

# PUBLICATION PRACTICES FOR TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT: BUDGETING, APPROPRIATING, AND SPENDING

*How well can the Internet access data about the federal government's budgeting, appropriating, and spending? The Cato Institute rated how well the government publishes information in terms of authoritative sourcing, availability, machine-discoverability, and machine-readability.*

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENTS
<b>Agencies</b>	<i>I</i>	<i>Believe it or not, there is NO federal government "organization chart" that is published in a way amenable to computer processing!</i>
<b>Bureaus</b>	<i>I</i>	<i>The sub-units of agencies have the same problem.</i>
<b>Programs</b>	<i>I</i>	<i>The data that identifies and distinguishes government programs is also not well published.</i>
<b>Projects</b>	<i>D-</i>	<i>Some project information gets published, but the publication is so bad...</i>
<b>Budget Documents</b>	<i>Congress D White House B+</i>	<i>The president's budget submission and congressional budget resolutions are a mixed bag.</i>
<b>Budget Authority</b>	<i>Congress C- Executive Branch D</i>	<i>Legal authority to spend is there, but not well articulated in the data.</i>
<b>Warrants, Apportionments, and Allocations</b>	<i>I</i>	<i>Spending authority is divided up in an opaque way.</i>
<b>Obligations</b>	<i>C+</i>	<i>Commitments to spend taxpayer money are visible some places.</i>
<b>Parties</b>	<i>D+</i>	<i>A proprietary identifier system makes it hard to know where the money is going.</i>
<b>Outlays</b>	<i>C-</i>	<i>After-the-fact aggregated data is pretty good. We need real-time, granular spending data.</i>