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State Stats: Refreshing Reference With Drupal

AJ Million, MoDOT Transportation Library

Transportation Librarian's Roundtable

June 10th, 2010

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MoDOT

dot State Stats

Accountability

- There are fifty-one departments of transportation.
- For these DOT's there are fifty-one different governments.
- This means there are fifty-one ways of reporting to the public.

MoDOT's Approach

- Very open, very aggressive, and tied to job responsibilities.
- The byproduct of previous problems with it's STIP.
- Provided in a quarterly publication named the "Tracker."
- Requires lots of time and lots of benchmarks.

But how is this connected? And what's the relationship?

Finding Benchmarks

- Measuring local performance only shows part of the picture.
- Had fifty-one (or more) places to look.
- BTS figures aren't annual and tend to be national in scope.
- Staff came to me for facts and figures.

Gotta Be A Better Way

- Was approached before SLA to see what could be done.
- Noted that Librarians advocate "open" information.
- Previous collaboration hinted this was an ongoing problem.
- Could others help?

So I went to Washington D.C. with all of this in the back of my mind…

SLA Conference and the MTKN

- ▷ Met others for the first time at SLA.
- ▷ Used the opportunity to ask John for MTKN server space. Drupal was already installed.

Content Management Systems

- ▷ Drupal is a (CMS) Content Management System.
- ▷ Numerous ones exist. They're very popular.
- ▷ Many are also "open source" and customizable.
- ▷ Allows themes, modules, and push-button tools.
- ▷ Database and (server-side) code driven.

Definition

" A system is designed to simplify the publication of web content to sites and mobile devices, in particular, allowing content creators to submit content without requiring technical knowledge or the uploading of files. " -Wikipedia.

Building Everything

- ▷ Started searching State agency websites for annual reports and fact books.
- ▷ Planned the best way to organize available content.
- ▷ Created separate pages for each State.
- ▷ Linked to publications from each State's page and listed findings by year.

Plug-ins and Other Tools

- Manually created spreadsheets of measures and formatted them.
- Posted them to Scribd and embedded into pages.
- Scribd is a social media document site.
- Used Google Maps to show States that were covered.
- Created a brief YouTube screencast explaining the site.

Technical Considerations

- Limited by basic knowledge of PHP.
- Need to know PHP to program custom plug-ins.
- Almost all CMS tools require a database and programming language installed (on the server).
- As a hit and miss designer I snagged an open source theme.

dot
State Stats

ABOUT | HELP | STATES

Welcome

Welcome to DOT State Stats! State Stats is an online pathfinder to transportation publications and reports. It invites users to apply their own expertise in identifying key State performance resources. It can help administrators interested in benchmarking, and it can can help researchers find unique data.

What Does It Offer

Access is provided by State Stats to select accountability publications and statistical (fact books, scorecards, etc...) resources. Think of it as a Government 2.0 approach to utilizing transportation information. Hosted by the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network, it also allows States to submit their own information.

Other Resources

Multiple groups in the transportation community work with performance measurements. WSDOT's longstanding Performance Measurement Library is one example. AASHTO's Standing Committee on Performance Management also works with performance comparisons. State Stats supports their respective purposes by bringing together unique resources.

Discussion

- Message Board

Syntheses

- 2009
- 2008

Publications

- East
- Midwest
- South
- West

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dot State Stats

ABOUT HELP STATES

New Hampshire

Submitted by ajmillion on Fri, 2009-09-11 15:42

New Hampshire Department of Transportation Annual Report

Available: • 2009 • 2008 • 2007 • 2006 • 2005

"The New Hampshire Department of Transportation 'Annual Report' provides a yearly narrative highlighting important organizational operations. Reports typically range from 20 to 30 pages and contain updates of topical data regarding specific projects, finance, and operational efficiency. Particular attention is paid to project development."

Login or register to post comments

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MTKN for Members --- Collaboration Space

Special Projects

- DOT State Stats
- Member Experiences

User login

Username: *

Password: *

Log in

- Create new account
- Request new password

Increase collaboration among the region's transportation libraries and information centers so managers, engineers and planners are better able to find and apply the most recent, credible, and validated technical information to their current projects.

Welcome MTKN members!

Tue, 2009-08-04 13:47 — jcherney

Welcome to the new MTKN Members collaborative environment. In this space, MTKN members are encouraged to further their customer-driven activities and explore ways to increase information access. This space is intended to be complementary to our NTKN Sharepoint site operated by the National Transportation Library.

Login or register to post comments

Logo samples collected by Karen Perrin

Fri, 2010-05-14 17:10 — jcherney

Library Logos (Word document) (right-click 'Save Target As' or 'Save Link As')

Library Logos (.pdf file)

jcherney's blog Login or register to post comments

Member Experiences

Wed, 2010-04-14 10:24 — Karen Perrin

The MTKN member experience submission form is now posted at: http://members.mtkn.org/experiences.

Karen Perrin's blog Login or register to post comments

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Problems and Lessons Learned

- Probably would be best to hosing using a separate Drupal install.
- Don’t count on public to help unless it’s easy.
- Editing functions, while nice, aren’t very user friendly.
- Not all the data out there is worth your time.
- Need a long term plan and support.

What You Need To Build Your Pathfinder

- Server space with MySQL and PHP.
- Working knowledge of HTML and CSS.
- Patrons, or an audience, who prefer to find information online.
- Marketing, marketing, and plenty more marketing.

Let’s take the site for a spin!