

# Australian Government Records Interoperability Framework

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## What is the Australian Government Records Interoperability Framework?

The **Australian Government Records Interoperability Framework (AGRIF, 'the Framework')** is a system of related semantic ontologies that describe the structure, functions, and activities of the Australian Government, providing sufficient context for the effective use – including but not limited to management – of Australian Government information assets. It complies with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Ontology Language (OWL2) Recommendation and makes reference to other Recommendations and existing domain ontologies for archival and preservation processes.

Describing the structure, functions and activities of the Australian Government in a precise way, allows interoperability between agencies and systems through a common representation of information assets, rather than through program-to-program interface specification. This approach allows the management of information assets as records in accordance with best practices and legislation. It will also reduce the complexity of coping with changes – including legislative changes and administrative arrangements.

The use of semantic representation for the Framework emphasises the connectedness of things, especially how organisations, activities, and record aggregations (files, series, collections, etc.) relate to each other. This permits a greater range of search strategies, resulting in more effective discovery by using the rich context that surrounds information assets created by the Australian Government. Unlike information created and presented on the Web, information assets created by the Australian Government have a budgetary, organisational, policy, and legislative context that can be identified, extracted and used to enhance the understanding of government.

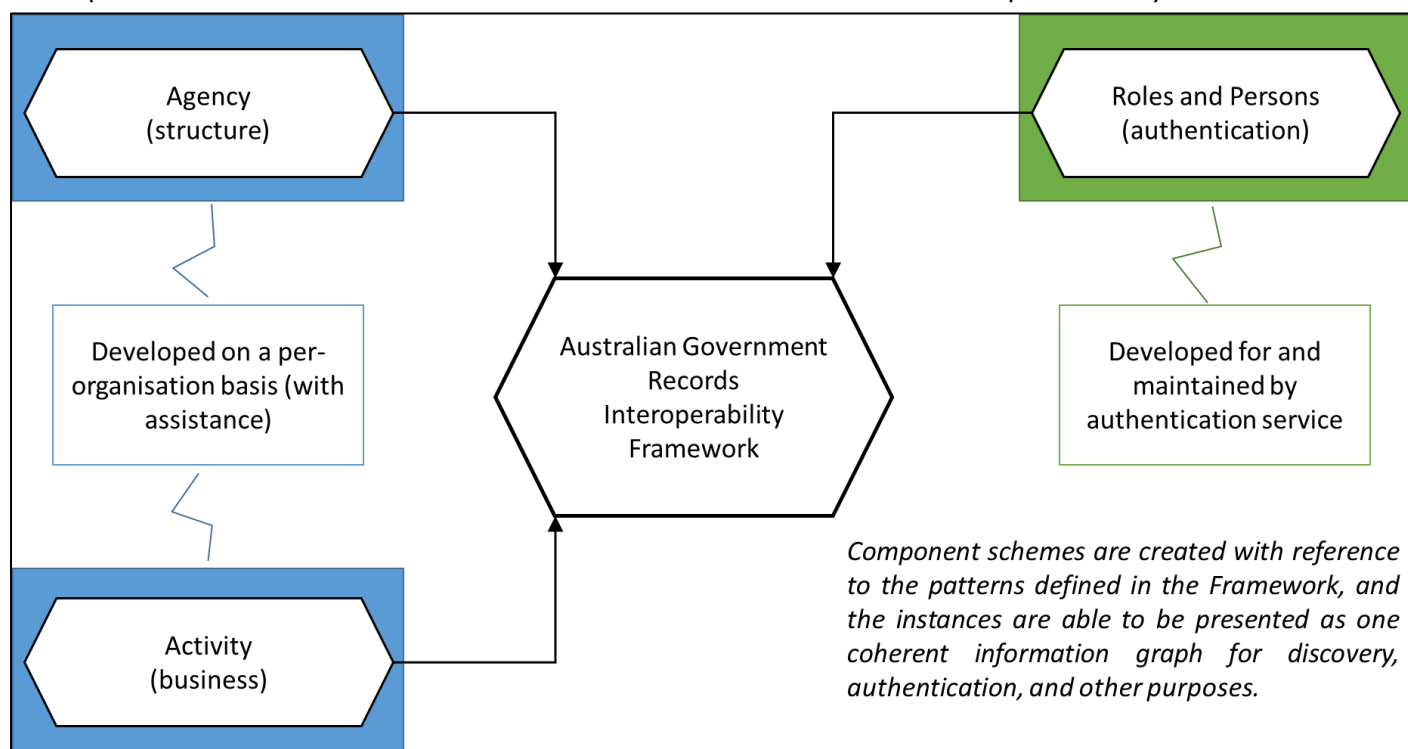
Information described as records by the Framework will drive business processes, such as workflow engines, especially in the case of automated processes. The formal logic of the Web Ontology Language means that machine agents, including complex reasoners such as entity and content extraction or categorisation services, can consume information assets described by the Framework as inputs.

The Framework improves the description, use, and management of unstructured natural language documents – such as email, reports, and policy – which makes up much of the information assets created by the Australian Government. However, the Framework will also be able to describe the context and characteristics of any information asset associated with the Australian Government, including data resources or transaction records.

### Records? Information? Documents? Data?

- **Data** refers to the syntax or raw representation – the text or values – in some accessible format.
- **Information** is data that has been explained or contextualised (especially by relating to other information) so it can be potentially understood by someone experiencing it. Information is an **asset** because it is an output or significant by-product of Government activities.
- **Records** are managed information assets, in this case of Government. Information assets are managed as records in order to ensure that their potential intrinsic value is not lost and in order to comply with legislation and policy related to information security and accountability.
- **Documents** are a common kind of information asset created by Government. They are typically aggregations of human-readable natural language text.

## Composition of the Australian Government Records Interoperability Framework



The Framework is a federated system of models. Information managers in agencies, in consultation with subject matter experts, will prepare the component schemes that are in turn references of the main Framework – which provides the conceptual endpoint for discovery. These components, representing existing artefacts such as organisation structures, enterprise resource plans, business categorisation schemes, and records plans, are prepared in the more usable format of the semantic ontology.

### Selected Recommendations and ontologies

World Wide Web Consortium; Web Ontology Language:

<https://www.w3.org/OWL/>

Library of Congress; Preservation Metadata Implementation Strategies (PREMIS):

<http://www.loc.gov/standards/premis/index.html>

International Council on Archives; Records in Context (RiC):

<http://www.ica.org/en/egad-ric-conceptual-model>