

# Newsletters

## November 2014 Newsletter



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### Vermont's Open Data Portal

by Harry Bell



The [Open Data Handbook](#) defines Open Data as data that can be freely used, reused and redistributed by anyone - subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and share alike. Government entities tend to be the custodians of a great deal of data that belongs to the public and is generally “open” in this sense. Vermont

is no exception, but until recently there has been no organized way to easily make such data available. Such data has historically been provided as a result of a public records request or on an infrequent basis via downloadable spreadsheets uploaded to state Websites.

In October 2014 the state launched a new Open Data Portal using software created by the Socrata Corporation. The portal is now available for use by any Vermont State entity that has a need to share data. The possibilities are limited only by the data that is available. During a small pilot project over the last year this system has been used to:

- provide transparency for the State's finances
- share locations of libraries
- publish a map showing day care providers with vacancies
- provide data on traffic accidents

As well as allowing the open sharing of data the site also includes custom charts, maps and views of the data provided. Not only that but any person accessing the site can create an ID and create their own views of the data for their own use or to share with others. The service also allows direct download of data in various useful formats including Excel spreadsheets and CSV files. Each data set is also provided with an API so that any developer can access the data via Web based applications or mobile apps.

Another exciting feature of the system is that it allows users to create views of selected records and fields, charts based on the data and maps based addresses in the data. Once these items are created they can be placed into existing Webpages so the data can be shown in context with other related information. The placement works a great deal like embedding a YouTube video into a Website. Once the items are added to the page they will automatically update as the data is modified. So it is only necessary to create a chart, graph or map once.

Feel free to visit the Vermont Open Data Portal at [data.vermont.gov](http://data.vermont.gov). Anyone can create a Socrata ID by clicking on the "Sign Up" link at the top of the page. The contents of the site can be viewed either by using the menu at the right that provides access by topic or by clicking on the "Catalog" link at the top of the page. If you have any questions or want to use the site to host your own data please email the DII Director of Web Services at [Harry.Bell@state.vt.us](mailto:Harry.Bell@state.vt.us) . We are actively pursuing data sets to include in the portal so don't hesitate to get in touch.

## New DII Website Launch

by Harry Bell



On November 17<sup>th</sup> the Department of Information and Innovation launched a redesigned Website. The domain name will remain the same ([dii.vermont.gov](http://dii.vermont.gov)) but the site will be markedly different. We hope the new design makes it easier for state staff to locate information more easily and to make working with DII more convenient.

As a result of the redesign any existing links to the site will likely be broken, so if you have bookmarked pages or if you manage a Website that links to the DII site you should update those items with the new URLs. If you have any questions or comments on the new site you can forward them to either Harry Bell ([Harry.Bell@state.vt.us](mailto:Harry.Bell@state.vt.us)) or Angela Leclerc ([Angela.Leclerc@state.vt.us](mailto:Angela.Leclerc@state.vt.us)).

## Risky Behavior

by Kris Rowley



*“In the past two years, more than 250 million confidential records were reported lost or stolen. And those losses do not always originate from external threats. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, innocently or maliciously, employees engage in behaviors that heighten the risk of data loss.”* <sup>11</sup>

As the use of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and devices at home (PC’s, laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.) by state employee’s increases, the risks to state information also increase. Improved computing power, work-from-home programs, and BYOD options provide an increased ease of access to sensitive information. For instance, a typical smartphone can now hold 6,000 Microsoft Word documents or 720,000 emails whereas a few short years ago the term mobile device was unheard of.

It is important to remember that the increased connectivity of the State of Vermont workforce facilitates increased productivity but also carries additional risks. As an example, if an employee has increased or elevated access to a number of state systems, the risks inherent with their account increase significantly.

*“Sensitive information is defined as information that is protected against unwarranted disclosure. Access to sensitive information should be safeguarded. Protection of sensitive information may be required for legal or ethical reasons, for issues pertaining to personal privacy, or for proprietary considerations.”* <sup>12</sup> (Examples are: PII (Personally Identifiable Information), Social Security Numbers, HIPAA data (Health information), IRS Tax data, Credit card information, Classified data, just to name a few. )

For employees who have elevated access privileges, care needs to be taken when logging into state networks and systems and handling sensitive state information. If the information contained in those systems and databases is protected, sensitive information, it should never be accessed from a home device without special provisions such as a remote access account (Citrix). With a remote access account, information is encrypted over the Internet, offering additional protection. If you access protected information from home as part of your job, you may want to discuss the use of one of these methods with your supervisor.

The best protection for yourself and state information is: if you do not need access to a system, then ask to have those privileges removed from your account. If you do not have access, it reduces the possible points of citizen information loss.

## Risks

People engage in behavior that risks the security of state information without realizing what they are doing. Some of these behaviors are listed below:

- It is strongly suggested that you do not access state systems on off state networks, such as from home and especially from public wifi networks, such as coffee shops. If you do not have proper protections in place, this behavior can introduce risks to state as well your own personal information, such as bank account information and health information you may have stored on your computer.
- Transferring files from a home device to a work computer that is not properly protected or maintained.
- Transferring information to a USB drive that is not encrypted. These drives are small and easily lost. Lost USB keys and laptops frequently represent one of the highest information risks to government information nationally.
- Failing to properly secure devices such as laptops and other portable devices that can be lost or stolen.
- Posting state information to non-state cloud sites such as Drop Box or Google Cloud. These sites are frequently not protected to the level that they need to be for sensitive information. Also, there is a loss of control of the information once they are posted “out in the cloud.”
- Not logging out of your computer when you leave it unattended.
- Misuse of passwords. This can mean sharing passwords with coworkers, writing down passwords and storing them in an easily accessible place, not using strong passwords or using the same password for all accounts.

### Security Future

It is the responsibility of every state employee to do their best to protect citizen’s information. Most of us try, but sometimes, security is inconvenient. Putting a password on smart phones, thinking up, remembering and using multiple, strong passwords for different accounts and devices, not logging onto a device on a public network to “just pass along a piece of information” when it is the easiest thing to do; these things can sometimes feel oppressive. However, in the long term, it is critical to protecting information at state as well as your own personal information.

Knowing where the policies and procedures for security are in case you have a question about the right thing to do is important. ([http://dii.vermont.gov/policy\\_planning\\_reporting/policy/security\\_policy](http://dii.vermont.gov/policy_planning_reporting/policy/security_policy).)

**Be safe out there!**

**If you see something that doesn't seem quite right, report it to a supervisor.**

**Computer security is our shared responsibility.**

[1] Data Leakage Worldwide: Common Risks and Mistakes Employees Make. CISCO

[2] Information Sensitivity: Wikipedia

## **Season's Haiku**

by Joe Ng



friends and family  
come together in season  
feasting as they share

turkey and stuffing  
velvety mashed potatoes  
green bean casserole

sweet potatoes, baked  
rosemary cranberry sauce  
pumpkin pie, ice cream

woodstove, warm glows, fire  
stories, kids, fun, joy, laughter  
thankful, love, we share

## LANDesk GO-Live – December 1, 2014

by Angela Leclerc, Director, Service Management



### **Mark your calendars!!**

On 12/1/2014 everyone will start using our new ticketing system. We have been conducting trainings during November 3 -14. User guides are available on our website; links are posted below.

The State of Vermont uses various means for requesting IT support. The merger of DII IT and AHS IT has led to combining multiple IT support ticketing systems into one system which will improve the customer experience. LANDesk “Request Support” is replacing both the AHS TrackIT system and the DII Footprints System.

LANDesk project status updates: [http://dii.vermont.gov/DII\\_Divisions/Customer/Customer\\_Support/Landesk](http://dii.vermont.gov/DII_Divisions/Customer/Customer_Support/Landesk)

LANDesk Training Information:

[http://dii.vermont.gov/DII\\_Divisions/Customer/Customer\\_Support/Landesk/training](http://dii.vermont.gov/DII_Divisions/Customer/Customer_Support/Landesk/training)

- Request Support Guide: <http://dii.vermont.gov/sites/dii/files/pdfs/End-User-Request-Guide.pdf>
- User Account Request Guide: <http://dii.vermont.gov/sites/dii/files/pdfs/User-Account-Request-Guide.pdf>

Note: Only authorized users are able to submit user requests. They have been identified by their managers and supervisors.

### **Employee Bio's Review**

by Peter Jaquith

*Over the past two years we have featured Employee BIO's from eleven members of our DII Team. We hope you'll enjoy this bi-annual review of some of DII's great team members.*



Angela Rouelle (VTHR) and husband Guy recently renovated their 1830's VT farmhouse in Woodbury. It has been a 7+ year project!



Claus Lund (EA) is originally from Denmark and has called VT home for the past 14 years. He says, *"I love the natural beauty of the state, the varied seasons, and the general attitude of the folks here. I don't foresee leaving this place."*



Frank Costantino (ERP) is an active tennis player in the USTA leagues as well as an accomplished trumpet player.



Kevin Nadzam (Networking) takes an annual family vacation to Acadia National Park and loves to go biking with his 4 yr. old son Isaac.



Martha Haley (EPMO) likes to vacation at Cape Cod almost every summer with her family. South Beach, downtown Chatham, Arnold's, the Orleans Playhouse, and Marion's Pie Shop are some of her favorite Cape Cod destinations.



Rhonda Boudreault (Desktop) is part of a military family; she, husband Mario (left) and a daughter Jennifer are all in the Air National Guard. Their anniversary happens to be 9/11 and they celebrated their 25th together in Iraq, his 4th tour, her first.



Nick Waringa (CISO) is restoring a **1951 International L-110 truck**. He purchased the truck in stock but worn condition and has made significant progress restoring it.



Jayna Guilford (EPMO) grew up in St. Croix and has been a certified SCUBA diver since 1994. She is also a dedicated EMT with the Waterbury Fire Dept.



Stephen Peterson (ERP) is an avid salt and freshwater fisherman. He has caught thousands of fish in his lifetime with a passion for the sport installed by his grandfather at a very young age.



Karen Canas is an IT Systems Manager with the Enterprise App and Server group. She has been a dedicated Vermont State employee for over 27 years!



Jon Welch (Networking and Telecom) recently retired from the US Air Force after 26 years of dedicated service to our country. During his travels he had the privilege to visit over 20 different countries.