

Suggested Projects: Presidential Innovation Fellows # 22 - Wiki-State and Knowing the World

The combined intelligence agencies in the DNI system now spend \$80 billion/year. More than 50,000 analyst reports are generated and begin to flow upward in a system designed to make the American government more intelligent, more far-sighted, more able to connect the dots, and more in touch with reality.

An Innovation Fellow project could explore how much of this vast knowledge about the world - much of it, for many purposes, acquired without using secret sources or clandestine methods - can readily be shared online as a vast Encyclopedia/Wikipedia to give a unique depth of understanding. What government “knows” - for example, about water resources in the Middle East, forecasts, scientific uncertainty, technological options, treaties, interest groups - often can be shared, with increases in efficiency and understanding for everyone.

A Commission on Public Diplomacy recommended, more than a decade ago, that the State Department take the official lead to review, publish online, and maintain this vast library of documents, scientific assessment, refined analysis of data and data problems, and other material that could be shared, without requiring a security classification, across all government agencies. The Commission’s goal was to help every American who wanted a truly sophisticated, in-depth understanding of a global issue to get it without requiring access to a world class academic research library. And they wanted every foreign student - indeed, every desk officer at every Foreign Ministry in the world - to log on to a USGOV site for trustworthy, reliable, and comprehensive analysis of global issues.

A core investment already has been made. Online versions of government’s knowledge of everything in the world exist at different levels of classification. A light touch of high-level leadership, problem-solving ability and diplomatic skill by Innovation Fellows, could take the final step.

Lloyd S. Etheredge
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