



>>> PleaseReview helps the IEA to better coordinate and streamline the peer review process

Company overview

The International Energy Agency, the global energy authority, was founded in 1974 to help its member countries co-ordinate a collective response to major oil supply disruptions. Its mission has evolved and rests today on three main pillars: working to ensure global energy security; expanding energy cooperation and dialogue around the world; and promoting an environmentally sustainable energy future.

The challenge

“In a time-constrained process, the time savings and immediate benefits from using PleaseReview cannot be understated.

Einar Einarsson
Head, Information Technology
Unit

The IEA is an international organization representing multiple member countries, and works in a truly collaborative environment. Its publication effort is intensive: the agency produces multiple large texts (some up to 700 pages) every year, including country reports, statistical reviews, forecasts and energy outlooks, and a variety of other specialist studies over a wide range of topics. The quality and accuracy of these documents – which are highly respected and widely cited around the world – is paramount to the agency’s mission.

These publications are often subject to peer review, which can involve between 100 and 300 reviewers from government, academia, industry as well as energy professionals. Each review is conducted independently, and participants are typically invited to comment and provide feedback on content. As a matter of principle, central control over the document is essential.

Previously, the review process involved sending each participant an electronic PDF version of individual chapters under review. Reviewers then returned their comments back in a variety of formats (email, word documents, PDFs - both electronic and scanned, or hard copies with notes). As a result, one of the most labor-intensive parts of the review process was collating all the returned comments from all these scattered sources and preparing a synthesized report for review. This approach could take many weeks.

The solution

The IEA needed to significantly reduce the time each review took and was looking for a solution that would reduce the time required to review each report. In 2014, it undertook an evaluation of PleaseReview.

“For us, where this tool really shines is at the conclusion of the review when we can download collated comments in a very short space of time and lead authors can quickly see the areas which need their attention.

The trial run with PleaseReview allowed the team to demonstrate to management the significant benefits such a tool could bring. With each subsequent review, the authors were able to refine the process to meet their specific requirements. Following a survey of those involved in the reviews the decision was made to go ahead with a hosted system.

The results

The IEA works with tight deadlines. Having more time to work through comments once the peer review process ends, rather than spend time trying to compile and organize all comments into a practical format constitutes a real benefit.

While peer reviewers appreciate the tool, PleaseReview also adds value at the end of the process. It makes it extremely quick and easy to collate and download comments so that lead authors can see the areas that need their attention.

“PleaseReview allows the IEA to better coordinate and streamline the peer review process by having a common framework which reviewers can comment on, and then easily extract summarised results for review.

For the past three years, PleaseReview has been used in the peer review process for the IEA’s flagship publication, the annual ‘World Energy Outlook’, which is used as a reference book by governments, industry, business, academics and journalists. The publication typically runs at a total of around 700 pages. Draft chapters are generally sent out for peer review during a three week period in August. At the end of the process, there is generally a two week window to collate, analyse and incorporate feedback and comments before the editing process begins.

For the WEO, PleaseReview allows for a time saving of one week per author. This means authors can start working on the comments raised by peer reviewers rather than wasting time collating and reviewing multiple comments from multiple sources, and in multiple formats. With typically up to ten authors per document, this results in savings of ten weeks per document.

While it has been a challenge in some cases to persuade reviewers to use new technology, the IEA has received much feedback about how useful and easy PleaseReview really is.

Einar Einarsson
Head, Information Technology
Unit

For more information, please contact:

PleaseTech Ltd

Europe & worldwide: tel: +44 (0)1666 826540 North America: tel: 877 205 4940
email: info@pleasetech.com