

# BRINGING LONG-FORM CONTENT TO DIGITAL.GOV

Office of Customer Experience  
General Services Administration

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coding it forward >



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# THE PROBLEM

- The current template on [Digital.gov](https://www.digital.gov) for long-form content is **outdated**
  - Technical: Old, redundant, difficult to maintain code
  - Content: Not distinguishable from the rest of the site. Cannot support multiple sections of content.
- Is **not flexible or robust enough** to support the variety of content from various subsites.

[Home](#) > [Guides](#) > [Guide to the Digital Analytics Program](#) > Become a DAP Certified Analyst

Overview

Add Your Site to DAP

**Become a DAP Certified Analyst**

Common Questions about DAP

Gaining Access to the Data

Guidelines for Sharing DAP Data

## GUIDE TO THE DIGITAL ANALYTICS PROGRAM

# Become a DAP Certified Analyst

## Overview

The [Digital Analytics Program](#) (DAP) now offers the opportunity to become a DAP Certified Analyst. Prospective analysts must complete the DAP Certification Exam with a score of 80 percent or better. The exam is 50 questions and is multiple choice. Prospective analysts can take the exam more than once.

The exam is not intended to be easy, nor is it targeted at novice DAP or Google Analytics users. The DAP team hopes that the exam can be used by prospective analysts in annual goals or individual development plans to demonstrate to supervisors that they maintain high-level of understanding of the program and Google Analytics.

## The Exam

To request the link to take the exam, email us at [dap@gsa.gov](mailto:dap@gsa.gov) with the subject: "DAP Certification Exam Request."

In order to become a DAP Certified Analyst, you must be a current DAP user. DAP users are limited to federal employees, and federal contractors with written approval from their federal supervisor. In order to receive the link for the exam, you will first be verified by the DAP team.

# SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

## **Create a new template for Digital.gov to publish long-form content from across the government**

- Needs to have a distinct visual identity while fitting in with the theme of Digital.gov
- Needs to be customizable enough to support content from many different sources while also creating a consistent look and feel
- Needs to be capable of supporting hundreds of pages of content while being easily navigable and accessible
- Needs to be technically maintainable and robust

# INITIAL SOLUTION

[Home](#) > [Guides](#) > [Guide to the Digital Analytics Program](#) > Become a DAP Certified Analyst

GUIDE TO THE DIGITAL ANALYTICS PROGRAM

## Become a DAP Certified Analyst

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DIGITAL.GOV GUIDE

## Guide to the Digital Analytics Program

The Digital Analytics Program (DAP) offers advanced, easy web analytics for federal agencies.



[Overview](#)

[Add your site](#)

[Common questions](#)

[Access the data](#)

[Share DAP data](#)

Before starting with new content, we needed to standardize the existing guides

(<https://digital.gov/guides/dap>)



# INITIAL SOLUTION

- New design has a **distinct visual identity**
  - Hero image
  - Kicker
  - Title
  - Summary
- Re-designed navigation
  - New menu bar
  - Sticks on scroll to allow for navigation throughout the page

## Web analytics playbook

Use these plays to reach your strategic website goals.



## Overview

Reading time: 1 minute

Federal websites vary greatly in content and purpose, but they all share a common objective: to deliver information or services to the public in an efficient, easy, and accessible way.

Web analytics tools play an integral role in pursuit of that goal. However, if the tool is implemented improperly or the data it collects are analyzed incorrectly, it can derail delivering information or services to the public.

Use these plays to help strategize how your team can most effectively use web analytics for your website and target audience.

1. [Create a foundation for your strategy](#)

2. [Commit to action](#)

# CASE STUDY: THE HCD GUIDES

- The Office of Customer Experience and the Office of Personnel Management collaborated on a series of Human-Centered Design Guides—currently living in **Google Docs**.
- **204 pages of content** across 4 completed guides, with 4 more guides in development
- Ideal candidate for testing new template for long-form content

## HCD Design Concepts Guide

### Design concepts

4 min read

Welcome to the design phase!

You've wrapped up the discovery phase of your human-centered design (HCD) research, and you and your team are ready to move into the design phase. In this phase, your team will build on the research you did in the discovery phase. Based on what you learned, you'll design or evolve a product, service, or system that answers customer needs.

This guide will help you understand the "why" behind the design process. (The "how" is explained in the [HCD Design Operations Guide](#), and you can find a refresher on HCD principles and practices in this [introduction to human-centered design](#).)

After learning the why, you'll be able to apply what you've learned to other situations, and expand your understanding of how to grapple with complex problems. Our hope is that, eventually, you will be able to take what you've learned here and create original work from your learnings.

Note that these design guides are not intended to offer an exhaustive list of design processes. There are many other works that can do that for you, some of which we will cite. The purpose of these guides is to provide context and share some select methods for designing products, services, and systems that will help solve the problems highlighted from your discovery phase.

# NEW FEATURES FOR LONG-FORM GUIDES

- **Landing page**
  - Hero
  - Featured guides
  - Additional resources
- **Menu bar**
- **Glossary**
- **Side navigation**
  - Combined with in-page navigation
- Reading time
- Featured resource
- Next/previous buttons
- “Ring” highlight
- “Key idea” highlight
- Quotes
- Tables
- Checkboxes

# LANDING PAGE

- Has distinct sections for hero, featured resources, and additional resources
- Creates a **central place** for introductory content and additional resources
- Allows for **easier navigation** of multiple pages of content
- Will **form the basis** of future “compilation” pages on Digital.gov

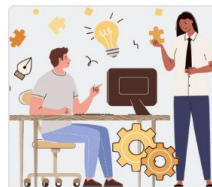
## Welcome!

The Human-Centered Design (HCD) Guides are intended to enhance the understanding and practice of human-centered design throughout the federal government. In this guide series, we will explore the four phases of HCD work: **discovery, design, delivery, and measurement**.

You can think of the HCD Guides like a travel series through design. In the same way you can collect travel guides to Kyoto and Tokyo and Nagasaki instead of a single, lengthy all-Japan travel guide, our HCD Guide series provides two volumes for each phase of the HCD process: a concept guide, focusing on why the phase works the way it does, and an operations guide with checklists and frameworks to help with the how of the phase.

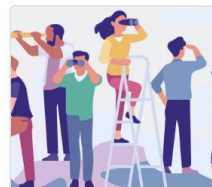
Ready to get started? Check out the guides below!

## Featured Resources



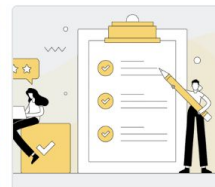
### Introduction to human-centered design

Everything you need to know to get started with our human-centered design series

[Read Guide](#)

### Discovery concepts guide

Explains the “why” behind conducting discovery research

[Read Guide](#)

### Discovery operations guide

Step-by-step guidance on how to conduct discovery research

[Read Guide](#)



# SIDE NAVIGATION

- Primary navigation moved to the top of the page to allow for additional side navigation
- Combines secondary navigation with in-page navigation for **streamlined user experience**
- Allows for **exponentially more content** per guide (anywhere from 1-5 sub-sections per section)

Framing

**Desk research**

Start with what's there

Organize your research

Reframing

## Desk research

Knowing what o  
contribute new

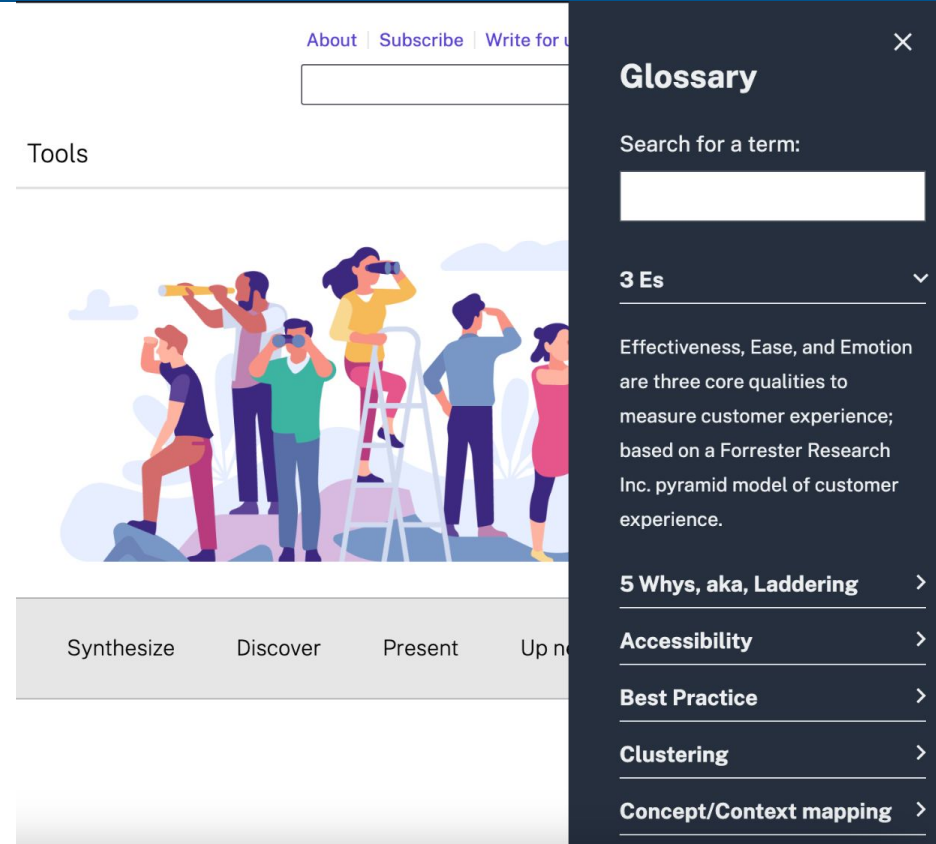
Reading time: 3 minutes

Some Types of Desk Research



# GLOSSARY

- Maintains the in-page reading experience
- Features sliding “drawer,” search, and collapsible terms
- Refactored to be **faster**, more **dynamic**, and more **accessible**
  - Multiple glossaries on multiple pages, nailable using only the keyboard...



# ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

Reading time: 3 minutes

FEATURED RESOURCE

## Discovery concepts guide

Explains the “why” behind conducting discovery research



← **Steps to discovery**

**Recruit** →

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### General

Server Response Code

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### USWDS

Presence of USWDS components

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### DAP

Presence of DAP snippet

---

### SEO

Meta Description Tags

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### Third Party Services

Presence of Third Party Services

# ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

“What people say, and what people do, and what people say they do, are entirely different things.”

— Dr. Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

## Note

You should regularly review your agency's websites and other digital products and services to ensure they comply with all relevant laws, policies, and regulations.

## Case in point

An example of HCD in practice involves rethinking USDA's application process for free and reduced lunch for low-income students. By leveraging HCD techniques to identify issues and simplify the form from five pages to one, USDA anticipated a system-wide savings of \$600M over five years. USDA used rapid iteration through a challenge platform to create a digital prototype that school districts nationwide tested to create even greater cost savings and efficiency, as well as a better experience for parents and program administrators.

# FINAL SOLUTION

**For a preview of the final product, visit:**

<https://federalist-466b7d92-5da1-4208-974f-d61fd4348571.sites.pages.cloud.gov/preview/gsa/digitalgov.gov/jtm-create-hcd-guides/guides/hcd/>

**Ultimately, this work will be published at:**

<https://digital.gov/guides/hcd/>

# IMPACT

- Created a new template for all **6** of the existing guides on Digital.gov
- Migrated **200+ pages of content** from document form into this new template
- This work will allow for **major subsite migrations** onto a single platform:
  - [pra.digital.gov](https://pra.digital.gov)
  - [plainlanguage.gov](https://plainlanguage.gov)
  - [accessibility.digital.gov](https://accessibility.digital.gov)
  - [18f.gsa.gov/guides](https://18f.gsa.gov/guides)

# LESSONS LEARNED: BREAK IT UP

**7973**

**new lines of code**

**254**

**files changed**

**264**

**commits**

Large changes are intimidating and take too long to get reviewed.

Instead, break up your work into smaller pieces until everything is accomplished.

# LESSONS LEARNED: BE OPEN TO CHANGE

213

comments/suggestions

8

rejected pull requests

Throughout the process, I conducted interviews and facilitated feedback.

The final project is more **functional**, more **stable**, and more **accessible** as a result!



# Thank you!

**This project would not have been possible without:**

Rachel Flagg, Office of Customer Experience

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Nick Lyons, Bixal Contractor

Bonnie Cameron, Bixal Contractor