



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Finance**

Website Governance Framework

Key principles for managing the
Western Australian public sector websites



Key principles for managing WA public sector websites

Aim

To support agency executives in achieving their website governance responsibilities.

Principles and Checklists

The eight key principles that underpin the Website Governance Framework (WGF) are listed in this document. Agencies should be actively working towards meeting these principles. A checklist of questions is provided for each principle to assist Directors General, Chief Executive Officers and other senior executives in discussing their agency's current approach to website governance with their Chief Information Officer or other Information Technology personnel.

The checklists are not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation, but rather an initial exploration to stimulate further discussion on what needs to be done to meet each principle and provide impetus for reviewing current website management practices.

Principle 1:

Websites should be in the WA Government domain (wa.gov.au)

Unlike websites in non-government domains such as com.au, websites in the wa.gov.au domain carry with them the integrity and trustworthiness of belonging to government and instant recognition that the information and services provided relate to Western Australia.

Choosing to go outside of wa.gov.au foregoes those benefits and may require additional expenditure to try to build equivalent brand values from scratch.

- Do we have websites outside of the wa.gov.au domain (or wa.edu.au for educational institutions)?
- If so, why?
- If so, do we have plans to phase out the use of other types of domains?

In 2009-10, nearly a quarter of new websites didn't use the wa.gov.au domain

Principle 2:

An agency should have only one Internet Domain Name

Government agencies must have an Internet domain name (such as 'dpc.wa.gov.au') in order to use Internet services such as email and the World Wide Web. Usually, collaborative initiatives aside, this is the only Internet domain name your agency should need.

The principle of one Internet domain per organisation should be adhered to wherever possible. However, there may be instances where an agency needs more than one Internet domain name, such as where it consists of multiple organisations, for a period of time following machinery of government changes, or to protect against the use of high profile government brands in other domains.

- How many Internet domains do we own?
- If more than one, do we have plans to reduce the number of Internet domains?

Principle 3: An agency should have only one website

One well-designed website should be able to meet the needs of your agency and the people that access its information and services, as is the case for even the largest of commercial and other non-government enterprises. Multiple websites within an agency generally lead to:

- duplication of content and effort
- potential for inconsistent information across websites
- less adherence to standards and attention to quality due to the additional effort this can require over multiple websites
- Customer confusion (which website should I go to?) and greater difficulty in finding content.

A single website as the online point of contact for your agency has a larger consolidated audience and increases opportunities for cross-promotion of other information and services it makes available online.

New campaigns or initiatives should be housed prominently in your agency's existing website and any associated marketing used to both highlight the new initiative and strengthen the existing web presence.

**In 2009-10, the
WA Government had
525 websites**

**In 2009-10, 19 agencies had six or
more active websites. Of those 19 agencies,
five had more than 10 websites and three
had more than 20 websites**

An exception to this principle is collaborative initiatives involving multiple organisations (See Principle 8). In such cases, there may be a need to create a separate website that is not specific to one particular organisation but, instead, reflects the topic or business focus of the website.

Where there is an unavoidable business need to have more than one website, this can be achieved without compromising the principle of one domain name per organisation (Principle 2) by using, for example, 'xxxxxx.dpc.wa.gov.au' or 'dpc.wa.gov.au/xxxxxx' as the address for the website. Where this type of approach is used, consideration needs to be given to the level of integration that needs to be achieved, such as a capability to search across all websites.

- How many websites do we have?
- If more than one per organisation, do we have plans to reduce the number of websites?
- Do we have plans to create more in the future and, if so, why?

Principle 4:

Websites should be underpinned by a website business plan

A website business plan documents key information about the website, ensures transparency and accountability, and provides a mechanism for stakeholder approval and signoff before the site is developed.

The WGF requires a business plan for all new websites and for significant redevelopment of existing websites. Areas covered in the business plan include the business objectives of the website, how achievement of those objectives are to be measured and evaluated, the business and technical requirements, a risk analysis, standards to be applied, how the site will be built and managed and the cost involved. The WGF provides a business plan template that agencies can use.

- Do we have a formal planning process for websites?
- Do we create a business plan before developing or significantly redeveloping a website?

**In 2009-10, 42%
of new websites did not
have a business plan**

Principle 5:

Websites should comply with relevant legislation, standards and policies

The WGF contains or references a number of standards, relevant legislation and best practice guidelines to assist agencies in developing and maintaining quality websites. Two particular requirements that agencies must comply with relate to accessibility and the Common Website Elements Standard:

Accessibility

It is important that websites are developed to meet website accessibility standards to ensure they cater for a broad range of needs. This includes people with disabilities, people in rural and remote areas that have slow Internet connections and people using alternative technologies such as smart phones and other handheld devices. The WGF sets out the level of accessibility that websites need to meet.

Common Web Elements (CWE)

The CWE improves the usability and accessibility of WA Government websites by requiring a level of consistency in the positioning and functionality of key website elements, including website navigation, branding, search and footer content.

- Do we follow the Website Governance Framework when developing a website?
- Do our websites comply with the WA Government's Website Accessibility requirement or do we have plans in place to make them compliant?
- Do our websites comply with the WA Government's Common Website Elements Standard or do we have plans in place to make them compliant?

**In 2009-10, less than half of
new websites were reported as
meeting the accessibility
requirement**

Principle 6:

Websites should be actively monitored and assessed

Ongoing monitoring, analysis and evaluation of websites is an important component of the website management lifecycle and is critical to improving performance and service delivery. It should be used to determine if the business objectives of the website are being met, to provide a basis for improving the website by understanding how users interact with it, and as a means of determining when a website or specific content within a website should be redeveloped or decommissioned.

- Do we actively monitor our websites?
- Do we regularly analyse this information and use it to make decisions about improving or decommissioning websites?

Principle 7:

Agencies should comply with WGF annual reporting and website registration requirements

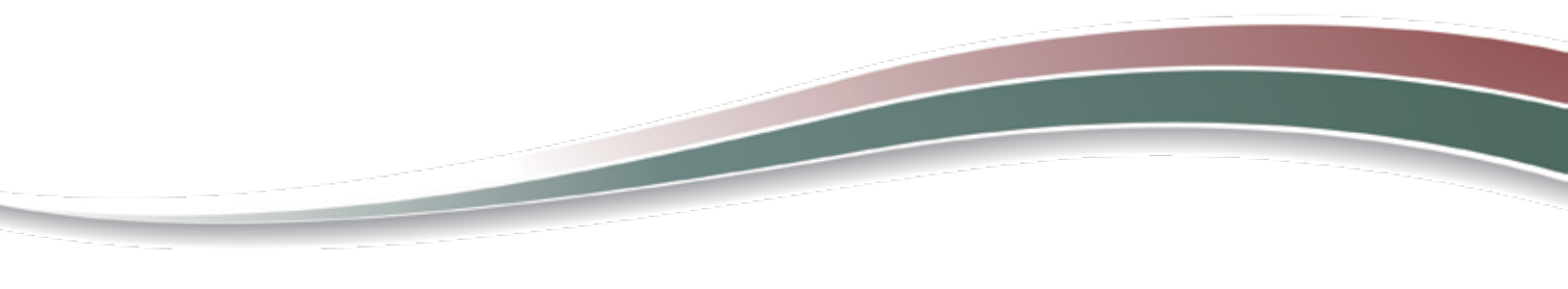
Reporting and registration of websites by agencies provides a means for evaluating the uptake and effectiveness of the WGF and provides metrics for understanding and reporting on the broader picture of the WA Government's use of the web. The information can be used at an agency and a whole-of-government level to inform new strategies and initiatives aimed at improving delivery of information and services.

- Are we aware of and prepared for the annual WGF reporting requirements?
- Have we registered all our websites as part of WGF reporting requirements?
- Do we have a good understanding of our website costs?

Principle 8:

Agencies should explore opportunities for collaboration

Before developing or redeveloping a website, you should explore opportunities to collaborate with other organisations to deliver a more complete view of the information and services available for a particular service/topic area or to make it easier for citizens to access a range of related services. Searching online is a quick way to initially identify organisations that have a shared interest in a particular area. Social media can also play a key role in bringing together people and ideas that spark collaborative opportunities and can also provide an effective means for agencies to interact with and build a better understanding of customer needs.

- Do we actively explore opportunities for collaborating online?
 - Do we have an environment that promotes and encourages collaboration?
 - Do we have a good understanding of the needs of our customers?
 - Do we have an approach to the use of social media that suits our organisational requirements?
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Evolution of WA Government Websites

PRESENT

FUTURE

**High number
of websites**

Significant variation
in quality, usability
and accessibility

**Lower number
of websites**

Higher quality,
greater consistency,
standards-based

**Citizen-centred
websites**

Collaborative service
delivery channels
designed around
citizen needs

Further Information

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