Websites and web content as records

Purpose

This Records Advice has been prepared to ensure that information made available on ACT Government websites, webpages, and any associated electronic transactions, are captured as records. The publication of a webpage is a business transaction and is therefore subject to an agency’s Records Management Program.

Capturing website records

ACT Government records must be authentic, reliable, complete, unaltered and useable, and the systems that support them must be able to protect their integrity over time. As records of ACT Government activity, agency websites and their constituent pages need to be captured in such systems. The documents that comprise a website and its pages can often be captured in their native format. Static websites can be captured by periodic snapshots.

Dynamically generated web resources in a fully functional state can be archived. Records managers need to determine whether they should use an object-based or an event-based approach to keeping records of web resources and online activities. That is, an agency needs to determine whether it wishes to focus on keeping records of the individual transactions between clients and servers, or the objects that comprise the content of the site at any given time.

Website and webpage records must be:

- captured into an official recordkeeping system at the point of creation;
- captured as full and accurate records and include all metadata and embedded links to other resources, including documents (word processing, spreadsheets etc.), graphics, sound, music, video, images and animations that constitute part of the record;
- accessible as provided for by the Territory Records Act 2002 and the Freedom of Information Act 2016;
- effectively stored, preserved and managed in an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) or another systems that complies with the Territory Records (Records, Information and Data) Standard 2016 and related Guidelines;
- disposed of according to approved records disposal schedules. Before any automatic or manual overwriting or deletion occurs, webpages must be appraised and a determination made as to their value and any requirement for ongoing retention;
- supported by a records management regime including:
  - a Records Management Program;
  - relevant policies and appropriate procedures.