

US EPA Resource Directory Guidance

November 27, 2012

Overview

Definition; Structure

The resource directory format organizes topics using a simple "hub and spoke" model. Topics presented in this format have a single navigation page (a hub) that links to the most important related content (spoke pages)², often including content you don't own. Spoke pages link back to the hub page (this link is added by the WebCMS in the template). Apart from the links between the hub page and each spoke page, resource directories include little or no internal navigation.

One EPA Web Goals

- Replace EPA-centric approach with user-centric approach. Help users accomplish what they want.
- Identify top audiences and their top tasks
- Develop content for those audiences and tasks
- Measurably improve user satisfaction
- Demonstrate "One EPA"

Resource Directory Goals

- Provide a unified gateway to a topic.
- Raise the most appropriate content for targeted audiences to a top level.
- Actively manage the content.

Principles

- Editor-in-chief for each topic will be responsible for keeping the resource directory up to date, reviewing metadata, managing and reviewing content, checking links, responding to comments/questions, etc.
- Not every topic warrants the creation of a resource directory. Resource directory topics are selected during the process of developing annual AA-ship and Regional web plans. Individual offices and divisions, both at headquarters and in the Regions, are expected to work with their Communications Directors, Public Affairs Directors, and Web Council representatives to determine topics each year.
- Resource directories will not link to every piece of related web content, only to content most relevant for the targeted audiences.
- The hub page for a particular topic links only to information about subtopics. The exception is that a hub page can contain a Related Topics section/box.
- Spoke pages do not link up to broader content except for the links back to the hub page(s).

Measures of Success

- Improved visitor experience, measured by ACSI scores and other feedback methods.

² About spoke pages:

- Some of the spoke pages you link to might be existing pages you own. If you revise them, create new versions of these pages in the WebCMS.
- Some content will be entirely new. Create new content in the WebCMS.
- Some spoke pages you link to might be pages owned by other content owners. You can ask the owner to rewrite for the web and you can suggest improvements. You can't force the owner to make the rewrites and improvements, but OEA can help you ask. If the owner won't rewrite and make improvements, you can choose not to link to the content, but do not duplicate that content to make the changes you'd like to see.
- It's OK that some spoke pages will be in template 3.

- Fewer broken internal and external links.³

Resource Directory Development

Editor-in-Chief (EIC) Responsibilities

- Identify the purpose for the resource directory.
- Identify one to three top audiences to properly focus content selection.
- Choose content that most directly supports the audiences' top tasks. Note: link to only the most directly supportive information, not all information.
- Ensure that metadata for all content, no matter the file type, exists and is appropriate.
- Maintain and update the hub page and any newly created spoke pages, complete metadata review, manage and review content, review results of any usability testing, check links, respond to comments/questions, etc.
- See "Qualifications and Responsibilities of OneEPA Web Editors-in-Chief" (<http://1.usa.gov/QIBCX4>) for more information

Process of Developing a Resource Directory

- See section V of the Content Development Strategy (<http://1.usa.gov/XW9VZa>)

Requirements of a Resource Directory

General Requirements

- Resource directory hub pages and all new spoke pages go into the WebCMS. The WebCMS templates control the look and feel.

Hub Page Requirements

Look and Feel

The hub page uses the rdtropo template in the WebCMS.

Elements of a hub page:

- Brief description of the topic (optional). If you include a description, keep it to 50 words or less.
- 1 – 6 content sections. Each section includes:
 - Title (H3 for heading size). All major words should be capitalized.
 - Graphic (325w x 100h pixels).
 - Follow the standards and processes described in the Image Guidance (<http://intranet.epa.gov/oneepa/web/docs/ImageGuidance.pdf>).
 - Images that contain text should not be used.
 - Program logos should not be used. Program logos may be displayed at the top of the right side of the hub page, above right-side boxes.
 - The graphics should be clickable links to the most significant content in that content section.
 - Relevant links:
 - Link text should clearly explain where the link is going.
 - Capitalize only the first word, plus any proper nouns.

³ The internal and external link reports can be found in the Maxamine Quality Assurance Reports (<https://maxamine.epa.gov/maxcentral/>) home page for your web area under "Link Integrity" and "External Link Integrity", respectively.

- Avoid links that wrap to a 2nd line to make the page easier to scan.
- No more than five links in each content section. If you have more than five links in a section, do this instead: replace two or more of them with a link to a new "landing page", which can then in turn link to multiple pages that would otherwise have been linked to from the hub page. Example: on epa.gov/safepestcontrol/, the "Controlling pests like ants, bed bugs, or slugs" link takes visitors to the landing page epa.gov/safepestcontrol/pests.html.
- Top questions, tasks, concepts. These should be addressed in the top content sections in the main body. The right-side column (i.e. where boxes are usually displayed) should **not** include a Top Tasks/Questions box.
- Maps (optional). Maps can be used to display local or regional information in either the main body or the right-side column.
- List of links to related topics (optional). Three to six links is optimal. This section goes in the right column and is always the last box/section in that column.
- Contact us links (top and bottom). These links go to a page with a contact form.⁴
- "Contact us" footer. This required footer should be centered at the bottom of the main body on both the hub page and all new spoke pages. In Documentum, the footer is created in the areanav file.
 - Use the following text, replacing "XXX" with the name of the resource directory: "Contact the XXX topic webmaster to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem." The underlined text links to the email address of the EIC, or to an epa.gov email address the EIC monitors.
 - OEAAA/OWC requires that the EIC or a designee respond within one business day of receiving questions. At a minimum, acknowledge that the question has been received and give an estimate of when we will provide an answer.

Selection of Linked Content

- Follow the guidance in the content development strategy.⁵ A page of general information is recommended for most topics.
- Other languages:
 - If topic for the page has an existing equivalent in another language, link to it.
 - When there are only a few existing links to material in other languages, include them in the resource directory.

Spoke Page Requirements

Look and Feel

- New spoke pages created in the WebCMS use either the basic page template or the two-column template. Spoke pages link at upper left (above the page name) to all hubs that link to them. Do not add other navigational schemes to the page.

Selection of New Content, Including Links

- Do not use sidebars, local area footers or other additional local navigation to create navigation among spoke pages.

⁴ EPA standards still apply. Each resource directory needs a contact us form, thank you page, and a 404 error page. See:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/OEI/webguide.nsf/standards-guidance/contactus>

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/OEI/webguide.nsf/standards-guidance/thank-you-page-2>

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/OEI/webguide.nsf/standards-guidance/404-pages2>

⁵ <http://intranet.epa.gov/oneepa/web/docs/OneEPAWebContentDevStrategyRound2Final.pdf>

- Follow writing for the web principles⁷ and EPA web standards⁸.
- Limit inline links (i.e., links in the middle of a paragraph). Most links should be below or to the right of the related content so that:
 - You can provide your viewers with more context.
 - Viewers and screen readers can scan linked content more easily.
- Other languages:
 - Do not create new spoke pages in languages other than English. If you need to create new content in Spanish, please contact Lina Younes and Lela Harris in the Office of Web Communications. Lina and Lela manage epa.gov/espaol.
 - If you need to create new web content in languages other than English or Spanish, please contact Christine Dibble. She coordinates foreign language content other than Spanish.

⁷ http://www.epa.gov/productreview/writing/writing_handout.html

⁸ <http://yosemite.epa.gov/oei/webguide.nsf/standards-guidance>

Appendix Rule-Related Web Content

- Link to the official versions of documents published in the *Federal Register*, *US Code*, *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR), dockets, etc. Official versions come from the Government Printing Office (GPO) or Regulations.gov. Do not post PDFs versions, unless a document is not available digitally from GPO or Regs.gov:
 - <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>
 - <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>
 - <http://www.federalregister.gov/>
 - <http://www.regulations.gov>
- Where possible, link to Regulations.gov.
- Do not link to non-government sites, such as Cornell's US Code site, when referring to U.S. law or regulation.
- When posting *Federal Register* documents on the web, follow the guidance on this Word document: <http://intranet.epa.gov/adplibrary/documents/frdocs-onweb10-04-11.docx>
- Follow EPA web standards for external links to the Federal Register (Example #4 on <http://yosemite.epa.gov/OEI/webguide.nsf/standards-guidance/external-links>).
- Do not recreate content from the EPA-wide Laws and Regulations channel (<http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/>). Any legal or regulatory summaries you write should be topically oriented; for example: "The Clean Water Act and Puget Sound," not just "The Clean Water Act" (which is already summarized here: <http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/cwa.html>).
- For regulations or regulatory content, identify the industries or sectors affected, with their NAICS codes, both in your content and your metadata. Sector audiences especially want to know
 - what they have to do (compliance) and
 - what happens if they don't (enforcement).Consider linking to or providing additional information for "over-compliance," like partnerships or initiatives for businesses that want to go the extra mile.
- Group regulatory or legal information in a section of your site called "Laws and Regulations." Whether this section contains just one page or a group of web pages depends on the amount of regulatory/legal information you need to include.
- When you create "Laws and Regulations" content, let the EPA Channels Editor-in-Chief (currently Susan Fagan in OEI), the Enforcement Editor (currently Christine Guitar in OECA), and the Laws and Regulations Editor (currently Susan Fagan in OEI) know, so they can coordinate updating links and content on other channels and web areas.