Digital Services Policy Framework

Accessibility and Inclusivity Standard

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Contact:

Office of Digital Government
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Telephone: 61 8 6552 5000

Email: dgov-strategy@dpc.wa.gov.au

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1. Overview

We must create and manage online government information and services using a consistent approach based on best practice so that:

- information and services are easy to find and access;
- information is easy to read and understand;
- information and services are relevant and current;
- services are easy to use; and
- information and services are available to as many people as possible.

2. Definition of terms

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Archived content</td>
<td>An archived web page is one that remains available on a website for reference purposes, but whose main content is not maintained or updated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistive digital support</td>
<td>Helping users with low digital skills or limited access to the web.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistive technology</td>
<td>Assistive technology is an umbrella term that includes assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for people with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Content is defined as information published by agencies in the form of text, documents, images, audio and video. It is used to inform, educate and connect people with our information and services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsive design</td>
<td>Responsive web design responds to the needs of the users and the devices they are using.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCAG</td>
<td>The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines are series of internationally recognised standards for web content accessibility.</td>
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3. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard is to ensure that:

- Western Australian Government agencies adopt a minimum accessibility standard when designing, developing and delivering digital products, services and content
- a consistent approach is taken across government so that the community can expect the same minimum standards no matter which agency is providing the digital product, service or content.

4. Objectives

- Make sure everyone who needs the service can use it. This includes people with a disability, older people, people who find using digital services difficult, people from diverse cultural backgrounds who use a range of languages, people living in remote areas who may experience low bandwidth, and people using different devices such as smartphones.
- Strengthen the accessibility of all government digital products, services and content to a consistent standard.
• Ensure that digital products, services and content are created using a consistent approach so that the community has the same experience regardless of which agency provides the service.
• Provide a single point of reference for digital content authors, developers or designers.

5. Scope

This Standard applies to all entities that are within the scope of Digital WA. This includes all agencies, statutory authorities and government trading enterprises.

This Standard is to be applied to:

• public facing websites
• intranets
• extranets
• web applications
• social media sites and tools.

Cross-jurisdictional websites and websites created through public-private partnerships should meet the accessibility requirement applicable to the main authoring agency.

Web content relating to government funded programs (including grants) or initiatives delivered through third-party providers should meet accessibility requirements if the information provided is portrayed as, or is considered to be, ‘government information’.

Agencies will be required to report on their website accessibility levels annually.

There is no process by which an agency can secure an exemption from the requirement to meet the Standard. Instead, each agency is responsible for meeting the Standard, and accordingly accepts any risks associated with not doing so.

5.1 Out of scope

Archived content provided for reference purposes.

6. Authority

This Standard underpins the Digital Services Policy and is a mandatory component of the Digital Services Policy Framework (DSPF).

6.1 Related legislation

Disability Services Act 1993 requires Western Australian state and local governments to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). DAIPs aid in planning services, facilities and information to assist people with disabilities access to public authorities.

Equal Opportunity Act WA 1984 assists to ensure that people are equally able to access services, facilities, information and buildings in WA.
Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 requires the provision of equitable access to people with disabilities. Under the Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against persons with disabilities by excluding access to information and services, which includes those delivered online.

7. Requirements

7.1 All digital content must adopt the WCAG 2.0 standard.
7.2 Content must be accessible and provided in the most useful and accessible format for the community.
7.3 A digital service must provide a comparable experience for all without undermining the quality of the content.
7.4 A digital service must allow for assistive technologies and methods.
7.5 Agencies must regularly test and review digital services.

8. Implementation

Implementation and achieving compliance to the Web Accessibility and Inclusivity Standard requirements will fall to individual agencies. The level of effort and cost will vary by agency and depends on a number of factors, for example, number and complexity of websites, available resources and ICT infrastructure requirements.

Agencies also need to recognise that this is not purely a technical issue and solely an IT related cost. Primarily, it needs to be viewed, funded and resourced as a critically important element of each agency’s Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

8.1 Timeline for implementation

Agencies are required to meet the following schedule for implementation of the Standard. This will enable agencies to absorb cost into their regular infrastructure upgrades and web development activities and management cycles.

From 1 July 2018, all new digital services must be developed to adopt the WCAG 2.0 Level AA criteria.
From 1 January 2020, all existing digital services will be expected to be Level AA compliant as a minimum requirement.

9.0 Related policies, standards and guidance

This Standard forms part of the Digital Services Policy Framework that provides guidance for agencies in the delivery of digital services, including websites and supports the Digital Services Policy.

You can also refer to the:
• **Digital Services Accessibility and Inclusivity Guidelines** – provides information and recommendations to assist agencies in complying with the Accessibility and Inclusivity Standard.

• **Digital Services Content Standard** - defines the minimum standards that Western Australian Government agencies should apply when creating content for digital services.

• **Digital Services Content Guideline** - provides information and recommendations to assist agencies in complying with the Digital Services Content Standard.

• **Digital Services Writing Guide** - as the single point of reference for common terms, spelling, punctuation, and naming conventions.