



OIA Connection Blog

Introduction for OIA Executive Team Call

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<http://vaww.vhaco.va.gov/oia/>



September 28, 2011



VA Supports the Use of New Media

For Veteran Communication:

- “This is about leveraging new technology to get the right information to the right Veteran at the right time
- Veterans today are online, so it’s our job to meet them where they’re already congregating
- Direct, open engagement/interaction encourages trust in the system and adds that long-needed human touch”

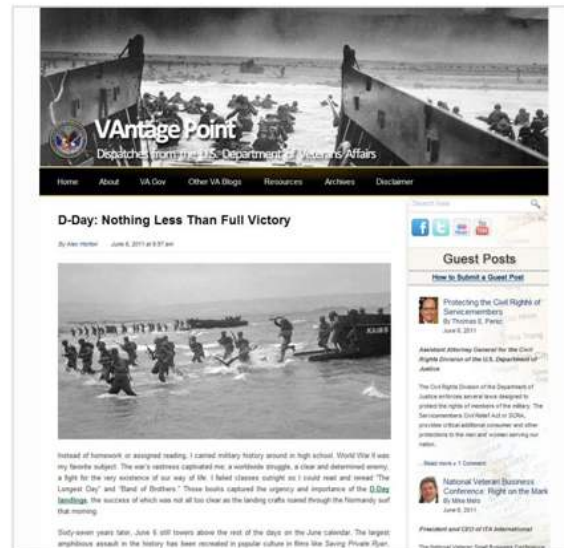
The same concepts apply to our stakeholders and team members.

Official VA Blog: Vantage Point

IT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



What We've Got



- Vantage Point: The VA Blog
 - Vantage Point launched on Veterans Day 2010
 - Allows for both internally produced articles as well as “guest pieces”
 - In the first nine months, published over 200 articles and received over 5,000 comments from the public

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Basic Blog Concepts

- We should have a new post for the Blog at least weekly. Our audience will lose interest unless we post frequently.
- We would like a queue of guest bloggers and would like to be able to schedule who is blogging each week in advance so we can set up task reminders.
- Posts can be both professional and personal and it is important that they are both.
- Posts should encourage comments. We can tell if the blog is a success if we see comments. Readers expect back and forth, so plan to reply back to their comments with more information, or even just to thank them for their interest.
- Use images and plenty of white space, people avoid walls of text. We'd like nice face shots of each of our guest bloggers to help personalize their posts
- We can set up our authors with user accounts on the blog, allowing them to post their own entries. Any of our authors who wish to do their own blog posts should contact our team and we will set up their access and walk them through how to post their first time.
- Any authors who don't want to post directly should still plan to make personal, friendly and approachable posts that can be copy/pasted to the blog by an admin. "In your own words" is an important ideal.
- We have a mail group set up specifically for the blog. Moderation notifications will go to this mail group. Members are Alison Tshikosi, Wendy Roy, Paula Sageser, Stacie Rivera, and Courtney Coduri. Guest bloggers who want an admin to post for them should send their post to this mail group as well.
VHAOIAConnectionsblog@va.gov

Basic Blog Concepts (Continued)

- Readers will find a link at the bottom of posts to leave a comment. When selected they will be required to put in a name and an email address.
- Our comments are moderated, so anyone with moderation rights will see that there is a new comment and will be required to review and approve it before it will appear in the blog.
- Comments are not edited, if they meet our policy (linked at the top of the blog), we will approve them. If they don't, we reject them.
- Authors can save drafts to the blog, so even though it is live and viewable, if you want others to review before you publish just save a draft of your post.
- Most people will find the blog via a feature button on the OIA home page. Most will visit it when they think about it and will come back to it often if they see it is kept current.
- Interesting blogs get visited often. People will make a habit of going to the blog page if they can make a personal connection to the content there.
- People pay attention to the Recent Posts section on the blog page. They see the title of blogs there, so make sure your titles are eye catching and descriptive.
- Users who are familiar with blogs will set up an RSS feed to keep up on the content of the blog. This feed can be displayed in their MySites, a Browser or in Outlook.

OIA Connection Home Page

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of VETERANS AFFAIRS



INTRANET

[Blog Home](#) [About](#) [Archives](#) [Policy](#) [Intranet Home](#)

OIA Connection Blog

iEHR — Marcia Insley
Posted on 09/26/2011 by [oiaAdmin](#)

The Integrated Electronic Health Record (iEHR) effort is in full swing. This effort is a collaboration between VA and DoD to develop and procure shared IT solutions. There is much activity ongoing to develop capability requirements for components such as laboratory, pharmacy, identity management, and immunizations. As this project moves forward, we expect many in OIA to be engaged in it to some degree. I will be providing an overview of the project on Wednesday at 2pm eastern via a Live and Learn. Please feel free to join in!



—Marcia

Marcia Insley

Posted in [education](#), [From Marcia Insley](#), [iEHR](#) | Tagged [iEHR](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

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- [iEHR — Marcia Insley](#)
- [Switch Video — Marcia Insley](#)
- [From Gail Graham—Welcome to OIA Connection](#)
- [Blog Introduction](#)

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- [Alison Tshikosi on Blog Introduction](#)
- [Stacie on Blog Introduction](#)
- [Paula Sageser on Blog Introduction](#)

Archives

- [September 2011](#)
- [April 2011](#)

Categories

- [About OIA](#)
- [change management](#)
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- [From Gail Graham](#)
- [From Marcia Insley](#)
- [iEHR](#)

Meta

Visitors see the main page: <http://vaww.blog.va.gov/oia/>

OIA Connection Administration Page

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for the 'OIA Connection Blog'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the WordPress logo, the site name 'OIA Connection Blog', and a status message 'Search Engines Blocked'. On the right side of the navigation bar, there are links for 'New Post', 'Howdy, oiaAdmin', and 'Log Out'. Below the navigation bar, a yellow banner displays a message: 'WordPress 3.2.1 is available! Please update now.' with links for 'Screen Options' and 'Help'. The main dashboard area is divided into several sections. On the left is a sidebar menu with categories: Dashboard (with a sub-menu for Updates showing 1 update), Posts (with sub-items: Posts, Add New, Categories, Post Tags), Media (with sub-items: Library, Add New), Links, Pages (with sub-item: Add New), and Comments. The main content area starts with a 'Dashboard' header and a 'Right Now' widget. The 'Right Now' widget contains a table with two columns: 'Content' and 'Discussion'. The 'Content' column lists 4 Posts, 3 Pages, 7 Categories, and 9 Tags. The 'Discussion' column lists 3 Comments, 3 Approved, 0 Pending, and 0 Spam. Below this table, it shows the current theme is 'Twenty Ten with 6 Widgets' and the user is using 'WordPress 3.1.1'. There are buttons for 'Change Theme' and 'Update to 3.2.1'. To the right of the 'Right Now' widget is the 'QuickPress' widget, which includes a 'Title' field, an 'Upload/Insert' toolbar with icons for image, link, audio, and video, a 'Content' text area, and a 'Tags' field. At the bottom of the 'QuickPress' widget are buttons for 'Save Draft', 'Reset', and 'Publish'. Below the 'QuickPress' widget is the 'Recent Drafts' widget, which states 'There are no drafts at the moment'. At the bottom of the dashboard is the 'Recent Comments' widget, showing a comment from 'Alison Tshikosi' on the post 'Blog Introduction #'. The comment text is 'Wow! How do I get my log in and password for my "moderator" status? Wow!'. The 'WordPress Blog' widget is partially visible at the bottom right.

Authors, admins and editors can log in to the administration page: <http://vaww.blog.va.gov/oia/wp-login.php>
Each Dashboard will be different, depending on your role. All share a common element, the left toolbar menu.

Some Example Blogs

- VAntage Point, Official Blog of the Department of Veterans Affairs:
<http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/>
What this blog does well: It is eye catching and uses very colorful images. It is updated frequently, often times daily rather than weekly. The topics are interesting and elicit comments.
What this blog could improve: The images are too large and take up too much space. High quality images do not have to dominate the posts. All posts have a sameness to them because the images are always in the same place and same size for every post. The blog is a bit slow to load.
- VISN 1 Network Director Blog “Open Mike”
<http://vaww.blogs.va.gov/visn1/>
What this blog does well: They use pictures to illustrate and enhance the posts, without those pictures dominating the posts. Their director posts frequently, if not weekly. The network director shows he reads the comments by replying back to a few of them.
What this blog could improve: There are a few big gaps in frequency of posts. They could add a lot more categories and tag posts with many more descriptive keywords.
- VSSC Biz Blog: <http://vaww.blogs.va.gov/vssc/>
- White House Blog: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog>

References

- Wordpress (The company that provided the new VA blog software) help blog: <http://en.blog.wordpress.com/>
- Common Craft's Blogs "In Plain English" : <http://www.commoncraft.com/video/blogs>
- Wikipedia Blogs: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>
- OIA Feedback Form (for questions or suggestions): <http://vaww.vhaco.va.gov/oia/feedback.asp>
- VA Directive 6515: Use of Web-Based Collaboration Technologies http://vaww1.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=551&FType=2
- Brandon Friedman - Director of Online Communications - Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA)
- Intranet Blogs List: <http://vaww.blogs.va.gov/>
- OIA Connection Blog Home Page: <http://vaww.blog.va.gov/oia/>
- OIA Blog Email: VHAOIAConnectionsblog@va.gov