

# **Department of Homeland Security**

## **Public Web Strategic Plan 2015-2018**

**DHS Web Content Management Executive Steering Committee  
January 2015**

# DHS Public Web Strategic Plan 2015-2018

## *Vision Statement*

**The Department of Homeland Security’s public digital presence will be unified in its efforts across the enterprise, constantly improving using the best technological approaches in a “Customer First” culture that helps the Department greatly enhance communication with key stakeholders and the American public and supporting the achievement of its key missions.**

## *Developing a Roadmap*

This strategic plan has been developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders across the Department. Starting nearly a year ago as a long discussion between DHS Office of Public Affairs and DHS OCIO/Enterprise System Development Office (ESDO); the need for a clearly defined strategy for the Department’s public digital presence that we can point to as the strategic framework for unifying our efforts was easily agreed on. The federal Digital Government Strategy and the U.S. Digital Services Playbook also provided top level strategic guidance and influence.

What this framework provides are the key elements and principles around which we can organize our efforts together. By working together as a team, and using common approaches we strengthen our ability to lead technologically, increase our efficiency as good stewards of taxpayer dollars and ensure we are the most effective communicators we can be.

This strategy lays out the themes, the goals and the key objectives for the Department as agreed upon by the community of public affairs and information technology professionals who make up the DHS Web Content Management Executive Steering Committee (ESC). The strategic plan is the starting point for the DHS Public Web Council to develop proposals on how we will meet the objectives and will also guide each component as they develop two-year action plans for how they will implement the strategic framework within their organization. The DHS Web Content Management ESC will provide the review, prioritization and identification of funding sources as well as work toward a sustainable overall public digital presence for the Department.

Each component should look at how their individual plans match up and integrate with this plan. All proposed execution and implementation plans should support the elements within this plan.

Every plan needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure the strategic direction still matches the fundamental needs of the organization and that key factors such as technology or customer needs haven’t radically changed. So this plan will be reviewed annually by both the ESC and the Web Council, along with a report on progress made toward meeting the goals and objectives. The DHS Web Content Management ESC has the authority to revise and amend this strategy during that annual review or at any time it is deemed needed based on unforeseen events.

## ***Roots of the Strategic Framework***

The Department of Homeland Security came into being in 2003 with a combination of existing organizations and agencies and the creation of new ones from merged programs. Some of those agencies and programs had their own websites that were updated to reflect new names and alignment under DHS. However, no real strategy existed to unify and organize the literally hundreds of public websites that sprang out of the many programs as the internet's importance in communicating took off and the technology to create them became easier to access.

What had resulted by 2009 was a vast and disorganized public presence that was totally disconnected, had no central governance and that was organizationally focused rather than being focused on the public and our key stakeholders. There was no consistency in branding, functionality, technology used, organization, or review and clearance of content. With so many sites on so many different hosting platforms using a dozen different content management systems, the cost to the Department was significant in both dollars and manpower.

The DHS Efficiency Review which began in 2009 was a critical starting point in the Department's effort to rein in excessive spending in an era of fiscal constraint and had a very positive effect on the DHS Public Web mission. Starting with establishing a clear governance structure that included establishing the DHS Web Content Management ESC and the DHS Public Web Council, then holding the first data call to catalogue all the many public web entities (including extranets, portals and other non-traditional sites) on not just dot gov, but also dot com, dot mil, dot org and other domains, the Department began to organize its efforts.

Consolidation and decommissioning of duplicative or low use sites was mandated. FEMA, which helped the Efficiency Review Office identify the need to better organize our public web presence, had already begun this effort in 2008 and had identified 51 sites within the organization. Many were integrated into the main three FEMA sites (FEMA.gov, Ready.gov and DisasterAssistance.gov) and others were decommissioned. Their effort continues.

The next major move was to unify the Department's technological foundation by selecting a primary database driven content management system (CMS) and establishing a common hosting platform. OCIO/ESDO in partnership with DHS OPA and FEMA External Affairs, and with input from the DHS Public Web Council, selected Drupal as the primary CMS and created the DHS Cloud-based Web Content Management as a Service (WCMAaaS) platform to host top-level DHS public websites. Through the development of the baseline CMS and assisting the migration of component websites, OCIO/ESDO currently has 10 of DHS' 11 targeted top level public websites hosted on the platform. In addition to the WCMAaaS, ESDO provides edge-server service (currently Akamai), O&M support, survey support (currently Survey Monkey and Foresee) and metrics support (currently Google Analytics). The U.S. Coast Guard has been given the option to align with the Department of Defense's common hosting platform and CMS (through the Defense Media Activity on Ft. Meade, MD) or join the DHS WCMAaaS platform.

This four year strategy now takes us forward from where we are today to the next major decision point – that is, when we will most likely need to move to a completely new approach with our Department's public digital presence. The rapidly evolving mobile technology environment is

already changing how both the public and private sector communicate in a world that is ever more interconnected. Some governments, like the United Kingdom, have already taken major steps to consolidate their public digital presence in anticipation of the next wave. The U.K. merged all of its top-level government public websites into one site that not only better serves their public but does so at a fraction of the cost of the former hundreds of other sites. But even that doesn't address what we see is coming in the new next-generation information revolution.

With the increasing power of devices in ever smaller sizes and the corresponding increase in the ability to transmit massive amounts of data comes the explosion of new apps that do much of the work for us in finding the information we want and giving it to us in the format we prefer. It is too early to say websites will go away in the future, replaced by sophisticated apps that interrogate open data to stream information in new and innovative ways, but we already see that how people get their information has evolved significantly from just five years ago. Any successful evolution in use of the latest technology will depend totally on both the planning of the execution and the careful detailing of risks, costs for development and maintenance as well as training requirements.

**We need to be ready for the next major change by keeping up with technology, by ensuring our teams are trained to the latest best practices and by planning for change.**

First and foremost, however, we need to be unified in our approach, and to prove the value of our services to make public digital presence a priority for the Department.

This strategic plan represents the combined input and views of DHS OPA and DHS OCIO and our component functional offices. We charge our communities with the tasking to use this plan as the basis for the evolution and improvement of our department's public web presence in full support of the Federal Digital Government Strategy.

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### *Strategic Themes*

1. **Implement a “Customer First” culture**
2. **Update and unify the DHS public digital presence**
3. **Build strong relationships internally and externally**
4. **Ensure constant improvement through enterprise approach**

### *Strategic Goals*

1. **Mission:** Make the public digital presence a priority mission within the Department.
2. **Customer First:** Foster a Customer First culture (internally for our staffs) and focus (externally for our audiences) through improved content, usability, reliability, presentation, and services that better meets the public’s needs as measured by metrics and feedback; select and organize content to help people accomplish their tasks; move away from a corporate-centric approach to make sure that the content the public is looking for is easy to find, easy to read / digest, and easy for them to act upon (that is, organize by topic and task, not by internal organization). This approach will strengthen the public’s confidence in DHS, helping us better accomplish the department’s missions.
3. **Unity:** Strengthen branding relationships across the Department’s public digital presence and better integrate the many platforms, including social media and data stores, to improve access to information and services. The goal is to strengthen the ties across DHS and broaden recognition by the public not to institute uniformity for uniformity’s sake.
4. **Service:** Help the components and program offices meet their stakeholder and public engagement goals through effective and strategic use of the Department’s public digital presence.
5. **Technology:** Use the latest and best technology and platforms in the most cost-effective and secure way to position the Department as a digital communication leader; adopt a “build once, use many” model for development on the common CMS platform.
6. **Operations:** Adopt operational consistency and improve the processes that support daily management of the Department’s public digital presence, both with content and technology (CMS platform) with a commitment to continuous improvement.
7. **Workforce:** Recruit and retain the best talent and ensure web staffs across the Department have access to continuous learning and skills development.
8. **Governance:** Revitalize the governance model for the Department’s public digital presence.
9. **Funding:** Move toward centralized funding for the Department’s public digital presence and be efficient stewards of that funding.

10. **Future:** Forge strong partnerships with other public and private sector organizations to share research, lessons learned, best practices and focus on the future of the Department's public digital presence strategies.

### ***Strategic Objectives***

1. **Mission:** Make the public digital presence a priority mission within the Department.
  - a. Clearly define the value added (current and potential) by the public digital presence and ensure leadership across the Department embraces that value.
  - b. Position the public digital presence as a frontline communication capability for DHS through metrics and other hard data.
  - c. Support the President's initiative on Digital Governance and the federal Digital Government Strategy and Open Government.
  - d. Support the Department's Digital Government efforts.
2. **Customer First:** Foster a Customer First culture (internally for our staffs) and focus (externally for our audiences) through improved content, usability, reliability, presentation, and services that better meets the public's needs as measured by metrics and feedback; select and organize content to help people accomplish their tasks; move away from a corporate-centric approach to make sure that the content the public is looking for is easy to find, easy to read / digest, and easy for them to act upon (that is, organize by topic and task, not by internal organization). This approach will strengthen the public's confidence in DHS, helping us better accomplish the department's missions.
  - a. Ensure that the content that the public is looking for is easy to find, easy to read / digest, and easy to act upon; ensure that content follows the standards set forth in the Plain Writing Act and accessibility requirements.
  - b. Ensure that the presentation of DHS public websites is clean, simple, and intuitive from an end-user perspective.
  - c. Ensure that content on DHS public websites is demand-driven and is chosen to support people's top tasks – the content most frequently accessed by our customers should be extremely easy to locate.
  - d. Ensure that content on DHS public websites is priority-driven – information that is critical to public safety, security, and the mission of DHS should be extremely easy to locate on our websites.
  - e. Improve transparency, public participation and collaboration wherever possible.
  - f. Ensure that DHS public websites are device agnostic / easily usable on all devices that our customers use (be that desktop, mobile, tablet or whatever the next technological wave is) through the use of responsive design, collapsible content blocks, and other industry best practices.
  - g. Ensure the fullest metrics capabilities are in place across all platforms and tools (APIs, widgets) and that all public websites follow the SMART model of performance-driven measurement and prioritization of content and platform development.

- h. Make decisions on content and functional upgrades based on metrics and feedback from users from all sources, including social media, as well as to support DHS programs and policies.
  - i. Audit the content, identify gaps and conduct focus groups to determine how to better support user task needs and meet expectations as well as improve the communication of key Department messages and improve online services provided.
  - j. Make data open by default, limited only by national security requirements, law enforcement and other sensitivities.
- 3. **Unity:** Strengthen branding relationships across the Department’s public digital presence and better integrate the many platforms, including social media and data stores to improve and provide seamless access to information and services. The goal is to strengthen the ties across DHS and broaden recognition by the public not to institute uniformity for uniformity’s sake.
  - a. Update the branding guidelines for web properties.
  - b. Continue the consolidation of sites across the Department to achieve a more concentrated public-facing footprint that makes it easier for the public to find information and services.
  - c. Develop a plan (in coordination with program offices and OCIO) for consolidating public web portals that link to secure and public databases across the Department so there are fewer silos.
  - d. Ensure that emerging forms of digital communication – including social media channels, Open Government Data and other audience-focused efforts – are machine readable and fully integrated and branded inside the DHS public digital presence.
- 4. **Service:** Help the components and program offices meet their stakeholder and public engagement goals through effective and strategic use of the Department’s public digital presence.
  - a. Integrate component and program office strategic goals and timelines into content and service planning for the DHS public digital presence.
  - b. Demonstrate communication effect through metrics and feedback.
  - c. Advise the program offices on best practices and what customers want.
  - d. Promote component and program office websites and social media efforts.
- 5. **Technology:** Use the latest and best technology and platforms in the most cost-effective and secure way to position the Department as a digital communication leader; adopt a “build once, use many” model for development on the common CMS platform.
  - a. Move toward mobile responsive presentation for the CMS platform and all DHS public websites.
  - b. Work together as a department to set up a more streamlined process for CMS development and full adoption of the “build once, use many” model.

- c. Prioritize the list of requirements for updating of the CMS baseline and ensure all documentation is complete.
  - d. Adopt better image and video technology, HTML5 and others (API, interactive mapping, etc.).
  - e. Ensure related mobile technologies such as APP development is integrated or coordinated within the department whenever there is a nexus with public web.
  - f. Improve the hosting solution to allow for a major drop in operational costs and to encourage all public sites to join the common hosting platform, with a focus on adoption of the common, database-driven, CMS platform.
  - g. Plan for and cooperate with OCIOs across the department as they develop a common API and visualization platform.
  - h. Ensure coordination and extensive planning of the execution and the careful detailing of risks, costs for development and maintenance as well as training requirements
  - i. Fully integrate FEMA's Disaster Management eGov initiative into departmental focus with component input on identifying and assessing emerging open source technologies; piloting those with greatest potential value including customization to meet DHS needs; and assisting transition of technologies developed to DHS operational adoption and ownership. (See Appendix D)
6. **Operations:** Adopt operational consistency and improve the processes that support daily management of the Department's public digital presence, both with content and technology (CMS platform) with a commitment to continuous improvement.
- a. Establish consistent processes across the Department for the maintenance of the key public sites as well as how content is reviewed and cleared to help improve and increase content workflow.
  - b. Encourage research and experimentation in a controlled and coordinated fashion when evaluating improvements to existing processes.
  - c. Working with IT Security and the system owners of the hosting platform (ESDO), improve the basic support and functionality of the hosting platform to address roll over issues, issues identified in existing Remote Connectivity Analyzers and remote access.
  - d. Codify process and decision points for DDoS attacks and other service interruptions to both the public facing (production) sites and internal (edit) systems.
  - e. Better facilitate information and resource sharing across the Department's web teams.
  - f. Codify process and decision points for disaster response changes, specifically the surge capabilities of the Department's digital presence for unified extended information dissemination.
7. **Workforce:** Recruit and retain the best talent and ensure web and social media staffs across the Department have access to continuous learning and skills development.
- a. Establish consistent training modules for use by all web and social media staff

- b. Work with other federal agencies and the private sector on training opportunities including the GSA Usability Community of Practice and others.
  - c. Further develop in-house training program (webinars, brown bags, OJT).
  - d. Ensure consistent position descriptions across the Department and collaborate on recruiting, retention and career path development; tie into government-wide efforts that are on-going.
- 8. **Governance:** Revitalize the governance model for the Department's public digital presence.
  - a. Complete update of Public Web Management Directive and Instruction (in process).
  - b. Recharter the DHS Enterprise Web Council to DHS Public Web Council (completed).
  - c. Create a HQ DHS Web liaison working group (completed).
  - d. Develop a DHS Public Web Strategic Plan with input from the DHS Web Content ESC (in process).
  - e. Ensure membership on the WCM ESC and Public Web Council have the right authority and are active.
  - f. Outline the request/approval process for new domain and sub-domain names.
  - g. Follow up original data call with another one to fully capture the DHS digital presence in public web and portals.
  - h. Complete update of the Social Media Management Directive and Instruction (in process).
- 9. **Funding:** Move toward centralized funding for the Department's top level public digital presence and be efficient stewards of that funding.
  - a. Capture current data on cost of operations (hosting, maintenance, development, staffing and training) for key DHS public websites (HQ and components).
  - b. Forecast long term cost of common hosting platform for DHS public websites and include estimates of future update requirements that have been proposed by the DHS Public Web Council and prioritized by the DHS Web Content Management ESC.
  - c. OPA and OCIO partner to present case to Working Capital Fund committee to stabilize O&M and development funding source by FY17.
  - d. Develop joint OPA and OCIO process with component input to ensure detailed funding requirements are developed in time to include in the Department's and component's annual and long term budgeting processes.
- 10. **Future:** Forge strong partnerships with other public and private sector organizations to share research, lessons learned, best practices and focus on the future of the Department's public digital presence strategies.
  - a. Benchmark with the best of the federal government.
  - b. Benchmark with the best of the private sector.
  - c. Establish partnerships with leaders in digital technology.

- d. Research emerging new technologies and existing open source technologies.
- e. Develop a plan for identifying the next-gen digital technology and how to adopt and integrate it into our operations.
- f. Participate in interagency web and social media leadership councils, conferences and information sharing efforts.

## **Appendix A: References and authorities**

- DHS Management Directive 226-04 and Instruction 226-04 on Public Websites
- DHS Management Directive and Instruction on Social Media (in development)
- President's Memorandum on Open Government (2010)
- OMB Memorandum M-10-06 – Open Government Memorandum (2010)
- National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace – NSTIC (2010)
- Executive Order 13571 – Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service (April 2011)
- Executive Order 13576 – Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government (June 2011)
- Executive Order 13642 – Making Open and Machine Readable the New Default for Government Information (May 2013)
- Open Data Policy – Managing Information as an Asset (May 2013)
- National Dialogue on Improving Federal Websites (Sept 2011)
- National Dialogue on the Federal Mobility Strategy (Jan 2012)
- Digital Government: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve the American People (May 2012) (aka federal Digital Government Strategy)
- U.S. Digital Services Playbook (August 2014)
- DHS Web Content Management Executive Steering Committee Charter (2011)
- DHS Public Web Council Charter (revised 2014)

## **Appendix B: Roles and Responsibilities**

- **DHS OPA** – Co-chair DHS WCM ESC, Co-Chair DHS Public Web Council, Chair DHS HQ Web Liaison Working Group, author Public Web and Social Media Management Directives and Instructions, business and system owner for DHS.gov.
- **DHS OCIO/ESDO** – Co-chair DHS WCM ESC, system owner for the Web Content Management as a Service platform, development of new functionality for the CMS, O&M of the CMS baseline and the platform, provide additional service to the department such as edge server service, etc.
- **DHS Web Content Management Executive Steering Committee** – Management representatives from all major components with public websites on both public affairs and CIO sides; provide strategic guidance to the DHS Public Web Council on the Department's public digital presence, including developing a prioritization of the key elements and strategic objectives of the strategic plan, reviewing proposals from the DHS Public Web Council and prioritizing execution of development and update efforts for the CMS and new technologies; and providing the top level departmental governance for DHS public websites.
- **DHS Public Web Council** – Representatives from all major components with public websites on both public affairs and CIO sides; provide technical subject matter expertise, develop proposals for implementation of the strategic plan and development and update efforts for the CMS and new technologies based on guidance and prioritization from the DHS Content Management ESC. The proposals must include timelines, technical requirements and funding requirements (including if a component is willing to fund all or part of the development).
- **DHS HQ Web Liaison Working Group** – representatives from all the program offices responsible for content on DHS.gov; provide user feedback on the CMS; provide input on new functionality requirements; provide input on other technical needs. (Note: components are also encouraged to create their own web liaison working groups for their tier 1 public web sites).

## **Appendix C: Timeline with Milestones**

February - November 2014: Development and review of the draft Public Web Strategic Plan

December 2014: Approval of the Public Web Strategic Plan by the DHS WCM ESC

January 2015: DHS WCM ESC Quarterly Meeting

January 2015: OCIO Begin drafting Statement of Work for Enterprise Content Delivery re-compete

January – March 2015: Development of 2-year action plans, implementation in phases as appropriate; joint effort by OPA and OCIO on long term funding solution.

March 2015: Completion of migration of public websites to WCMaaS

April 2015: DHS WCM ESC Quarterly Meeting; review of key action items in plans; prioritization of efforts.

June 2015: Completion of transfer of specific public websites with DHS-owned URLs but are hosted and run by other departments that are not currently compliant to those other departments or implementation of alternate solutions (e.g. IPRCenter.gov; Biometrics.gov)

July 2015: DHS WCM ESC Quarterly Meeting; review of key action items in plans and status of execution and implementation

August 2015: Re-compete for Enterprise Content Delivery Service is due.

September 2015: Submission of accomplishments through DHS Public Web Council and review of the strategic plan for updates, revisions, additional items.

October 2015: DHS WCM ESC Quarterly Meeting; Annual review of the strategic plan

December 2015: Approval of any revisions to the strategic plan

Follow on years will be similar. This timeline will be expanded as action plans and other due outs are set.

## **Appendix D: Disaster Management eGov Initiative Support Strategy**

The Disaster Management eGov initiative (DM) will support the DHS Web Strategic Plan by taking a leading role in the “Build Once/Use Many” model as outlined.

DM will work closely with DHS HQ and Components to assess and analyze their public communication technology needs. DM will be the go-to team for identifying emerging customer communication technologies and will assess and pilot such technology in partnership with DHS HQ and/or Components who could use that technology.

DM will take a SWAT team approach to sharing technology and tools across the Department. The DM team will provide deployment support to each DHS Component as required for approved Enterprise tools. DM will provide the appropriate project management capabilities and support, including requirement analysis, setup and integration, and training, including train-the-trainer materials.

DM will focus on current initiatives as a starting point in the DHS strategy. Between 2015 and 2016, DM (with appropriate approval and support) will accomplish the following:

- Continue the roll-out of the DIAMOND (digital asset management) system to all Components; including the development of a DHS version of the VIRIN/VisionID identification system.
- Upgrade DIAMOND for classified use
- Assess the use of an existing customer relationship management and collaborative tool to ensure instant communication during disaster and incident situations, across all Components
- Assess the use of Salesforce.com as a public communication tool
- Investigate and compare public cloud services compatible with DHS security and public communication requirements
- Investigate how to improve/reduce costs of the DHS Cloud
- Create a “store” where other Federal Agencies can “purchase” DM Products such as DIAMOND via MOU/IAA. (Note: this will require the appropriate PMO contract)
- Create an internal website outlining DM activities and benefits available; i.e. outreach, IT Security compliance, IT skills, cost savings, etc.
- Develop transition and operational plans for adopted technologies
- Develop a process to engage with DHS HQ and Components to help assess and analyze their public communication technology needs on a regular basis and in coordination with the DHS Web ESC.