

# Pay.gov Frequently Asked Questions: Connectivity

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## Table of Contents

1. What does Pay.gov mean by “connectivity”? .....	2
2. What software connectivity options are available? .....	2
3. I’m not familiar with some of those software solutions. What are the advantages and disadvantages? .....	2
4. Where can my agency obtain more information about these software solutions? .....	2
5. Do you support FTP mailboxes or products? .....	3
6. Can my agency use HTTPS even when exchanging information with Pay.gov over a dedicated line?.....	3
7. What level encryption must my agency's Web server certificate support if the agency is to connect to Pay.gov using HTTPS? .....	3
8. Does Pay.gov use a HTTPS solution that is FIPS 140-1 compliant? .....	3
9. What hardware connectivity options are available? .....	3
10. What connectivity solutions will FMS pay for? .....	3
11. My agency needs to connect information from several internal systems in dealing with Pay.gov. Can Pay.gov assist my agency in this regard? .....	3
12. How many connections will my agency need? .....	4
13. How is information protected? .....	4
14. Will Pay.gov encrypt information delivered to my agency?.....	4
15. What is the relevance of the Treasury Web Application Infrastructure (TWA)? 4	
16. What file formats does Pay.gov support? .....	4
17. When are files to be delivered? .....	4

**18. Some specialized services require script-based connectivity. Where can I learn more about these scripts? ..... 5**

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**1. What does Pay.gov mean by “connectivity”?**

Connectivity refers to the software and hardware used to deliver information to an agency from Pay.gov or to Pay.gov from an agency.

**2. What software connectivity options are available?**

Pay.gov supports the following software solutions:

- IBM’s MQSeries
- Valicert’s SecureTransport
- HTTPS mailbox on Pay.gov

Separate of these methods, Pay.gov allows certain Web services to be called via scripts, especially those relating to collections and verification.

**3. I am not familiar with some of those software solutions. What are the advantages and disadvantages?**

MQSeries is the most difficult to set up but is the most powerful, allowing not only for file transfers but also facilitating application integration. Valicert and the HTTPS mailbox are the easiest to set up but are limited to file transfers.

**4. What is application integration?**

If an agency so chooses, it may allow Pay.gov to integrate data directly into one or more agency systems through a process that is sometimes referred to as application integration or enterprise application integration (EAI). This type of integration—which will only be done when requested by an agency—is useful in a number of ways. In particular, by integrating information directly into the agency’s systems, Pay.gov removes manual processing that otherwise would be involved, expediting the reporting process and reducing the possibility of errors.

**5. Where can my agency obtain more information about those software solutions?**

- WebLogic Integration—  
<<http://www.bea.com/products/weblogic/integration/index.shtml>>

- MQSeries—<<http://www-3.ibm.com/software/ts/mqseries/messaging/>>
- Valicert—<[http://www.valicert.com/products/secure\\_transport.html](http://www.valicert.com/products/secure_transport.html)>

## **6. Do you support FTP mailboxes or products?**

No, we do not support FTP due to security problems with that protocol. All of our software solutions are based upon HTTP (if running over a dedicated line) or HTTPS.

## **7. Can my agency use HTTPS even when exchanging information with Pay.gov over a dedicated line?**

No, Pay.gov is not configured to handle this option.

## **8. What level encryption must my agency's Web server certificate support if the agency is to connect to Pay.gov using HTTPS?**

Pay.gov requires the agency have a Web server certificate capable of supporting 128-bit encryption in order to connect to Pay.gov using HTTPS.

## **9. Does Pay.gov use a HTTPS solution that is FIPS 140-1 compliant?**

Yes. Pay.gov uses a hardware-based, triple-DES card from Rainbow Technologies to handle SSL, version 3 only.

## **10. What hardware connectivity options are available?**

Pay.gov supports the following hardware solutions:

- Dial-up to a 56k Pay.gov modem bank
- Internet
- VPN
- Dedicated line

## **11. What connectivity solutions will FMS pay for?**

FMS generally will not pay for costs of hardware used by an agency to connect to Pay.gov. In most cases, an Internet connection is sufficient. FMS may be willing to pay for a limited number of advanced software connectivity solutions.

## **12. My agency needs to connect information from several internal systems in dealing with Pay.gov. Can Pay.gov assist my agency in this regard?**

For any application, Pay.gov will connect to one agency system to accept information and may connect to another agency system to deliver information. It will not otherwise connect together disparate parts of an agency's systems.

### **13. How many connections will my agency need?**

Pay.gov will have two geographically balanced, mirrored sites that can operate if the other goes down for any reason. Connectivity will be needed to both locations if the agency want to ensure availability for contingency purposes.

### **14. How is information protected?**

With exception of digital cash transactions—which involve digital signatures using tamper-resistant hardware—all communications between Pay.gov and agencies will use dedicated lines, virtual private networks, or 128-bit, hardware-based (on Pay.gov's side), version 3-only Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption. The scripts used for invocation of the collections services require encryption, can provide for authentication of the agency, allow the agency to authenticate Pay.gov, and facilitate the handling of collection and reporting information.

### **15. Will Pay.gov encrypt information delivered to my agency?**

Pay.gov's approach is to protect the channel used to deliver the file, rather than encrypting the file itself.

### **16. What is the relevance of the Treasury Web Application Infrastructure (TWA)?**

Pay.gov is one of the applications that resides upon the Treasury Web Application Infrastructure (TWA), which is a Treasury hosting environment operated by the Federal Reserve system. The TWA has a production environment in Dallas, Texas, a test environment in Richmond, Virginia, and will have another, geographically load-balanced environment in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

The relevance of the TWA is two-fold. First, because the TWA will offer two production environments, an agency can use two connections to different locations to ensure the highest continuity of service. Second, unlike other functionality of Pay.gov the connectivity options are offered directly but the TWA, rather than by Pay.gov. Pay.gov is a customer of these options as are agencies. Therefore, TWA representatives will occasionally but not frequently be involved in connectivity discussions.

### **17. What file formats does Pay.gov support?**

For files coming in from an agency to Pay.gov, Pay.gov supports fixed width, comma delimited, tab delimited, and XML formats. It does not currently support print stream formats. For outgoing files, Pay.gov will use the same file format that the agency currently uses. If no format is in place, Pay.gov will create an XML file, which is the preferred format.

### **18. When are files to be delivered?**

The times for delivering or picking up files are set by the agency.

**19. Some specialized services require script-based connectivity. Where can I learn more about these scripts?**

Information about scripts should be available as part of the agency's welcome kit but the most recent documentation can be made available upon request.

**20. Will Pay.gov use the same legacy formats that my agency uses for paper lockbox processing?**

Generally yes, if the agency so requests. Acceptable file formats include tab delimited, comma delimited, fixed length, and XML. The preferred method is XML; if the agency does not have a file format, Pay.gov will create an XML file format.

**21. Can Pay.gov report on only those transactions that have settled, as opposed to those collections that are still in the process of settling?**

Yes.

**22. Does Pay.gov combine the files my agency receives from a paper lockbox financial agent with the electronic equivalents of those transactions on Pay.gov?**

Yes. It is the preferred approach of Pay.gov that it be the hub for the transmission of lockbox activity to the agencies. This benefits the agency and the FMS in that if a financial agent leaves the lockbox program, the connectivity with the agency does not need to be changed. Pay.gov will combine lockbox information with the electronic transaction information processed by Pay.gov into one set of data, or as two sets if so preferred by the agency.