

.gov Reform Initiative

National Archives and Records Administration Web Improvement Plan

Working Draft as of 10/11/2011

Background

In the [August 12, 2011 Agency Instructions for Completing Web Inventories and Web Improvement Plans](#), Agency CIOs were asked to work with their Agency Web Manager and Office of Public Affairs to submit an Interim Progress Report on their efforts to streamline Agency-managed .gov domains (due September 6, 2011) and to begin development of an Agency-wide Web Improvement Plan.

“By October 11, Agencies shall develop a Web Improvement Plan that communicates their **strategy for managing web resources more efficiently, improving online content, and enhancing the customer experience of Agency websites.**” This comprehensive plan will “address the broader objectives of **streamlining content, infrastructure, and ultimately improving customer service.**”

The purpose of this Web Improvement Plan is to identify the strategy, actions, measurements, and timelines that the Agency is using to streamline website infrastructure, improve web content, and enhance the customer experience with Executive Branch websites.

Agencies are being asked to create a Web Improvement Plan that will be developed iteratively over the next few months. In this plan, Agencies will describe Agency-wide efforts to effectively manage publicly accessible websites in the .gov domain. Only agencies in the Executive Branch are required to submit a Web Improvement Plan. The initial plan for the National Archives and Records Administration, due to OMB by October 11, 2011, is in the following section.

Step 1: Current State of Agency-wide Web Improvement Efforts

Over the past few months, Agencies have been reviewing their .gov domains, web operations, and other web-related efforts in response to OMB .gov Reform data collection efforts (individual domain inventories, web governance survey, interim progress reports, etc.). The following describes the state of current web improvement efforts at the National Archives and Records Administration.

1) Does your Agency currently have an Agency-wide web strategy?

No.

2) How does your agency currently ensure that Agency-wide web resources are managed efficiently (e.g. governance, technology/infrastructure, hosting, staffing, operations, etc.)?

The National Archives does not have a specific Agency-wide web strategy; however, as we develop a strategy, we will draw from the NARA web policy directives and the National Archives Open Government Plan, which defines parts of an Agency-wide web strategy. These include:

- Social Media Strategy for the National Archives
- Improved Search Capabilities to the Permanent Records of the Federal Government
- A Website Designed for Participation
- Strategic Approach to Digitization

The National Archives has policy directives and staff that guide website design, content, technical policies, and regulations. This includes ongoing monitoring for high-quality presentation of appropriate, plain-written text, images, and multimedia content, quarterly reviews, IT system maintenance and security policies, and overall website management. These policies will be updated based on the new Federal Web Strategy.

See 807.1 and 807.3 - Content Rules and Requirements for NARA Websites (Internet, Intranet, and NARA-Hosted Extranets) and Presidential Library Websites - NARA 807

See 808.1 and 808.4 - Content Management for NARA's Main Public Website and Intranet - NARA 808

3) How does your Agency currently ensure that website content is readily accessible, updated, accurate, and routinely improved?

Web staff collaborate with content contributors and subject matter experts in ongoing reviews that include:

- reviewing content

- checking links
- confirming accessibility
- evaluating and inventorying content
- simplifying language to make information useful, relevant, and easy to find
- reviewing and revising navigation and page layout, as needed

The National Archives policy directives support these activities with training, quarterly reviews, and multilevel workflow reviews prior to posting. These policies will be updated based on the new Federal Web Strategy.

See 808.6 Content Management for NARA's Main Public Website and Intranet NARA 808

As part of the National Archives Plain Writing Action Plan to provide clear Government communication that the public can understand and use, the National Archives is:

- Overseeing plain writing act efforts based on the Federal Plain Language Guidelines
- Updating the NARA Style Guide to provide a reliable reference for consistent communication
- Training all staff to use plain writing

4) How does your Agency currently ensure that websites are meeting user expectations and needs and that the customer experience with websites is continually enhanced?

The National Archives uses a variety of tools to ensure the websites are meeting the needs of the customers. These include analysis and reviews of WebTrends reports, American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey data, site search data, customer feedback, visitor comments, focus groups, and usability testing.

Web staff collaborate with content contributors and subject matter experts and routinely use this data to:

- monitor website data and customer feedback
- identify top customers and tasks
- create user and task-focused content
- identify problem areas
- conduct usability testing

Some examples of ways that we have continually enhanced the customer experience with our websites include:

- Redesigned Archives.gov using a transparent redesign process where visitors and stakeholders participated in the redesign process and voted for the final design. This resulted in winning a ClearMark award.
- Developed ways to participate with our online users more effectively by developing our current catalog into a public tagging catalog that allows our users to contribute information about our holdings.
- Streamlined search capabilities for our online holdings to unlock online records from previously stove-piped systems.
- Approached digitization strategically as well as transparently with the ultimate goal of providing greater access to our holdings online.