Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **the Premier and Cabinet**
Office of Digital Government

Digital Services Policy Framework

Website Metadata Tagging Guidelines

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Document Control

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Department of Finance
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Document version history

Date	Author	Version	Revision Notes
April 2018	Office of the GCIO	1.0	First release
September 2019	Office of Digital Government	1.1	Rebranded to Office of Digital Government

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide agencies with guidance on managing the creation and publishing of website metadata tags for their publically available website content that is managed through a Web Content Management System.

Policy context

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [Digital Services Policy Framework](#) suite of policies, standards and guidance materials, in particular the [Website Metadata Tagging Standard](#) and [Digital Services Content Standard](#).

Governance

To ensure website metadata tags are entered according to the Website Metadata Tagging Standard, Digital Services Content Standard and managed over time, agencies should define metadata roles and responsibilities.

It is recommended to have a model whereby the authoring of website metadata tags is decentralised, in that the web content authors also create the metadata. Staff should:

- be made aware of their responsibility to enter website metadata tags as part of the web content creation and editing process
- be provided with appropriate training and support to create and update website metadata tags according to the Website Metadata Tagging Standard and Content Standard

Quality assurance

Quality assurance of website metadata tags is important to ensure that the metadata is kept up-to-date and that it is not simply created and forgotten about while the web page it describes continues to develop and evolve.

Good quality website metadata tags should:

- provide accurate, clear and concise descriptions of web pages
- describe the individual web page, and not the agency or further information not contained in the actual page
- describe the web page's unique features and not be the same as other pages
- be written for, and easily understood by, the target audience
- aid the discovery of the web page by the target audience .

In order to determine what terms are understood by your target audience, agencies should regularly review the search terms used in their website analytics and ensure:

- website metadata tags are aligned with the relevant search terms used
- the relevant search terms being used are returning accurate and meaningful results.

Quality assurance processes may include:

- making the entry of website metadata tags automated (for example, date) and mandatory in the Web Content Management System
- making the review of website metadata tags part of the web content authoring, review and approval steps
- adding the requirement to check website metadata tags for completion, currency and adherence to the [Website Metadata Tagging Standard](#) and [Digital Services Content Standard](#) part of your web publishing checklist
- running a centralised annual review of website metadata tags for completion, currency and adherence to the standards.

Website metadata life cycle management

Creation of website metadata tags

The best time to create metadata is when you are creating the web content. The creator or publisher of an information resource is best placed to create the metadata, as they are the subject matter expert and understand the importance of the information to their audience.

Review and assessment of website metadata tags

As web page content is updated over time, the web page metadata tags should also be reviewed and updated by the web content author.

An annual review and assessment of agency website metadata may be performed that involves the following activities:

- review agency website metadata tagging roles and responsibilities to ensure that they are appropriate
- assess opportunities to extend the use of website metadata tags
- review website metadata tags quality and completeness.

Versioning and archiving of website metadata tags

When website content and metadata tags are updated, previous versions should be retained for record keeping purposes. Version control should be enabled within your agency's Web Content Management System and have the ability to keep and refer to previous versions.

The approach to website metadata life cycle management should progress through to the archiving of that information when it is no longer required. When [removing content](#) from your website, the content's metadata tags should be assessed for retention. For this reason, it is important that agencies liaise with their record keeping area to discuss how to archive website metadata.

Create Once Publish Everywhere

Website metadata can be used to support a [Create Once Publish Everywhere (COPE) model](#), where the information captured in an entity database can be used both as metadata and also leveraged to display as content in multiple views and locations.

WA.gov.au uses [Government Service](#) and [Government Organisation](#) [schema.org](#) entities to capture information and use it as metadata and display it as content in a variety of views. If your agency is looking at doing something similar, you are encouraged to get in contact with the Office of Digital Government by emailing [dgov-strategy@dpc.wa.gov.au](#).

Machine readable website metadata and semantic searching

[Schema.org](#) is a technology jointly developed by Google, Bing, Yandex and Yahoo! to help you provide machine readable [structured data](#) to their search engines so that they may understand your content and provide the best search results possible at this time.

Publishing schema entities as JSON-LD structured data can facilitate semantic searching where users can ask plain language questions that can then be answered by machines - search engines and applications such as digital assistants or chatbots[1], providing an improved user experience.

Standardised structured data published across government websites will make it easier for the community to ask questions such as "What government camping sites are available in the Albany region?" or "What government services are available in the Rockingham area?"

WA.gov.au is currently publishing [Government Service](#) and [Government Organisation](#) [schema.org](#) entities as JSON-LD structured data. This is facilitated using the Drupal Web Content Management System [Schema.org Metadata module](#). If your agency is looking at doing something similar you are encouraged to get in contact with the Office of Digital Government by emailing [dgov-strategy@dpc.wa.gov.au](#).

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[1] *Make Chatbots More Intelligent with Schema Markup,* https://www.schemaapp.com/tips/schema-markup-make-chatbots-intelligent/, Schema App