

# Tasmanian Government

## WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

Content management involves the appropriate management of sites 'behind the scenes', including content creation, approval, record keeping and review of web content. From an external user's perspective, content management involves ensuring that the information provided is objective, apolitical, correct, timely, up-to-date, consistent and accurate.

The scope of these Guidelines covers non-transactional, public websites only but their application is also recommended for Agency intranet publishing and other parts of government.

## 2. WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

The management processes applied to web content should be consistent with the processes used across the Agency in providing information to the public. Many agencies use their websites as a major source of information, but fail to implement the management processes that would be applied to producing information in other forms, for example publications, brochures, and newspaper advertisements.

These management processes may differ depending on the type of web content, which may include:

- Text (management processes regarding accuracy and timeliness)
- Graphics and multimedia (management processes regarding obtaining permissions from the relevant copyright owner/s and regarding privacy [as a matter of policy the Tasmanian Government requires that acknowledgement of the use of an image(s) be obtained from the subject/s (model/s) in the image/s])
- Downloadable files (management processes regarding file types and file sizes)
- Agencies should consider the issues involved in managing different types of web content, and processes should be clearly documented and maintained.
- Agencies should establish and regularly review a web content management framework, consisting of governance structures, policies, procedures and plans.

## 3. RISKS OF POORLY MANAGED WEB CONTENT

Failure to manage web content effectively can have a number of ramifications:

- Legal exposure if users act on incorrect or outdated information on the site
- Agencies may incur a loss if they are unable to verify what was published and when
- Negative impact upon reputation and branding

- Public relations and political issues caused by the release of untimely, inaccurate or inappropriate information
- Increased customer complaints and support costs, due to inaccurate, out-of-date, conflicting or misleading published information

## 4. WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Agencies should assess their business needs, the scope and complexity of their content management needs, and consider a method of managing their content.

### a. Allocate roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities associated with the content management process should be allocated to a particular position, rather than allocated to a staff member. Then, if a position ceases to exist, then the role and responsibility can be reassigned.

These content management roles may include:

- Content author
- Content owner
- Content authoriser
- Image manager
- Website publisher
- Website manager/coordinator
- Records manager
- Systems administrator

Agencies should consider including responsibility for creating and maintaining web content in Statements of Duties. Inclusion of this responsibility allows the performance of the activities to be reviewed, as well as legitimising time and resources spent on web content management activities.

The responsibilities of the content management roles may vary depending on the authoring model adopted. There are three main authoring models:

- Centralised authoring - source material is provided to the web team, which publishes and manages all content
- Decentralised authoring - individual business units are provided with tools for authoring and maintaining their information
- Hybrid authoring - most authoring is done by business units, while a central unit is responsible for overall quality control and strategic web management

## b. Identify a web content owner and determine the approval process

Every page of web content or piece of information published on a website should have a specified owner. The specified owner is responsible for reviewing the web content and ensuring that it remains accurate and current. Agencies should consider removing web content that does not have a specified owner, unless there is an alternative mechanism for keeping this web content up-to-date.

Agencies should ensure that all web content has appropriate approval before publication. Approval is critical when managing the creation of web content by multiple parties. The approval process should ensure that a record of the approval (by whom and on what date) is captured into a recordkeeping system.

Over time in some agencies, it may be difficult to determine who approved particular text, documents, etc on the website. Ensuring that these roles and responsibilities are made clear will assist in facilitating any necessary changes that become evident at a later date.

Management of web content approval may be assisted by using the workflow features provided as part of content management and document management systems.

## c. Assess and manage any legal implications of web content

Agencies should review their web content for any risks and address the issues appropriately. Agencies should establish appropriate systems and processes to ensure that it is possible to retrieve what was presented on the site on a particular date. This can be used if any legal action arises. This retrieval process can often be implemented using a content management system, although simpler systems and processes may also be viable.

Agencies must comply with relevant legislation, including those mentioned in the Tasmanian Government Website Standards.

The following are examples of some of the risks that may be found on Agency websites:

### Example 1: Breach of Copyright

Agencies need to be aware of the potential for inadvertent copyright breaches arising from unauthorised use of material such as Microsoft's or Adobe's corporate logos.

### Example 2: Unauthorised use of Images

Images published on websites need to be reviewed on a regular basis in relation to the appropriateness of the use. For example, a school photo collected for promotion of Education Department activities may not be appropriately used if the subject has since moved to a private school.

Agencies need to regularly review use of images to ensure they continue to be used in accordance with the terms and conditions under which permission was given. For example, reuse of a photo or image on a Drugs website where it has been collected for another purpose.

### Example 3: Personal Information Protection

If a website is collecting personal information from visitors, for example from an online survey, then disclaimers must appear on the website stating how that information will be used by Government.

#### d. Establish testing processes

Testing content can help ensure that quality, usability, discoverability and accessibility standards are met. A number of testing activities can be used, including:

- Checking links to ensure they are active
- Ensuring conformance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and the W3C standards. Automated testing can validate whether standards have been reached or not
- Assessing page size and other quantitative measures of quality and accessibility
- Ensuring appropriate metadata has been entered
- Checking that new pages are listed in site navigation and search engines
- Editorial processes to review the suitability and clarity of new content
- Usability testing to measure the appropriateness of the content to the target audience.

#### e. Keep appropriate records

There are a number of reasons that agencies must keep appropriate records of web content, including:

- Providing evidence of the business of government
- Documenting corporate knowledge and history
- Supporting business decision making and functions
- Contributing to the documentation of Tasmanian history
- Fulfilling legal requirements, such as the *Archives Act* (1983), *Evidence Act* (2001), *Electronic Transactions Act* (2000) and the *Libraries Act* (1984)
- Meeting audit requirements.

To meet legislative requirements, Agencies must:

- I. Capture and manage records of their web resources over time, until disposed of in accordance with the *Archives Act* (1983). The Office of the State Archivist is developing new advice for management of web sites. As an interim measure, continue to use [Guideline 15](#): Recordkeeping Strategies for Managing Records of Web Sites and Web Pages.

2. Deposit copies of all electronic publications in the National eDeposit (NED) service to fulfill the legal deposit obligations under the Libraries Act 1984. NED is also an approved repository for publications that are identified for permanent retention in the Office of the State Archivist's [Disposal Schedules](#) including the Disposal Schedule for Common Administrative Functions (DA No 2157).
3. Notify Libraries Tasmania of pending major additions or changes to the presentation or content of Agency website/s, and request capture of the old website/s before the changes are implemented. Libraries Tasmania maintains preservation copies of Tasmanian websites to ensure access to this cultural information for future generations and facilitate compliance with legal deposit requirements.

#### **f. Review and remove or amend web content as necessary**

Web content must be reviewed to remove or modify material that is inaccurate, out-of-date, conflicting or misleading. Rapidly changing material may need to be reviewed every week or month, while other web content may need to be revisited only every few years. Setting inappropriately short review dates can 'fatigue' web content owners and may lead to failure of the review process.

Agencies should notify *Service Tasmania Online* of any major additions or changes to an Agency website. This will ensure the site is properly indexed and discoverable from [tas.gov.au](http://tas.gov.au) portal.

Disposal of web sites, web pages and supporting records must meet the Office of the State Archivist Disposal Schedules and relevant Standards, as well as existing Agency Records Management requirements.

Agencies may find it useful to automate the management of page reviews wherever possible, for example through the use of a web content management system. By setting review dates on pages, automated notification messages can be sent out to web content owners. This reduces the labour involved in tracking reviews and increases the currency of web content.

#### **g. Select an appropriate business process or tool to manage content**

Content management may be undertaken through appropriate business processes and/or by using a variety of tools, such as a spreadsheet, a database or a content management system (CMS).



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