Electronic Data Deliverables: The Importance of Receiving Your Site and Project Data Electronically

What is an Electronic Data Deliverable (EDD)?

An EDD is a data file (or files), in a specified format, designed to transmit information electronically to another data user or recipient. The EDD may contain data that have been collected as part of an investigation or routine monitoring event requiring the generation of a report to a regulatory agency or agencies. It may contain such information as site or project-level maps, graphs, sampling data, analytical laboratory data, lithologic descriptions, and survey results. The data files are generally organized in a readily exportable format (e.g., tabular, dbf, xml) that allows the data user to easily import the information into a database or to quantitatively analyze the data independently.

Purpose of this Ground Water Forum Fact Sheet

EDDs are being used within the Superfund program and in some state cleanup programs. (See Fact Sheet Appendix for a listing.) The purpose of this fact sheet is to encourage even wider use of EDDs by explaining their importance and how to ensure that your site data are submitted electronically. The EDD Fact Sheet Appendix provides supplemental information on what to request in EDDs, how electronic data are shared, examples of data to submit electronically, and links to EDD guidance.

Why are Electronic Data Important to EPA?

The importance of receiving site and project data electronically cannot be overstated. One need only look at the explosion in modern electronic tools for the mapping, evaluation, visualization, and reporting of all types of data. Electronic data can assist managers with site-specific decisions as well as decisions regarding the geographic areas and communities adjoining the site. Electronic data also can expedite the availability, use, storage, search, and retrieval of costly data, and permit it to be shared for concurrent or future purposes.

The efficiencies gained through the use of electronic data can free up scarce resources needed to pursue site and project goals. For example, the receipt and use of electronic laboratory data in the Superfund program saves millions of dollars annually on quality control and data review. In addition to saving staff time and money, electronic data also provide a more comprehensive, accessible, and usable site record for future project managers and technical support staff.

*The **Ground Water Forum** is a group of ground water scientists from EPA regions, headquarters, labs, and some states, who support the Superfund and RCRA programs. The forum exchanges information related to ground water remediation at contaminated sites in order to bring the state-of-the-science to each regional office; focus laboratory resources on research areas important to the Regions; and maintain consistency in the interpretation of guidance and application of policy throughout the country.*

Additional benefits of maintaining data electronically include the potential to better communicate environmental data to the public and to facilitate review and assessment of environmental impacts on a regional scale. Some government entities are beginning to merge electronic site data across programs and agencies to provide site managers and other stakeholders a more holistic view of specific sites as well as geographic regions.

How to Ensure Data are Submitted Electronically

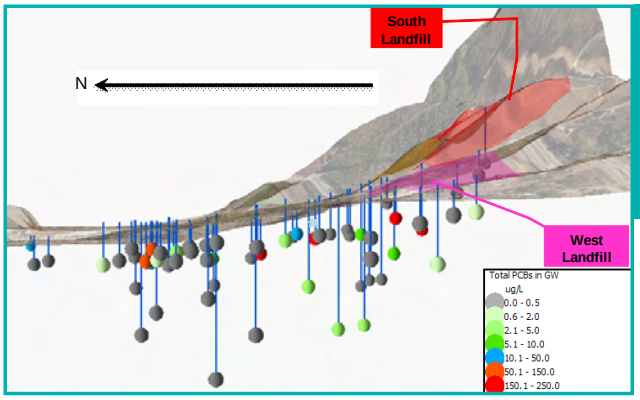
Primary contractual documents can require that data generated by EPA contractors or cooperating agencies be submitted electronically. Such documents include Remedial Action Contractor or Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team contracts and Interagency Agreements (IAs) with cooperating agencies. If contracts or IAs are already in place, the submission of electronic data can be required in the scope of work issued to the contractor or cooperating agency.

For data generated by potentially responsible parties (PRPs) and their contractors, submission of electronic data can be required in primary legal enforcement site documents such as Administrative Orders on Consent (AOCs), Unilateral Administrative Orders (UAOs), statements of work (SOWs), or Consent Decrees (CDs). The stipulation that electronic data be submitted to the agencies will eliminate ambiguity and will make the submission of electronic data legally enforceable.

If the primary legal enforcement site documents are already in place but do not require the submission of electronic data, secondary documents, such as official correspondence letters to PRPs, can be used to enforce the requirement. In addition, some Regions have standard operating procedures (SOPs) for conducting site investigations that may be included in the AOCs, UAOs, SOWs, or CDs to document required methods for performing site characterization. The addition of an EDD SOP can also allow a project manager to retroactively require the submittal of site data electronically.

In Summary

Ensuring that data are submitted electronically will facilitate data sharing, storage, and communication while saving EPA both time and money. EDDs allow for vastly improved data evaluation and visualization. Several means exist to require EDDs in usable and appropriate formats. More information on the data to request and who is using EDDs is found in the Appendix.



Visualization software can import electronic data to illustrate contaminant plumes and other site conditions more clearly

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