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Policies and Guidelines for Federal Public Websites: ICGI Report Attachments

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From Recommended Policies and Guidelines for Federal Public Websites: Final Report of the Interagency Committee on Government Information
Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget
June 9, 2004

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Attachment A
Interagency Council on Government Information Web Content Standards Working Group

Working Group Members and Advisors
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Department of Housing and Urban Development (IT)	Department of Agriculture (IT)
Carlynn Thompson Director, Component Information Support Defense Technical Information Center Department of Defense (technical standards and policies)	James Vaughn USA Services Program Manager General Services Administration (customer service)
Tricia Wellman Senior Attorney Office of Information and Privacy Department of Justice (e-FOIA)	Michael White National Archives and Records Administration (U.S. Government Manual)

Attachment B
Interagency Council on Government Information Web Content Standards Working Group

Definitions
The following are definitions for terms used in this report.

Agency: An organizational unit of the executive branch that is any of the following:

- A member of the cabinet;
- A major subdivision of a cabinet agency. For example
  - In the Department of the Interior: the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the Office of Surface Mining, among others
  - In the Department of Defense: major components such as the military departments, the defense agencies, and the field activities.
- An independent agency, such as
  - The Central Intelligence Agency
  - The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
  - The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
  - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Any other organizational unit OMB designates as an organization for the purposes of web content management.

Alternative Formats: Web file formats that are not universally accessible, but are available to the public via specific software or plug-ins. These formats include, but are not limited to: Portable Document Formats (PDF), WordPerfect, MS Word, MS PowerPoint, and statistical data files, such as SAS, SPSS, SQL, and MS Excel.

Content: Any material that is available on a federal public website.

Cross-Agency Portal: A website that brings together information and services from multiple federal agencies or organizations about a particular topic or for a particular audience group.

Document: A file provided on a website that contains text, such as pages, text files, word processing files, and spreadsheet files.

Domain Names: Web addresses that are used to help people find websites on the Internet. Domain names are made up of a hierarchy known as levels, which are separated by periods (".") within the domain name. Top-level domains include domains such as .gov, .mil., .us, .org, .com., and .edu. Examples of a federal organization's domain name are army.mil, noaa.gov and publicdebt.treas.gov.

Extranet: A public-private website or portal, secured or password-protected, specifically designed for selected workers in an organization and selected external partners to conduct internal business.

Federal Public Website: Any website that meets these three criteria:

- Is funded and sponsored entirely by a federal executive branch agency or organization;
- Presents official government information, and
- Is available to the public without passwords or log-ins.

Homepage: The page that serves as the front door of a website. Every website has a homepage. No website has more than one homepage.

Industry Standard Web Formats: Web file formats that are universally accessible to anyone with a web browser, which do not require specific software or plug-ins. HTML and XML are current examples of industry standard formats.

Intranet: A private website or portal, secured or password-protected, specifically designed for workers in an organization to conduct internal business.

Major Entry Point: Pages that are frequently accessed directly by the public. Major entry points include:

- An organization's homepage;
- The root of the level right below the homepage (for example, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/ and http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues);
- The pages submitted in response to the Department of Justice Bi-Annual Survey for the Review of Agency Implementation of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and
- Any other page that website statistics indicate is most often visited, bookmarked, or linked to by website visitors.

Navigation: The means by which a visitor can navigate the content of a website. Navigation usually consists of a collection of links to sections and subsections of a website.

Organization and Federal Organization: Any entity of a federal executive branch agency, at any level of the agency-for example, any department, agency, bureau, division, office, program, or other organizational unit.

Page: A text file at a single URL, written or generated in a markup language like HTML, and viewed through a browser. For the purpose of these policies, pages do include PDFs but do not include pop-up windows, dialog windows, files that provide text descriptions of non-text content to enhance accessibility (d-links), redirection pages, or slides within a presentation, except where otherwise noted.

Second-Level Domain Name: A website address that is at the next highest level of the hierarchy below the top-level domains of .gov and .mil, such as hud.gov, fbi.gov, regulations.gov, or army.mil. It includes all websites registered through the official Government Domain Registry (including domain names in the .fed.us domain), and all websites registered through the Department of Defense .mil registry. It does not include websites considered to be third-level domains, such as nmfs.noaa.gov or www.publicdebt.treas.gov.

Site Map: A linked, graphic or text-based display of a website's hierarchy, similar to an organization chart. Typically, site maps break down a website's content into increasingly specific subject areas to help the visitor understand its structure, from the main navigation pages to their subordinate pages. The main difference between a site map and a subject index is that a subject index is typically an alphabetical list, not a hierarchically structured set of links.

Subject Index: A list of a website's content, typically presented in alphabetical order, similar to an index in the back of a book. The main difference between a subject index and a site map is that a site map conveys website structure or navigation.

Usability: The measure of the quality of a visitor's experience when using a website, including the ability to accomplish basic tasks.

Web Content Manager: Federal employees who write, edit, manage, and form strategic plans for the content of federal websites.

Website: A collection of web content organized under a single homepage.

Attachment C
Interagency Council on Government Information Web Content Standards Working Group

Vetting List
The following groups and individuals were invited to provide feedback on the draft recommendations developed by the Web Content Standards Working Group in April 2004.

- Federal Web Content Managers Forum
- CIO Council

- Public Affairs Officers
- Agency Webmasters and IT Specialists
- E-Gov Initiative Program Managers
- Web Managers within Working Group member agencies
- Public Domain Directory Working Group
- Other ICGI working groups and sub-groups (Electronic Records Policy Working Group and Categorization of Information Working Group)
- Legislative Branch agencies (Government Printing Office and Library of Congress)
- CENDI (Commerce, Energy, NASA, Defense Information Managers Group)
- USA Services Advocates (agencies involved in customer relationship management)
- Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC)
- American Library Association
- Selected experts with interest in E-Gov, specifically Gerry McGovern, Pew Foundation, Council for Excellence in Government
- Industry Advisory Council

The initial draft recommendations have also been posted on the ICGI website.

Attachment D
Interagency Council on Government Information Web Content Standards Working Group

Establishing a federal public website inventory and publication priorities

Here is a simple 3-step process that can help you meet the requirements of Section 207(f)(2) of the E-Government Act of 2002. It will help you decide what should be on your website-both now and in the future-and help you set publication priorities.

Just follow the steps and keep this in mind: If it can be public, and is of interest to the public, it should be public. Agencies dealing with national defense and law enforcement should weigh security needs as well as the public's need to know.

Step 1: Determine your audiences

- Worksheet 1: List all the audiences who do, should, and might visit your website. Determine the potential size of those audiences.
- Think about audiences in the broadest sense, for example, business partner groups, client groups, media, elected officials, librarians and researchers, international visitors, senior citizens, students, children, parents, teachers, and so forth. And-of course-be sure to list "citizens" as an important audience group.
- Note your list on Worksheet 1.

Step 2: Develop your inventory

- Use Worksheet 2 to create your inventory. List the audience groups you defined in Step 1 down the left side of the matrix, and list the various components of your organization or organization across the top.
- Complete the matrix by answering two questions: What does this audience group want to know from this part of our organization? What does this part of our organization need to tell this audience group? List broad categories of information, such as press releases, budget documents, and publications.
- Include both content that currently exists on your website and content that should exist on your website.
- Make sure you address common requests. Look at customer questions from email, focus groups, phone calls, and surveys. Look at your search logs to identify information visitors to your website have sought. Talk to people who answer the telephones or act as desk receptionists.

Step 3: Set priorities

- Use Worksheet 3 to help you set priorities.
- In column 1, list all the content items you identified as your inventory, on Worksheet 2.
- In column 2, note whether the information or services already exists on the website, exists in some form but is not on the website, or has to be developed (to determine a

general Level of Effort).

- In column 3, note whether the information is:
  - Priority 1: required by law, regulation, Presidential directive, or other official directive or to ensure national security
  - Priority 2: mission-critical and essential for program operations, but not required by law, regulation, or Presidential directive (i.e.-information or services that are directly tied to your mission and/or strategic plan)
  - Priority 3: frequently requested information or services that would improve organization business processes and/or customer service to the public (e.g. most commonly used forms, documents, applications, transactions, etc.).
  - Priority 4: other information
- Some inventory items may fall into more than one priority. Assign them the highest priority.
- In column 4, assign a publication target for every inventory item that is not already posted on the website. Clearly the content at the highest priority levels should be targeted first. But also look for opportunities to post content that already exists in another format that could be easily converted for web use, particularly if that content will improve customer service. We suggest grouping content into 3 target categories: 1 year out, 2 years out, and 3 years out, but you may want to add more.
- Be sure that, as you assign a publication target, you have the resources to meet that target.

Developing an inventory, priorities, and publication schedule for federal websites

Worksheet 1: Define your website audiences

List the different audience groups that might use your website. Think about the groups that you want to target and about the groups who might just end up at your website. Look at your email. Think about citizen groups, business groups, and other government organizations.

1. Citizens as a whole
2.
3.
4.
and so on

Developing and inventory, priorities, and publication schedule for federal websites

Worksheet 2: Develop your inventory of information/services for the website

- Down the left, list the audience groups you identified on Worksheet 1.
- At the top of each column, list the components of your organization or program areas.
- Fill in each box by answering two questions: What does this audience group want to know from this component? What does this component want to tell this audience group?

Audiences	Organization Components or Program Areas				

Developing an inventory, priorities, and publication schedule for federal websites

Worksheet 3: Set priorities and publication targets

- In column 1, list all the content items you identified as your inventory, on Worksheet 2.
- In column 2, note whether this information is on the website currently (C), exists in some form but is not on the website (E), or has to be developed (D).
- In column 3, note whether the information is:
  - Priority 1: required by law, regulation, Presidential directive, or other official

directive or national security.

- Priority 2: mission-critical and essential for program operations, but not required by law, regulation, or Presidential directive (i.e.-information or services that are directly tied to your mission and/or strategic plan)
- Priority 3: frequently requested information or services that would improve organization business processes and/or customer service to the public (e.g. most commonly used forms, documents, applications, transactions, etc.).
- Priority 4: other information
- Some inventory items may fall into more than one priority. Assign them the highest priority.
- In column 4, assign a publication target for every inventory item that is not already posted on the website.

Content	Status	Priority	Publication Target

Read the Summary and Background of ICGI Report.

Read the Recommendations of ICGI Report.

Content Lead: Rachel Flagg
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