

Using Rich Media for Grant Applications

Mitch Boretz, University of California, Riverside/APMP
Federal Demonstration Partnership, September 2013



Goodbye, Gutenberg. I'll e-mail you.

- ▶ It's not 1450 anymore. Much as we might like to cling to printed words on paper, the electronic age is coming to a proposal near you.
- ▶ Our mission: the migration from “paperless paper” to truly electronic proposals and processes.



We need to work together to prepare for the next generation of electronic proposals.

- ▶ Why we are here today.
 - ▶ FDP, meet APMP.
 - APMP, meet FDP.
 - Grants people, meet the near future.
- ▶ What we want (and don't want!) from the electronic environment.
- ▶ What we need to do to get it.
- ▶ What we should do next.

But first, a few acknowledgments.



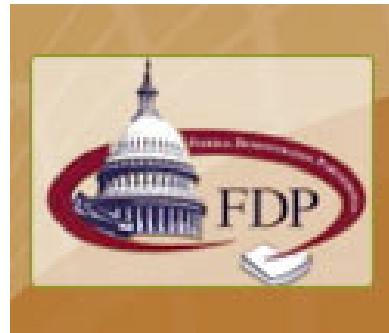
- ▶ UC Riverside, an FDP member, for supporting this trip.
You will be seeing more of UCR at future FDP meetings.

And a few more.



- ▶ The Association of Proposal Management Professionals for establishing the Electronic Proposal Submission Task Force.
 - ▶ Rick Harris, APMP Executive Director, for being here today.
 - ▶ Beth Wingate, APMP CEO, for being here today.
 - ▶ Bobbie O'Brien, for supporting the APMP task forces.
 - ▶ Ruth Turman, APMP board member, for keeping this in focus.

And most important for today's topic.



- ▶ FDP and the Joint Application Design working group for inviting us here today. Thank you.

Technology is changing the proposal world.
We can make it change for the better.

- ▶ If we believe that color, video, hyperlinks, and sound communicate more effectively than written words on a page, then we must believe that these technologies soon will dominate our world.
- ▶ FDP and APMP can work together to make the new electronic landscape work.

We all have the same objective: The right proposals get selected for funding.

- ▶ Funding agencies, set aside your suspicions for a moment. I'm not here to sell you anything today.
- ▶ We write proposals to you because we believe we have the best answer for your need. All we want is an efficient and effective framework for communicating that.

This is about preparedness and self-defense, not advocacy.

- ▶ I live in California and have an earthquake survival kit in my garage. That doesn't make me an advocate for earthquakes.



- ▶ *Our choice: lead and build consensus for how to implement the change, or stand around and wait for it to hit us.*

USGS photo

▶ 9

It's already happening, and a lot of what we are seeing isn't pretty.

All abstracts/proposals submitted electronically by means of an Electronic Business Application Tool or proposal submission website (not including Grants.gov) must be encrypted using Winzip or PKZip with 256-bit AES encryption. Please submit full proposals as two separate documents, Volume I (Technical and Management Proposal) and Volume II (Cost Proposal), uploaded as one single encrypted .zip file. Abstracts/proposals not zipped/encrypted will be rejected by DARPA. An encryption password form must be completed and e-mailed to DARPA-BAA-10-90@darpa.mil at the time of submission. See <https://dsobaa.sainc.com> for the encryption password form.

Note the word “Password” must appear in the subject line of the above e-mail and there are minimum security requirements for establishing the encryption password. Failure to provide the encryption password may result in the abstract/proposal not being evaluated. For further information and instructions on how to zip and encrypt abstract/proposal files, see <https://dsobaa.sainc.com>.

So, what do we want? And what do we want to avoid?

- ▶ APMP has asked proposal professionals from around the world and collected opinions and best practices on
 - ▶ Disseminating and amending the solicitation.
 - ▶ Proposal preparation and submission.
 - ▶ Review, award, and debriefing.
- ▶ What do we want from FDP? A pathway to consensus!
 - ▶ Right now, all we have is proposal people talking to ourselves.
 - ▶ Together, we can design an efficient and effective electronic environment.
 - ▶ Eventually, APMP can be a catalyst for creating an FDP for procurement.

How do we want the future to look?

- ▶ Where we are today



- ▶ Where we want to go



- ▶ What we want to avoid

First of all, what are the hottest hot buttons?

- ▶ Cost to propose. Will it be prohibitively expensive to make video proposals?
- ▶ Security and access before, during, and after submission. (And FDP already has raised the issue of the reviewer's privacy if viewing web-based content.)
- ▶ How Q&A and amendments are handled.
- ▶ File size, storage, and archiving.
- ▶ And from our friends at the National Contract Management Association: how do you write a contract based on a video?



Solicitations and amendments: key issues and best practices.

- ▶ Disseminate the solicitation.
 - ▶ No elaborate registration process.
 - ▶ No hiding requirements behind blind turns in the system. If you require a lay abstract, I want to know about it before I submit the proposal, not when I come to the screen where I upload it.
- ▶ Automatically disseminate amendments.
 - ▶ Numbered.
 - ▶ Dated.
 - ▶ Summarized.
- ▶ Disseminate ancillary documents, such as proposer's guide or terms and conditions.

From Mitch's good list: an amended solicitation that tells us what changed.

MODIFICATIONS

All modifications to the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) are highlighted in yellow in the body of the FOA.

Mod. No.	Date	Description of Modifications
001	April 12, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated Full Application section of the Required Documents Checklist.• Updated Appendix 4, Technical Volume to the Full Application Template.

From Mitch's bad list: a poorly documented change that cost us an opportunity.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DoD)

Research and Education Program for
Historically Black Colleges and Universities and
Minority-Serving Institutions (HBCU/MI)
Equipment/Instrumentation

Fiscal Year 2013

Broad Agency Announcement W911NF-13-R-0008



Issued by the U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground
Research Triangle Park Division
on behalf of the Army Research Office (ARO) and Assistant Secretary of
Defense for Research and Engineering
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Issued: May 2013

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Proposal submission: key issues and best practices.

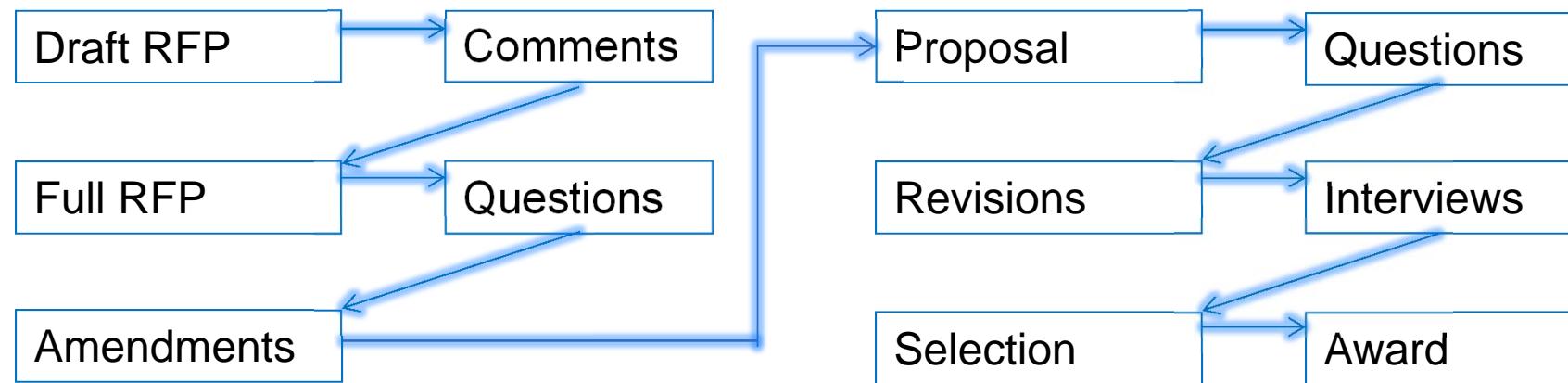
- ▶ The best on-line systems keep you on-line for the least time.
- ▶ Systems should integrate the proposal process with the review and award process.
- ▶ When we do get into video, should the files be uploaded to the recipient's site? Made available on the proposer's site? Submitted on a CD, DVD, or jump drive?
- ▶ Maybe we will evolve to a limit on total number of bytes to submit, rather than a page limit.

Review, debriefing, and award: key issues and best practices.

- ▶ How do you get your reviews back to the proposer?
- ▶ How do we handle revisions and updates?
- ▶ How do you integrate the award management system with the proposal system?

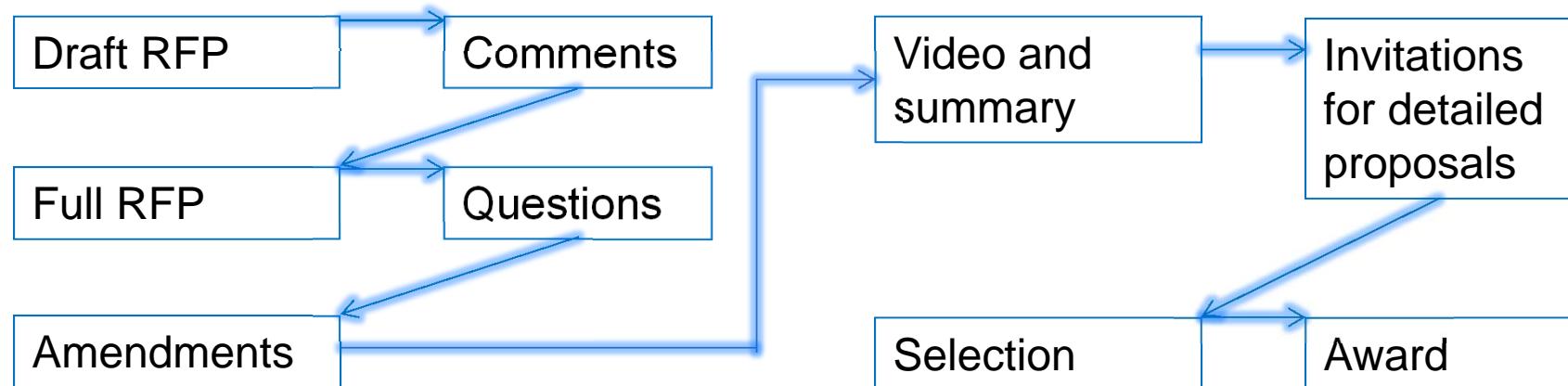
In principle, we could streamline the whole process: more BAA-like, less RFP-like.

- ▶ How we do it today:



What if reviews took an afternoon instead of six months?

▶ How we could be doing it:



This isn't about video proposals.
It's about video in proposals.

- ▶ Just a few minutes of video to highlight unique features of the proposal.
- ▶ Other electronic features, too:
 - ▶ [Interactive table of contents](#).
 - ▶ [Hyperlinked compliance matrix, mapping proposal sections to review criteria](#).
 - ▶ [Hyperlinked details: click here for more information](#).

NIH and the Army are among those leading the way.

- ▶ **From the Defense Health Program Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs**
- ▶ https://cdmrp.org/files/2014/dmrp/midcta_instruct.pdf, page 20
- **Color, High-Resolution, and Multimedia Objects:** Project narratives and pre-application files may include color, high-resolution, or multimedia objects (e.g., MPEG, WAV, or AVI files) embedded in the PDF files; however, these objects should not exceed 15 seconds in length and a size of 10 MB. Photographs and illustrations must be submitted in JPEG format; bit map or TIFF formats are not allowed.

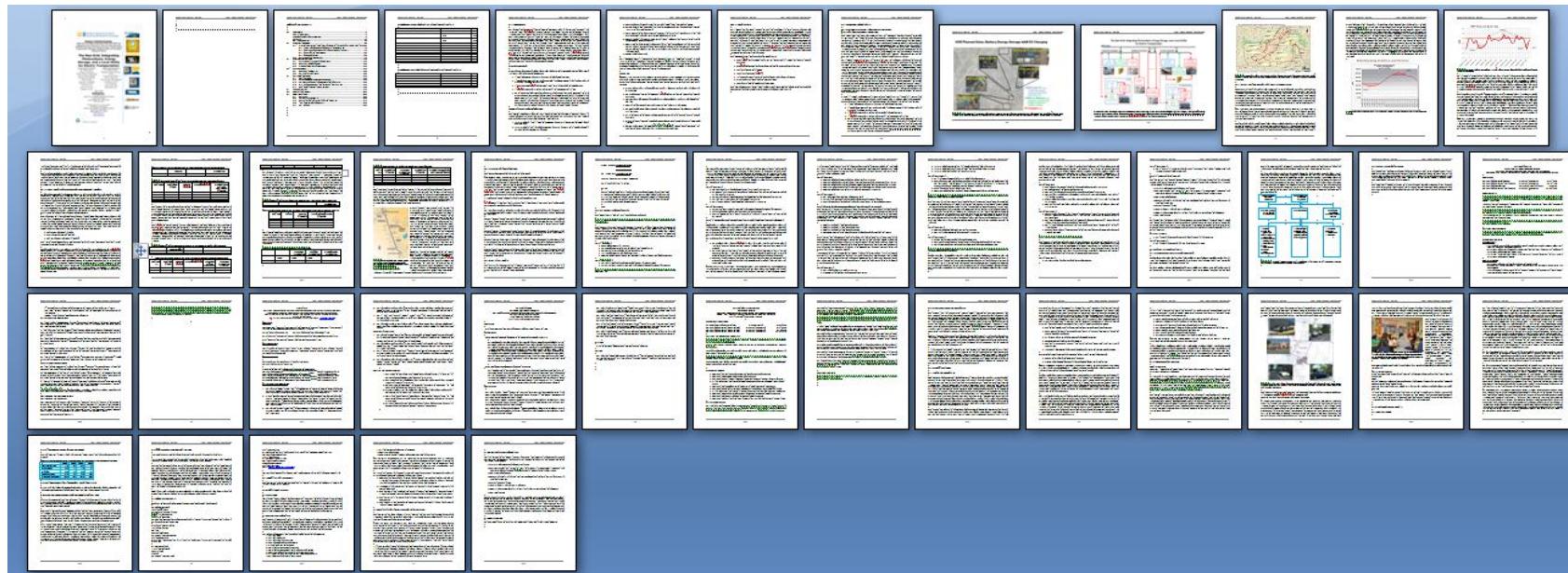
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- ▶ NIH Interim Guidance for Videos Submitted as NIH Application Materials
- ▶ <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-12-141.html>
- ▶ Stills must be included in the proposal. Video is submitted later (they don't say how).
- ▶ Aggregate limit of 2 minutes of video per proposal.

We have the tools to communicate more effectively. Let's learn to use them.

- ▶ What is the way forward?
- ▶ What can we take from NIH and from the Army Medical Command's experience so far?
- ▶ How can we migrate toward making this the norm?
 - ▶ Non-competing renewals?
 - ▶ Selected BAAs?
 - ▶ Something else?

I genuinely believe that soon proposals will look less like this...



...and more like this.

SCAQMD RFP 2011-21	Home	Technical	Cost	Administrative
			Key personnel	Specifications
<h2>The New Grid: Integrating Photovoltaics, Energy Storage, and a Local Utility for Electric Transportation</h2>				
Submitted by: University of California, Riverside Legal name: The Regents of the University of California c/o Office of Research 200 University Office Building Riverside, CA 92521 (951) 827-5535	Principal Investigator: Professor Matthew J. Barth College of Engineering-Center for Environmental Research and Technology Mail Code 022 University of California Riverside, CA 92521 (951) 781-5535			
<p>This proposal describes an innovative and comprehensive initiative to use the Sun's energy to power cars and buses throughout the City of Riverside and the UC Riverside campus. With support from the District, we propose to install 2 megawatt-hours (MWH) of photovoltaic generation capacity on the UCR campus and in the Hunter Park technology park area north of campus. The generating capacity will be connected to at least 1 MWH of</p>				
 <i>This proposal has been reviewed and approved by an authorized</i>				

So, what do you have to say?



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