The Transformative Power of Communications:
Digital Communication Management for the Public Sector
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Digital Communication Management for the Public Sector

Email is a Critical Communication Tool for Government

Every government organization needs the ability to communicate proactively with citizens and constituents. But too often, the technology intended to resolve communication gaps fails to deliver the expected results.

Timely communication with citizens and stakeholders is challenging at every level of government for a variety of reasons, including logistical complexity, budget constraints and limited resources. Many government agencies spend considerable resources updating their websites with timely and relevant communications, yet few realize any return on that investment. Even though government websites contain a wealth of useful information, they often fail to attract visitors or the people who do find government websites fail to either find the information they want or fail to notice website updates that are important to them. Given this reality, how can government organizations effectively communicate the information that citizens need, whether that be day-to-day information or vital communications during an emergency?

The foundation of any government organization’s digital communication management system needs to be email. Why?

EMAIL IS PERVERATIVE.
92% of American adults using the Internet use email.*

EMAIL IMPROVES YOUR ABILITY TO REACH THE PUBLIC.
There were 3.3 billion email accounts worldwide in 2013, and the number is expected to grow to over 4.2 billion by 2016.**

Today, 43 percent of all emails are opened from a mobile device.*** With the increasing adoption of smart phones with email capabilities, it's easier than ever for people to access email from any location.

EMAIL IS A COST-EFFECTIVE AND EASY WAY TO REACH THOUSANDS.
Email is immediate and scalable, so you can reach large numbers of constituents very quickly, without the long lead-time of paper-based communications or the brief lead-time of social media updates. Using email significantly reduces printing and postage costs as well. For Oakland County, Michigan, moving to email alerts saved them an estimated $268,000.

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* Purcell, Kristen. Search and Email Still Top the List of Most Popular Online Activities. Pew Internet & American Life Project, August 2011.
EMAIL HELPS YOU GET MORE USAGE OUT OF YOUR WEBSITE.

By using email to notify people of new information on your website, you can drive people back to your website and the digital processes that are efficient and effective for government, such as online transactions. This improves the return on the digital investment while potentially diverting citizen interactions from costly phone, paper or in-person channels.

For these reasons, many government organizations have made targeted email communication a top priority in their ongoing efforts to keep citizens informed. By providing citizens with email alerts that are integrated with official websites and tailored to citizen interests, government organizations can leverage more properly the time, money and energy that they have invested in their websites.

Email communication is a powerful way to reach your citizens with up-to-date information. But government agencies face challenges in building strong communities and interactions via email. To deliver the levels of necessary responsiveness, reliability and citizen involvement, government organizations should use communication systems specifically designed for the public sector. And to give citizens relevant, timely and highly targeted communications, you need a Digital Communication Management (DCM) solution.

Digital Communication Management (DCM) is a scalable communications platform that helps you increase your outreach and notify citizens proactively on specific topics of interest using multiple channels, including email, text messaging, RSS and social media.

This cloud-based solution monitors websites for content updates and can automatically send alerts when new information is posted, driving subscribers back to your website for information of interest to them. Using robust DCM systems, citizens and stakeholders can choose specific topics of interest and how often they want to receive updates during the sign-up process. A robust system also gives stakeholders the ability to update their subscription preferences from a saved profile on a continual basis.

To appreciate the value of building a subscriber base using DCM, consider the news industry. Without distribution channels through newspapers and home deliveries, online news websites, digitally curated news applications for mobile devices, and social media channels, publishers would struggle to disseminate their news to large audiences. Similarly, DCM is a digital distribution network for government content, using an organization’s website as the main hub for information while email, SMS/text messaging, RSS and social media become delivery mechanisms for that information.

- The DCM system can send alerts and notifications with or without administrative approval.
- Administrators can manually send alerts at any time.
- Government agencies using GovDelivery DCM typically increase website usage by 20 to 50 percent.
The Transformative Power of Communications

What is Digital Communication Management?

From your citizen’s or stakeholder’s perspective, using DCM is simple:

1. Stakeholders find your website by doing a search on a topic of interest to them.
2. While browsing your organization’s web page for more information on a specific topic, clear sign-up boxes encourage visitors to subscribe to receive updates on specific topics. All they need to do is enter their email address and select how often they want to receive alerts.
3. The DCM system monitors your organization’s website for relevant content changes.
4. When the DCM system detects new information on the website, it generates an update and sends it to the subscribers who have signed up for that topic. It can either send alerts automatically or route them to an administrator for final approval before distributing them.
5. Subscribers can receive an email or text message notifying them of an update, with a link to return to the website to view the new information.

How Digital Communication Management Works

1. Website content is updated.
2. DCM automatically detects change.
3. Citizen receives alert on topic of interest.

Email and search are the two most popular online activities for Internet-connected Americans.

- Pew Internet & American Life Project, survey
Case Study #1: Oakland County, Michigan

DCM Deployed Across Entire County and Offered Free of Charge to Municipalities

www.oakgov.com

In 2007, the Oakland County website (Oakgov.com) welcomed more than two and a half million visitors, serving approximately nineteen million page views. With so many residents desiring information and County services, Oakland County understood the importance of “pushing” information out to residents, rather than expecting them to visit the website and search for information themselves. Oakland County launched GovDelivery Digital Communication Management to help them deliver relevant and targeted communications on 150 unique topics to residents.

GOALS:

• Leverage Oakland County’s website to proactively provide residents, business owners and other stakeholders with important information
• Find a Digital Communication Management system that would work with the county website’s current publishing system
• Improve community outreach and engage residents with meaningful and consistent communication from the county
• Automate the proactive communication process, reducing need for administrative oversight and hassle

RESULTS*:

OFFERS OVER 350 DIFFERENT TOPICS FOR SUBSCRIPTION
REACHING MORE THAN 110,000 SUBSCRIBERS
SENDING 4.8 MILLION EMAILS TO STAKEHOLDERS
ENGAGING 56% OF SUBSCRIBERS IN THE LAST 90 DAYS

MOST POPULAR SUBSCRIPTION TOPICS ON OAKGOV.COM:

• Flu shots
• Circuit Court eFiling
• Waterparks
• Golf
• Winter Activities
• Jobs: Open Positions
• Nature Programs
• Trails: OakRoutes

*Results as of April 2013

“Oakland County uses email to really change the relationship between citizen and government. Citizens today want to know more about what’s happening in government... One way to communicate that is to create email alerts that will come out of our web pages or web services, and go directly to the end user.”

-Phil Bertolini, Chief Information Officer, Oakland County
Digital Communication Management vs. List Software

Before the advent of DCM, public and private sector organizations maintained email groups using email address books or listservs. This technology adequately served organizations’ needs to communicate with interested parties for a number of years when websites were less sophisticated. But as websites added pages, content and rich multimedia, using email lists or listserv became cumbersome. DCM systems significantly simplify the process of informing interested citizens while meeting government requirements for efficiency.

HOSTED, CLOUD-BASED VS. EXTENSIVE PROGRAMMING

You could try to imitate the function of a DCM system by supplementing internal email list management with substantial custom programming. But this approach is not scalable and does not leverage the experience of other government organizations.

Robust DCM systems operate as cloud-based solutions, requiring no programming to launch, maintain and/or add new subscription options. Hosted DCM systems are highly scalable, delivering efficiencies by sharing certain resources (mail-sending capacity, managing deliverability, etc.) across many government organizations.

In contrast, using email list software or a listserv requires significant time and resources to maintain and manage. If managing the process internally, extensive programming is needed to use email lists or to add subscription options. IT staff must manually make software updates to each email list administrator’s computer.

AUTOMATED VS. MANUAL EMAIL CREATION

One of the great efficiency benefits of a DCM solution is its ability to automate alerts. This reduces the costs and resources needed to manage communications while accelerating proactive notification to citizens. GovDelivery DCM automatically monitors websites for content changes and generates alerts to subscribers when it detects updated content.

Administrators can opt to view alerts before sending updates or to have alerts distributed automatically. They can also create and send their own email bulletins, SMS/text notifications and social media postings. In addition, administrators can send custom, visually appealing messages or newsletters to individual or multiple subscriber groups. With basic email lists or listservs, someone has to manually create and send emails whenever site content changes. Due to the restrictions of listservs, many of those alerts are text-only.
MULTICHANNEL DISTRIBUTION

Robust DCM systems allow for easy multichannel distribution as part of the communications automation process. DCM systems can leverage mobile technology to send SMS/text messages and distribute advisory or urgent voice messages as well as easily post content to social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook. Additionally, comprehensive DCM systems can “consume” content from social media channels, generating email alerts or digests of social media content for subscribers to review when they have a chance. Twitter has adopted this technique, sending its users weekly email digests of tweets engaging and relevant tweet from Twitter connections.* But this requires your audience to have a separate Twitter account and to follow you. By offering your own digest roll-up of Twitter posts via email, you allow stakeholders to continue receiving information through channels they have already established: their email account.

EMPOWERING CITIZENS WITH CHOICE VS. ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

Automating the process of email alert generation allows DCM system administrators to offer many more subscription options than they could using email list software – up to 40 times more in many cases. Subscription options can be placed throughout the website, making it easy for citizens and stakeholders to find and subscribe to specific information of interest to them. In contrast, email list software is typically a one-size-fits-all solution, with limited subscription options located in a single location on the website. This takes the power away from citizens by giving them just one option; an all-or-nothing approach to communications that many stakeholders may see as irrelevant to their specific interests.

EASY SUBSCRIBER MANAGEMENT VS. CUMBERSOME LISTS

DCM systems make profile management easier for both subscribers and administrators by providing a single-user profile that houses the subscriber’s choices. The subscriber can then make changes at any time, choosing to subscribe to more topics later or to unsubscribe from specific topics that are no longer of interest to them. By comparison, email list software is much more difficult to manage and use because it requires subscribers to sign up or unsubscribe to multiple lists separately.

MORE SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS = MORE SUBSCRIBERS
FEWER SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS = FEWER SUBSCRIBERS

DCM systems typically generate between 300 and 1,100 percent more subscribers than email list software programs. You can offer subscription options tailored to specific topics with a DCM system. More granular options encourage citizens and stakeholders to sign up for information that is relevant or meaningful to them. For example, a business owner may want to receive information on business taxes but a mother of four will want information on parks and recreation activities for families. Research shows that subscribers are more willing to give out their email address when they know they will not be bombarded with irrelevant information.

**FIXED PRICING VS. VARIABLE PRICING**

Another benefit that organizations can see from most DCM solutions is the flat-rate pricing structure, with fees based on the size of the agency or entity using the system. This price structure encourages proper deployment and widespread use of the system. In contrast, the fees for email list software vary widely as they are tied to the number of subscription options and the number of emails sent to subscribers. This variable pricing structure ultimately penalizes an organization for communicating regularly with stakeholders, while a fixed price DCM system encourages government-to-citizen communications success.

**COMPARISON OF DCM VS. EMAIL LIST SOFTWARE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIGITAL COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>EMAIL LIST SOFTWARE/LISTSERSVS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLOUD-BASED/EASY IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>PROGRAMMING + HARDWARE REQUIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No programming required to launch, maintain and/or add new subscription options</td>
<td>Extensive programming required to launch system and add subscription options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based model provides seamless upgrades</td>
<td>Upgrades take valuable time and resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUTOMATED</td>
<td>MANUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatically monitors website for changes and proactively generates alerts to subscribers (or to an administrator for approval) when content is updated</td>
<td>Requires extensive administrative support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web content managers typically must make a decision to send email notices manually when website content changes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>HIGHLY-SPECIFIC SUBSCRIPTION TOPICS</th>
<th>LIMITED OPTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowers citizens to customize information with 10 to 40 times more subscription options located throughout the website</td>
<td>One-size-fits-all solution with limited subscription choices located in a few places on website</td>
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<tr>
<th>PROFILE-BASED</th>
<th>LIST-BASED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-user profile makes subscriber management easy for citizens and administrators</td>
<td>Typically requires people to sign up for many separate lists, and then unsubscribe from lists individually</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>HIGH SUBSCRIPTION RATES</th>
<th>LIMITED SUBSCRIBER BASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generates 300 to 1,100 percent more subscribers, which means more information is being “pulled” by citizens</td>
<td>Fewer subscription options mean fewer subscribers and return website visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases website usage by 20 to 50 percent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>FIXED PRICING</th>
<th>VOLUME-BASED, VARIABLE PRICING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Flat-fee licensing tied to the size of the government agency or entity using the system</td>
<td>Pricing and licensing based on number of subscription options and/or number of emails sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited system use typically offered at a fixed rate to encourage proper deployment</td>
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</table>
Digital Communication vs. Email Marketing

In the private sector, email marketing is an important part of the marketing mix. Digital communication management for the public sector takes advantage of private sector experience with the importance of specificity (i.e., targeted/personalized communication) while avoiding database mining and any approach whereby the sender of the email decides what the recipient should receive.

In the public sector, it is critical to put control in the hands of the citizen to avoid intrusive “marketing” practices. DCM does this by giving the citizen complete control over which topics they sign up to receive. In the private sector, email communication is frequently called “push” communication. In the public sector, it is better to let citizens make choices on what they will receive so they can, in effect, “pull” information updates of interest out of the agency website.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DIGITAL COMMUNICATION - PUBLIC SECTOR</th>
<th>EMAIL MARKETING - PRIVATE SECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>FURTHER AGENCY MISSION COMMUNICATE AND INFORM</td>
<td>GENERAL SALES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USER CONTROL</td>
<td>Let the citizen or end user decide what to receive (pull)</td>
<td>Control who gets what (push)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIMING</td>
<td>Whenever new information is available</td>
<td>Promotions, sales events, etc.</td>
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Case Study #2: U.S. Small Business Administration

SBA Reaches More Small Businesses With DCM

www.sba.gov

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Since its founding in 1953, the SBA has delivered millions of loans, loan guarantees, contracts, counseling sessions and other forms of assistance to small businesses. To address the federal directives for open government and “plain language” while extending its reach to more small businesses, the SBA implemented GovDelivery Digital Communication Management. Using DCM, stakeholders can sign up for specific topics, such as writing a business plan, tax and finance law, and growing the business.

GOALS:
- Increase proactive and direct communications with key stakeholders, such as small businesses, to further its core mission
- Expand the agency’s visibility, reach and public perception
- Organize and automate the dissemination of information across central and regional SBA offices
- Increase the number of website visitors to valuable online resources
- Reduce printed newsletter distribution costs and effort
- Ensure Section 508 compliance with its digital communications

RESULTS:

MORE THAN 65 MILLION EMAILS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS
REACHING OVER 1.0 MILLION SUBSCRIBERS ACROSS OVER 175 TOPICS
INCREASE IN WEB VISITORS & SOCIAL MEDIA FANS/_FOLLOWERS
INCREASE OF 255% ENROLLMENT IN GOV'T CONTRACTING 101 COURSE

* Results as of April 2013
Benefits of Digital Communication Management

**IMPROVED SERVICES FOR CITIZENS**

Email is quite simply one of the most effective ways that you can reach citizens. By helping people get the information they need quickly and efficiently, your organization will **improve service to citizens and stakeholders**.

At the same time, government agencies cannot ignore other communication channels used by many citizens, including SMS/text messaging and social media. The best strategy for maximizing reach and citizen engagement is to offer citizens the ability to subscribe to updates using their preferred channel, whether that's a text message alert, an RSS feed or an email. A digital communication management platform can manage these different types of subscriptions and **integrate with social media platforms**, ultimately extending your reach.

**SIGNIFICANT RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)**

As with most IT expenditures, government agencies need a clear way to measure a return on investment before investing in a project. How much do you value increased website usage? How important is your total outreach? Would reaching one million subscribers be to your organization's programs and mission? These are baseline measures of success for government-to-citizen communications. Determine what each website visit is worth to your agency in terms of better service to citizens, saved administration time, reduced paper and printing costs and fewer phone calls. Using these measures, DCM solutions typically **deliver a rapid return on investment**.

**SIGNIFICANT RESULTS WITH MINIMAL ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT**

One of the key features of a DCM system is that it automatically prepares messages whenever it detects a change to the website. It can simultaneously send email and text message alerts, while posting to designated social media channels, directly to subscribers or to an administrator for review – a process that typically takes less than 30 seconds.

**REACH CITIZENS DURING EMERGENCIES**

Whenever emergencies strike, citizens turn to digital communications. Canadian networking equipment company Sandvine found that internet usage on the East Coast **increased 114 percent** on Monday, October 29, 2012, when Hurricane Sandy hit.* As an example, Ocean City, Maryland had recognized the need for a robust digital communications management system, using it to manage outbound communications during Hurricane Sandy. Ocean City connected directly with more than 6,000 citizens and media correspondents that had subscribed to receive emergency email and text notifications in advance of the storm.

If your organization is involved in emergency communications, you want to make sure that people are getting the information you need them to have. Email, SMS/text alerts, voice messages and social media are very effective ways to **reach people on mobile devices during emergencies**. Your DCM system should be able to leverage all these channels easily and efficiently through a single portal.

Case Study #3: USA.gov

USA.gov Reaches Out to All Citizens Through Specialized Websites and Subscriptions

USA.gov is the U.S. government’s official web portal. GobiernoUSA.gov provides similar information in Spanish, while Kids.gov presents government information in an age- and topic-appropriate way for younger children. In March 2012, the General Services Administration (GSA) contracted with GovDelivery to conduct an intensive Outreach Acceleration effort to achieve aggressive goals for increased subscriptions, email opens and email click-throughs. The GovDelivery Engagement Services team worked with USA.gov to identify and evaluate audience segments, and then implemented a strategic communications plan to attract potential subscribers while reconfiguring the various portals to streamline subscriptions. As a result, all three sites surpassed the GSA’s aggressive goals.

GOALS:

• Increase subscribers by at least 50 percent across USA.gov, GobiernoUSA.gov, and Kids.gov

• Increase total email opens and click-throughs for each site by 50 percent

RESULTS*:

USA.gov added 204,000 new subscribers alone

• GobiernoUSA.gov added approximately 22,000

• The gross new subscriber base for Kids.gov grew to more than 70,000 names from fewer than 500 initial names.

* Results as of April 2013
Building A Business Case

As you decide on a DCM solution, create a business case to support vendor selection and implementation strategies. A well-formulated business case offers a clear statement of the business problem and potential solution, and return-on-investment (ROI) metrics for the proposed solution. Having a solid business case gives team members the opportunity to propose options, fostering an increased understanding and sense of ownership within the project team.

As you build the business case, it is important to define both the tangible and intangible benefits and their contributions to ROI.

TANGIBLE ROI

- Reduction in printing, mailing, and faxing costs (e.g., newsletters, bulletins, minutes/agendas, press releases, RFPs, etc.)
- Increased revenue (e.g., online permit renewals, property sales, events, courses, etc.)
- Decreased advertising and marketing costs (e.g., RFPs, job announcements, events, etc.)
- Shift in spending from less cost-effective communication efforts, such as inbound phone calls or face-to-face interactions

INTANGIBLE ROI

- Improved customer service and communication
- Reduced administrative and customer service response time
- Improved ability to reach citizens during emergencies or urgent situations
- Increased citizen awareness of new information
- Increased website usage (total website usage affecting the total ROI from all e-government efforts)

Partnering with a Digital Communication Management Provider

When evaluating an IT project, every agency asks, “Can we do this in-house?”

The appropriate follow up question is, “Should we do this in-house?”

While it is tempting to say yes to both questions, there are several reasons to consider working with an outside partner. These reasons include resources, expertise and budget.

RESOURCES

How can a government agency get maximum leverage out of internal IT resources? By not focusing time and energy on building solutions that are readily available in the marketplace. Deploying a cloud-based DCM system can take fewer than fifteen days and less than three hours of internal IT time. DCM systems have been fine-tuned over many years based on the experiences of government agencies. DCM systems have been fine-tuned over many years based on the experiences of government agencies, evolving into a turnkey solution requiring minimal administrative oversight. Using a DCM partner improves the scalability of the project across the organization and ensures that you won’t need to dedicate resources to maintaining or upgrading the system.
EXPERTISE

Setting aside the time needed to develop a DCM system internally, the next question to ask is, “Do we have the internal expertise necessary to create the system?” Even if the answer is yes, there are significant advantages to partnering with an expert in the field that has working knowledge of its many government customers.

For example, your IT team probably could build its own word processing program, but you likely have chosen to buy one from a reputable software vendor. A DCM provider has the advantage of working with many government organizations, which helps the vendor stay abreast of the latest deliverability concerns and technology trends affecting digital communications.

BUDGET

Using a solution from a proven outside provider is an effective way to stretch your dollars and allow your IT group to focus on core competencies. Additionally, public sector DCM solutions are available on a fixed-fee basis, meaning that costs will be predictable regardless of the number of subscription options, total subscribers or emails sent.

Deliverability: Getting Email to the Inbox

Every organization that sends emails to mailing lists on a regular basis has to worry about their emails being filtered or blocked by spam filters. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as Gmail, Yahoo! and Outlook/Hotmail are developing increasingly sophisticated methods to weed out the “good” mail from the “bad.” Unfortunately, that leads to a high number of legitimate emails being blocked or landing in recipients’ junk folders.

A good DCM partner stays at the forefront of email deliverability issues to ensure emails land in inboxes and do not get blocked or filtered. Below is a list of actions that all email senders should follow to ensure the highest email delivery rates possible.

- **MAINTAIN WHITELIST STATUS WITH MAJOR ISPS**
  Major ISPs maintain whitelists — a list of valid and accepted email addresses that will be delivered even if spam filters are in place. Email senders should proactively engage with major ISPs to maintain whitelist status.

- **MONITOR BLACKLISTS**
  A blacklist is an explicit list of senders from which ISPs will not accept email. This includes known spammers. It’s important to recognize that even legitimate email senders that do not follow best practices can end up on blacklists. Government organizations that need to send email messages in bulk to thousands or millions of stakeholders would need to proactively monitor blacklists to stay off them. Working with a strong DCM partner can be critical in this regard.
MAINTAIN CLEAN EMAIL LISTS
People change email addresses frequently; today’s clean email list will contain bad addresses by tomorrow. This is a problem because many ISPs will blacklist a sender if they send too much undeliverable email. DCM solutions automatically remove invalid email addresses from lists, keeping them clean.

CONFIRM PERMISSION
Blacklisters are imposing increasingly stricter permission standards for bulk email senders, including requiring senders to confirm permission to send to recipients. Permission to send to recipients is given when subscribers sign up to receive email updates. DCM systems should allow you to send confirmation emails to subscribers whenever a new user signs up to receive email updates and whenever recipients make changes to subscriptions.

ADHERE TO FEDERALLY MANDATED CAN-SPAM EMAIL COMPLIANCE STANDARDS
Reputable DCM partners dedicate significant resources to staying up-to-date on current email laws to make sure their clients are compliant.

MAINTAIN ISP TEST INBOXES
Comprehensive DCM providers should maintain email test accounts with major ISPs to ensure that email sent on behalf of clients is landing in inboxes and not in junk or bulk email folders.

“This communications tool allows us to quickly and efficiently deliver updates of user-selected information to the public. Real-time information sharing is critical to keeping the public informed, safe and healthy.”

- Gerry Weaver, Former Chief Information Officer, State of Indiana
Case Study #4: State of Indiana

State of Indiana Saves Time and Money While Providing Citizens Better Information

www.in.gov

In June 2006, the State of Indiana began a two-year process to provide residents, business stakeholders and visitors of Indiana with a more convenient, user-friendly website. GovDelivery Digital Communication Management (DCM) offers IN.gov visitors a convenient way to stay current on updates from multiple state agencies on more than 1,500 subscription topics via email and mobile messaging. Six months after implementation, Indiana reported a positive return on investment of between $200,000 and $250,000 from the solution.

GOALS:

• Improve communication with citizens throughout the state
• Reduce direct mail, printing, postage and other administrative costs of communications
• Maintain compatibility with existing content management systems
• Coordinate email updates and subscriptions for 82 state agencies through a central website

RESULTS*

1.5 MILLION
SUBSCRIBERS
+ 30% ADULT
PENETRATION

$200K +
ROI IN FIRST 6 MONTHS
+ ONGOING SAVING OF
200K PER YEAR

18K
DEPLOYED OVER
CUSTOM
SUBSCRIPTION
TOPICS FOR
82+ AGENCIES

• Improved citizen communications by sending more than one million email and SMS messages monthly

*Results as of April 2013
Additional Update Options: SMS, RSS and Social Media

Email is a part of day-to-day life for most Americans; even Pew research on internet use views email and internet use as interchangeable. For that reason, email is the most efficient and cost-effective way to reach the public. However, there are additional communication channels that can leverage DCM subscription capabilities. With an enterprise-wide DCM system in place, you will be well positioned to offer additional update options, including wireless alerts, RSS and social media.

**WIRELESS ALERTS**

Text messages allow subscribers to receive updates on cell phones and other text-enabled devices. It works alongside existing DCM functionality by allowing users to choose to receive updates at both an email address and on a mobile device. Administrators can designate which subscription items are available as short messages. This feature is especially useful for emergency communications or to deliver time-sensitive news updates to citizens or internal members of an organization.

In addition, DCM solutions can support dynamic text messaging services for organizations that need to communicate constantly changing information. For example, the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system uses its DCM system to promote on-demand transit information. Riders can send a text message with their station location to a specific short code. BART’s DCM system then responds with a text message containing transit information on the next train.

**RSS UPDATES**

Really Simple Syndication, also known as RSS, provides an easy-to-read and clearly curated format for many people. RSS allows users to view the latest news and information available from many websites in one place. Aggregation tools called RSS readers display summaries of RSS subscriptions, which update automatically when new information is available. An RSS reader is similar to an email inbox, with RSS “feeds” taking the place of emails.

RSS, similar to wireless alerts, works in conjunction with DCM subscription functionality to allow users the choice of receiving updates via email and/or RSS.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Flickr are powerful channels for engaging with the public – often too valuable to ignore. But managing these different social media sites can strain government resources. A DCM solution should make it easy to integrate social media sites into overall communication strategies by posting updates to social media sites and cross-promoting social media content to email or SMS subscribers.

You can also extend the reach of your messages by making it easier for subscribers to share email updates across their social networks. For example, the Department of Health and Human Services included a “Share This Email” feature in updates about the flu from its Flu.gov site. This resulted in a dramatic increase in content sharing and corresponding email subscriptions, as well as strong growth in Twitter followers.
Conclusion

Successful government communications need to effectively share information, provide solutions, and reach citizens and stakeholders through many channels. In the past, communicators honed the skills needed to organize interviews, create press releases, send correspondence, and provide information for radio or TV. With the prevalence of email, social media and smartphones, government communications need to go digital. With the right digital communication platform, with many key capabilities outlined in this white paper, government communications can reach more people, through the most used digital channels, and ultimately engage stakeholders in online and offline activities that help organizations meet their mission goals.

GovDelivery: Proactive Citizen Communication

GovDelivery is the leading provider of cloud-based public section digital communication solutions.

GovDelivery Digital Communication Management (DCM) is the only comprehensive digital communication management solution designed just for the public sector. This cloud-based solution enables you to manage multichannel digital communications – email, text messaging, social media and more – in one system. It uses technology to monitor public sector organizations' websites for content updates and automatically sends personalized email alerts to interested citizens—driving subscribers back to the website to view the new information. Organizations using the system improve customer service immediately, increase website usage up to 50% and decrease costs for a positive return on investment.

GovDelivery is used by more than 1,000 public sector organizations worldwide including the U.K. and European Parliaments; the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, Labor, Transportation, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services; the states of Indiana and Maine and New York State Tax and Revenue; and the cities of Washington, D.C., Raleigh, NC, Louisville, KY, and more. GovDelivery is also used by transit authorities across the U.S., including the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Tri-County Metropolitan District of Oregon (TriMet) and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). For more information, visit www.govdelivery.com.