

FAST FACTS

- ▶ This is the third version of the state portal to launch at www.RI.gov. The first version launched in December 2001.
- ▶ The new RI.gov is Section 508 Priority 2 compliant, meeting strict guidelines for accessibility to the widest possible audience, including users with disabilities.
- ▶ The new RI.gov search allows users to search 2,200 pages of content from over 100 individual state Web sites.
- ▶ In April 2005, visitors to the portal viewed 1.5 million pages.
- ▶ In March 2005, over 8,000 vehicle registration renewals were processed through an online service created by RI.gov and the DMV.
- ▶ Currently, 6,110 businesses file and pay their business taxes electronically through services created by RI.gov and the Division of Taxation.
- ▶ This year, RI.gov will securely facilitate a half billion dollars in transactions electronically on behalf of the state.
- ▶ The new RI.gov was tested in all major browsers including various versions of Internet Explorer, Netscape, Firefox, AOL, Opera, Safari, screen readers and text-based browsers as well as multiple operating systems.
- ▶ RI.gov includes detailed information of all 39 cities and towns including contact information, key links, demographic data and meeting postings.
- ▶ RI.gov links to 90 eGovernment services or transactions that can be performed electronically.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW RI.GOV

▶ **Coded with standards-based semantic markup with CSS-driven design**

What it is:

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) is a standard for creating Web pages. All the data for how the site looks (colors, layout, fonts, etc.) are defined in a single document.

Why it's important:

Unlike sites coded with standard HTML, designers can make changes to one document to transform the entire look and feel of the site. CSS makes the size of each page smaller so that the site loads faster. CSS also allows the portal to be viewed on a variety of specialized browsers such as screen-readers used by the blind and mobile web browsers on cell phones and PDAs. **RI.gov is the first State Portal in the nation to fully implement these standards.**

▶ **RSS feeds sharing data across multiple RI government Web sites**

What it is:

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) allows data from one source to be viewed on multiple Web sites and computer desktops. Examples on RI.gov include:

- Press releases and news highlights from multiple state entities
- Open meeting notices filed by municipalities with the Secretary of State on each municipality's dedicated page in the Cities & Towns section
- A "Blog" authored by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts on the Arts pages of RI.gov
- Events from the Tourism Division in the Visitors and Culture section of RI.gov
A list of the last 10 new corporations filed with the Secretary of State's office

Information about RSS technology is available on the REX portal. (www.ri.gov/rex) REX, the RI eGovernment Exchange, is the product of the state's Web Data Sharing Committee. The REX initiative received national acclaim when it was recognized by the Center for Digital Government in the 2004 Digital Government Achievement Awards.

Why it's important:

RSS is one of the most exciting technologies to gain popularity on the Internet in the past few years. Rhode Island now leads the country for embracing this standard in state government. This technology saves time and resources by avoiding redundant efforts to post the same information in multiple places and ensures accuracy by having the entity responsible for the information manage that data for multiple outlets.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW RI.GOV

▶ **New Rhode Island Government Search Engine**

What it is:

Implemented by the RI.gov Portal team at no cost to the state, the new search engine is based on open-source software. The new RI.gov search allows users to search across multiple state Web sites from one central location. This tool allows users to search for information from over 2,100 pages from over 100 unique state Web sites. All of this information can be easily searched using keywords through a user-friendly interface.

Why it's important:

With so much important information scattered across such a wide variety of sites, the new search de-silos government for citizens and businesses returning timely results from a huge variety of state resources. For example, a search for "disability" returns results ranging from the Governors Council on Disabilities to instructions on obtaining a special bus pass from RIPTA.

▶ **Developed as part of public-private partnership at no cost to RI citizens**

What it is:

RI.gov is designed, maintained and improved using \$0 General Fund appropriations. The portal is part of a public-private partnership between the State of Rhode Island and its private-sector partner, New England Interactive, LLC. The portal is funded based on transaction fees or convenience fees paid only by those users of certain added-value eGovernment services created and maintained by the portal team.

Why it's important:

By embracing this public-private partnership model, the State of Rhode Island gains an award-winning Web resource without the financial expenditure.

SOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ **www.ri.gov/about/**
Information about the RI.gov staff and the private-public partnership between the State of Rhode Island and New England Interactive, LLC.
- ▶ **www.nicusa.com/**
NIC is the parent company of New England Interactive, LLC and has similar partnerships in 17 states to provide eGovernment solutions.
- ▶ **www.ri.gov/rex/**
REX, the Rhode Island eGovernment Exchange initiative which offers detailed information on the state's Web Data Share initiative as well as helpful links to learn more about RSS.
- ▶ **www.w3.org/TR/CSS-access.html**
A Web site that outlines the many benefits of standards-based CSS design and layout.
- ▶ **www.swish-e.org/**
The homepage for the open-source search engine, Swish-e, configured by the RI.gov team to power the new state-wide search.

▶ **Contact Information**

Web: **www.RI.gov**
Phone: (401) 831 8099
Fax: (401) 831 8095
Email: rigov@neinetwork.com

Joan Gammon, General Manager, RI.gov
401-831-8099 x23 | joan@neinetwork.com