

Commonwealth of Australia

Digital Continuity 2020 Policy

Purpose

The Digital Continuity 2020 policy plays a key role in supporting the Australian Government's digital transformation initiatives and driving e-government. Agencies that understand and fully realise the benefits of their assets – information, technology, people and processes – will deliver better and more efficient services to Australians.

The Digital Continuity 2020 policy enables the integration of information governance principles and practices into the work of agencies and their governance arrangements to:

- optimise the delivery of government programs and services;
- enable information reuse for economic and social benefits; and
- protect the rights and entitlements of Australians.

The policy promotes a consistent approach to information governance across the Australian Government and within individual agencies. It applies to government information, data and records, as well as systems, services and processes, including those created or delivered by third parties on behalf of Australian Government agencies.

The Digital Continuity 2020 policy is aligned with the work of the Digital Transformation Office and builds on the foundations of previously issued transition policies. The National Archives is responsible for leading the implementation of the Digital Continuity 2020 policy.

Authority

Under the *Archives Act 1983*, the Archives has the authority to issue standards for Commonwealth records, and to preserve and make accessible the archival resources of the Commonwealth.

Under the Act, 'Commonwealth records' cover all information in digital and non-digital formats that is created, used or received as part of government business.

The Digital Continuity 2020 policy identifies digital information management principles and practices recommended for non-corporate and corporate Commonwealth entities, and wholly owned companies including government business enterprises. These are collectively referred to as 'agencies'.

The Archives will report annually to government on the status of digital information management in agencies and make recommendations for further enhancements.

Policy statement

Agencies will **manage their information as an asset**, ensuring that it is created and managed for as long as required, taking into account business and other needs and risks.

Agencies will transition to **entirely digital work processes**, meaning business processes including authorisations and approvals are completed digitally, and that information is created and managed in digital format.

Agencies will have **interoperable information, systems and processes** that meet standards for short and long-term management, improve information quality and enable information to be found, managed, shared and re-used easily and efficiently.

Principle 1 – Information is valued

Australian Government information is a key strategic asset and economic resource of the Commonwealth. Information is as important as finances, property and equipment. It informs public policy and debate, ensures accountability and underpins how the government conducts its business.

Digital information enables more efficient digital service delivery, increases opportunities for information sharing and can improve business decisions. It also creates new opportunities for process and service redesign and innovation. Digital information managed as a strategic asset makes the Australian Government's digital transformation initiatives possible and ensures that other agency governance requirements are met, including those for security, privacy, quality and accessibility.

When information is accountably created, managed, described and stored, the potential future value of information increases. Future value of information is dependent on its ability to be used, re-used and shared. In contrast, information that is not appropriately managed is more likely to become unreadable, unusable, and have limited potential future use and value.

What success looks like

Agency heads are accountable for information governance in their agency. Agencies have implemented an **information governance framework** and report annually on their information governance.

Information is created, stored, used and managed effectively, and accountably destroyed if it is no longer required.

Agencies have appropriate **policies, processes, standards, controls and metrics** to ensure that business, information management and legislative requirements are met and risk is managed.

Information management workforce planning and capability development enable agencies to have access to appropriately skilled information management staff, and employees and third parties acting on behalf of Australian Government agencies meet their **information responsibilities**.

Actions

#	Recommended action	Target date
1	Information governance reporting	Annually until 31 December 2020
2	Agencies have established an information governance committee	30 June 2016
3	Agencies have an information governance framework	31 December 2016
4	Agencies manage their information assets for as long as they are required	31 December 2020
5	Agencies meet targets for skilled staff	31 December 2020

Case study – [Parliamentary Budget Office](#)

Principle 2 – Information is managed digitally

Developing end to end digital work processes provides opportunities for agencies to establish more mature and efficient procedures and services that engage the public directly and effectively, while providing opportunities for process improvements and innovation.

Work processes that create and collect digital information and keep it in an accessible digital form can enable better productivity and responsiveness to client and government behaviour. Digital information that is kept in digital form is more usable and can be shared more easily and at less cost.

Digital information kept in paper and other analogue forms can result in inefficiencies such as unnecessary duplication, increased storage costs, and unreliable or inaccessible information that cannot be easily found and cost-effectively shared or backed up for business continuity.

What success looks like

Agencies **have entirely digital work processes** and **keep information in an accessible digital form**, for as long as it is required.

Agencies work **digitally by default** and transition analogue or immature digital processes to efficient and mature digital processes that maximise information value.

Where there are benefits for agency business, information in **analogue formats is migrated to digital format**.

Actions

#	Recommended action	Target date
6	Agencies work digitally, with business interactions, decisions and authorisations recorded digitally	31 December 2020
7	Information in analogue formats is migrated to digital format, where there is value for business	31 December 2020

Principle 3 – Information, systems and processes are interoperable

The Australian Government's digital transformation initiatives will make government services simpler, faster and easier to use. These initiatives are enabled by interoperable information, systems and processes that make it less costly and easier to share information, improve information quality, reduce unnecessary duplication and reduce the impact of structural changes in government.

Achieving interoperable information, systems and processes takes time and requires interoperability to be planned, designed and integrated from the initial stages. This work has commenced at whole of government and cross-agency levels but there is still much to be done.

Individual agencies support digital transformation initiatives by ensuring that information-systems are interoperable, and created and managed in accordance with standards endorsed by government.

What success looks like

Agencies have information, systems and processes that are **interoperable** and **meet standards** for short and long-term management. This includes standards for describing information (recordkeeping metadata), information quality, and file and data formats.

Business systems have been assessed for information management functionality to ensure that information is available and usable for as long as it is required and in accordance with business outcomes and risks.

Australian Government **processes incorporate information governance** requirements and specifications to ensure that information, systems and services meet standards and information remains findable, sharable and re-usable.

Actions

#	Recommended action	Target date
8	Information is managed based on format and metadata standards for information governance and interoperability	31 December 2020
9	All business systems meet functional requirements for information management	31 December 2020
10	Cross-agency and whole of government processes incorporate information governance requirements and specifications	31 December 2020

Accountability framework

Agencies are required to create and manage their information as a public resource in accordance with the *Archives Act 1983* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, as well as the [Protective Security Policy Framework](#), [Commonwealth Resource Management Framework](#) and internal corporate controls.

The Archives provides an accountability framework for the Digital Continuity 2020 policy including:

- annual agency survey reporting to the Archives
- National Archives annual reporting to the Minister responsible for the Archives.

The Archives will use annual agency reports and other information as part of performance monitoring. This includes identifying agencies that need assistance to complete the recommended actions. The Archives will work with these agencies to improve their digital information management.

Guidance and support

The National Archives collaborates with agencies and key partners to develop advice, products and tools that support information governance, digital information management, and interoperable information, systems and processes.

A range of strategies, implementation pathways, guidance and standards to help agencies implement the Digital Continuity 2020 policy are available from the Archives' [Agency Service Centre](#).

Related links

- [Digital Continuity 2020 Policy \(pdf, 532kb\)](#)
- [Digital Continuity 2020 Policy \(docx, 416kb\)](#)
- [Digital Continuity 2020 background and support](#)
- [Digital Continuity 2020 Agency Implementation Targets and Pathways](#)