



Helping Communities Find the Environmental Information They Want

November 2, 2010



Agenda

- The environmental information communities want
- What EPA is doing now
- Discussion: How can EPA help communities find the information they need?
- Next Steps



Background

- EPA is listening to community leaders about their needs for environmental information
 - National Dialogue on Access to Environmental Information
 - Community Roundtable in Philadelphia
 - Community Matters Conference
 - American Customer Satisfaction Index
 - Partnering with the Community Indicators Consortium



Information needs of communities

- Find information at EPA and elsewhere
 - Understand information and its applicability to various situations
 - Use information to make decisions
 - Use collaborative web technologies to empower people
- > Finding information is the sticking point that makes it hard for people to progress further.



Topics communities are interested in

- Air: mobile emissions, local air quality, indoor air quality.
- Energy: energy consumption, energy sources.
- Health and safety: food safety, obesity, asthma, indoor health and safety.
- Land: soil quality, urban agriculture, land use.
- Natural resources: biodiversity, invasive species, ecosystem services.
- Transportation: mass transit, environmental impacts of traffic.
- Water: drinking water quality, groundwater contamination, flooding.



Types of data communities want

- Raw data to manipulate and conduct their own analyses.
- Summary data, aggregated so they don't require manipulation.
- Spatial data that are relevant to specific geographic locations.
- Local data, especially at the census tract or even block level.
- Data for GIS purposes (placed onto city maps).
- Real-time data that shows the immediate impacts of people's actions on the environment.
- Scenario information about the impacts of community-wide actions.
- Easy to find, download, and use.



How communities use data

- Quantify environmental effects and conditions.
- Develop baselines to measure results and monitor progress.
- Assess and communicate about risks associated with environmental conditions.
- Develop costs and benefits to assess environmental policy and program options.
- Compare results and coordinate environmental efforts with others.
- Build consensus on environmental issues.
- Encourage community involvement to improve the environment and collect data.



Challenges

- Finding consistent and high-quality data at the right levels.
- Communicating with stakeholders that need specific information.
- Comparing results and coordinating with other communities.
- Finding best practices for developing programs and using environmental data.
- Reaching people who have little access to computers.
- Communicating about environmental issues if they are viewed as low priority.



Some community-based programs from EPA

- Community-Based Childhood Asthma Program
- Local Climate and Energy Program
- EPA Schools Monitoring Initiative
- Environmental Justice Showcase Community
- Brownfields
- Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE)
- Superfund Community Technical Assistance Grants
- Urban Waters Initiative
- Tribal and Community Lead Grant Program
- Smart Growth
- Indian Environmental General Assistance Program
- Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program



EPA tools that help communities find data

- MyEnvironment: provides a cross-section of environmental information based on the user's location.
- Data Finder: single place to find EPA's data sources
- Envirofacts: place to retrieve and map information from multiple EPA databases by various search options
- EPA State and Local page: various resources including grant information
- Data.gov: place to find datasets from across the federal government

The screenshot shows the EPA MyEnvironment website. At the top, it says "EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency" and "MyEnvironment environmental information for my area". Below this is a search bar and a "Sites Reporting to EPA near 20001, DC" map. The map displays numerous orange location markers. To the right of the map is a "Sites and facilities by:" filter menu with options like "All Facilities and Sites (1011)", "Air Emissions (AIR/AMS) (101)", "Superfund Sites (SFR/US) (9)", etc. Below the map are several data sections: "MyAir" showing air quality data for Northern Virginia, VA; "MyHealth" showing 2002 Cancer Risk Estimates for the District of Columbia; "MyWater" showing water quality monitoring activities; and "MyLand" showing Superfund sites. There are also navigation links for "MyCollaboration" and "SERVE.GOV".

Map of an area

Turn on layers of the map

Sections on Air, Water, Land, Human Health, Ecosystems, and Communities

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

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SEARCH A-Z Index

Data Finder

Search GO [Share](#)

Data Finder is a single place to find EPA's numerical data sources so that people can access and understand environmental information. All of the data sources are available on the Internet and have been organized by topics such as air, water, and chemicals. If you are looking for data sets that are generated and held by EPA and other Federal agencies, please visit [Data.gov](#). Data Finder provides an initial collection of EPA's data sources ([see the newest data sources](#)). Please shape the future of Data Finder so it meets your needs by sharing your comments and suggestions in the [Data Finder Forum](#).

[Air](#) | [Climate Change](#) | [Health Risks](#) | [Pollutants & Contaminants](#) | [Waste](#) | [Water](#)
[View All Topics](#) | [View All Data Sources](#)

Air

- Air Pollution
- Air Quality
- Climate Change
- More air topics

[↑ Top of page](#)

Climate Change

[↑ Top of page](#)

Visit Data.gov

Quick Finder **A-Z Topic Index** [All Topics](#)

Air	Hazardous Waste	Soils & Land
Air Quality	Health Assessment	Species
Chemicals	Health Effects	Surface Water
Cleanup	Health Risks	Wastes
Climate Change	Monitoring	Watersheds
	Pesticides	Water

[Basic Information](#)

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Search bar

Environmental topics

Discussion forum to collaborate



Envirofacts

Envirofacts
United States Environmental Protection Agency

You are here: EPA Home » Envirofacts

The TRI 2009 Preliminary Dataset is now available in the TRI Section of Envirofacts. Also, for more information see the TRI Home Page.

Home | Multisystem Search | Topic Searches | System Data Searches | About the Data | Data Downloads | Widgets | Services | Mobile

How to Use Envirofacts | News and Information | Data Update

Envirofacts

Your one-stop source for Environmental Information

Get the EnviroFACTS!
Retrieve information from multiple sources of Envirofacts' System Data for your area of interest.

Enter a location such as address, zip, city, county, waterbody, park name, etc.

Advanced

Topic Searches

- Air
- Waste
- Facility
- Land
- Toxics
- Compliance
- Water
- Radiation
- Other

Envirofacts System Data Searches | Multisystem Search

AFS | ECHO/IDEA | Location Information | PartNet | TRI
BR | News Feeds | Podcasts | EPA Mobile | News by Email | Widgets
Brownfield | CERCLIS | Cleanups | GICS | RADInfo | SRS | TSCA | UV Index

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Search multiple EPA data systems

Search by topic

Search by location



EPA State and Local page

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

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EPA Home Resources EPA for State and Local Governments

EPA for State and Local Governments

This page is designed to help environmental professionals who work for state and local agencies find information on EPA's Web site.

- Air and radiation
- Climate change
- Complying with and enforcing environmental laws
- Emergency management
- Energy efficiency and resource conservation
- Financing environmental systems; grants
- Performance and accountability
- Pesticides
- Reducing pollution and toxics
- Regulations and reporting
- Transportation
- Waste and cleanup
- Water

Air and Radiation

- Air quality: Through AIRNow, EPA, other federal agencies, news media, tribal, state, and local agencies work together to report conditions for ozone and particle pollution.

General Resources for State and Local Governments

- State-specific regulatory information: learn about plans, programs, and designations developed by your state or locality as required by federal regulations (e.g., your state's implementation plan under the Clean Air Act); find links to state-level laws, regulations, and administrative agencies.
- EPA Regional offices: Find out about the Regional office that works with your state | Regional office addresses
- Links to state environmental agencies
- EPA news:
 - Read news from your Region
 - Get any combination of EPA national and regional news releases e-mailed to you
 - Receive RSS news feeds by topic and/or

Environmental topics

Resources and partners

DATA.GOV
EMPOWERING PEOPLE

HOME DATA TOOLS COMMUNITY METRICS DIALOGUE GALLERY WHAT'S NEW UPDATED

USDA MEAT, POULTRY, AND EGG PRODUCT
INSPECTION DIRECTORY

The Meat, Poultry and Egg Product Inspection Directory is a listing of establishments that produce meat, poultry, and/or egg products regulated by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) pursuant to the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act. The directory is updated monthly, and the current edition replaces all previous editions.

VIEW MORE ▶

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Most Popular Datasets

1. U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook)
2. Worldwide M1+ Earthquakes, Past 7 Days
3. 2009-2010 Candidate Summary File
4. FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer - Web Map...
5. TSCA Inventory

SEARCH OUR CATALOGS

Search our catalogs.. **SEARCH ▶**

APPS

COMMUNITY

Data.gov is leading the way in democratizing public sector data and driving innovation. The data is being surfaced from many locations making the Government data stores available to researchers to perform their own analysis. Developers are finding good uses for the

SEMANTIC WEB

As the Web of linked documents evolves to include the Web of linked data, we're working to maximize the potential of Semantic

Search for data or tools

See apps and uses of the data



What EPA plans to do

- **Revise Data Finder**
 - Add a “Data in the News” section
 - Improve search by substances
 - Engage data users on the Data Finder Forum
 - Consider including data beyond EPA’s holdings
- **Revise MyEnvironment**
 - Include details about your community
 - Improve navigation of the site
- **Make more datasets available through Data.gov**



Coming Soon: Information about local environmental conditions

- EPA will make it easy to find information about local environmental conditions
 - Catalogue over 150 state and local Reports on the Environment
 - Provides interpretation about each location's environment
 - Includes the list of indicators in each report
 - Searchable by location
 - Searchable by environmental topic (e.g., surface water)
 - Content will be available through MyEnvironment



Discussion: How can EPA help communities find the information they need?

- Let's hear your ideas about
 - Data: What data do community leaders need and what form do they want it in?
 - Tools: What tools could EPA provide and how would they be used?
 - Analysis: What kinds of analysis are needed and who could provide them?
 - More...



Next Steps

- Revise the sites in the next few months
- Ask community leaders how they find environmental information
- Consider setting up a discussion forum so communities can share how they use environmental information to make decisions



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