allocated for the ECMS for the state of Vermont. However, VIC has dedicated one creative project manager to the ECMS project who guides state personnel through the process of using the system, including sitemapping, training, design work, and feature upgrades. Hosting costs are also free-of-charge to the state under this model.

16. How is the program funded?

The ECMS is funded through the unique self-funded model employed by VIC, wherein certain transaction-based fee services help fund no fee services. The resource dedicated to the ECMS is paid directly by VIC.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

No, although legislation was written to create the Vermont Web Portal project, through which the Vermont Information Consortium signed a long-term contract with the state.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

Since the service is web-based, the only technology necessary is a connection to the Internet.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

VIC's ability to create a robust ECMS solution hand-tailored to the needs of the state is believed to be very unique, enabling 19 state entities (so far) quickly and conveniently redesign websites at no cost.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

Although there are several states which employ a content management system for website redesigns, we are unaware of any who have customized a system for a state's needs in the ways that Vermont has.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

The ECMS was fully implemented in August, 2007.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program’s effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

As previously stated, the Enterprise Content Management System was envisioned by the state to help alleviate several issues, including:

- Inconsistencies in naming, URL conventions, and look and feel across state websites
- Excessive costs associated with website redesigns, often paid to outside vendors
- Lack of internal control to handle routine maintenance
- Lack of central control over adherence to security and accessibility standards

First, the ECMS has succeeded in creating a uniform naming convention for agencies (www.agency.vermont.gov), as well as a common look-and-feel across state websites. The common look-and-feel has been achieved by mandating that state standards are followed – among them, placement of the state’s logo in the upper left hand corner, primary navigation on the left side, and a footer bar.

Second, costs associated with website redesigns have been mitigated because the ECMS requires no upfront costs for state agencies and departments, which can run into the tens of thousands of dollars. This does not mean that outside design vendors cannot be selected by agency or department managers for inclusion within the ECMS; the system and VIC will (and have) work with outside vendors. But no budget allocation is required when working with VIC, and in this way the ECMS has created substantial savings for many state entities in Vermont.

With the Vermont ECMS, routine maintenance is relatively easy. Since non-technical employees have the ability to update timely content and other minor maintenance issues, there’s no need to cede control to webmasters outside of an employee’s office or department. Further, email and telephone support by the VIC team is available and an online user manual can answer many questions.

Finally, security and accessibility standards are met by the ECMS because all websites within the system are 508 and ADA compliant.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

In the 17 months since the ECMS was launched, 19 websites have been redesigned at no cost to the state, including the Vermont Federal Recovery Office, which was launched in February, 2009.

The following list of websites implemented in the ECMS can be found at:

<http://www.vermont.gov/portal/webmasters/cms.php#sites>.

Site/Agency/Department	Support Level	Approx Pages/Files	Approx Disk Space	Active Content
Green Mountain Care	Tier 1	80	10M	No
Pursue VT	Tier 2	25	200K	Yes
Department of Information and Innovation	Tier 2	200	20M	Yes
Agency of Administration	Tier 1	10	200K	No
Department for Children and Families	Tier 2	980	125M	Yes
Department of Buildings and General Services	Tier 2	1,500	120M	Yes
Department of Libraries	Tier 3	5,500	250M	No
Veterans Services Directory	Tier 1	45	400K	No
HelpforVT.org	Tier 1	40	350K	No
Health Care Reform	Tier 1	80	7M	No
Department of Finance and Management	Tier 2	1,250	200M	Yes
Vermont Scenic Byways	Tier 1	60	150M	No
VtSHARES	Tier 2	50	30M	Yes
Office of the Defender General	Tier 1	180	4M	No
Enhanced 9-1-1 Board	Tier 1	300	450M	No
Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriff's Association	Tier 1	30	210K	No
Information Security - Office of the Chief Information Officer	Tier 1	60	1M	No
Vermont Federal Recovery Office	Tier 1	10	100K	No
Human Rights Commission	Tier 1	225	50M	No
Approximate Totals:		11,000	1.6G	

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

Because of the unique self-funded model that Vermont has employed, and because an open-source solution was selected for customization, the costs for the ECMS were minimal. Other states who attempt to adopt the system would want to consider these factors before embarking on a similar system.

2009 Innovations Awards Program Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

Government Operations

- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

Health & Human Services

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

Public Safety/Corrections

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

Save in .doc or rtf. Return completed application electronically to innovations@csg.org or mail to:

CSG Innovations Awards 2009
The Council of State Governments
2760 Research Park Drive, P.O. Box 11910
Lexington, KY 40578-1910

Contact:

Nancy J. Vickers, National Program Administrator
Phone: 859.244.8105
Fax: 859.244.8001 – Attn: Innovations Awards Program
The Council of State Governments
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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.

Deadline: March 23, 2009