

New Web site 'drills down' into government standards

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Protracted and, sometimes, fruitless searches for government-applied technical standards may soon be a thing of the past. A new Web site, Standards.Gov, provides businesses, other organizations and interested citizens with a direct portal to sources of information on the thousands of specifications that government agencies reference in regulations or use to guide their purchasing decisions.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) launched the new site to further the government's progress in using private-sector standards in lieu of agency-unique specifications, whenever practical. Under the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA), NIST leads and coordinates federal, state and local government efforts to increase use of voluntary consensus standards over in-house, proprietary standards.

From basic tutorials to a searchable database of standards referenced in federal regulations, the Web site offers a broad perspective on the government's complex standards landscape. Using Standards.Gov, visitors can quickly home in on their particular interests, be it standards incorporated into drinking water requirements, specifications for military equipment, guidelines for respiratory protection in the workplace or other topics.

Links to standards-related Web sites maintained by 12 federal departments and independent agencies are now featured on the site. This number is likely to grow as other governmental units follow suit and post

standards information pertinent to their missions and operations, says NIST's Kevin McIntyre, who led development of Standards.Gov.

In all, nearly 30 departments and agencies are members of the NIST-led Interagency Committee on Standards Policy (ICSP), responsible for implementing NTTAA requirements. Each year, these federal units report on their standards-related activities. NIST compiles and summarizes these submissions in annual reports that are available on Standards.Gov.

McIntyre says the new Web site continues to be a work in progress. He and his team welcome suggestions for improvements and new features to add. Recommendations and other comments can be submitted via the "contact us" page on the site.

To visit Standards.Gov, go to standards.gov/

Source: NIST

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