



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
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WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

SECNAVINST 5720.48  
CHINFO/DON CIO  
26 June 2009

SECNAV INSTRUCTION 5720.48

From: Secretary of the Navy

Subj: ENSURING THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATED TO  
THE PUBLIC BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Ref: (a) DoD Policy Memorandum, Ensuring the Quality of  
Information Disseminated to the Public by the  
Department of Defense, of 10 Feb 03 (NOTAL)  
(b) Treasury and General Government Appropriations  
Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (Public Law 106-554),  
Sec. 515 (NOTAL)  
(c) OMB Guidelines for Information Quality (Federal  
Register Vol. 67, No. 36), 22 Feb 02  
(d) Department of Defense Principles of Information  
(NOTAL)  
(e) SECNAVINST 5720.44B, Department of the Navy  
Public Affairs Policy and Regulations  
(f) SECNAVINST 5720.47B, Department of the Navy  
Policy for Content of Publicly Accessible World  
Wide Web site  
(g) SECNAV M-5210.1, Department of the Navy Records  
Management Program, Records management Manual,  
November 2007

Encl: (1) Definitions  
(2) Sample Process For Ensuring And Maximizing the  
Quality of Information Disseminated to the Public

1. Purpose. To implement reference (a) within the Department  
of the Navy (DON), provide procedures for requesting correction  
of DON information disseminated to the public, and delineate  
annual reporting requirements.

2. Scope. This instruction is applicable throughout the  
Department of the Navy. It applies to all DON activities and  
all information developed, procured, or managed by DON  
activities and/or by their contractors and disseminated to the  
public. It applies to all information media including audio-  
visual, photographic, printed, and electronic distributed to the  
public.

3. Background

a. Reference (b) directed the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to issue government-wide guidelines that "provide policy and procedural guidance to Federal Agencies for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility and integrity of information (including statistical information) disseminated by Federal Agencies." OMB's guidelines are contained in reference (c). Reference (a) implements those guidelines for the Department of Defense (DoD).

b. According to the OMB and DoD guidelines, a basic standard of quality (objectivity, utility, and integrity) must be maintained and appropriate steps must be taken to incorporate information quality criteria into DoD public information dissemination practices. Service Components have been directed to adopt standards of quality that are appropriate to the nature and timeliness of the information they disseminate.

4. Definitions. Definitions used in this instruction are located in enclosure (1).

5. Policy. It is DON policy to:

a. Only disseminate information to the public, to every extent possible, that is accurate, objective, and has utility and integrity (references (a), (d), (e), and (f)); and

b. Allow affected persons to seek and obtain, if appropriate, timely correction of publically disseminated information that does not comply with these quality standards.

6. Exceptions. The following specific types of information are not subject to these guidelines:

a. Distribution of information that is limited to government employees, component contractors or grantees;

b. Intra or inter-DON or other Department or Agency use or sharing of government information including responses to requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Privacy Act, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, or other similar laws;

c. Distribution of correspondence among individuals or persons;

d. Information limited to subpoenas and adjudicative processes;

e. Information that has previously been disseminated to the public and is subsequently presented to Congress as part of the legislative or oversight processes, including testimony of officials, and information or drafting assistance provided to Congress in connection with pending or proposed legislation;

f. Press releases and other information advising the public of an event or activity;

g. Procedural, operational, policy, and internal manuals prepared for the management and operations of the Department of the Navy that are not primarily intended for public dissemination, including personnel notices such as vacancy announcements; and

h. Information disseminated under urgent situations, including imminent or credible threats to national defense and security.

## 7. Procedures

### a. Information Quality

(1) Commands will maximize the quality of the information they disseminate, in terms of objectivity and utility, first by obtaining input from a range of sources and perspectives, to the extent practicable under the circumstances, and second by subjecting draft materials to a review process involving as many commands and offices as may be in a position to offer constructive input, as well as other government agencies.

(2) Enclosure (2) contains a sample process for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated to the public.

b. Correction Requests

(1) Affected persons (defined in enclosure (1)) may request corrections to disseminated information.

(a) Corrections will be formally requested by letter or commercial Electronic Mail (e-mail) to the publisher of the information. To expedite action, e-mail is the preferred method.

(b) Simple corrections of obvious errors in fact or typographical errors will not be resolved via the provisions of this instruction nor will they be reported. Best practices and common courtesy dictate expeditious correction of these types of errors by the publisher when brought to that entity's attention.

(c) Requests for correction must contain the following information:

1. The requestor's first and last name and e-mail address if submitted by e-mail or street address, city, state, and zip code if submitted by traditional letter;

2. A complete citation of the information that does not comply with the information quality guidelines, including, as appropriate, publication name, date of publication, and page number; or specific uniform resource locator for World Wide Web publication; or any data that permits the publisher to readily find the alleged error(s) for review and correction, when such correction is warranted; and

3. A detailed description of how the requestor benefits, is harmed, or is otherwise impacted by the disseminated information.

(2) Commands shall, within 60 days, correct the information, make a decision to reject the requested correction, or inform the requester that more time is required and indicate the reason why and an estimated decision date.

(a) Commands have authority to reject claims made in bad faith or without justification and are required to undertake only the degree of correction that they conclude is appropriate for the nature and timeliness of the information involved.

(b) Commands must substantiate the reason for rejection and advise the requester that the requested correction and copy of rejection can be submitted to the Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer (DON CIO) for appeal/resolution, if the requester disagrees with the reason for rejection.

(c) If an appeal is submitted, the DON CIO shall, within 60 days, make a decision to approve or reject the claim or inform the requester that more time is required and indicate the reason why and an estimated decision date.

c. Annual Report

(1) All DON commands, activities, and offices (DON components) receiving requests for correction which meet the criteria as provided in reference (a) and this instruction, will submit an Annual Information Quality Report. This report will be submitted via e-mail no later than 15 October of each year. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and Secretariat staff components will submit the report to the Chief of Information Policy and Doctrine Branch (CHINFO OI-82). U.S. Marine Corps components will submit the report to Director of Public Affairs (DIRPA).

(2) The report format changes periodically. The latest format for the Annual Information Quality Report will be posted on the DON CIO Web site at [www.doncio.navy.mil](http://www.doncio.navy.mil) in the Knowledge Management topic area.

(3) CHINFO will submit a consolidated DON report to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), per reference (a), not later than 1 November of each year.

8. Responsibilities

a. CHINFO and DIRPA shall:

(1) In coordination with DON CIO, oversee the implementation of the policy and procedures in this instruction;

(2) Maintain file records to support and substantiate the DoD annual report to OMB; and

(3) Submit annual reports as required in subparagraph 7c above.

b. The DON CIO shall:

(1) With CHINFO and DIRPA, implement the policy and procedures in this instruction;

(2) Serve as the DON appeal authority to receive and resolve requests for appeal concerning information disseminated by DON commands or activities; and

(3) Post the current OMB format for the Annual Information Quality Report on the DON CIO Web site ([www.doncio.navy.mil](http://www.doncio.navy.mil)).

c. All DON commands, activities, and offices shall:

(1) Disseminate information to the public, to every extent possible, that is accurate, objective and has utility and integrity, in accordance with references (a), (d), (e), and (f);

(2) Publish administrative mechanisms consistent with these guidelines that allow affected persons to seek and obtain, if appropriate, timely correction by the command/activity/office of publicly disseminated information that may not be in compliance with these quality standards;

(3) Develop a process consistent with these guidelines for reviewing the quality of information that allows substantiation of the quality of the information the commands/activities disseminate to the public. Enclosure (2) provides a sample of such a process;

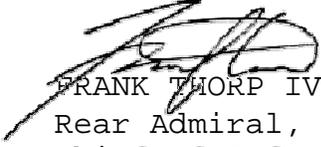
(4) Receive and respond to correction requests regarding information disseminated by the command/activity/office that may not be in compliance with the quality standards; and

(5) Submit annual reports as required in subparagraph 7c above. Negative reports are not required.

9. Records Management. Records created by this instruction, regardless of media, will be managed in accordance with reference (g).

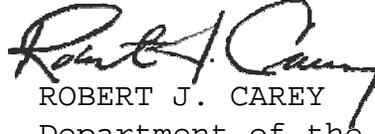
SECNAVINST 5720.48  
26 June 2009

10. Reports Control. The Annual Information Quality Report is report control symbol SECNAV 5720-1.



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Distribution:

Electronic only, via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site  
<http://doni.daps.dla.mil/>

DEFINITIONS

1. Affected persons. Persons who may benefit, be harmed, or otherwise impacted by the disseminated information. This includes persons who are seeking to address information about themselves as well as persons who use information. "Persons" includes groups, organizations, and corporations as defined by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. Impact must be substantiated. (Reference (a))

2. Dissemination. Department of the Navy initiated or sponsored distribution of information to the public.

a. Exempted from this instruction is information of which distribution is limited to: government employees or component contractors or grantees; intra- or inter-DON use or sharing of government information; and responses to requests for DON records under the FOIA, the Privacy Act, the Federal Advisory Committee Act or other similar law.

b. Also exempted from this instruction is information of which distribution is limited to: correspondence with individuals or persons, press releases, archival records, public filings, subpoenas or adjudicative processes. (Reference (c))

3. Influential. When used in the context of scientific, financial, or statistical information, means that the disseminating activity or command can reasonably determine that dissemination of the information will have or does have clear and substantial impact on important public policies or important private sector decisions. Each activity or command is authorized to define "influential" in ways appropriate given the nature and multiplicity of issues for which the activity or command is responsible. (Reference (c))

4. Information. Any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts or data, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms. This definition includes information that an activity or command disseminates from a Web page, but does not include the provision of hyperlinks to information that others disseminate. This definition does not include opinions,

where the presentation makes it clear that what is being offered is someone's opinion rather than fact or the activity's or command's views. (Reference (c))

5. Information dissemination product. Any book, paper, map, machine-readable material, audiovisual production, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristic, that an activity or command disseminates to the public. This definition includes any electronic document, compact disk - read-only memory, or Web page. (Reference (c))

6. Integrity. Refers to the security of information. This involves protection of the information from unauthorized access or revision to ensure that the information is not compromised through corruption or falsification. (Reference (c))

7. Objectivity. Involves two distinct elements, presentation and substance.

a. "Objectivity" includes whether the disseminated information is being presented in an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased manner. The information must also be presented in the proper context. Sometimes, in disseminating certain types of information to the public, other information must also be disseminated in order to ensure an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased presentation. Also, the activity or command must identify the sources of the disseminated information (to the extent possible, consistent with confidentiality protections) and, in a scientific, financial, or statistical context, the supporting data and models, so the public can assess for itself whether there may be some reason to question the objectivity of the sources. Where appropriate, supporting data (including classified data) should have full, accurate, transparent documentation, and error sources affecting data quality should be identified and disclosed to users when possible.

b. In addition, "objectivity" involves ensuring the substance of the information is accurate and reliable. This includes classified information. In a scientific, financial, or statistical context, the original and supporting data shall be generated, and the analytical results shall be developed, using sound statistical and research methods.

(1) If the data and analytical results have been subjected to formal, independent, external peer review, the information can generally be considered of acceptable objectivity. However, this presumption may be rebutted based on persuasive evidence by the petitioner in a particular instance.

(2) In those situations involving dissemination of influential scientific, financial, or statistical information, a high degree of transparency of data and methods must be ensured to facilitate the reproducibility of such information by qualified third parties.

(3) Making the data and models publicly available will assist in determining whether analytical results are capable of being substantially reproduced. However, these guidelines do not alter the otherwise applicable standards and procedures for determining when and how information is disclosed. Thus, the objectivity standard does not override other compelling interests such as privacy, trade secret, intellectual property, and other confidentiality protections such as security classifications. (Reference (a))

8. Quality. An encompassing term comprising utility, objectivity, and integrity. Therefore, the guidelines sometimes refer to these three statutory terms, collectively, as "quality." (Reference (c))

9. Reproducibility. The information is capable of being substantially reproduced, subject to an acceptable degree of imprecision. For information judged to have more (less) important impacts, the degree of imprecision that is tolerated is reduced (increased). If components apply the reproducibility test to specific types of original and supporting data, standards for replication of laboratory data shall be established. With respect to analytic results, "capable of being substantially reproduced" means that independent analysis of the original or supporting data using identical methods would generate similar analytic results, subject to an acceptable degree of imprecision or error. (Reference (c))

10. Simple errors in fact. Simple errors of fact may be the result of faulty arithmetic, a misidentification of a piece of

hardware, or other like errors. These should obviously be corrected as quickly as possible and are not included within the scope of this instruction.

11. Transparent/Transparency. The practice of describing the data and methods of developing an information product in a way that it would be possible for an independent individual or organization to reproduce the results. (Reference (a))

12. Utility. Refers to the relevance and timeliness of information to its intended users, including the public. In assessing the usefulness of information that the activity or command disseminates to the public, the activity or command needs to consider the uses of the information not only from the perspective of the activity or command but also from the perspective of the public. (Reference (a))

SAMPLE PROCESS FOR ENSURING AND MAXIMIZING THE QUALITY OF  
INFORMATION DISSEMINATED TO THE PUBLIC

Per reference (c), "quality" is defined as an encompassing term comprising utility, objectivity, and integrity.

1. Objectivity and Utility of Information

a. Before disseminating information, commands should subject the draft information to a thorough review process. Each command should pursue the most knowledgeable and reliable sources reasonably available to confirm the objectivity and utility of the information.

b. Commands should consider the uses of the information from the perspectives of the Department of the Navy and the public.

(1) When it is determined that the transparency of information is relevant for assessing the information's usefulness from the public's perspective, the command should ensure that transparency is appropriately addressed.

(2) If a command determines that the information it will disseminate is influential scientific, financial, or statistical information, extra care should be taken to include a high degree of transparency about data and methods to meet the requirements in reference (a).

c. Commands should generally take the following steps to assure the "objectivity" and "utility" of the information to be disseminated:

(1) Prepare a draft of the information after consulting relevant parties, including government and non-government sources, as appropriate;

(2) Determine and assure the accuracy and completeness of the source data;

(3) Determine the expected uses of the information by the government and public;

(4) Determine whether a peer review would be appropriate and, if necessary, coordinate such a review;

(5) Determine necessary information release clearance procedures;

(6) Determine who will make the final release decision;

(7) Obtain release clearances; and

(8) Disseminate the information.

2. Integrity of Information. "Integrity" refers to the security of information (protection of the information from unauthorized, unanticipated, or unintentional modification) to prevent information from being compromised through corruption or falsification. Commands should adhere to both law and DON information technology security policies for the protection of data and information.