



Oregon Department of Administrative Services
155 Cottage Street NE, U20 Salem, Oregon 97301-3966

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Contact: Lonh Hoklin, Public Affairs Manager, DAS
(503) 378-2627
lonh.hoklin@state.or.us

State government rolls out new 'open-government' website
Website lets citizens customize their view of agency information

Salem, Oregon—State government has rolled out a powerful new website that lets citizens easily customize their view of data from state agencies and comment right on the site, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services announced today.

The website, Data.Oregon.gov, also lets visitors interact with state records, create their own charts, graphs, calendars and maps, and save them online. Visitors may even suggest new “datasets” for displaying information not yet available on the site.

“Our goal is to enable state government to interact more directly with the citizens of Oregon, and this new site is a powerful way to help make that happen,” said Kris Kautz, acting-director of the state Department of Administrative Services. “We want to transform the way government works, and that means making it easy for Oregonians to get information about agencies and offer their views about what they see.”

Kautz also noted that Oregon is among the first states to employ this new technology. The White House has used the technology since 2009, making available records on visits to the White House and staff salaries.

Oregon’s use of the technology is more far-reaching, Kautz said. The site displays information in a wide range of datasets, including state agencies’ expenditures, buildings leased by state government, salaries of state workers, state contracts with private businesses, and more than 60 others. Forty new datasets are already in the testing and evaluation stage. The offerings will continue to grow as viewers suggest more datasets.

“You don’t need to be a technology expert to use Data.Oregon.gov,” Kautz said. “The site is easy to use and very flexible. Countless Oregonians have said they want more access to the information that state agencies collect, and this new resource gives them that access.”

How it works

In addition to offering visitors immediate access to a vast array of facts and records, Data.Oregon.gov lets them do the following:

- Post comments about the data right on the dataset.
- Use the data to create charts, graphs, maps and calendars, which users can share with others. “Creating displays is as easy as posting to YouTube,” Kautz said.
- Suggest new datasets for the state to display.
- Create or participate in discussion forums, where visitors may share their views and concerns with state agencies and the public.
- Download the data in any of eight formats, something researchers and scientists will appreciate.

Another powerful feature of Data.Oregon.gov is access to any dataset in real time for industrial and civic web developers. Developers are thus able to create new mobile applications and web applications that utilize data from state agencies.

Users may filter or sort the data any way they want. They may also embed it in their own blogs and websites.

“Pioneering comes naturally to Oregonians,” Kautz said. “With Data.Oregon.gov, we’re blazing a new ‘Oregon Trail’ that leads to more citizen involvement and openness in state government.”

The website is live at <http://data.oregon.gov/>