



Association of State Drinking Water Administrators

## ASDWA's UserVoice

# A Tool for Communication

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**ASDWA's UserVoice** is a powerful web-based tool that allows communities of interest to create, discuss, and vote on ideas. Sounds simple, right? It is! So, how can we use it to meet our own business needs?

### *Getting to Know ASDWA's UserVoice*

Most users can figure out all there is to know in a few minutes by simply visiting an ASDWA UserVoice site. If you're feeling adventurous, feel free to head over to <http://feedback.asdwa.org> to start getting your feet wet. It's okay to enter ideas into the system to see how the site works.

If you don't have time to "play around", you can use this resource document to better understand the basic ins-and-outs of the system.

### *A Forum by Any Other Name*

First, you need to know that there's an important distinction between ASDWA's Discussion Forums and ASDWA's UserVoice "Feedback Forums"...they are very different tools, designed for very specific purposes.

Our Discussion Forums are designed to enhance state-to-state and state-to-EPA communication. The purpose of posting to an ASDWA Discussion Forum is to generate discussion within a community of interest – to ask a question of your colleagues, to share a unique experience, or to explore ideas in a group exchange. We love Discussion Forums! Unfortunately, they make terrible spaces for collecting and analyzing large amounts of information or data.

ASDWA's UserVoice, on the other hand, is designed specifically with data collection, discussion, and prioritization in mind. In fact, for the techies among us, you can even export all of a site's data into a "csv" format that can be easily imported into any database software for external analysis.

# The Basics

This is what we're talking about. Below is an example of an ASDWA UserVoice site dedicated to collecting ideas on how ASDWA might improve our communications infrastructure. All of these sites have a common look and function to them.

The screenshot shows the ASDWA UserVoice site for Communications. The header features the ASDWA logo and the text "Association of State Drinking Water Administrators". Below the header, the page title is "ASDWA's Feedback for Communications". A navigation bar includes "New and returning users may sign in" and a "10" indicator. The main content area is titled "ASDWA's Feedback for Communications" and includes a "Post a new idea..." section with "All ideas" listed: "ASDWA Discussion Forums" (1), "ASDWA FTP" (1), "ASDWA News Blogs" (1), "ASDWA Videos" (1), and "ASDWA.org" (6). A search bar is labeled "Search ASDWA Feedback Forums" with a magnifying glass icon. A "Give feedback" section lists "ASDWA's Feedback for Communications" (10) and "DMSC Potential Work Areas and Priorities" (5). The main idea list shows "2 votes" for "Transition 'News' and 'One-Way' Communications to a News Blog Format" with a "Vote" button. A response from ASDWA (Information Management Specialist, ASDWA) is shown, stating "We've started migrating many of our printed publications to online news blogs. The project should continue into 2012." Callouts 1-13 point to various UI elements: 1 (Title), 2 (Description), 3 (Question), 4 (Response Field), 5 (Idea Filters), 6 (Vote on Ideas), 7 (Response), 8 (Idea Title), 9 (Idea Description), 10 (Sign in), 11 (All ideas list), 12 (Search bar), and 13 (Give feedback list).

1. **Title** – in this example, we're looking at "ASDWA's Feedback for Communications" site.
2. **Description** – this text is customizable and may be used to provide better context to visitors.
3. **The Question** – every ASDWA UserVoice site starts off with a question. In the example above, we're asking visitors "How Can We Improve ASDWA Communications?" We want the question to be as broad as possible, so we're sure to capture a wide range of responses from our community.
4. **The Response Field** –once you start typing, the system automatically begins to search through any existing ideas to see if a similar idea already exists. If the system finds a similar idea [based on keywords], they will be listed on the screen. This allows you to vote for/support an existing idea rather than create a duplicate one. If you do not see an idea that is similar to what you wish to submit, then go ahead and post your idea.
5. **Idea Filters** – these filters can be used to organize the stream of ideas, or narrow the result-display, based on certain parameters.
6. **Vote on Ideas** – you can use "votes" to prioritize/support ideas that you want to push to the top of the list. The total number of votes available is determined by the Admin Team and can be expanded or narrowed depending on the community's need. You are limited to using between 1-3 votes per idea [1=low, 2=medium, 3=high]. In order to submit an idea to the system, you

must use at least one of your allocated votes. You can withdraw their vote(s) from an idea at any time or change your vote to support another.

7. **Actionable Status Updates** – status options include “Under Review”, “Planned”, and “Started”. These are considered “opening actions”, meaning they indicate that an idea is being worked on in some capacity by the Admin Team. Other status options include “Completed” and “Declined”, which are examples of “closing actions”. When a closing action is taken, work on an idea has been completed or rejected, all votes in support of the idea are returned to users, and the idea may be hidden from the idea stream.
  8. **Title of an Idea** – clicking on the title brings you to a screen where you can read the full description, share the idea with other users, or use the comment function to interact with the “OP” [original poster].
  9. **Description of an Idea** – used to clarify what an idea is about. This eliminates a common problem when collecting feedback from a large audience – “what exactly did you mean when you said...”
  10. **Login and Profile** – click here to sign in. New users asked to “sign in” by providing their email address to the system and creating a password. You are expected to sign into the system **using your work email address**. Use of non-work email addresses may cause you to be denied access to an ASDWA Feedback Forum.
  11. **Categories** – used to help organize ideas into subdivisions and allow users the ability to narrow responses and target idea submissions. In the example above, the site is dedicated to “ASDWA Communications” and has Categories for “ASDWA.org”, “ASDWA Blogs”, “ASDWA FTP”, “ASDWA Videos”, etc.
  12. **Search** – this field allows you to search all ASDWA UserVoice sites you have access to.
  13. **Forum List** – a list of all ASDWA UserVoice sites a user has access to.
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# Submitting an Idea

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## **1. Go to an ASDWA UserVoice Site**

## **2. Sign In**

There is no need to register in order to participate. You will, however, be asked to provide your email address to gain access to the system – you must always sign in with a work-associated email address. You will also be asked to create a password to associate with your email address, so you can track/edit your submissions.

Once you've signed in, you can immediately start submitting ideas by typing directly into the response field provided [#4 in the graphic].

## **3. Create an Idea/Support an Existing Idea**

UserVoice employs “search-as-you-type”. When you begin typing your idea into the response field, UserVoice will search through any existing ideas already in the system that may be similar to what you are suggesting. If similar ideas are found, they will display beneath the response field.

### *Option A - Voting for an Existing Idea*

To vote for an existing idea, click the “Vote” button displayed to the left of the idea. You will be given an option to add 1, 2, or 3 votes to the idea. You may also remove your votes from an idea by clicking “Vote” next to the idea – if you voted for an idea the “Vote” button will be highlighted blue.

### *Option B – Post a New Idea*

After you select “Post a New Idea”, you have the option to add more detail to your idea.

The “Category” drop down gives you options for organizing your submission into a sub-category of the site. If none are present, you can skip this step.

The “Describe your idea...” field is used to provide more information about your idea so that it has context. We encourage you to provide descriptions, but this is an optional step.

Lastly, you will notice the numbers “1”, “2”, and “3”. These correlate to the number of votes you can apply to your idea. In order to submit an idea to the system, you must apply at least one vote. Select the number of votes you wish to allocate to your idea and press “Post Idea”.

...you're finished!!