DOI content principles from Aus Gov style manual

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Lara Smith (TeamWork) <application@teamwork.com>

Date: Wed, Feb 16, 2022, 1:31 PM

Subject: (Dept of Industry Design System & Guide) Re: Answers to your Design-specific questions

To: <chelle.sargent@gmail.com>

===== WRITE YOUR REPLY ABOVE THIS LINE =====

Feb 16

1:31PM

Feb 16 1:31PM

Lara Smith replied to this message

Hi Jim

Let me know if you have any further questions. Thank you!

Lara

\*\*1. How will the baseline components library be delivered? Through Figma? \*\*

- Yes, will be delivered via Figma prototype links for you to circulate.

Great!

\*\*2. How will you work with us for testing/validation of these component designs?\*\*

- Our thoughts were as follows:

a) Ushmi and I will be in CBR to talk through the baseline deliverable (which we define below).

b) On Day 1 of our CBR visit, we will run through with you in the AM. (Flights usually arrive at 10am so we'll start around 11am)

c) In the afternoon of Day 1 we meet with a broader group of DOI stakeholders and you, and us, run through the baseline deliverable with them — and have a general Q&A discussion. We leave it with them.

d) On Day 2 in the AM, we come back with the broader group and Q&A and discuss their thoughts.

e) We can leave the design system available to you on Figma if you are doing any further internal testing.

It will be important for our project team to review and validate the baseline deliverable before sharing with our brand and design team.

Can we suggest that your CBR visit is reserved for our team? Then we can be the conduit with any other stakeholders?

Our other teams aren’t a clearance point, rather a consultation point, and if they picked up any critical issues like a breach of the Australian Government Branding Guidelines we would convey this back soon after our meeting in CBR.

On this, will there be any scope for a feedback round after you present the baseline deliverable? We will need some time to do a general test on accessibility (colours for example), and cross-checking against requirements (this is also where we could also review from the brand perspective). Or is this something you would like us to do further down the track on other iterations?

Let us know what you think.

\*\*Baseline deliverable\*\*

We are thinking that the baseline deliverable will include:

A standard page

A non-standard page

A range of common-sense components inside each of the above pages.

Would a ‘non-standard page’ be one of the following?

News homepage

News sub-section

Publications homepage

Initiatives and services/Regulations and standards homepage

Search homepage

Website homepage

One-page publication

Chaptered publication

News

Event

Each of these have has distinct UI design requirements – so with respect to page patterns and defining components used within each pattern, we agree that we first need to determine the collection of baseline page patterns so that we’re speaking the same language.

Friday AM (or before 14:30) works for us more so – do you guys have availability by chance? We’re happy to look at Michelle’s doco with a couple of hours’ notice.

\*\*Moodboard deliverable\*\*

We'd like to have the following ready for you on Monday 21/2 AM for review and confirmation we are on the right track.

A Figma-based moodboard of collected assets to confirm we understand the design principles, tone and interaction you're looking for.

A one-page introduction to the product identity guide/style guide to set tone and voice.

Excellent.

On tone and voice, we follow the Australian Government Style Manual and the following key principles (for content design/writing) which we use in tandem with the website government framework.

Sharing as some key points may be useful for inclusion in the one-pager?

Content criteria

Content decisions on our website are largely determined by whether something is deemed ‘Critical content’ and whether it’s ‘timely or timeless’, This enables us to ensure these website governance principles:

Content management

Information integrity

User focus.

Critical content

We prioritise content requests for industry.gov.au and consult.industry.gov.au against these criteria:

* is a strategic priority for the department as identified in our Corporate or Strategic plan, or listed in our Administrative Arrangements Orders
* is led by our department and we are the appropriate single source of truth
* explains the department’s purpose, responsibilities, and strategic intent within the portfolio
* meets our legislated disclosure and reporting requirements and we’re legally obligated to provide it
* meets mandatory publishing requirements defined by our department
* is valuable to our users and stakeholders as identified through user research and analytics (it meets a direct user need)
* is user focussed and explains what the user can do, needs to do, or needs to know

Examples of legislated publishing:

* information we’ve released for Freedom of Information requests
* information categorised under the Information Publication Scheme
* our Portfolio Budget Statements
* our statutory appointments and organisational chart
* information, consultation submissions and advice to the Minister under certain legislation
* reporting under international agreements such as the National Inventory Reports.

Examples of mandatory publishing:

* information to help users comply with legislation or standards we administer
* regular reports or data our department publishes like the Resources and Energy Quarterly
* communiques from forums we lead.

Examples of strategic priorities:

* strategies and plans we develop and lead like the Technology Investment Roadmap
* initiatives that have received funding in the most recent budget.
* Examples of something our users need to know:
* If there are changes or proposed changes to a service or program we provide that will impact our users, then they need to know. This change may involve legislation or a shift in policy, and is often time sensitive.
* If the department is leading or supporting a new government initiative, we should tell our users what this means for them.

Non-critical content

* We sometimes publish information that we’d like to tell users that is not critical. We put this information in news stories or case studies, not standard content.

Our department is broad in its scope of responsibility and our work is diverse. We’re doing some very interesting and important work, with impacts to the Australian and international community.

The website can’t tell every story, and nor should it as this would bombard and confuse our users.

When evaluating this content get to the crux of what you’re trying to say and why you want to say it. Who does it impact? Are there better ways of telling this story? Does it only impact a niche group of people? Can those people be communicated with directly? Are there existing channels you can tap into such as a social media community?

Example of non-critical content we publish:

* Case studies showcasing examples of businesses that achieved good outcomes as a result of government funding, policies or initiatives
* News stories updating users and stakeholders about progress on initiatives. This may be promoted via social media and newsletters as part of ongoing communications plans.
* Video recordings or virtual events that are valuable for users who can’t or didn’t attend.
* ‘Watch this space’ or ‘Coming soon’ information
* We don’t publish coming soon information.

Our users are time poor, distracted, and we’re competing for their attention.

When we do manage to get their attention, we should make it worth their while. If there isn’t any tangible outcome or call-to-action, wait and communicate when there is.

Information available on another website

We don’t publish information available on another website. This includes duplicating reports, pages or articles.

If there are other agencies responsible for the information, users should be sent to those sites directly. And that’s only if there is a relationship to the department. The website is not a ‘useful link’ directory for topics of interest.

Timely vs. timeless

We maintain clear boundaries between timeless and timely information on industry.gov.au.

Timely information is something that will date within the next 6 months, or something that has already happened (i.e. an announcement). Aim to include timely information in consultations, news items, social media, newsletters and case studies. Include relevant cross-links to this information where relevant.

More ‘timeless’ information, like regulatory protocols, program explanations or strategies should be treated like the reference section of a library. This information source should be kept current, factual, and explicitly explain our department’s remit. This enables users to quickly understand our responsibilities, and complete tasks.

Dates and announcements

Dates age the content and give users the impression the content is not current. Aim to include dates in timely content.

Only include dates in timeless content if it’s critical to the user, and there’s no other timely information to link to (noting there must be a strategy in place to remove the dates when they are no longer relevant). Never start a content page with ‘On the [date] the Minister for [portfolio] announced the [measure]. This style is reserved for media releases.

Example of relevant dates in a standard page:

date a legislative requirement applies during a transition period that impacts users.

Examples of relevant dates in a news item (see news and media section):

dates during which we are consulting with the public

date by which the user must apply for a program

date by which Australia must meet a legislative requirement

date the Minister announced the initiative.

Archiving

Content is maintained for no more than 5 years, unless there is a critical need.

If users need to find older content we point to web pages archived on the National Library of Australia’s Trove Library.

If a policy area, initiative or regulatory requirement is retired from our department, we remove the content from our website. If the policy area has retired but delivered work for our department such as a final report, we may retain the report for up to 5 years.

If the function or content has moved to another department, link to the content in the new location or set redirects if appropriate.

Content standards and style guide

Following this guide will ensure content remains consistent across the website. This enables us to meet these website governance principles:

* Readability
* Accessibility
* User focus
* For specific style and formatting queries see the APS Style Manual

Readability rules

* Write clear, plain English and avoid jargon.

Content must meet our department’s 4 readability benchmarks:

* short sentences (20-25 words max)
* active rather than passive voice
* low readability score (Flesch Kincaid)
* low reading level.
* We aim for year 9 for most content on the industry.gov.au website (or year 7 for simpler content, per the APS Style Manual). This means someone with 9 years of schooling should be able to understand the information. This is critical for landing pages but you have some leeway for lower level pages that have more in-depth or complex information. Try to keep these under 12 years of schooling.

We use Hemmingway App for small editing jobs (super useful for revising paragraphs and sentences on the fly).

We use Visible Thread’s ‘Readability Engine’ to check larger pieces of work, pages and reports during our content development process and to provide feedback:

Send documents via our email tool to readabilityengine@industry.gov.au.

Upload documents to our Visible Thread platform (requires assigned user login)

Read more in the APS Style Manual page on reading levels.

Watch a presentation from our team on Why readability is important.

Editorial rules

We follow several unique rules as part of our website style and voice.

Active voice

Write content in active voice, even if it feels a bit blunt. This helps the user quickly read and scan the content. The website is not the place to demonstrate academic prowess or creative turns of phrase.

Tone and language

Use a conversational tone that creates a less impersonal feel for our content. It’s okay to use common contractions of words that aren’t obscure or clunky.

We don’t go so far as using idioms or figures of speech that only Australians or native English speakers would understand. For example, ‘fair go’ or ‘changing tack’ may be meaningless or confusing to some users.

People and points of view

To ensure our language is consistent and we don’t confuse our users, make sure you’re writing from the right point of view:

* ‘We’ are the department and you can read about ‘our department’s’ programs and contact ‘us’. We don’t mention our department’s name or use its acronym as this is prone to change.
* ‘You’ is the user and we explain how we can help ‘your’ business.
* ‘Australia’ is the country and the community as a whole.
* ‘The Australian Government/the government’ is for decisions or activities broader than our department.
* ‘Our Minister’ or ‘the Minister for...’ to specify which portfolio element with a link to their page on minister.industry.gov.au. We don’t mention our Ministers by name as they are prone to change. An exception is citing the Minister’s name and title in a timely news story or photo caption about an event where they appear alongside other people.
* Capitalisation
* Only capitalise proper nouns and publication titles. Capitals are difficult to scan so we use sentence case wherever possible. In titles, capitalise the first letter and follow with sentence case.

Italics

We currently do not use italics on the website for legislation, titles or other content. This is a legacy issue from the previous APS Digital Style Guide and will be revoked on the next website redevelopment.