

# Best Practices Workshop on Technology in FOIA

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Department of Justice and Office of Government Information Services

*featuring the*

CFO Council Technology Committee

April 20, 2020

# Technology Committee (formerly known as the Technology Subcommittee)



Co-Chairs: Eric Stein, U.S. Department of State and Michael Sarich, Veterans Health Administration



[Archivist of the United States](#) proposed that the Chief FOIA Officers (CFO) Council seek to establish a technology subcommittee



Study the utilization and deployment of technology in FOIA programs across agencies, and identify best practices and recommendations that can be implemented across agencies.



In September 2018, the CFO Council co-chairs established the Technology Subcommittee (later renamed as the Technology Committee).

# Technology Committee

- Membership includes FOIA professionals from the Departments of Homeland Security and the Interior, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Institute of Library and Museum Services, American Battle Monuments Commission, Social Security Administration, Air Force Declassification Office, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau....
- The Committee seeks to represent agencies of all sizes and resource levels.
- The Committee liaises with OIP and OGIS.



# Technology Committee – Accomplishments to Date

Engagement with federal agencies, public, and private sector throughout 2019

2019

Drafted and Released Best Practices and Recommendations Paper in

Feb. 2020

Increased membership by about 20 people in 2020

2020

# Best Practices- Top 10

Senior-level agency support of records management and FOIA programs make a difference.

Understand your agency's records management policies and engage with records management staff.

Identify records and FOIA IT requirements (*i.e.*, needs for a technical IT solution) by engaging stakeholders in program and FOIA offices.

Have an IT component in FOIA programs and/or a close, formally established relationship with the IT component of an agency.

# Best Practices Top 10

To the extent feasible, ensure IT solutions and FOIA case management tools are interoperable.

Consider cost savings through shared services.

Posting released records online may assist FOIA programs & provide public access to previously released information and records.

Build public release of records and disposition of records into new agency recordkeeping systems.

# Best Practices Top 10

Leverage the budget cycle to request resources needed for FOIA programs.

Network with fellow FOIA professionals to candidly share challenges and methods to overcome those challenges.

# Recommendations

Either maintain the Technology Committee, or establish a standing body to advise and assist those Federal agencies interested in leveraging the experience of Federal agencies in creating or further developing the technical abilities for their FOIA programs.

Consider the possibility of establishing an annual venue or opportunity for agencies to see technological developments in both the private and public sector

Consult Federal agencies to seek the specific FOIA tasks where technology may be able to assist with this work. Share the results of this review with CFOs and Federal FOIA offices to raise awareness of shared challenges and possible solutions. For example, provide a brief update at CFO Council meetings.

# Recommendations

Consider partnering with the General Services Administration (GSA) to develop contract schedules for agencies to leverage the acquisition of frequently purchased FOIA management and processing tools at a government-wide rate instead of at individual contract rates per agency, which is likely more expensive.

Consider having a similar GSA schedule for Federal records management solutions, and the IT support to implement such records management solutions.

# 2020 Agenda

Building on Report,  
Implement  
Recommendations

Generate List of  
Lessons Learned  
from COVID-19  
Emergency

Continue  
Discussions of FOIA  
applications used  
by agencies

Review use of FOIA  
Websites by  
Agencies

# 2020 Agenda

Improve FOIA User Experience (UX) – public and agencies

How can FOIA leverage new media?

Better understand what you as FOIA professional need for success & how to get it!

June 2019 OMB/NARA Mandate – Electronic Records

# New Recommendations



Provide tools/sheets with guidance on gathering IT requirements, common Information Technology (IT) terms, steps on considering new ITS requirements.



Create “communities of interest” based on the use of specific FOIA IT tools (i.e., create user communities for FOIAXpress, FOIAOnline, Adobe, and SharePoint where we can facilitate discussion about best practices with these tools and how to troubleshoot practical issues).

# New Recommendations

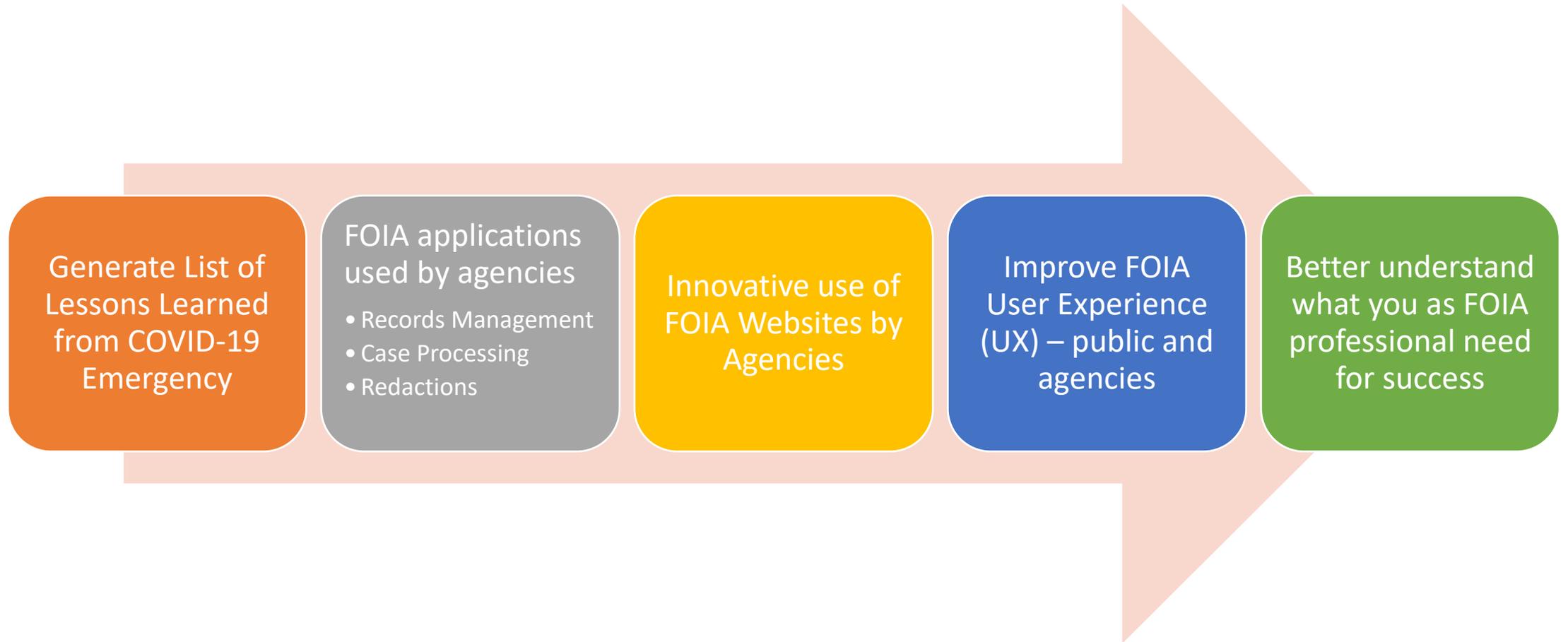


Create a community or group where we gather/share requirements for FOIA programs and potentially one for AI



Create a User Experience (UX) FOIA group (to consider public and agency interactions and how to improve them)

# Open Discussion



# Thank You & Contact Information



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