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ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

Federal Agencies Have Made Progress Implementing the E-Government Act of 2002



G A O

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Highlights of [GAO-05-12](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

The E-Government Act (E-Gov Act) of 2002 was enacted to promote the use of the Internet and other information technologies to improve government services for citizens, internal government operations, and opportunities for citizen participation in government.

The act directs the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and federal agencies to take specific actions to promote electronic government. GAO was asked to review the implementation status of major provisions from Titles I and II of the act, which include provisions covering a wide range of activities across the federal government.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations to OMB regarding implementation of the act in the areas of e-government approaches to crisis preparedness, contractor innovation, and federally funded research and development, to help ensure that the act's objectives are achieved.

In commenting on a draft of this report, officials from the Department of Homeland Security, General Services Administration, and OMB generally agreed with its content and recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-12.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Linda D. Koontz at (202) 512-6240 or koontzl@gao.gov.

ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

Federal Agencies Have Made Progress Implementing the E-Government Act of 2002

What GAO Found

In most cases, OMB and federal agencies have taken positive steps toward implementing provisions of Titles I and II of the E-Gov Act that GAO reviewed. For example, OMB established the Office of E-Government, designated its Assistant Director for Information Technology (IT) and E-Government as the office's Administrator in April 2003, and published guidance to federal agencies on implementing the act in August 2003. Apart from general requirements applicable to all agencies (which GAO did not review), in most cases, OMB and designated federal agencies have taken action to address the act's requirements within stipulated time frames. For example, OMB established the Interagency Committee on Government Information in June 2003, within the deadline prescribed by the act. The committee is to develop recommendations on the categorization of government information and public access to electronic information. Similarly, in most cases where deadlines are not specified, OMB and designated federal agencies have either fully implemented the provisions or demonstrated positive action toward implementation. For example, in May 2003, the E-Government Administrator issued a memorandum detailing procedures for requesting funds from the E-Government Fund, although the act did not specify a deadline for this action. As stipulated by the act, the E-Government Fund is to be used to support projects that enable the federal government to expand its ability to conduct activities electronically.

Although the government has made progress in implementing the act, the act's requirements have not always been fully addressed. In several cases, actions taken do not satisfy the requirements of the act or no significant action has been taken. In particular, OMB has not ensured that specified activities have taken place regarding e-government approaches to crisis preparedness (a study and follow-up response), contractor innovation (establishment of a program), and federally funded research and development (support of an information repository and Web site). In these cases, either the actions OMB has taken do not fully address the act's provisions, or OMB has not yet made key decisions that would allow actions to take place. Until these issues are addressed, the government may be at risk of not fully achieving the objective of the E-Government Act to promote better use of the Internet and other information technologies to improve government services and enhance opportunities for citizen participation in government.

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Abbreviations

CIO	chief information officer
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
GSA	General Services Administration
ICGI	Interagency Committee on Government Information
IPT	Information Policy and Technology
IRM	information resources management
IT	information technology
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
OIRA	Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PIA	privacy impact assessment
PRA	Paperwork Reduction Act
RFI	request for information

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Abbreviations

CIO	chief information officer
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
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ICGI	Interagency Committee on Government Information
IPT	Information Policy and Technology
IRM	information resources management
IT	information technology
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
OIRA	Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
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PIA	privacy impact assessment
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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

December 10, 2004

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chairman
The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Davis
Chairman
Committee on Government Reform
House of Representatives

The Honorable Candice S. Miller
House of Representatives

The E-Government Act (E-Gov Act) of 2002 was enacted with the general purpose of promoting better use of the Internet and other information technologies to improve government services for citizens, internal government operations, and opportunities for citizen participation in government. Among other things, the act specifically requires the establishment of the Office of Electronic Government within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to oversee implementation of the act's provisions and mandates a number of specific actions, such as the establishment of interagency committees, completion of several studies, submission of reports with recommendations, issuance of a variety of guidance documents, establishment of new policies, and initiation of pilot projects. Further, the act requires federal agencies to take a number of actions, such as conducting privacy impact assessments, providing public access to agency information, and allowing for electronic access to rulemaking proceedings. OMB has linked several of the act's provisions to ongoing e-government initiatives that it has sponsored.¹ While some deadlines specified in the act have passed, many required actions do not have statutory deadlines or have deadlines that have not yet passed.

¹For detailed information on the progress of the 25 initiatives sponsored by OMB, see GAO, *Electronic Government: Initiatives Sponsored by the Office of Management and Budget Have Made Mixed Progress*, [GAO-04-0561T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 24, 2004).

This report responds to your request that we review the implementation status of major provisions from Titles I and II of the E-Gov Act. To address this objective, we analyzed the act, reviewed OMB's fiscal year 2003 report to Congress on the implementation status of the act, and interviewed officials from OMB, the General Services Administration (GSA), and other agencies that have specific responsibilities under Title II. We included the major e-government sections of the act in this review, except for two sections,² as agreed upon with your staff. Within the sections we included, we did not address general requirements applicable to all agencies.³ Details of our objectives, scope, and methodology are provided in appendix I. Our work was conducted in Washington, D.C., from April 2004 to August 2004, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results in Brief

In most cases, OMB and federal agencies have taken positive steps toward implementing the provisions of Titles I and II of the E-Gov Act. For example, OMB established the Office of E-Government, designated its Assistant Director for Information Technology (IT) and E-Government as the office's Administrator in April 2003, and published guidance to federal agencies on implementing the act in August 2003. In most cases, OMB and federal agencies have taken action to address the act's requirements within stipulated time frames. For example, OMB established the Interagency Committee on Government Information in June 2003, within the deadline prescribed by the act. The committee is to develop recommendations on the categorization of government information and public access to electronic information. Even when deadlines have not yet passed, in all but one case OMB and agencies have taken action to implement the act. For example, federal courts have established informational Web sites in

²We did not include section 202, which prescribes general requirements applying to all major federal agencies. Further, we did not review section 210, which concerns share-in-savings contracts, since this section mandates a separate, more in-depth GAO review on the implementation and effects of this provision at a future date.

³Examples include 203(b), which addresses agency implementation of electronic signatures; 207(e)(4), which requires annual agency reporting on accessibility, usability, and preservation of government information; 207(f)(2), stipulating agency requirements for making government information available on the Internet or by other means; 207(g)(2), requiring agencies to provide information for the repository on federal research and development; 208(b)(1), which stipulates agency requirements related to privacy impact assessments; and 209(b)(2) and (4), stipulating requirements for agency information technology training programs. For section 206, we assessed governmentwide implementation by reviewing the status of the e-Rulemaking initiative.

advance of the April 2005 deadline specified by the act, and court officials are taking steps to ensure that the Web sites fully meet the criteria stipulated by the act.

Similarly, in most cases where deadlines are not specified, OMB and federal agencies have either fully implemented the provisions or demonstrated positive action toward implementation. For example, in May 2003, the E-Government Administrator issued a memorandum detailing procedures for requesting funds from the E-Government Fund,⁴ although the act did not specify a deadline for this action.

Although the government has made progress in implementing the act, the act's requirements have not always been fully addressed. Specifically, OMB has not

- ensured that a study on using IT to enhance crisis preparedness and response has been conducted that addresses the content specified by the act,
- established a required program to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes, or
- ensured the development and maintenance of a required repository and Web site of information about research and development funded by the federal government.

Further, GSA has not contracted with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a required study on disparities in Internet access for online government services.

In the first three cases, OMB has either taken actions that are related to the act's provisions but do not fully address them (in the first and second cases) or has not yet made key decisions that would allow actions to take place (in the third case). In the last case, GSA is seeking funding for the required study in fiscal year 2006. Until these issues are addressed, the government may be at risk of not fully achieving the objective of the E-Government Act to promote better use of the Internet and other

⁴As stipulated by the act, the E-Government Fund is to be used to support projects that enable the federal government to expand its ability to conduct activities electronically.

information technologies to improve government services and enhance opportunities for citizen participation in government.

To ensure the successful implementation of the E-Government Act and achievement of its goals, we are recommending that the Administrator of the Office of E-Government take action to address those instances where the act's requirements have not been fully addressed. In commenting on a draft of this report, officials from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), GSA, and OMB generally agreed with its content and recommendations.

Background

The E-Gov Act was enacted into law on December 17, 2002. The act's provisions add to a variety of previously established statutory requirements regarding federal information and IT management, such as the Paperwork Reduction Act, which also prescribes responsibilities within OMB for overseeing information and IT management in the federal government.⁵ Appendix II provides further details on the statutory framework for federal information and IT management.

Even before passage of the E-Gov Act, OMB was working on e-government issues, primarily through its Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) and through the activities of the Associate Director for Information Technology and E-Government (the predecessor position to the current Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government). In February 2002, OMB issued its first E-Government Strategy⁶ and designated 24 high-profile initiatives⁷ to lead the government's transformation to e-government.⁸

⁵P.L. 96-511 (Dec. 11, 1980) and P.L. 104-13 (May 22, 1995). For more detailed information regarding the Paperwork Reduction Act and its relationship to the E-Government Act of 2002, see appendix II.

⁶Office of Management and Budget, *E-Government Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2002).

⁷Based on analysis by the E-Government Task Force, 23 initiatives were originally selected in September 2001. A 24th, e-Payroll, was then added by the President's Management Council. In 2002, a decision was made to separate the e-Clearance initiative from the Integrated Human Resources initiative, resulting in the current count of 25 projects.

⁸For more information about the selection of the initiatives, see GAO, *Electronic Government: Selection and Implementation of the Office of Management and Budget's 24 Initiatives*, [GAO-03-229](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 22, 2002).

Title I of the E-Government Act established the Office of Electronic Government within OMB, to be headed by an Administrator. The Administrator's responsibilities include

- assisting the Director in carrying out the act and other e-government initiatives, including promoting innovative use of IT by agencies, overseeing the E-Government Fund, and leading the activities of the federal Chief Information Officers Council;
- working with the OIRA Administrator in setting strategic direction for e-government under relevant laws, including the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Clinger-Cohen Act; and
- working with the OIRA Administrator and other OMB offices to oversee implementation of e-government under the act and other laws, including the Paperwork Reduction Act, relating to IT management, enterprise architecture, information security, privacy, access, dissemination, preservation, accessibility of IT for persons with disabilities, and other areas of e-government.

Title II of the E-Gov Act contains 16 sections that include a range of provisions aimed at promoting electronic government services and increasing citizen access to and participation in government. The sections of Title II address such topics as maintaining and promoting a federal Internet portal to make government information more accessible to the public, protecting the privacy of personal information, establishing a framework for use of electronic signatures for secure transactions with government, and providing online access to documents filed electronically with federal courts. Appendix I contains a complete list of the Title II sections included in our review.

OMB and Agencies Have Made Progress Implementing Major Provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002

Overall, OMB and federal agencies have made progress implementing Titles I and II of the E-Gov Act. In April 2003, OMB established the Office of E-Government (also known as the Office of E-Government and Information Technology) and designated its Assistant Director for IT and E-Government as its Administrator. Also in April 2003, OMB issued its second E-Government Strategy,⁹ which laid out its approach to implementing the E-Gov Act. In August 2003, OMB issued guidance to agencies on implementing the act, and in March 2004, it issued its first annual report to Congress on implementation of the act.¹⁰ In its report to Congress, OMB summarized individual agency e-gov reports, described actions taken to address the act's provisions, and provided details of the operation of the E-Government Fund.

As shown in table 1, OMB and designated federal agencies have taken steps to implement the provisions of most of the major sections of Titles I and II of the E-Gov Act that we reviewed.¹¹ Specifically, apart from general requirements applicable to all agencies, OMB and designated agencies have already implemented the provisions of 7 of the 18 major sections, have actions in progress to address provisions of another 7 sections, and have not fully addressed provisions of the remaining 4 sections. Each of these 18 sections includes many specific provisions, such as developing and issuing guidance and policies, conducting studies, initiating pilot projects, and establishing specific programs and working groups. Appendix III contains details of the specific provisions in each of these sections and their current implementation status.

⁹Office of Management and Budget, *E-Government Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: April 2003).

¹⁰Office of Management and Budget, *FY 2003 Report to Congress on Implementation of the E-Government Act* (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 8, 2004).

¹¹Appendix I contains details of how we assessed the overall implementation status for each section.

Table 1: Summary Implementation Status of Major Sections from Titles I and II of the E-Gov Act

Section reviewed	Status ^a
101: Office of Electronic Government	Implemented
Chief Information Officers Council	Implemented
E-Government Fund	Implemented
Program to Encourage Innovative Solutions	Not fully addressed
E-Government Report	Implemented
203: Electronic Signatures (excluding 203(b))	In progress
204: Federal Internet Portal	Implemented
205: Federal Courts	In progress
206: Regulatory Agencies ^b	In progress
207: Accessibility, Usability, and Preservation of Government Information (excluding 207(e)(4), (f)(2) and g(2))	Not fully addressed
208: Privacy Provisions (excluding 208(b)(1))	Implemented
209: IT Workforce Development (excluding 209(b)(2) and (b)(4))	In progress
211: State and Local Government Use of Federal Supply Schedules	Implemented
212: Integrated Reporting Study and Pilot Projects	In progress
213: Community Technology Centers	In progress
214: Enhancing Crisis Management through Advanced Information Technology	Not fully addressed
215: Disparities in Access to the Internet	Not fully addressed
216: Common Protocols for Geographic Information Systems	In progress

Source: GAO.

^aThe E-Government Fund, E-Government Report, and Federal Internet Portal provisions of the act, while considered implemented, require ongoing and future activities (i.e., annual reports and maintenance of the federal Internet portal).

^bFor section 206, we assessed governmentwide implementation by reviewing the status of the e-Rulemaking initiative.

OMB and designated federal agencies are taking actions to implement the provisions of the act in most cases; however, the act's requirements have not always been fully addressed. In several cases, actions taken do not satisfy the requirements of the act, or no significant action has been taken.

Progress in Implementing Provisions with Statutory Deadlines

In most cases, OMB and designated federal agencies have taken responsive action to address the act's requirements with statutory deadlines, although these have not always been completed within stipulated time frames. For example, OMB established the Interagency Committee on Government Information in June 2003, within the deadline prescribed by the act. The committee is to develop recommendations on the categorization of government information and public access to electronic information. In another example, as required by section 211, GSA developed and issued procedures for the acquisition of IT by state and local governments through Federal Supply Schedules, which previously had been available only to federal agencies. Although the act required that the procedures be issued by January 17, 2003, GSA did not finalize the new procedures until May 2004. The agency had issued a proposed rule to implement the procedures on January 23, 2003, and an interim rule on May 7, 2003.

In one case, OMB has not taken fully responsive action to address the requirements of the act. Specifically, OMB did not ensure that a study on using IT to enhance crisis preparedness and response was conducted that addresses the content specified by the act. Section 214 of the act required, within 90 days of enactment, that OMB ensure that this study is conducted, and it specifies the content of the study. For example, the study was required to address a research and implementation strategy for the effective use of IT in crisis response and consequence management. OMB was further required to report on findings and recommendations from this study within 2 years of the study's initiation. According to DHS officials, a study conducted by the MITRE Corporation for Project SAFECOM¹² fulfills this requirement. However, the MITRE study—which was chiefly an assessment of a Web tool for disseminating information about solutions to the problem of interoperability among first responders' communications systems—did not address the content specified by the act. For example, the study did not include research regarding use of IT to enhance crisis preparedness, nor did it include a research and implementation strategy for more effective use of IT in crisis response and consequence management. Until the required elements of the study are addressed, OMB may not be able to make a fully informed response to the act's requirement that it report on findings and recommendations for improving the use of IT in

¹²For more information about Project SAFECOM, see GAO, *Project SAFECOM: Key Cross-Agency Emergency Communications Effort Requires Stronger Collaboration*, [GAO-04-494](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 16, 2004).

coordinating and facilitating information on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

In another case, GSA has not taken fully responsive action to address the requirements of the act. Specifically, Section 215 required the Administrator of GSA to contract with NAS by March 17, 2003, to conduct a study on disparities in Internet access for online government services. GSA was to submit a report to Congress on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study by December 2004. GSA officials reported that they were unable to request funds as part of the fiscal year 2003 or 2004 budget cycles because the act passed in December 2002, after fiscal year 2003 had begun and the deadline for fiscal year 2004 agency budget submissions (August 2002) had passed. Although GSA officials did not provide any information regarding their actions for fiscal year 2005, they reported that the agency had requested the funds authorized in the act for the fiscal year 2006 budget cycle and was working on compiling an interim study based on existing research on disparities in access to the Internet. This compilation report is expected to be completed by December 2004 and submitted to Congress in OMB's annual report on implementation of the act.

For those provisions with future deadlines, OMB and agencies have taken action to implement the act. For example, under section 207 of the act, by December 2004, the Interagency Committee on Government Information must submit recommendations to OMB and to the Archivist of the United States on the categorization of government information and how to apply the Federal Records Act to information on the Internet and other electronic records. The committee structure, work plans, and interim products show progress toward meeting this deadline. As another example, under section 205 of the act, federal courts are required to establish Web sites by April 2005 that provide information such as location, contact information, and local and individual rules. By April 2007, these sites must also provide access to documents that are filed electronically. In June 2004, officials from the Administrative Office of the Courts reported that all 198 federal courts had established Web sites, 10 months before the April 2005 deadline. Court officials also reported that the individual court Web sites were making progress providing the information stipulated in the act and that 128 of the courts already allowed access to documents filed electronically, in advance of the April 2007 deadline.

Progress in Implementing Provisions without Statutory Deadlines

As with the provisions specifying deadlines, in most cases where deadlines are not specified, OMB and federal agencies have either fully implemented the provisions or demonstrated positive action toward implementation. For example, in May 2003, the E-Gov Administrator issued a memorandum detailing procedures for requesting funds from the E-Government Fund, although the act did not specify a deadline for this action. As stipulated by the act, the E-Government Fund is to be used to support projects that enable the federal government to expand its ability to conduct activities electronically. Similarly, section 208 requires the Director of OMB to develop policies and guidelines for agencies on the conduct of privacy impact assessments but does not stipulate a deadline. In September 2003, OMB issued guidance for implementing the privacy provisions of the E-Government Act, including guidance on conducting privacy impact assessments.

In two instances in which statutory deadlines were not specified, OMB's actions have not yet fully addressed the act's requirements. Specifically:

-
- OMB has not established a program to satisfy the requirements in section 101 (44 U.S.C. 3605), which requires the Administrator to establish and promote a governmentwide program to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes. OMB officials reported that no program had been established specifically to satisfy the requirements of 44 U.S.C. 3605. The OIRA Information Policy and Technology (IPT) Branch Chief and other OMB officials stated that they believed the mandated program was not necessary because the functions of such a program were being accomplished through other ongoing OMB initiatives, such as the SmartBuy initiative,¹³ the Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) Web portal,¹⁴ and the recently inaugurated “lines of business” initiatives.¹⁵ Specifically, the officials stated that a recently issued request for information¹⁶ (RFI) for several of the lines of business initiatives addressed the act’s requirement that, under the stipulated program, announcements be issued seeking unique and innovative solutions. However, while OMB’s recent RFI represents one example of an announcement seeking innovative solutions, it does not represent a commitment to issuing such announcements and promoting innovative solutions on an ongoing basis. In contrast, establishing a dedicated program—as stipulated by the act—would represent such a commitment. Until OMB establishes such a program, it is at risk of not fully meeting the objective of this section to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes.

¹³The SmartBuy initiative, managed by GSA, is aimed at reducing costs and improving quality in federal purchases of commercial software through the use of enterprise licenses.

¹⁴The FedBizOpps portal, also managed by GSA, serves as a single government point of entry for federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business opportunities by posting information directly to FedBizOpps. Through one portal, commercial vendors seeking federal markets for their services and products can search, monitor, and retrieve opportunities solicited by the federal contracting community.

¹⁵In March 2004, OMB announced the launch of a task force to examine five government lines of business: case management, federal health architecture, grants management, human resources management, and financial management.

¹⁶In April 2004, OMB issued an RFI to provide industry and government service providers with an opportunity to describe solutions and implementation approaches for achieving the goals of three of the lines of business (financial management, human resources, and grants management).

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- OMB has not yet taken sufficient action to ensure the development and maintenance of a repository and Web site of information about research and development funded by the federal government, as required by section 207 of the act. In its fiscal year 2003 report to Congress, OMB reported that an analysis had been conducted of the National Science Foundation's "Research and Development in the United States" database system and that the system was closely aligned with the act's requirements. However, OMB also said it had not yet determined whether the National Science Foundation's system would serve as the repository required by the act. Until OMB decides on a specific course of action, it may not fully meet the objective of section 207 to improve the methods by which government information, including information on the Internet, is organized, preserved, and made accessible to the public.

Conclusions

In most cases, OMB and designated federal agencies have made progress in addressing the specific requirements of the E-Government Act of 2002. OMB and federal agencies made efforts to implement provisions before the expiration of statutory deadlines that have now passed, and they are also taking positive steps toward implementing provisions without deadlines or with deadlines in the future.

Despite the overall progress, in several cases, actions taken do not satisfy the requirements of the act, or no significant action has been taken. In one case—the requirement to conduct a study in disparities in access to the Internet—the responsible agency, GSA, is taking steps to address the act's requirements, even though a statutory deadline has already passed. In other cases, OMB has either taken actions that are related to the act's provisions but do not fully address them, or it has not yet made key decisions that would allow actions to take place. Specifically, OMB has not ensured that a study on using IT to enhance crisis preparedness and response has been conducted that addresses the content specified by the act, established a required program to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes, or ensured the development and maintenance of a required repository and Web site of information about research and development funded by the federal government. Until these issues are addressed, the government is at risk of not fully achieving the objective of the E-Government Act to promote better use of the Internet and other information technologies to improve government services to its citizens, internal government operations, and opportunities for citizen participation in government.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To ensure the successful implementation of the E-Government Act and its goal of promoting better use of the Internet and other information technologies to improve government services to citizens, internal government operations, and opportunities for citizen participation in government, we recommend that the Director, OMB, direct the Administrator of the Office of E-Government to carry out the following three actions:

- ensure that the report to Congress regarding the study on enhancement of crisis response required under section 214 addresses the content specified by the act;
- establish and promote a governmentwide program, as prescribed by 44 U.S.C. 3605, to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes; and
- ensure the development and maintenance of a governmentwide repository and Web site that integrates information about research and development funded by the federal government.

Agency Comments

We received oral comments on a draft of this report from representatives of OMB's Offices of Information and Regulatory Affairs, E-Government, and General Counsel. We also received oral comments from representatives of DHS's Development Science and Technology Directorate and GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy. These representatives generally agreed with the content of our draft report and our recommendations and provided technical comments, which have been incorporated where appropriate. GSA officials also provided updated information regarding the status of the required actions under the community technology centers provision of the act (section 213), which has been incorporated in the report.

Regarding our recommendation that OMB ensure that its report to Congress regarding the study on enhancement of crisis response addresses the content specified by the act (section 214), OMB officials agreed that the study conducted by Project SAFECOM did not address the requirements of the act. OMB officials stated that a new study would be initiated to meet the requirements of the act.

Regarding our recommendation that OMB establish and promote a governmentwide program, as prescribed by 44 U.S.C. 3605, to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes, OMB officials reiterated their position that OMB's ongoing activities address the substance of the required program and that establishing a separate new program could introduce delay. The officials stated that a recently issued RFI for several of the recently inaugurated "lines of business" initiatives is an example of an announcement seeking innovative solutions, as required by the act. We made changes to the report to reflect that the RFI partially addressed the act's requirements. However, while the RFI represents one example of an announcement seeking innovative solutions, it does not represent a commitment to issuing such announcements and promoting innovative solutions on an ongoing basis. In contrast, establishing a dedicated program—as stipulated by the act—would represent such a commitment. Until OMB establishes such a program, it is at risk of not fully meeting the objective of this section to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes.

Unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will provide copies of this report to the Director of OMB, the GSA Administrator, and the Secretary of Homeland Security. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>. Should you have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-6240 or John de Ferrari, Assistant Director, at (202) 512-6335. We can also be reached by e-mail at koontzl@gao.gov and deferrarij@gao.gov, respectively. Other key contributors to this report included Barbara Collier, Sandra Kerr, David F. Plocher, and Jamie Pressman.



Linda D. Koontz
Director, Information Management Issues

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to assess the implementation status of major provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002, Titles I and II.

Titles I and II of the act contain numerous provisions that cover a wide range of activities across the federal government aimed at promoting electronic government. Because it was not feasible to conduct in-depth assessments of all the provisions of Titles I and II for this engagement, we conducted a high-level review of the implementation status of major provisions of the act, determining whether actions have been taken or are under way to address their major provisions. Listed below are the sections included in this review, as agreed.

- Title I, Section 101—Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services
- Title II, Section 203—Compatibility of Executive Agency Methods for Use and Acceptance of Electronic Signatures
- Title II, Section 204—Federal Internet Portal
- Title II, Section 205—Federal Courts
- Title II, Section 206—Regulatory Agencies
- Title II, Section 207—Accessibility, Usability, and Preservation of Government Information
- Title II, Section 208—Privacy Provisions
- Title II, Section 209—Federal IT Workforce Development
- Title II, Section 211—Authorization for Acquisition of Information Technology by State and Local Governments through Federal Supply Schedules
- Title II, Section 212—Integrated Reporting Study and Pilot Projects
- Title II, Section 213—Community Technology Centers
- Title II, Section 214—Enhancing Crisis Management through Advanced Information Technology

- Title II, Section 215—Disparities in Access to the Internet
- Title II, Section 216—Common Protocols for Geographic Information Systems

We did not include section 201, which provides definitions, or section 202, which prescribes general requirements applying to all major federal agencies, in our review. Similarly, for the sections we reviewed, we did not assess the implementation of general requirements applying to all federal agencies, such as sections 203(b), which addresses agency implementation of electronic signatures; 207(e)(4), which requires annual agency reporting on accessibility, usability, and preservation of government information; 207(f)(2), stipulating agency requirements for making government information available on the Internet or by other means; 207(g)(2), requiring agencies to provide information for the repository on federal research and development; 208(b)(1), which stipulates agency requirements related to privacy impact assessments; and 209(b)(2) and (4), stipulating requirements for agency information technology training programs. For section 206, we assessed governmentwide implementation by reviewing the status of the e-Rulemaking initiative. Finally, we did not assess Section 210, which concerns share-in-savings contracts, since this section mandates a separate, more in-depth GAO review on the implementation and effects of this provision at a future date.

To assess the implementation status of the major provisions, we interviewed cognizant officials from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the General Services Administration (GSA), and other agencies that have specific responsibilities under Title II. For several sections, the act requires specific actions, such as the initiation of pilot projects, establishment of interagency workgroups or committees, development and issuance of guidance/policies, conduct of a study, or issuance of reports. The majority of these actions include statutory deadlines for completion. For provisions with deadlines that have passed, we determined whether the requirement had been met. For provisions with deadlines that had not yet expired or that had no explicit deadline attached, we obtained information on actions taken and progress made to date. We analyzed relevant documentation, including OMB's fiscal year 2003 report to Congress on implementation status of the E-Gov Act. We determined the implementation status of the major provisions by comparing the information we obtained to the requirements established in the act.

We assessed the overall status of the major sections according to the following three categories:

1. *Implemented.* A section was assessed as implemented if the responsible agency had completed responsive actions to address each of the section's requirements that we reviewed.¹
2. *In progress.* We assessed status as "in progress" if responsive action was under way to address each of the section's requirements, even if statutory deadlines had not been fully met.
3. *Not fully addressed.* We assessed a section's status as not fully addressed when an agency had taken actions that did not meet the requirements specified in the act or had not taken action on requirements with imminent or expired deadlines.

Our work was conducted from April 2004 to September 2004, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

¹Some of the act's sections require ongoing actions, such as annual reporting or the maintenance of a Web site. We did not consider such ongoing activities when assessing whether provisions had been implemented.

Federal Information and IT Management Statutory Framework

For more than 20 years before the enactment of the E-Government Act, the management of federal information and information technology (IT) was governed by a number of issue-specific laws and one law that coordinates across those issue areas. Examples of the issue-specific laws are the Privacy Act, which governs the protection of personal privacy in government records; the Freedom of Information Act, which provides for public access to government information; and the Clinger-Cohen Act, which applies investment control concepts to IT management. The coordinating law is the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). Like the E-Government Act, the Paperwork Reduction Act gives management responsibilities to agencies and oversight responsibilities to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

The PRA, as first enacted in 1980 and as significantly revised in 1995, established the concept of “information resources management” (IRM) to coordinate information and IT management functions throughout the information life cycle, from collection through disposition.¹ The PRA established the OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) for governmentwide oversight and stated that the Administrator of OIRA should “serve as principal adviser to the Director [of OMB] on Federal information resources management policy.”² Under the PRA IRM umbrella, OIRA is responsible for overseeing

- information collection and the control of paperwork, including review of agency information collection proposals;
- information dissemination;
- statistical policy and coordination;
- records management, including oversight of compliance with the Federal Records Act;
- privacy, including oversight of compliance with the Privacy Act;

¹P.L. 96-511 (Dec. 11, 1980) and P.L. 104-13 (May 22, 1995). See *Paperwork Reduction Act Amendments of 1984*, Senate Report 98-576 (Aug. 6, 1984); *Federal Management Reorganization and Cost Control Act of 1986*, Senate Report 99-347 (July 31, 1986), pp. 12–17 and 52–59; and *Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995*, Senate Report 104-8 (Feb. 14, 1995).

²44 U.S.C. 3503. In addition to its responsibilities under the Paperwork Reduction Act, OIRA reviews agency regulations under the authority of presidential executive orders.

- information security, including oversight of compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act;
- information disclosure, including oversight of compliance with the Freedom of Information Act; and
- information technology, including oversight of the Clinger-Cohen Act and promoting the use of information technology “to improve the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of Federal programs, including through dissemination of public information and the reduction of information collection burdens on the public.”³

The E-Government Act of 2002 added to OMB’s statutory PRA duties with requirements to promote “electronic government,” defined as government use of Web-based Internet applications and other information technologies to enhance access to and delivery of government information and services and to improve government operations.⁴ To oversee these electronic government activities, the E-Government Act created the OMB Office of Electronic Government, to be headed by an Administrator.⁵ The E-Gov Administrator’s responsibilities include assisting the Director in carrying out the act and other e-government initiatives and working with the OIRA Administrator and other OMB offices to oversee implementation of e-government under the E-Government Act and other laws, including the PRA.⁶

Both the OIRA Administrator and the E-Government Administrator report to the OMB Deputy Director for Management, who exercises all functions of the OMB Director with regard to information policy and other management functions under 31 U.S.C. 503(b), as enacted by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-576, Nov. 15, 1990).

³44 U.S.C. 3504(h)(5).

⁴44 U.S.C. 3601(3).

⁵44 U.S.C. 3602(a) and (b).

⁶44 U.S.C. 3602(c)–(f).

Implementation Status of Major Provisions from Titles I and II of the E-Government Act of 2002

Titles I and II of the E-Government Act of 2002 include provisions covering a wide range of activities across the federal government aimed at promoting electronic government. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and other federal agencies likewise have a variety of activities under way that address these provisions. This appendix summarizes the status of implementation of the act's requirements that we reviewed. As noted in appendix I, we did not review all sections of Titles I and II, nor did we review the implementation of general requirements applying to all federal agencies.

Office of Electronic Government: Title I, Section 101 (44 U.S.C. 3602)

Section 3602 of Title 44 of the U.S. Code¹ establishes the Office of Electronic Government (E-Government) within OMB, which is to be headed by a presidentially appointed Administrator. The Administrator is required to assist both the OMB Director and the Deputy Director for Management, as well as work with the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in setting strategic direction for and assisting in implementing electronic government. In addition, the Director is to ensure that there are adequate resources in OMB to carry out its functions under the act.

OMB has taken responsive action to address the requirements of this section. The Office of E-Government was established on April 17, 2003, with an Administrator appointed on the same day. OMB officials stated that this office, working closely with the OIRA Administrator and OIRA's IPT Branch, has taken steps to carry out the functions specified in the act. For example, to set strategic direction for electronic government, OMB issued an E-Government Strategy in April 2003.² OMB officials said they plan to issue an update to the E-Government Strategy during the fall of 2004.

¹In referring to specific provisions of Title I, section 101, of the E-Government Act, we refer to Title 44 of the U.S. Code, because section 101 of the act amends the U.S. Code. In discussing Title II, which does not amend the U.S. Code, we refer to the relevant sections of the E-Government Act: sections 203 to 216.

²Office of Management and Budget, *E-Government Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: April 2003).

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OMB had been working on electronic government issues before the E-Gov Act was passed and the Office of E-Government officially established. For example, OMB issued its first E-Government Strategy in February 2002,³ which designated a number of high-profile initiatives to lead the government's transformation to e-government.⁴ This work was performed through OIRA's IPT Branch and supervised by the Associate Director for Information Technology and E-Government (a position that was the predecessor to the current E-Government Administrator position).⁵

OMB officials reported that under the current organizational structure, the E-Government Administrator works collaboratively with the OIRA Administrator (primarily through working with OIRA's IPT Branch) to carry out the requirements of the act. Along with its E-Government Strategies, OMB officials cited its oversight of the e-government initiatives as examples of setting strategic direction for e-government.

Regarding resources for carrying out the functions of the act, OMB officials reported that as of June 14, 2004, the Office of E-Government consisted of eight full-time positions, including the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Special Assistant, Chief Architect, and four Portfolio Managers. In addition, four employees on detail from other agencies provide further assistance. Finally, there are 12 employees in OIRA's IPT Branch who also support the activities of the Office of E-Gov. Accordingly, the IPT Branch chief reports both to the Administrator of the Office of E-Government and to the Administrator of OIRA.

³Office of Management and Budget, *E-Government Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2002).

⁴GAO, *Electronic Government: Selection and Implementation of the Office of Management and Budget's 24 Initiatives*, [GAO-03-229](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 22, 2002). These initiatives currently number 25; in 2002, a decision was made to separate the e-Clearance initiative from the Integrated Human Resources initiative.

⁵In June 2001, OMB established the position of Associate Director for Information Technology and E-Government to oversee IT policy, the CIO Council, and the Administration's proposed E-Government Fund.

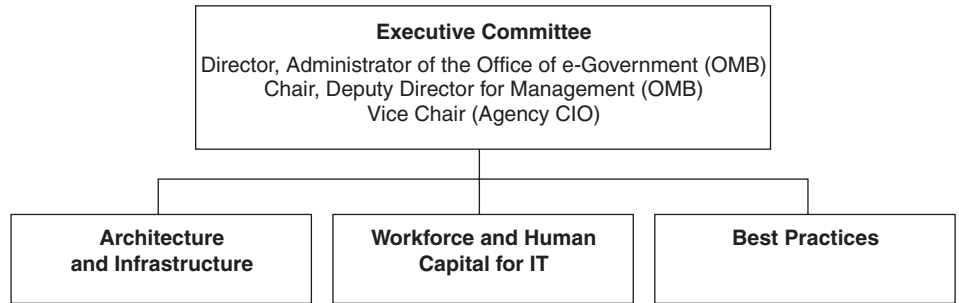
**Chief Information
Officers Council: Title
I, Section 101 (44
U.S.C. 3603)**

Section 3603 of Title 44 codifies the establishment, structure, and responsibilities of the Chief Information Officers (CIO) Council, which was established on July 16, 1996, by Executive Order 13011. The CIO Council's responsibilities include developing recommendations for information and information technology (IT) management policies, procedures, and standards; sharing management best practices; and assessing and addressing the needs of the federal government's IT workforce.

The CIO Council has taken responsive action to address the requirements of this section of the act. Membership on the CIO Council includes CIOs from federal executive agencies, the OMB Deputy Director for Management, the E-Government Administrator, and the OIRA Administrator. The E-Government Administrator is to lead the council on behalf of the Deputy Director for Management, who serves as the council chair. According to its strategic plan for fiscal year 2004, the CIO Council's structure and activities are aligned with the applicable provisions of the E-Gov Act. (Fig. 1 shows the organization of the CIO Council.) For example, the Best Practices Committee has published recommendations and experiences on the CIO Council's Web site (www.cio.gov) and contributed to the development of resources such as its report on Lessons Learned on Information Technology Performance Management, which is also available on the Web site. In addition, the Architecture and Infrastructure Committee has provided models for a component-based architecture, which assists agencies in identifying opportunities to share information resources. Furthermore, the Workforce and Human Capital for IT Committee is working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to address issues regarding recruitment and development of the federal IT workforce.

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Figure 1: CIO Council Organization Chart



Source: CIO Council.

**Administration of the
E-Government Fund:
Title I, Section 101 (44
U.S.C. 3604)**

Section 3604 of Title 44 establishes the E-Government Fund, which is to be used to support projects that enable the federal government to expand its ability to conduct activities electronically. The Director of OMB, assisted by the E-Government Administrator, approves which projects will receive support from the E-Government Fund. The E-Government Administrator is required to establish procedures for accepting and reviewing proposals for funding. In addition, the Director of OMB is required to report on the operation of the fund in OMB's annual report to Congress on the implementation status of the E-Government Act. GSA is responsible for administration of the fund and is required to submit to Congress a notification of how the funds are to be allocated to projects approved by OMB. Table 2 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

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Table 2: Actions Required under 44 U.S.C. 3604

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Develop procedures for accepting and reviewing proposals for funding	Administrator of the Office of E-Government	No deadline given
Submit a report on operation of the E-Government Fund in the annual E-Government Act Report required under section 3606	Director of OMB	Not later than March 1 of each year
Submit a notification and description of how the e-government funds are to be allocated and how the funds will further the purposes of section 3604	GSA Administrator	Funds provided from the E-Government Fund cannot be transferred to any agency until 15 days after the notifications and descriptions are provided to Congress

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB has taken responsive action to address the requirements of this section. In May 2003, the agency issued a memorandum detailing procedures for requesting funds from the E-Government Fund. The memorandum establishes a process for submitting proposals and details the process by which OMB will review proposals.

In March 2004, OMB submitted its first annual report to Congress on implementation of the E-Government Act. As required by 44 U.S.C. 3604, this report detailed the operations of the E-Government Fund for fiscal years 2002 to 2003. Also, in accordance with its responsibilities in administering the fund, GSA submitted notifications and descriptions to Congress on how the e-gov funds were to be allocated and spent for the approved projects. Table 3 summarizes the projects funded for fiscal years 2002 to 2004, as reported by GSA's notifications to Congress.

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Table 3: Summary of E-Government Fund Usage, Fiscal Years 2002–2005

Fiscal year	Authorized by the E-Gov Act	Appropriation	Allocated to projects
2002	N/A	\$5 million ^a	\$4.89 million
2003	\$45 million	\$4.967 million	\$5.067 million
2004	\$50 million	\$3 million	\$3 million
2005	\$100 million	N/A	N/A

Source: GAO analysis of GSA data.

^aOf the fiscal year 2002 appropriation, \$100,000 was not allocated to e-gov projects. The fiscal year 2003 appropriation of \$5 million was reduced by the rescission of 0.65 percent under Pub. L. 108-7. The unallocated \$100,000 from fiscal year 2002 was then added to the remaining \$4.967 million, for a total of \$5.067 million available for allocation to e-gov projects in fiscal year 2003.

In fiscal years 2003 and 2004, the amount requested by OMB for the fund was close to the amount authorized by the act, yet in the fiscal year 2005 budget, \$5 million was requested although \$100 million was authorized. An OMB official stated that OMB requested significantly less than what was authorized by the act because it was seeking authority in fiscal year 2005 to allow surplus receipts in the General Supply Fund⁶ to be spent on e-government projects.

Program to Encourage Innovative Solutions: Title I, Section 101 (44 U.S.C. 3605)

Section 3605 of Title 44 requires the Administrator of the Office of E-Government to establish and promote a governmentwide program to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of e-government services and processes. Under this program, the E-Government Administrator is required to issue announcements seeking innovative solutions as well as convene a multiagency technical assistance team to screen proposals. The E-Government Administrator is to either consider the screened proposals for funding from the E-Government Fund or forward the proposals to the appropriate executive agencies. Table 4 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

⁶This fund, which is managed by GSA, is supplied by a 0.75 percent fee paid by federal agencies that buy IT goods and services using governmentwide acquisition contracts.

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Table 4: Actions Required under 44 U.S.C. 3605

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Establish a program to encourage contractor innovation and excellence	Administrator of the Office of E-Government	No deadline given
Issue announcements seeking innovative solutions	Administrator of the Office of E-Government	No deadline given
Convene a multiagency technical assistance team to screen proposals submitted in response to announcements	Administrator of the Office of E-Government	No deadline given

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB has not fully addressed the requirements of this section of the act. OMB officials reported that no program had been established specifically to satisfy the requirements of 44 U.S.C. 3605. The OIRA IPT Branch Chief and other OMB officials stated that they believed the mandated program was not necessary because the functions of such a program were being accomplished through other ongoing OMB initiatives, such as the SmartBuy initiative,⁷ the Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) Web portal,⁸ and the recently inaugurated “lines of business” initiatives.⁹ Specifically, the officials stated that a recently issued request for information¹⁰ (RFI) for several of the lines of business initiatives addressed the act’s requirement that, under the stipulated program, announcements

⁷The SmartBuy initiative, managed by GSA, is aimed at reducing costs and improving quality in federal purchases of commercial software through use of enterprise licenses.

⁸The FedBizOpps portal, also managed by GSA, serves as a single government point of entry for federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business opportunities by posting information directly to FedBizOpps. Through one portal, commercial vendors seeking federal markets for their services and products can search, monitor, and retrieve opportunities solicited by the federal contracting community.

⁹In March 2004, OMB announced the launch of a task force to examine five government lines of business: case management, federal health architecture, grants management, human resources management, and financial management.

¹⁰In April 2004, OMB issued an RFI to provide industry and government service providers with an opportunity to describe solutions and implementation approaches for achieving the goals of three of the lines of business (financial management, human resources, and grants management).

be issued seeking unique and innovative solutions. However, while OMB’s recent RFI represents one example of an announcement seeking innovative solutions, it does not represent a commitment to issuing such announcements and promoting innovative solutions on an ongoing basis. In contrast, establishing a dedicated program—as stipulated by the act—would represent such a commitment. Until OMB establishes such a program, it is at risk of not fully meeting the objective of this section to encourage contractor innovation and excellence in facilitating the development and enhancement of electronic government services and processes.

E-Government Report:
Title I, Section 101 (44
U.S.C. 3606)

Section 3606 of Title 44 requires the Director of OMB to develop an annual e-government status report and submit it to Congress (see table 5). The report is required to summarize information reported by agencies,¹¹ describe compliance with other goals and provisions of the act, and detail the operation of the E-Government Fund.

Table 5: Action Required under 44 U.S.C. 3606

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Submit an e-government status report to Congress	Director of OMB	March 1 of each year

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB has taken responsive action to address the requirements of this section. The agency submitted its first annual E-Government Act status report to Congress in March 2004. The report was based on individual agency e-government reports submitted to OMB in December 2003 and supplemented by fiscal year 2005 agency budget submissions, as appropriate. OMB’s e-government status report contained the required elements described above.

¹¹Section 202(g) of the E-Government Act of 2002 requires agencies to submit annual reports to OMB that address the status of e-government initiatives relevant to the agency. On November 21, 2003, OMB issued reporting instructions to the agencies and required submission of reports by December 15, 2003.

Electronic Signatures: Title II, Section 203

Section 203 of the E-Government Act addresses implementation of electronic signatures to enable secure electronic transactions with the government. The provision in this section that we reviewed¹² directs the GSA Administrator, supported by the Director of OMB, to establish a framework that allows for efficient interoperability among executive agencies when using electronic signatures, including processing of digital signatures. Table 6 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

Table 6: Action Required under Section 203 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Establish a framework to allow interoperability when using electronic signatures, including processing of digital signatures	GSA Administrator, supported by the Director of OMB	No deadline given

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

GSA, with the assistance of OMB and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), has responsive actions under way to address the requirements of this section. In December 2003, the Director of OMB issued guidance on electronic authentication¹³ to assist agencies in determining their authentication needs for electronic transactions, including the use of electronic signatures. The guidance directs agencies to conduct e-authentication risk assessments on electronic transactions to ensure a consistent approach across government. As a follow-up to OMB's guidance, in June 2004, NIST issued technical guidance on requirements for electronic transactions requiring authentication.¹⁴

¹²Section 203 (b), which we did not review, directs executive agencies to ensure that their methods for use and acceptance of electronic signatures are compatible with the relevant policies and procedures issued by the Director of OMB. The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (section 1703 of Pub. L. 105-277, 44 U.S.C. 3501 note) requires the Director of OMB to develop procedures for the use and acceptance of electronic signatures.

¹³Office of Management and Budget, *Electronic Authentication Guidance for Federal Agencies*, Memorandum M-04-04 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 16, 2003).

¹⁴National Institute of Standards and Technology, *Electronic Authentication Guideline*, Special Publication 800-63 (Gaithersburg, Md.: June 2004).

OMB reported in its fiscal year 2003 e-government report to Congress that the activities of the e-Authentication initiative, managed by GSA, begin to meet the requirements of section 203 in establishing a framework to allow interoperability. The e-Authentication initiative is intended to minimize the burden on businesses, the public, and government when obtaining Internet services by providing a secure infrastructure for online transactions. The initiative is currently focused on setting a framework of policies and standards for agencies to use in procuring commercial products to meet their authentication needs. In July 2004, the initiative released documentation on its technical approach, which is based on an architectural framework that allows multiple protocols and federation schemes to be supported over time.¹⁵ The technical approach includes provisions for the use of electronic signatures when conducting electronic transactions.

Federal Internet Portal: Title II, Section 204

Section 204 of the E-Government Act requires the Director of OMB to work with the GSA Administrator to maintain and promote an integrated Internet-based system that provides the public with access to government information and services (see table 7). To the extent practicable, the federal Internet portal is to be designed and operated according to specific criteria; for example, the portal is to provide information and services directed to key groups (e.g., citizens, businesses, other governments), endeavor to make Internet-based services relevant to a given citizen activity available from a single point, integrate information according to function or topic, and consolidate access to federal information with Internet-based information and services provided by state, local, and tribal governments.

¹⁵General Services Administration, *Technical Approach for the Authentication Service Component Version 1.0 .0* (Washington, D.C.: June 28, 2004).

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Table 7: Actions Required under Section 204 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Maintain and promote an integrated Internet-based system that provides the public with access to government information and services	Director of OMB working with the GSA Administrator	No deadline given

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

GSA has taken responsive action to address the requirements of this section. As indicated in OMB's fiscal year 2003 report to Congress, FirstGov.gov serves as the federal Internet portal prescribed under section 204. FirstGov.gov was launched in September 2000 as an interagency initiative, managed by GSA and supported and assisted by OMB and federal agencies. With this support and assistance, GSA established the portal to provide the public with access to U.S. government information and services, and GSA has maintained and promoted it since that time.

The portal's design and operation generally adhere to the criteria established by section 204. For example, one of the ways the portal organizes its content is by key group, including citizens, businesses, nonprofits, federal employees, and other governments (state, local, and tribal). FirstGov.gov also organizes content according to online services rather than organization; this allows the public to conduct business with the government via the Internet without having to know how the government is organized. According to the FirstGov.gov program manager, many citizens do not know what services are federal versus state or local, and so FirstGov.gov searches not only federal Web sites, but also state sites. In addition, through its browse feature, FirstGov.gov links to state, tribal, and local government home pages, as well as state services such as departments of motor vehicles and state lottery pages. Table 8 provides usage statistics for Firstgov.gov.

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Table 8: Usage Statistics for FirstGov.gov, Fiscal Years 2002–2004

Fiscal year	Unique visitors	Page views	Sites that link to FirstGov
2002	33 million	91 million	77,000
2003	63 million	176 million	129,000
2004 ^a	70 million	200 million	209,000

Source: GAO compilation of GSA-provided data.

^aUsage statistics for 2004 are projected.

GSA has several activities under way to promote the portal, including a nationwide television public service advertising campaign that began in June 2003 to educate citizens on how to find and use the information on FirstGov.gov. GSA officials estimate that the campaign has been used in 62 percent of the nation’s television markets. In June 2004, GSA’s Office of Citizen Services and Communications launched a public service advertising campaign to encourage citizens to take advantage of federal information and services through FirstGov.gov and 1-800-FED-INFO. The campaign includes a television public service announcement, prerecorded radio messages, and print advertisements for magazines and newspapers.

**Federal Courts: Title II,
Section 205**

Section 205 of the E-Government Act promotes public Internet access to federal court information. By April 2005, individual courts are required to establish and maintain Web sites to provide public access to specific types of information, such as location and contact information, court rules, case docket information, and opinions. In addition, the courts are required to make any documents filed electronically available to the public by April 2007. Privacy and security rules are to be established by the Supreme Court to protect electronically filed documents; however, the Judicial Conference may issue interim rules until the Supreme Court issues final rules. Finally, individual courts may defer compliance with the requirements of section 205 by submitting a notification to the Administrative Office of the Courts. Table 9 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

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Table 9: Actions Required under Section 205 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Establish a Web site	Individual courts	April 17, 2005
Provide access to electronic filings	Individual courts	April 17, 2007
Issue interim rules to address privacy and security relating to electronic filing and public availability of documents	Judicial Conference	No deadline given
Issue final rules to address privacy and security relating to electronic filing and public availability of documents	The Supreme Court	No deadline given
Report to Congress on the adequacy of the Supreme Court's final rules to protect privacy and security	Judicial Conference	1 year after Supreme Court's rules take effect; every 2 years thereafter
Report to Congress on notifications submitted to defer compliance with any requirements from section 205	Judicial Conference	April 17, 2004; every year thereafter

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

The federal courts have made progress establishing individual Web sites for the circuit, district, appellate, and bankruptcy courts, as required by this section of the act. Officials from the Administrative Office of the Courts reported that as of June 2004, all 198 courts had established individual Web sites, 10 months before the April 2005 deadline. Court officials further reported that individual courts were making progress providing the information stipulated in the act on their Web sites.

Court officials reported that as of August 2004, 128 of the 198 courts had provided public Internet access to their electronic filings, in advance of the April 2007 deadline. In addition, court officials reported that district and bankruptcy courts will provide public Internet access to electronic filings by September 2005, and appellate courts will provide such access by 2006.

To address privacy and security concerns, in September 2003, the Judicial Conference adopted a policy permitting remote public access to criminal case file documents to be the same as public access at courthouses, with a requirement that filers remove personal data identifiers from documents filed electronically or on paper. While the act does not specify a deadline

for the Supreme Court to issue final rules to protect privacy and security, federal court officials expect the Supreme Court to prescribe such rules by 2007. As required by the act, 1 year after the final rules take effect, and then every 2 years thereafter, the Judicial Conference will be responsible for submitting a report to Congress on the adequacy of the final rules to protect privacy and security.

To date, no notifications deferring compliance with the requirements of section 205 have been submitted to the Administrative Office of the Courts. However, the Judicial Conference submitted a report to Congress, dated April 2, 2004, noting that because the statutory deadlines for the establishment of the individual courts' Web sites and access to electronic filings (April 2005 and April 2007, respectively) have not passed, there are no notifications to report.

Regulatory Agencies: Title II, Section 206

Section 206 of the E-Government Act is aimed at enhancing public participation in government by electronic means and improving performance in the development and issuance of agency regulations through the use of information technology. This section, in part, calls for agencies, to the extent practicable, to accept submissions electronically (e.g., comments submitted on proposed rules) and to make electronic dockets—the full set of material related to a rule—publicly available online. The Director of OMB is charged with establishing a timetable for agencies to implement these requirements in its first annual report to Congress on implementation of the act. Table 10 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

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Table 10: Actions Required under Section 206 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
In rulemaking proceedings, to the extent practicable, provide for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electronic submission of comments • electronic dockets to be made publicly available online 	Federal agencies	Timetable for agency compliance to be established by the Director of OMB
Establish a timetable for agency compliance with section 206	Director of OMB	By the first annual report to Congress required under 44 U.S.C. 3606

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have actions under way to address the rulemaking requirements of this section. OMB designated the e-Rulemaking initiative, managed by EPA, as the vehicle for addressing these requirements of section 206. In January 2003, www.regulations.gov was launched, which enables citizens and businesses to search for and respond electronically¹⁶ to proposed rules open for comment in the *Federal Register*.¹⁷ The ability to search full rulemaking dockets—the complete set of publicly available material (i.e., economic analyses, models, etc.) associated with a proposed rule—is not yet available; its availability is contingent on the development of a governmentwide electronic docket system.

In its fiscal year 2003 report to Congress, OMB established a goal of completing migrations to the common federal docket management system by September 2005, with agencies beginning migrations to the central system in September 2004. According to the e-Rulemaking director, this timetable is contingent on funding. The director stated that an operational

¹⁶In cases where agencies accept only paper submissions, www.regulations.gov allows a user to fill out a Web form and print comments, and it provides a mailing address to the user for mailing the comments directly to the agency. Even if an agency accepts electronic submissions, a user has the option to fill out the Web form and mail the comment directly to the agency.

¹⁷For a more detailed examination of the first phase of this initiative, see GAO, *Electronic Rulemaking: Efforts to Facilitate Public Participation Can Be Improved*, [GAO-03-901](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2003).

version of the electronic docketing application would be ready by September 2005.

**Accessibility, Usability,
and Preservation of
Government
Information: Title II,
Section 207**

Section 207 of the E-Government Act requires the Director of OMB to establish an Interagency Committee on Government Information (ICGI) to develop recommendations on the categorization of government information and public access to electronic information. The Director of OMB is to issue guidance for agency Web sites and establish a public domain directory of federal government Web sites. Further, OMB is required to ensure the development and maintenance of a governmentwide repository and Web site that integrates information about research and development funded by the federal government. The ICGI is to submit recommendations to the Director of OMB on policies to improve reporting and dissemination of information related to research performed by federal agencies and federally funded development centers. Table 11 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

Table 11: Actions Required under Section 207 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Establish an Interagency Committee on Government Information (ICGI)	Director of OMB	June 17, 2003
Submit recommendations to OMB on the adoption of standards for categorizing and indexing government information	ICGI	December 17, 2004
Issue policies based on the above ICGI recommendation	Director of OMB	December 17, 2005
Submit recommendations to the Director of OMB and the Archivist on the adoption of policies and procedures for applying the Federal Records Act to government information on the Internet and other electronic records	ICGI	December 17, 2004
Issue policies based on the ICGI's recommendation for the above	Archivist	December 17, 2005
Develop guidance for agency Web sites	Director of OMB	December 17, 2004
Establish a public domain directory of public federal government Web sites	Director of OMB	December 17, 2004

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Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Develop and maintain a governmentwide repository and Web site of research and development funded by the federal government	Director of OMB, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy	No deadline given
Submit recommendations to the Director of OMB on policies to improve reporting and dissemination of information related to research performed by federal agencies and federally funded development centers	ICGI, working with the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy	June 17, 2004

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

Although OMB and the ICGI have taken steps toward complying with many of the provisions of this section, no significant action has been taken on one of them. Among the steps toward compliance is OMB's establishment of the ICGI on June 17, 2003; the committee consists of representatives from the National Archives and Records Administration, representatives of agency CIOs, and other relevant officers from the executive branch. The ICGI consists of an Executive Committee under the auspices of the CIO Council, as well as four working groups: Categorization of Government Information, Electronic Records Policy, Web Content Management, and E-Gov Act Access. The E-Gov Act Access working group was tasked with addressing the requirements of section 213 (community technology centers) and section 215 (disparities in access to the Internet). The Executive Committee is co-chaired by OIRA's IPT Branch Chief and the Department of Commerce CIO.

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ICGI's working groups have made progress toward meeting the deadlines for developing the various recommendations prescribed in section 207. In August 2004, the Categorization of Government Information working group published for public comment a recommendation for search interoperability, in preparation for the required December 2004 submission of recommendations to OMB. In June 2004, the Electronic Records Policy working group, tasked with developing recommendations on the application of the Federal Records Act to government information on the Internet and other electronic records, released a report on barriers to effective management of government information on the Internet and other electronic records.¹⁸ The Web Content Management working group is assisting OMB with its responsibilities to issue guidance on standards for agency Web sites and establish a public domain directory of federal government Web sites. In June 2004, this working group submitted a report to OMB on recommended policies and guidelines for federal public Web sites.¹⁹ As for establishment of the public domain directory and subject taxonomies, the working group intends to build on the existing directory and taxonomies of the federal Internet portal prescribed under section 204.

OMB has not yet taken significant action to ensure the development and maintenance of a repository and Web site of information about research and development funded by the federal government, as required by the act. In its fiscal year 2003 report to Congress, OMB reported that an analysis had been conducted of the National Science Foundation's Research and Development in the United States (RaDiUS) database system and that the system was closely aligned with the act's requirements. However, OMB also said it had not yet determined whether RaDiUS would serve as the repository required by the act. Until OMB decides on a specific course of action, it may not fully meet the objective of section 207 to improve the methods by which government information, including information on the Internet, is organized, preserved, and made accessible to the public.

According to the executive sponsor of the Web Content Standards working group, the ICGI has addressed the requirement to make recommendations on policies to improve reporting and dissemination of federal research

¹⁸Electronic Records Policy Working Group, Interagency Committee on Government Information, *Barriers to the Effective Management of Government Information on the Internet and Other Electronic Records* (Washington, D.C.: June 2004).

¹⁹Interagency Committee on Government Information, *Recommended Policies and Guidelines for Federal Public Websites* (Washington, D.C.: June 9, 2004).

results in its June 2004 report on recommended policies and guidelines for federal public Web sites.

Privacy Provisions: Title II, Section 208

Section 208 of the E-Government Act is aimed at ensuring sufficient protection for the privacy of personal information as agencies implement electronic government. Section 208 requires the agencies to prepare a privacy impact assessment (PIA), which is an analysis of how information is handled in order to determine risks and examine protections for systems that collect information in a personally identifiable form (that is, information that could identify a particular person). Also, the act requires the Director of OMB to develop and issue guidance for completing the PIA. In addition, the Director of OMB is to develop guidance for privacy notices on agency Web sites accessed by the public. Finally, section 208 states that the Director of OMB is to issue guidance requiring agencies to translate privacy policies into a standardized machine-readable format. Table 12 summarizes the deliverables required by this provision.

Table 12: Actions Required under Section 208 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Develop PIA guidance	Director of OMB	No deadline given
Develop guidance for privacy notices on agency Web sites used by the public	Director of OMB	No deadline given
Develop guidance for machine-readable privacy policies	Director of OMB	No deadline given

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB has taken responsive action to address the requirements of this section. In September 2003, OMB issued guidance on implementing the privacy provisions of Section 208 that included requirements for PIAs as well as privacy policies for Web sites. OMB requires that agencies report compliance with the PIA and Web site privacy policy requirements in their agency-specific annual e-gov reports. In addition, OMB has built privacy compliance requirements into the budget process by requiring agencies to conduct a PIA for each major information technology system. Other efforts made by OMB to oversee agency PIA development include speaking engagements, agency-specific meetings, and workshops. Rules for agency Web site privacy policies including notices were also outlined in OMB's

privacy implementation guidance and took effect on December 15, 2003. Finally, the guidance document included requirements for translating Web site privacy policies into standardized machine-readable format.

**IT Workforce
 Development: Title II,
 Section 209**

Section 209 of the E-Government Act requires the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in consultation with OMB, GSA, and the CIO Council, to conduct activities aimed at improving the skills of the federal IT workforce. OPM is required to develop governmentwide policies so that executive agencies can promote the development of performance standards for training as well as uniform implementation of workforce development requirements. OPM is also required to submit a report to Congress on the establishment of an IT training program. Additionally, OPM is required to establish procedures for administration of an IT Exchange Program, report to Congress on existing IT Exchange Programs, and submit biennial reports to Congress on the operation of such programs. Table 13 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

Table 13: Actions Required under Section 209 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Conduct activities aimed at improving the skills of the federal IT workforce (i.e., analyze the personnel needs of the federal government related to IT and identify where current training does not satisfy the needs of the federal workforce)	OPM, in consultation with OMB, the CIO Council, and Administrator of GSA	No deadline given
Issue governmentwide policies to promote the development of performance standards and uniform implementation of IT workforce development by executive agencies	OPM, in coordination with OMB	No deadline given
Submit report to Congress on establishment of a governmentwide IT training program	OPM, in consultation with the CIO Council and the Administrator of GSA	January 1, 2003
Prescribe regulations for the administration of the IT Exchange Program	OPM	No deadline given
Submit report to Congress on existing exchange programs	OPM	December 17, 2003

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Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Submit report to Congress on the status of the IT Exchange Program	OPM	Not later than April 30 and October 31 of each year

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OPM, GSA, and the CIO Council all have efforts under way in IT workforce development that address the requirements of this section of the act. These efforts include baseline activities such as surveying the personnel needs of the federal government related to IT as well as information resources management. In a June 2004 report,²⁰ we highlighted that the CIO Council's Workforce and Human Capital for IT Committee, in consultation with OPM and OMB, developed the Clinger-Cohen Assessment (CCA) survey.²¹ This survey was conducted via the Internet in September 2003 to collect information regarding federal employee IT competencies, skills, certifications, and specialized job activities. The data collected by the CCA survey provided agencies with an "as is" IT workforce baseline for use in developing IT training programs that would close the gap between the current and necessary federal IT skills. OPM officials reported that the survey would be performed every year to give agencies a measure of their progress in closing skills gaps.

As we reported in June 2004,²² OPM has not yet issued policies that encourage the executive agencies to promote the development of performance standards for workforce training. However, OPM has established milestones for the development and issuance of such policies and estimates that guidance will be communicated via the CIO Council and OPM's Human Capital Officers in November 2004.

In August 2004, OPM issued its report on the establishment of a governmentwide IT training program. The report establishes an IT framework based on the Clinger-Cohen "Core Competencies" developed by the CIO Council. The E-Government Act was enacted on December 17,

²⁰GAO, *Information Technology: Training Can Be Enhanced by Greater Use of Leading Practices*, GAO-04-791 (Washington, D.C.: June 2004). This report also provides more detailed information on governmentwide IT workforce development efforts.

²¹For more detailed information on the survey results, see CIO Council, *Clinger-Cohen Assessment Survey (2003) Analysis of Survey Results* (Washington, D.C.: May 2004).

²²GAO-04-791.

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2002, leaving OPM approximately 2 weeks to prepare the required report. Consequently, OPM officials instead provided an interim report to Congress in June 2003 that provided a descriptive view of existing governmentwide IT training programs, noting that a more comprehensive report would be provided at a later date.

In January 2004, OPM published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* on the establishment of an IT Exchange Program. OPM officials reported that they reviewed public comments and drafted a final rule but could not give an estimate as to when the final rule would be published. As required by the act, OPM provided Congress with a report on existing exchange programs in December 2003. In addition, OPM submitted reports to Congress in April 2003 and April 2004, both of which stated that the IT Exchange Program had not yet been established.

**State and Local
Government Use of
Federal Supply
Schedules: Title II,
Section 211**

Section 211 of the E-Government Act provides for the use of Federal Supply Schedules²³ by state and local governments for the acquisition of IT. The GSA Administrator is charged with establishing procedures to govern the use of Federal Supply Schedules by state and local governments. The E-Government Administrator is required to report to Congress on the implementation and effects of state and local government use of these schedules. Table 14 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

²³The Federal Supply Schedule Program, which is directed and managed by GSA, is designed to provide federal agencies with a simplified process for acquiring commonly used commercial supplies and services at prices associated with volume buying.

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Table 14: Actions Required under Section 211 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Establish procedures to govern the use of Federal Supply Schedules for the acquisition of IT by state or local governments	Administrator of GSA	January 17, 2003
Report to Congress on the implementation and effects of the use of Federal Supply Schedules for the acquisition of IT by state or local governments	Administrator of the Office of E-Government	December 31, 2004

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

GSA has taken responsive action to address the requirements of this section. On May 18, 2004, GSA issued its final rule authorizing acquisition of IT by state and local governments through Federal Supply Schedules.²⁴ Although the act required that the procedures be issued by January 17, 2003, GSA did not finalize the new procedures until May 2004. The agency had issued a proposed rule to implement the procedures on January 23, 2003, and an interim rule on May 7, 2003. GSA officials noted that the use of these schedules on the part of vendors as well as state and local governments is voluntary. The deadline for the required implementation report has not yet passed; OMB officials reported that they plan to report to Congress in December 2004.

**Integrated Reporting
Study and Pilot
Projects: Title II,
Section 212**

Section 212 of the E-Government Act requires the Director of OMB to oversee a study and report to Congress on progress toward integrating federal information systems across agencies. In addition, in order to provide input to the study, the Director of OMB is required to designate up to five pilot projects to encourage integrated collection and management of data and interoperability of federal information systems. Table 15 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

²⁴*Federal Register*, Volume 69, No. 96 (Tuesday, May 18, 2004), 28,063–28,066.

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Table 15: Actions Required under Section 212 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Designate no more than five pilot projects to encourage integrated collection and management of data and interoperability of federal information systems	Director of OMB, in consultation with agencies	No deadline given
Submit a study and report to Congress on the progress toward integrating federal information systems across agencies	Director of OMB, in consultation with agencies	December 17, 2005

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB has actions under way to address the requirements of this section. In March 2004, OMB announced the launch of a task force to examine five government lines of business: case management, federal health architecture, grants management, human resource management, and financial management. OMB officials stated that the lines of business initiatives also serve as the pilot projects required under section 212. Similar to the management of the 25 e-government initiatives, the lines of business initiatives are to be led by agencies designated as managing partners. The managing partners for all five initiatives are to submit business cases in September 2004 for the fiscal year 2006 budget cycle.

OMB officials also reported that the study they are required to conduct under section 212 is ongoing; the deadline for this report has not yet passed. OMB officials stated that their study will address the lines of business initiatives, as well as the Federal Enterprise Architecture.²⁵ OMB officials said they plan to report on the results of the study via the annual E-Government Act implementation report to Congress.

²⁵ According to OMB, the purpose of the Federal Enterprise Architecture, among other things, is to provide a common frame of reference or taxonomy for agencies' individual enterprise architecture efforts and their planned and ongoing investment activities.

Community
 Technology Centers:
 Title II, Section 213

Section 213 of the E-Government Act requires the Administrator of the Office of E-Government to ensure that a study is conducted to evaluate the best practices of community technology centers, which provide Internet access to the public, and submit a report to Congress on the findings of this study by April 2005. In addition, this section requires the E-Government Administrator, in consultation with other agencies, to develop an online tutorial that explains how to access government information and services on the Internet. Table 16 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

Table 16: Actions Required under Section 213 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Conduct a study and submit a report to Congress evaluating the best practices of community technology centers	Administrator of the Office of E-Government	April 17, 2005
Develop an online tutorial that explains how to access government information and services on the Internet and provides a guide to available online resources	Administrator of the Office of E-Government, in consultation with the Department of Education and the Institute of Museum and Library Services	No deadline given

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB and other agencies have actions under way to address the requirements of this section of the act. According to a GSA official, OMB assigned the responsibility for section 213 to a newly created E-Gov Act Access working group established under the Interagency Committee on Government Information. The E-Gov Act Access working group consists of a cross section of agencies with an interest in access issues and includes representation from agencies such as the Department of Education, the Government Printing Office, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. According to the working group's co-chair, the group plans to meet the April 2005 statutory deadline for the required study evaluating the best practices of community technology centers. Additionally, the group plans to consider options for developing an online tutorial in December 2004.

Enhancing Crisis
 Management through
 Advanced Information
 Technology: Title II,
 Section 214

Section 214 of the E-Government Act addresses the coordination and availability of information across multiple access channels and improving the use of IT in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. A study is required to evaluate the use of IT for the enhancement of crisis preparedness, response, and consequence management of natural and manmade disasters. Also required is a report to Congress on the findings of the study as well as recommendations. Finally, the Administrator of the Office of E-Government is to initiate pilot projects in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or report other activities to Congress that involve maximizing the use of IT in disaster management. Table 17 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

Table 17: Actions Required under Section 214 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Conduct a study on the enhancement of crisis response	Administrator of the Office of E-Government in consultation with FEMA	March 17, 2003
Submit a report on the study including findings and recommendations	Administrator of the Office of E-Government	2 years after contract entered into for the study
Initiate pilot projects or report to Congress on other activities	Administrator of the Office of E-Government in consultation with FEMA	No deadline given

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

OMB and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have not yet taken actions that are fully responsive to the requirements of this section of the act. A study provided by DHS officials to address enhancement of crisis and response did not contain the required contents as stipulated in section 214. The study was conducted by the MITRE Corporation for Project SAFECOM²⁶ in December 2002 and completed in March 2003. DHS officials stated that the study addresses the section 214 requirement to conduct a study on enhancement of crisis response. However, our analysis indicates that the study in general did not address the use of IT to enhance crisis preparedness, response, and consequence management of natural and

²⁶For additional information, refer to GAO, *Project SAFECOM: Key Cross-Agency Emergency Communications Effort Requires Stronger Collaboration*, [GAO-04-494](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 16, 2004).

man-made disasters, as required by section 214. Specifically, the study did not include a research and implementation strategy for effective use of IT in crisis response and consequence management. The act states that this strategy should include the more effective use of technologies; management of IT research initiatives; and incorporation of research advances into the information communication systems of FEMA and other federal, state, and local agencies responsible for crisis preparedness, response, and consequence management. Furthermore, the study did not discuss opportunities for research and development on enhanced technologies for potential improvement as determined during the course of the study. OMB officials agreed that the study conducted by Project SAFECOM did not address the requirements of the act. OMB officials stated that a new study would be conducted to meet these requirements. Until the required elements of the study are addressed, OMB may not be able to make a fully informed response to the act's requirement that it report on findings and recommendations for improving the use of IT in coordinating and facilitating information on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

According to OMB officials, pilot projects expected to enhance the goal of maximizing the use of IT are not planned. Instead, the focus of OMB's efforts has been on other activities, such as the Disaster Management²⁷ and SAFECOM programs, which work with industry communities to improve the requirements and develop standards for information sharing and coordination of responsiveness. OMB officials stated that they would determine at a future time whether initiation of pilot projects is necessary.

Disparities in Access to the Internet: Title II, Section 215

Section 215 of the E-Government Act requires the GSA Administrator to contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a study on disparities in Internet access for online government services. GSA is to submit a report to Congress on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study by December 2004. The report is required to address (1) how disparities in Internet access influence the effectiveness of online government services, (2) how the increase in online government services is influencing the disparities in Internet access and how technology development or diffusion trends may offset such adverse

²⁷Disaster Management is a program managed by the Department of Homeland Security that provides federal, state, and local emergency managers with online access to disaster management-related information, as well as planning and response tools.

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influences, and (3) related societal effects arising from the interplay of disparities in Internet access and the increase in online government services. Table 18 summarizes the actions required by this provision.

Table 18: Actions Required under Section 215 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Conduct a study with NAS via the National Research Council on disparities in Internet access for online government services	GSA Administrator	March 17, 2003
Report to Congress on the study setting forth the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the National Research Council	GSA Administrator	December 17, 2004

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

GSA has not fully addressed the requirements of this section, because it has not yet commissioned the required NAS study on disparities in Internet access for online government services. Although the act authorizes \$950,000 to be spent on the study and report, a GSA official stated that no money had yet been appropriated. GSA officials reported that they were unable to request funds as part of the fiscal year 2003 or 2004 budget cycles because the act passed in December 2002, after fiscal year 2003 had begun and the deadline for fiscal year 2004 agency budget submissions (August 2002) had passed. Although GSA officials did not provide any information regarding their actions for fiscal year 2005, they reported that the agency had requested the funds authorized in the act for the fiscal year 2006 budget cycle. Pending appropriation of the requested funds, GSA plans to enter into a contract with NAS for the study, but notes that the report on the study will not be completed within the statutory deadline of December 2004.

In keeping with the purpose of this section, GSA officials and the Interagency Committee on Government Information's E-Gov Act Access working group are working on compiling an interim study based on existing research on disparities in access to the Internet. The existing research includes, for example, Hart-Teeter poll results and Pew Internet and American Life Project studies. This compilation report is expected to be completed by December 2004 and submitted to Congress in OMB's annual report to Congress on the implementation status of the act.

Common Protocols for Geographic Information Systems: Title II, Section 216

The purpose of section 216 of the E-Government Act is to reduce redundant data collection and information and promote collaboration and use of standards for government geographic information (see table 19). An interagency group is to establish common protocols that maximize the degree to which unclassified geographic information from various sources can be made electronically compatible and accessible, as well as promote the development of interoperable geographic information systems technologies.

Table 19: Action Required under Section 216 of the E-Government Act

Action	Responsibility	Statutory deadline
Facilitate the development of common protocols for the development, acquisition, maintenance, distribution, and application of geographic information	Administrator of the Office of E-Government, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, and working with the Director of OMB through an interagency group	No deadline given

Source: GAO analysis of the E-Gov Act.

A variety of actions are under way to address the requirements of this section of the act. According to OMB, the interagency group referred to in the act is the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), which was organized in 1990 under OMB Circular A-16. The FGDC is intended to promote the coordinated use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis. The FGDC is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Interior, with the Deputy Director for Management at OMB serving as Vice-Chair, and is made up of representatives from 19 cabinet-level and independent federal agencies.²⁸

OMB also established the Geospatial One-Stop²⁹ initiative in 2002 to facilitate the development of common protocols for geographic information systems by bringing together various stakeholders to

²⁸The E-Government Act requires that NIST have representation within the interagency group. However, NIST is not directly involved in the interagency group, but representatives are able to participate via the Department of Commerce, which houses NIST.

²⁹For more information regarding Geospatial One-Stop, refer to GAO, *Geospatial Information: Better Coordination and Oversight Could Help Reduce Duplicative Investments*, [GAO-04-824T](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 23, 2004).

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coordinate effective and efficient ways to align geographic information. In addition, the purpose of the Geospatial One-Stop is to make it faster, easier, and less expensive for all levels of government to obtain necessary geospatial data in order to make programmatic decisions.

Actions taken by FGDC to promote collaboration include creating a standards working group made up of federal and state agencies, academia, and the private sector. The working group has developed, and FGDC has endorsed, a number of different geospatial standards, including metadata standards, and it is currently developing additional standards. The committee's working group also coordinates with national and international standards bodies to ensure that potential users support its work.

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