

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Inspector General

- Innovative Strategies for Communicating Audit and Evaluation

- ~~Results~~

- Jennifer Kaplan**

Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Congressional and Public Affairs



EPA OIG Office of Congressional and Public Affairs

- Assistant Inspector General
- Deputy Assistant Inspector General
- Congressional/Media Liaisons (2)
- Editors (3)
- Web Specialist
- Multimedia Specialist
- Administrative Officer
- Pathways Intern

- Integrated approach to external and internal communications:

- Congress
- Website
- Podcasts
- Media
- Intranet
- Blog
- Publications
- Social media
- e-Newsletter





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PODCASTS



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Reasons to Produce Podcasts

- Amplify findings and recommendations for the general public.
- Frame and humanize dense material with context in a conversational format.
- Provide access to digestible summaries for mobile and multitasking listeners.
- Supply at-the-ready soundbites for radio, web-based (and print!) news media.



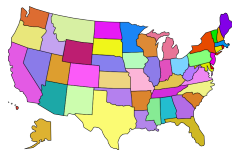
Fringe Benefits of Producing Podcasts

- Staff enjoy showcasing their hard work and sharing their expertise.
- Over time, everyone has an opportunity to participate.



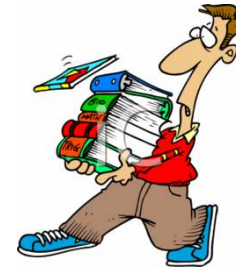
What Topics are Best Suited to Podcasts?

- Is it newsworthy? Did a notification memo draw media interest? Will findings impact and resonate with a lot of people nationally or regionally? Might they provoke outrage?
- Is there a draw – such as a congressional request, alignment with a prominent news topic or person, an unusual finding, etc. – warranting special consideration?
- Do the OIG’s recommendations go beyond updating agency policies and/or guidance?
- Was a review initiated as a follow-on to an investigation or earlier audit/evaluation, or the latest installment following a common theme, of significant public interest?



What Topics are Best Suited to Podcasts?

- Would explaining a report's scope, findings and recommendations through an audio format add value – from a Q&A-structured conversation and/or the inclusion of natural sound?
- Do we have web analytics from experience with past reports that support a “go”?
- Will a little known/understood investigative resource, practice or effort have broad appeal?



What Does an EPA OIG Podcast Sound Like?

Environmental Impacts of the Renewable Fuel Standard



Filing a Hotline Complaint



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VISUALS IN REPORTS



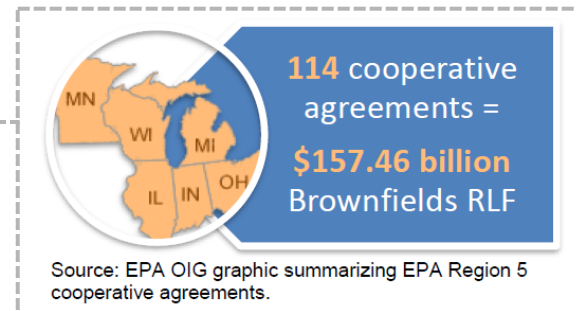
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Visuals in Reports

- Capabilities
 - Infographics & data graphics
 - Photography
- The public taxpayer is ALWAYS a stakeholder
 - Imagery makes info digestible
- A good image can go a long way in the social media, Web, digital communications world. Let us champion your work!



Left side of image: Uncontrolled weeds compete for nutrients and reduce crop yield.

Right side of image: Weeds are controlled. (EPA OIG photo)

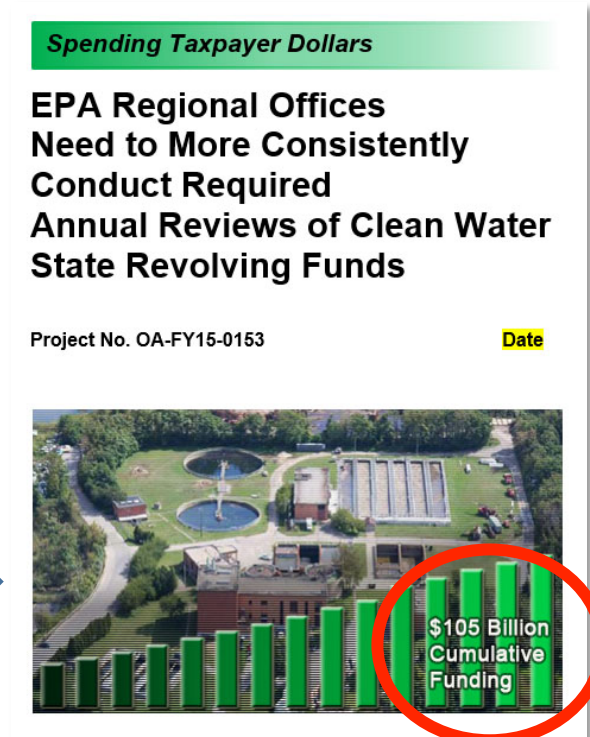


Visuals in Reports - Example

- Think outside the box. A simple cover photo would have been ok in this example, but how about illustrating the **\$105 billion** in progressive funding? *Taxpayers will care about that!*



How about instead ...



Visuals in Reports

- “My report topic is not visual. How can I have images of intangible concepts?”
 - Talking to you, financial auditors 😊
- Answer: Consider ...
 - Potential effects or impacts
 - What could this mean to the public taxpayers?
 - Are there mentions of specific places, concepts, data, significant dollar amounts (i.e., **data visualization**)?



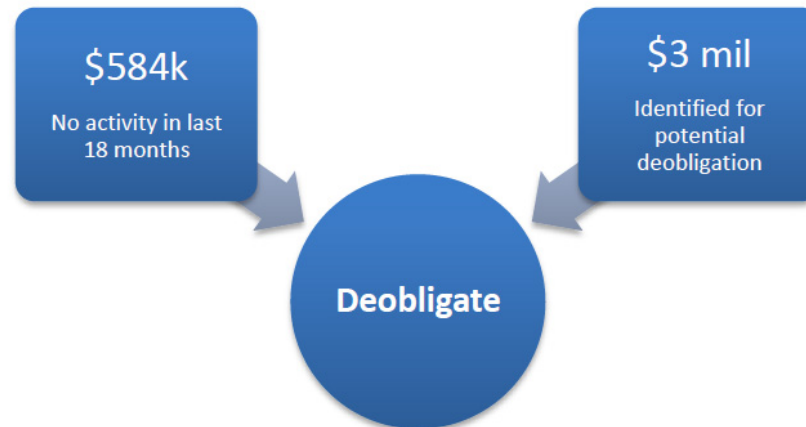
Visuals in Reports - Example

Financial Management

EPA Should Timely Deobligate Unneeded Contract, Purchase and Miscellaneous Funds

Report No. 16-P-0135

April 11, 2016



Visuals in Reports - Example

- Tables, tables, tables. They're ok, but what about instead ...

| Fiscal Year | Obligated Resources |
|---|----------------------|
| 2010 | \$46.8 million |
| 2011 | \$49.4 million |
| 2012 | \$48.4 million |
| 2013 | \$27.8 million |
| 2014 | \$59.6 million |
| TOTAL | \$232 million |
| TOTAL PLUS PRIOR YEARS' FUNDING SINCE 1995 | \$1 billion |

Source: EPA OIG.

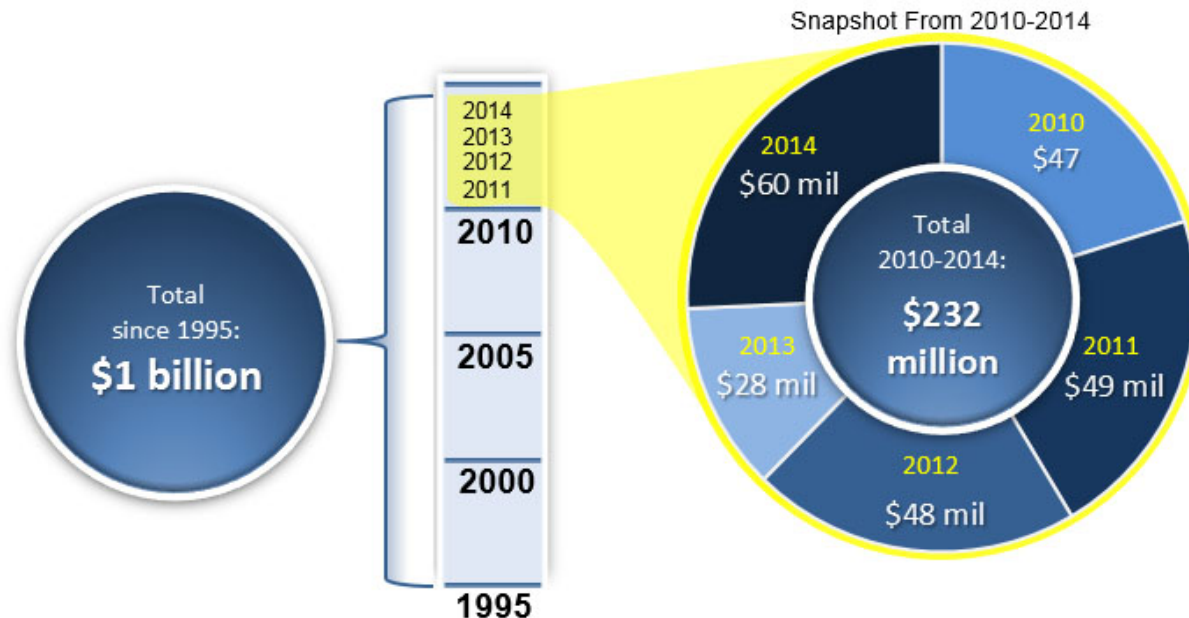
ORIGINAL



Visuals in Reports - Example

- Data graphics!

Figure: Breakdown of STAR Grant Awards Obligated Resources by Year



Source: EPA OIG.

REVISED



Visuals in Reports - Examples

▣ “What about sensitive topics?”



Visuals in Reports - Examples

- Telling a story through ...

INFOGRAPHICS &



PHOTOGRAPHY



EPA headquarters paid for unoccupied parking spaces. (EPA OIG photos)



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Visuals in Reports – Best Practices

- Plan ahead
 - Identify photo opportunities in project (field research stage).
- Get approval from management on graphic concepts BEFORE doing the work to create them.
- **Original content is always best.** Customize!



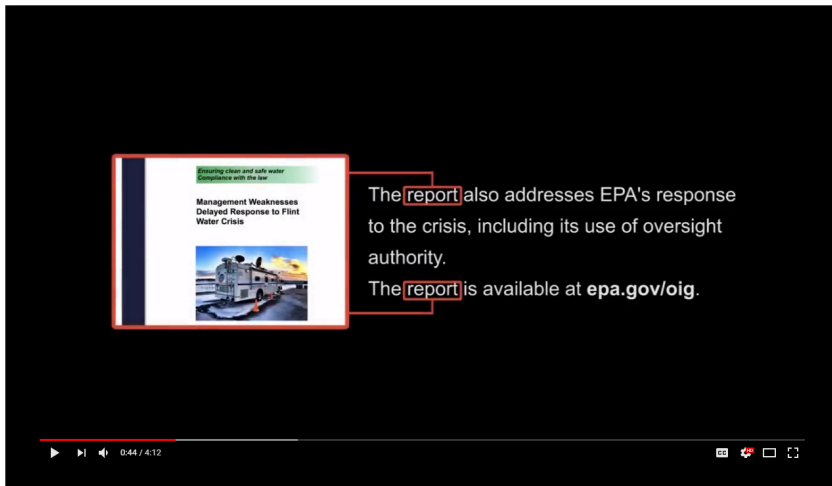
VIDEOS



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“COMING SOON” NOTICES



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NOTICE OF SCHEDULED REPORT ISSUANCE

[Audit of File Server Security](#)

The OIG expects to issue a final report for this audit on August 28, 2018 (morning). To read the memorandum initiating the project, please click on the link above.

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MEDIA OUTREACH



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Media Outreach

- Subject Matter Experts as Spokespersons



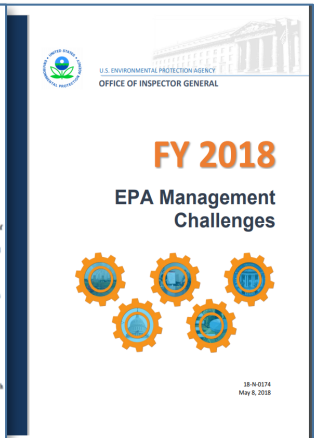
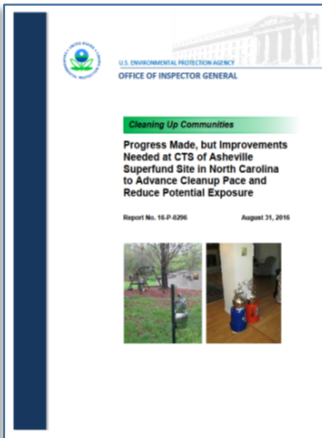
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Media Outreach

TV and Radio Interviews with Subject Matter Experts



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Media Outreach

▣ Newsroom Visits

Network TV and Radio

- ABC News
- CBS News
- CNN
- National Public Radio
- NBC News

Daily Newspapers

- New York Times
- Wall Street Journal
- Washington Post

Trade Press

- Energy & Environment News
- Inside EPA

Congressional and Political News Publications

- The Hill
- Politico

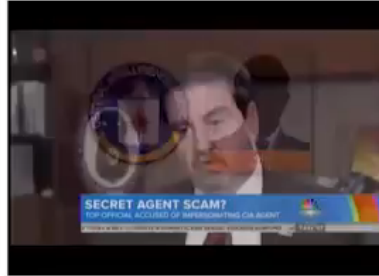
Website-based Media

- Bloomberg BNA
- BuzzFeed News
- Government Executive
- Huffington Post
- Vox Media
- Yahoo News

Not-for-profit Journalism Outlets

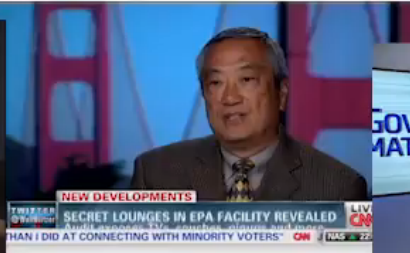
- Associated Press (wire service)
- Center for Public Integrity
- Daily Caller News Foundation





EPA OIG ON TV

CLIPS



**I look forward to
addressing any questions at
the end of this session.**

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