

Website Management Framework

Fact sheet

Consistent management of government websites

The Website Management Framework (WMF) provides a coordinated approach to the planning, creation, operation and retirement of government websites in Victoria. This is being achieved in four ways:

1. Creation of a multi-disciplinary taskforce within each department and agency responsible for decision making regarding websites
2. Adoption of the WMF business case process for all new websites
3. Creation of authoritative policies and standards for websites
4. Implementation of a consistent approach to monitoring and reporting on websites.

The ICT Strategy Board, the governance body that provides executive steerage of the ICT agenda within the Victorian Government, has endorsed the WMF project and it now applies to all government departments and the four lead agencies (the State Revenue Office, VicPolice, VicRoads and the Environmental Protection Authority).

A compelling case for change

Victoria was an early eGovernment leader with the Government Online program in the late 1990s driving an intense period of website development as agencies put information and services online.

Today there are more than 195 discrete websites on the vic.gov.au domain serving the 10 government departments and four lead agencies (the State Revenue Office, VicPolice, VicRoads, and the Environmental Protection Authority).

Such a substantial base of websites, however, has raised a new set of issues. Government is concerned that there are too many websites, information is hard to find, inconsistent messages across websites, and the cost of websites is potentially too high.

The current situation creates four major problems:

- hinders the use of websites by government to present consistent, accurate and relevant messages;
- lack of a consistent approach to technology, operations and management of government websites hinders the development and enhancement of government online service delivery
- adds unnecessary cost to the development and management of websites
- makes it difficult for people to access government information and services.

Website Management Framework outcomes

The Website Management Framework was commissioned to provide governance and management practices to create a more effective and efficient approach to the planning, creation, operation and retirement of websites.

The WMF was developed through an extensive series of workshops and discussions with website practitioners and executives across the Victorian Government, under the guidance of an executive project board. The WMF recommended four outcomes:

1. Establish Website Management Taskforces

Website Management Taskforces (WMTs) are multi-disciplinary groups responsible for implementing the Website Management Framework in their department or agency. Their role includes:

- review proposals for new websites based on the WMF business case, and to submit these for approval to the Government Communications Review Group
- oversee a lifecycle approach (plan, create, operate, retire) to the management of websites
- manage the implementation and reporting of approved website standards
- monitor and report on the performance of their organisation's website/s, and on standards compliance.

Website Management Taskforces may be a new body, or an existing multi-disciplinary group.

2. Adopt business case process for all new websites

In consultation with departments and agencies, the Office of the Chief Information Officer together with the Strategic Communications Branch has developed a business case process and template for all new websites from 1 July 2004.

The Website Business Case is a tool to:

- ensure strategic alignment of websites to government policies and initiatives
- encourage whole-of-life-planning
- provide opportunity for co-ordination of website initiatives across Government
- identify opportunities for technology re-use and manage operational risks
- establish key performance indicators that will be measured throughout the life of the website.

The Website Business Case provides a consistent template for website owners to use to provide information to their department/agency Website Management Taskforce, the Government Communications Review Group, and the Office of the CIO.

3. Create authoritative policies and standards for websites

Victorian Government websites have an inconsistent application of existing website policies and guidelines. This has resulted in increased risk for departments, lower quality of service for citizens, confusion for website management personnel, and increased costs in development and delivery of websites.

A portfolio of proposed website standards and an initial set of draft standards have been developed and is being released for consultation and feedback in what will be an ongoing process. The finalised standards will supersede the existing Victorian Government Website Guidelines and web related IT&T policies.

Further standards will be drafted with subject matter experts from across government. Drafted standards will then be packaged and distributed to WMTs for impact assessment. This is expected to be an ongoing process until the portfolio of standards is completed. The Office of the Chief Information Officer will be responsible for issuing the standards and ensuring their currency.

4. Implement a consistent approach to monitoring and reporting on websites across the Victorian Government

There is currently an inconsistent approach to monitoring and reporting of website performance and activity across departments. This makes it difficult for government to measure the benefits of information and services delivered via the web to citizens and businesses in Victoria.

In response to this, the Office of the Chief Information Officer has engaged Red Sheriff/Deloitte to provide integrated web measurement and demographic profiling of Victorian Government websites. This provides departments and agencies with a centralised demographic profile of customers accessing Victorian Government websites within the vic.gov.au domain, which sites they visit, and how often they visit them.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer will compile the reports into a whole of government view, enabling departments and agencies to benchmark the performance of their websites. It is covering the costs of this service at no charge to departments and agencies for the first year, from 1 June 2004.

Benefits for departments and agencies

The Website Management Framework assists departments and agencies to:

- improve policy alignment
- lower operational risks, including reducing the government's legal risk position
- enhance service delivery, in particular increasing the ease of use of government websites
- create a foundation to support channel integration and interoperability
- implement governance bodies and processes that enhance a coordinated approach at both department and agency level, and across the Victorian government
- leverage greater re-use of content and services across the Victorian government
- establish a reliable benchmark of website costs
- provide consistent performance-based measurement and reporting
- establish a comprehensive inventory of all Victorian government online services assets.

Benefits for Citizens

The Website Management Framework benefits Victorian citizens, businesses and organisations by improving their online interactions with government by:

- improving citizen satisfaction and success rates
- making it easier to find and use information and services
- ensuring that information is current and authoritative.

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