

State LMI shops dipping toes in social network pool

By Phil Ellsworth, State of Wyoming, Department of Employment, Research & Planning

In fall 2009, the Analyst Resource Center conducted a survey of database administrators that asked, among other things, whether the states were using or considering using social networking for LMI purposes. Two of 21 states that responded said they were using or developing the use of social networks, but a review of several states' workforce information sites suggests a burgeoning interest exists.

Although social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter might be best known as platforms that let people keep track of friends and celebrities, several states are looking at the sites' potential for distributing labor market information (LMI), and many are using social networks to connect job seekers with employers.

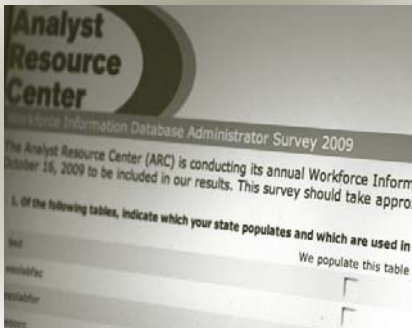
People who visit the WorkSource Oregon website (www.worksourceoregon.org), for example, will see a link to Twitter inviting them to "follow" the department's listings of job openings in a particular sector. The listings are sent via "tweets" – messages of 140 characters or less – which frequently contain links to websites with more information.

The Montana Jobs System, meanwhile, offers 23 Twitter feeds of job openings by community (<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/whatisrss.asp>). To receive these listings, a person must have a Twitter account, but accounts are free for both sender and recipient, which could make its use attractive to states wanting to increase contacts with LMI end users.

Government agencies are hardly alone in wanting to connect labor market and job information with end users. A search of the words "Wyoming" and "Jobs" on November 1 showed 26 tweets from the previous two days, of which 9 contained links to an Associated Press article based on a news release from the Research & Planning Section of the Wyoming Department of Employment. The individuals and businesses reposting the article had a combined 5,747 followers. The other 17 tweets contained links to advertising-supported websites carrying descriptions of job openings mentioned in the tweets.

New Mexico is another state developing a presence on social networks, but the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions is taking it several steps further, by

(Continued on page 3)



Thank you!

The results are in from the 2009 Workforce Information Database Administrator Survey and the LMI Director Survey. Thank you to those who participated. As we've said many times, your feedback, not only from the surveys, but throughout the year is critical in helping the ARC to provide the products and services states need. A brief summary of results can be found in this eNews.

Inside This Issue

Social Networking	1
Survey Results	2
ARC Meeting Notes	5

And the Survey Says

In October the Analyst Resource Center conducted its annual Workforce Information Database Administrator Survey. Following are some highlights. Detailed results will be posted on the ARC website in the near future.

(21 completed surveys; abridged responses below)

Tables causing the most problems or issues for DBAs:

QWI
LICENSE
EMPDB
INDUSTRY
PROGRAMS

Tables added or modified that are not part of the WID standard structure:

- Community-specific data for a profile of each municipality
- UICLAIMS—added “veteran” and “Highestgrd” fields
- IOMATRIX—added fields to accommodate all projections
- Oil production table
- Resources table to provide list of assistance programs for people exiting corrections system
- Publookup—a table used to cross reference publications listed on the delivery website
- Tables related to educational career clusters and pathways
- OID—occupations in demand
- PPI data
- Career clusters tables and crosswalk tables to O*NET/NAICS

- Governor’s clusters
- Pubref—a lookup table to ensure data validity
- Top50emp—50 largest employers data set
- Food stamps table

What data elements DBAs would like to see added:

- CES—All employees hours and earnings
- Benefit survey
- Career clusters and education pathways standardization

How has the ARC helped DBAs over the last year:

- Providing basic data table structure
- I went to the conference in St Louis and acquired new knowledge that has helped me in my job
- Source for LMI data
- Made it easier to share information with colleagues
- Provided timely, up-to-date information
- I use the infoUSA EMPDB table for a job searching application. The modification in the license agreement was critical to that end. I really appreciate the development usage of the table.
- Employer Database information
- NCSC has helped me with data files I was having trouble with.
- Provided calendar info of meetings and links for data resources.
- Definitions of database tables.
- Provide links to needed information.



WID hosted by third-party vendor?:

Yes 38%
No 62%

Database Management Software used for WID:

SQL 52%
Oracle 14%
FoxPro 19%
Other 14%

Upcoming Meeting

The next Analyst Resource Center Meeting is scheduled for:

December 1–3, 2009
Charleston, South Carolina

Social Networking... continued

(Continued from page 1)

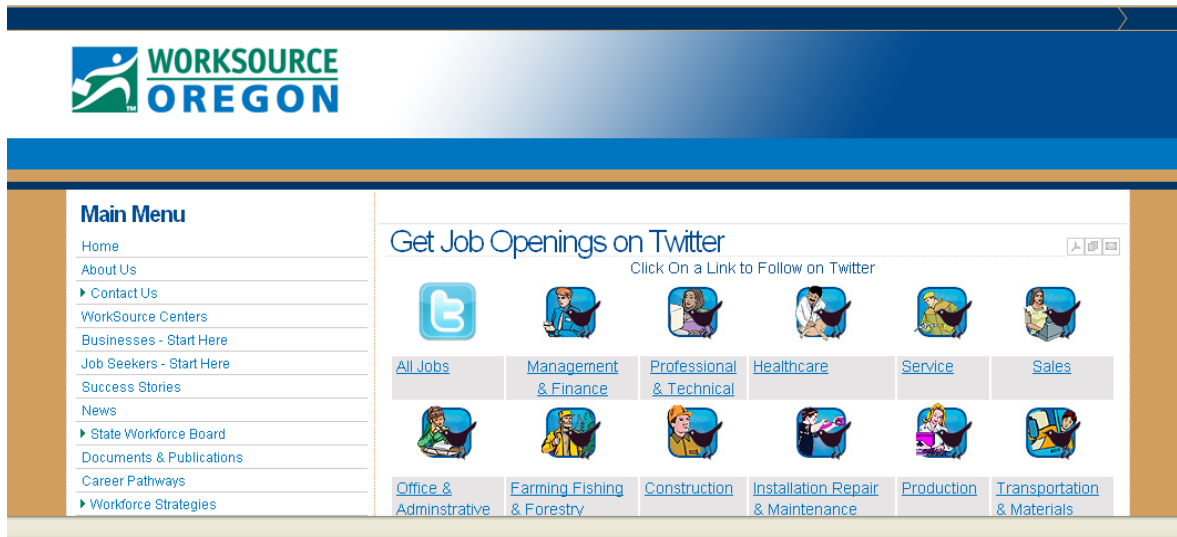
developing a network specifically for students. Suzan Reagan, labor market information webmaster for the Economic Research & Analysis Bureau, said the department is helping to develop an Electronic Student Management System to be branded Carve Your Path (ESMS-CYP) in partnership with the NM Public Education Department, the NM Department of Higher Education and The College Success Network. The ESMS-CYP will incorporate student assessments, grades, and scholastic standards and will allow students as early as sixth grade to plan their future in higher education and the workforce.

The social network part of the ESMS-CYP will allow high school students in the state to explore virtual careers via a game format, similar to Gaia.com or SecondLife. Participants will be able to learn more about various careers through the activities of their virtual selves, or avatars. The first year will see the development of a

functional system with a 3 minute interactive video on career exploration which is the pilot concept for the virtual game format. The College Success Network, a private nonprofit, will publish career exploration (labor market) information to Facebook and Twitter in conjunction with marketing the ESMS-CYP. Reagan said the partnership is key to solving one obstacle to social networking that many states face: state employees can't access social networks during work. Through the partnership, the department will provide the content, and the nonprofit can manage the tweets and updates.

Virginia's LMI office launched a Twitter account in mid-July, said Jeremy Deyo, project manager and database administrator for the Virginia Employment Commission. It currently has 35 followers, many of whom are reporters who want to know immediately when new labor market news is available. Some even

An October 19 article in the (St. Paul, Minn.) *Pioneer Press* stated, "Ninety-four percent of companies will continue to expand their online presence in social media, according to a recent survey of more than 400 companies conducted by Beeline Labs and the Society for New Communications Research." (www.twincities.com/watchdog/ci_13593578)



WorkSource Oregon's user-friendly Twitter links allow job seekers to subscribe to feeds based on industry type.

Social Networking... Continued

Arizona unemployment rate is steady at 9.1%. <http://bit.ly/3z0Ovq>

1:18 PM Oct 15th from web

Laid off? Want to pursue your dream? Attend the Arizona Entrepreneurship Conference - <http://azentrepreneurship.com>.

11:06 AM Oct 14th from web

Discover a vast range of resources and services available to new and emergent entrepreneurs - www.ideafunding.org.

11:05 AM Oct 14th from web

Tweets from the Arizona Department of Commerce cover a variety of topics, including Labor Market Information.

receive the tweets directly to their cell phone. "It's extremely fast for me to update it," he added.

Federal government agencies are already swimming in the social network pool, as can be seen on the NextGov.com website "The Feed: What Government is Twittering Now" (<http://www.nextgov.com/thefeed/>). Will all state LMI shops follow suit? Social networks are

unlikely to replace traditional methods of distributing LMI, but they're certainly changing the landscape, even if it comes 140 characters at a time.

Phil Ellsworth (pellsm@state.wy.us) is a publications and web editor for the Wyoming Department of Employment's Research & Planning section.



Federal government is increasingly seeing the benefit of social networks to "get the word out."

Would you like to be notified when we update our LMI website? Follow us on [twitter](#)

Visitors to Virginia's LMI website can stay up to date by clicking on a simple "follow us" link.

What's on your mind?

If you have a success (or lessons learned) experience regarding the use of Facebook or Twitter in delivering Labor Market Information that you would like to share in our next eNews—please email mskalberg@yahoo.com

ARC Meeting Notes—July 2009

Future Direction

Bob Cottrell asked the group to consider and discuss several key questions in regards to defining ARC's future direction:

1. What are the key accomplishments of the ARC?
2. What would happen if the group didn't exist?
3. Are there things that can be done to enhance ARC's core value?

Bob asked state representatives in attendance to encourage their LMI directors to attend future ARC meetings. States can choose to send both a technical (DBA) and policy (LMI Director) representative. He added that it would be productive to get back to a more regular meeting schedule (3 times per year).

ETA Update

Sam Wright provided an update on ETA (Employment and Training Administration) activities. He shared handouts of an ETA activity update presentation for a WIC meeting that was given by Jan Sten, Division Chief, Office of Workforce Investment, Division of Workforce System Support, ETA. Sam elaborated on the current focus of ETA activities, including creating jobs, re-employment, green jobs, projections, skills identification and skills projections.

ACTION: Sam asked the workgroup to develop and submit a one-page report by Monday, explaining the ARC and its resources supported within the context of current initiatives and areas of focus.

FOLLOW UP: *The report was developed and submitted within the timeframe requested.*

For development of the report, the group briefly discussed WID elements and application of the WID along with other initiatives as they relate to current workforce needs.

Captcha

Discussion was held regarding the accessibility of "Captcha" on systems that are accessed by users with visual and/or hearing impairment. Bob Cottrell and Mike Wendell (North Carolina Employment Security Commission) demonstrated a proof of concept to address accessibility issues. The concept would be an alternative to Captcha to counter automated access risks to downloadable data.

ACTION: The workgroup was asked for their feedback and approval to present the concept to infoUSA.
FOLLOW UP: *The workgroup gave feedback and approved.*

State, Other Initiatives, Groups, and Council Updates

Members briefly discussed various initiatives and possible points of consideration for data sets and opportunities related to the WID. Among those:

- A NASWA technical conference being planned for 2010; Bob Cottrell asked the workgroup if this might be a good opportunity to showcase the WID and its applications
- National Labor Exchange; Bob asked the workgroup to consider the statistical data feeds from that system for the WID.
- Mass Layoff Statistics information in terms of layoffs and plant closings and how we want to look at

that today. It was suggested that we could also look at the data in "relative real time" (in that it gives more immediate insight into the available labor supply) from actual UI claims files that don't necessarily fall under the definition of a MLS event.

- Longitudinal Tracking System (LTS) – North Carolina has been working on a pilot for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Minnesota has a new system that allows for tying regional and county data together. The WID makes that possible.
 - o **DISCUSSION:** The group elaborated that the ability to make custom regions in data is critical and cross-state regions would be even better. Redeveloping the ADAM application in new technology was brought up for consideration.

LMI Institute Update:

Joe Ward gave an update on the activities of the LMI Institute. Missouri has assumed responsibility for the LMI Institute. C2ER will be the administrative entity. There will be an LMI Advisory Board and an avenue for communications to the LMI Institute through that body. Joe Ward will be on the LMI Board and will be the liaison between ARC and the LMI Institute.

(Continued on page 6)

ARC Meeting Notes... Continued

Workforce Information Council (WIC) Update:

Roger Therrien joined the group via conference call and provided an update on the latest WIC activities and items of interest to the ARC. Discussion ensued regarding potential ARC activities being explored in the context of using WID as a foundation within Web 2.0 technologies and open source technologies and how that aligns with WIC's recent survey on web and information delivery technologies.

Employer Database Update:

Dan Brown updated the group on recent Employer Database news. There is a new contract. It had originally been scheduled for an April 1, 2009 release but ended up being released on May 5, 2009. It had the same data that the previous contracts included. The new data is coming out 10/01/2009. July 15, 2009 is the target date for having state licenses signed. If you don't have your license agreement signed then you will not receive a release of data on 10/01/2009. There is a copy of the license and sublicense agreement and a document with highlights of the contract on the ARC website. The only item that is not currently out there is the *EMPDB* table. Changes associated with the new contract were discussed.

National Crosswalk and Service Center Update

Barbara Ledvina gave an update on recent activities of the National Crosswalk and Service Center (NCSC). The NCSC website has been put into a content management system. Barbara discussed the NCSC handout detailing activities relating to classifications and update plans, the CIP 2010 release, IPEDS data, and SOC update in 2010.

DBA and Director Survey

Marilyn Skalberg provided handouts of the previous DBA survey to the workgroup subcommittees. The handouts included both analyses and questions. She proposed changes for the upcoming survey and asked the subcommittees to review and make any changes, additions, or deletions. The target survey date was given as September 2009.

Structure Subcommittee Report

Objectives for the week:

- Finalize the Employer Database structure
- Identify what will be necessary for the next full version update

Structure Subcommittee Summary Report:

Dana Placzek reported on the activities of the group over the course of the week. The release of WID 2.4.1 at the end of summer will have a green job indicator for occupations and industries. In the interim it was added to the Non-Standard Tables page on the ARC website.

Per suggestion, the group decided to add tables that would hold data on re-employment initiatives (e.g. jobs posted by state workforce agencies by ARRA stimulus monies).

The subcommittee finalized and approved the Employer Database table structure and submitted to Dan Brown.

The subcommittee reviewed prior ARC/WID DBA survey questions and indicated those that the Structure subcommittee decided were relevant to ask again.

Other issues looked at by the Structure Subcommittee included: table structure changes to address SOC2010, projections tables and potential changes in next major release (intent is for major release to eliminate INDPRJ/OCCPRJ and only have IOMATRIX; INDPRJ/OCCPRJ would become non-standard tables), name changes for the next major release, expansion of length of fields and names, and discussion of which acronyms to allow and which to spell out. The subcommittee has temporarily tabled the discussion of what changes the actual structure of the WID should undergo in the next major release.

Policy Subcommittee Report

Objectives for the week:

- Primary focus is development of the one page document requested by ETA
- Identification of any new WID core tables and/or deletions.

Consideration of Future ARC Activities:

The group identified various opportunities and initiatives that the ARC may want to become more involved with, re-visit or explore further, including the ADAM project (from the perspective of "web services toolkit") and green job identification.

ACTION: John Pearce agreed to develop a mobile application to pull data sets from the WID.

FOLLOW UP: John Pearce developed the application and delivered to the group.

(Continued on page 7)

ARC Meeting Notes... Continued

(Continued from page 6)

Education and Communication Subcommittee Report

Objectives for the week:

- Select a new chairperson for the subcommittee
- Collect and draft new DBA survey
- Develop recommendation on one-page report for ETA

The Education and Communication Subcommittee unanimously approved Denise Lee as the next subcommittee chair.

Denise Lee reported on several activities that the subcommittee was working on, including:

- In addition to the DBA survey, the subcommittee recommended, and the workgroup approved, conducting a short survey of LMI Directors.

- The LMI Directors would be meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in November and we will be looking into what materials we could make available for their conference.
- C2ER will be having a conference in May 2010 and we will be exploring ideas for collaboration.
- Phil Ellsworth presented an idea for RSS code/widget "Powered by ARC/WID" as part of a "toolkit". Also discussed was a subscribed and topic-specific subscription to RSS feeds as presented by John Pearce.
- The subcommittee is looking into having a future DBA training focusing on

new data tables, Wiki, and data sources.

- Next year is when the next ARC Seminar is tentatively scheduled. The group will be analyzing the feasibility of having the seminar.

ARC Meeting Wrap-Up and Adjournment

Bob Cottrell thanked everyone for their participation and hard work throughout the week and the meeting adjourned. The next meeting will tentatively be held in October 2009 in a member state.



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The Workforce Information Database is a normalized, relational database structure developed for the storage and maintenance of labor market, economic, demographic and occupational information. The Analyst Resource Center is responsible for the Workforce Information Database structure development, update, and maintenance. Members include North Carolina (lead), Connecticut, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Texas, Wyoming, and ETA, along with support from the National Crosswalk Service Center.