Digital Service Standards

Public Release

GOVTECH
SINGAPORE
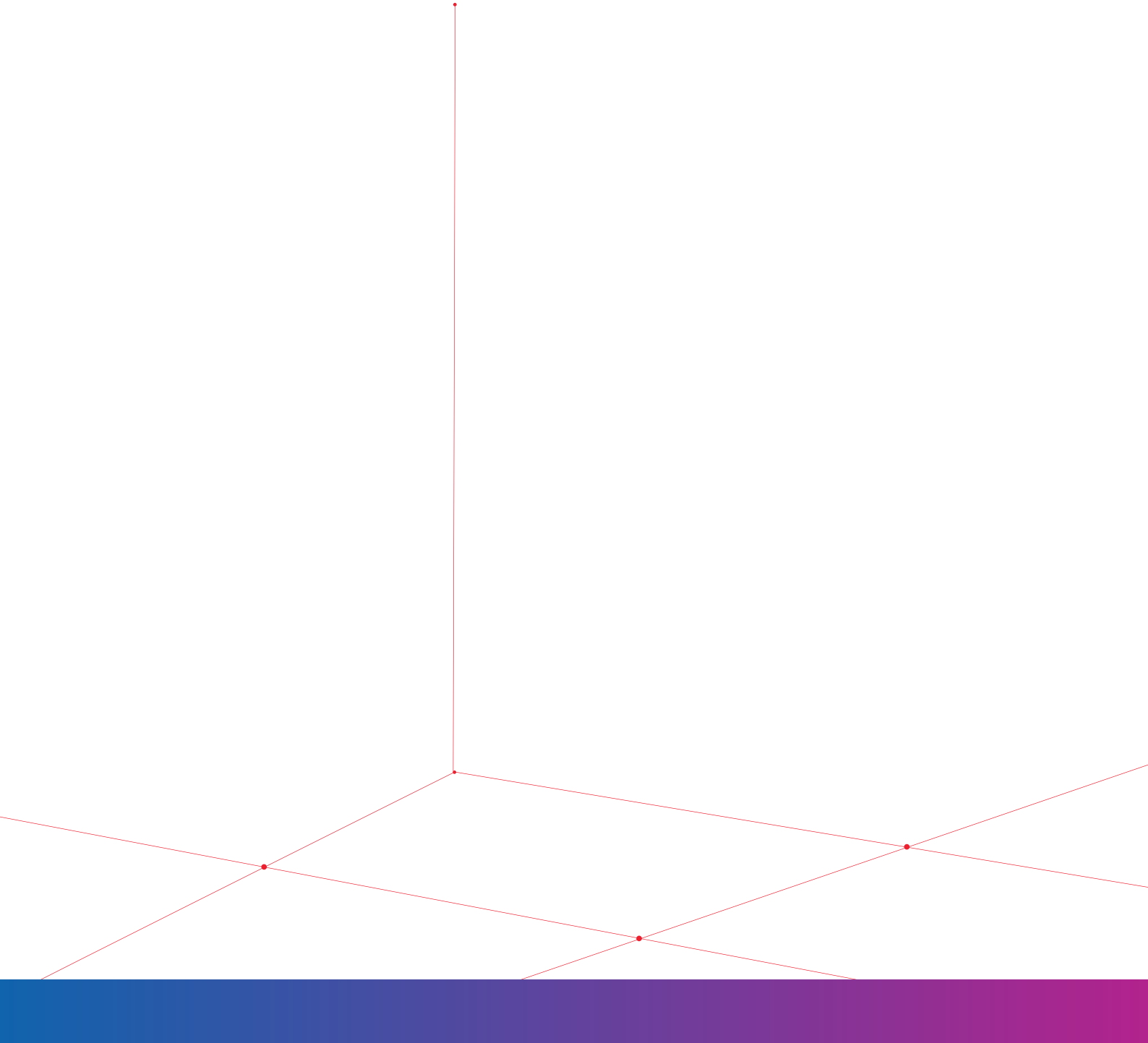
Table of contents

INTRODUCTION

Digital Service Standards (DSS) is a set of standards for Agencies to implement their digital services to meet the Digital Government Blueprint (DGB) goal of delivering digital services that are easy, seamless and relevant for our citizens and businesses.

All public-facing digital services of the Government must meet the Digital Service Standards.

PLANNING AND OWNERSHIP

1.   To stay relevant and effective with changes in user needs and technology, digital services shall be reviewed at least once every three years and terminated as soon as they are irrelevant or ineffective.

2.   To reduce duplication and wastage of resources, mobile applications shall be implemented only if the same objectives cannot be met with web-based digital services.

3.   To avoid being seen as endorsing products or services of private-sector organisations, digital services shall display only content that is owned by, or under the control of, the Agency[1] or other Agencies. The digital service shall indicate clearly if the Agency has partial or full ownership of the content.

4.   To help the public identify legitimate government digital services and to enable Agencies to streamline their websites, a single website with .gov.sg domain shall be used for each Agency (e.g. www.agency.gov.sg), except for Agencies in the area of education which may use the .edu.sg domain.

Standard 4.1
Intuitive Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

The URLs of the web-based digital services shall be named appropriately and intuitively (e.g. easy to remember and relate to real world).

Note: Standard 4.2 is intentionally left blank.

FRONTEND USER INTERFACE DESIGN

5. To allow individuals and businesses to transact with the Government digitally from start to finish, digital services shall provide end-to-end services (except for those with physical or legal restrictions) including digital alternatives to wet ink signatures.

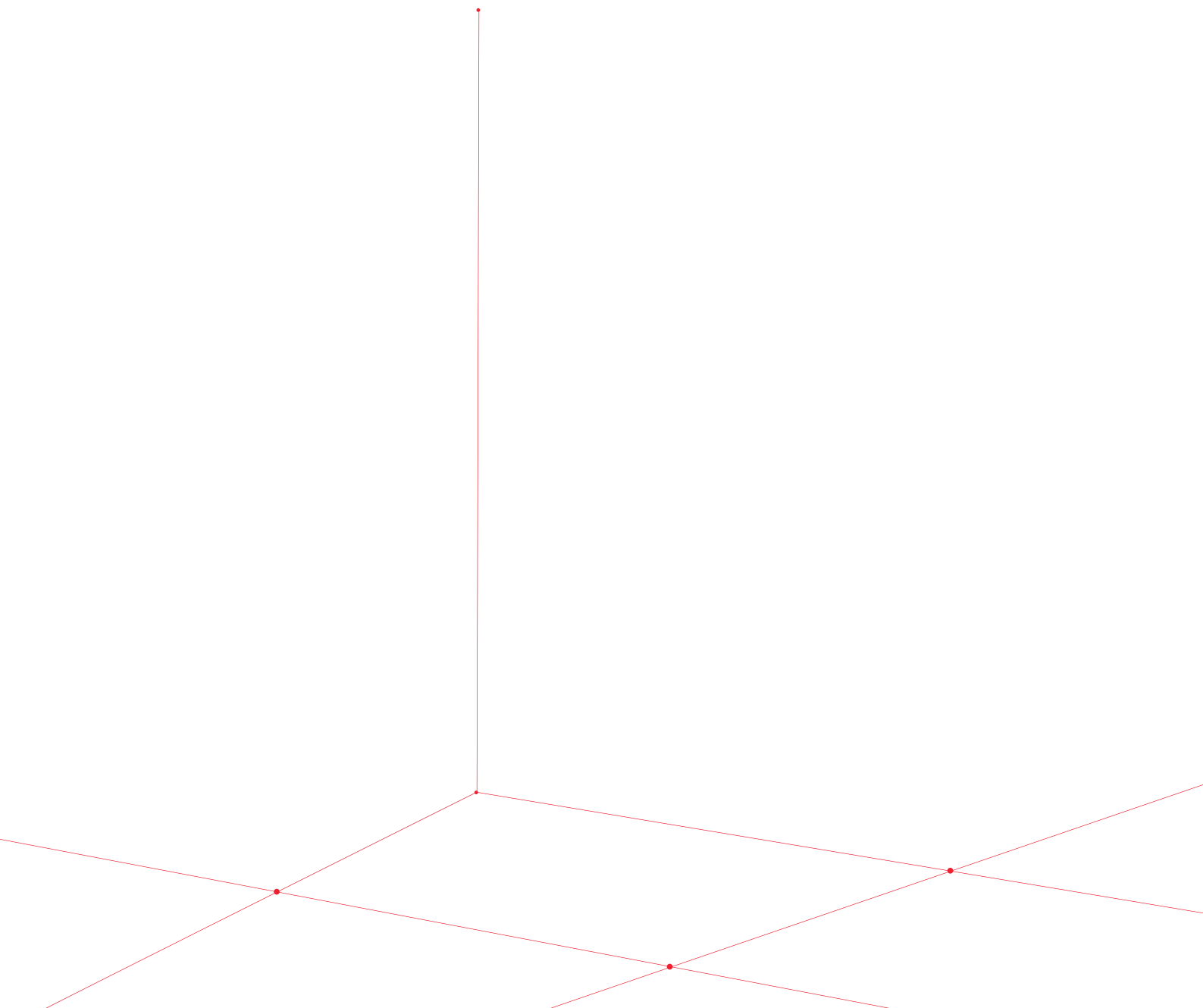|	
Standard 5.1 **User Assistance** **in Form Filling**	Where SingPass/CorpPass is used, transactional services shall use MyInfo[2] for pre-filling of personal data and Enterprise Data Hub (EDH)[2] for pre-filling of business-related data, so that users do not have to provide the same information again.
Standard 5.2 **Digital Payment**	Where there are inbound and/or outbound payments, transactional services shall provide digital payment options. The inbound payment collection shall include the payment collection screen, bill information, and digital payment modes. Before the user makes the payment, processes relating to procedures of handling exceptions (e.g. interruptions), payments, as well as refunds and reconciliations in the event of a failed transaction shall be clearly communicated.

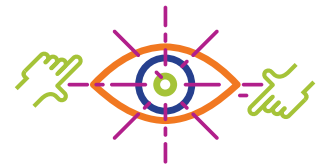[2] MyInfo and EDH are one-stop data platforms that save time by automatically filling out government forms online.

6. To ensure that individuals and businesses can easily interact with the Government digitally, digital services must be well-designed to be 1) intuitive and usable, 2) accessible and inclusive, 3) relevant to the needs of users and provide a consistent experience across the Government.

PRINCIPLE

1 INTUITIVE DESIGN AND USABILITY

As the Government's digital 'shopfront', our digital services must be well designed so that citizens and businesses can interact and transact with us digitally in an intuitive and easy to use manner.

a) FIND THE SERVICE AND UNDERSTAND HOW TO USE IT

Standard 6.1
Easily Searchable

Web-based digital services shall be easily searchable by search engines.

Standard 6.2
Prominent Featuring of Transactional Services

Web-based transactional services shall be easily discoverable (within 2 to 3 clicks from homepage) and viewable by the user without prior login. Any pre-requisites for user to complete the transaction (e.g. estimated completion time, payment methods) shall be provided upfront, prior to login.

Web-based informational services that provide access to transactional services shall display the list of available transactional services and provide any useful information for each of the transactional services.

b)　NAVIGATE THE DIGITAL SERVICE

Standard 6.3
Navigation

Digital services shall ensure ease of navigation via features that include reasonable number of links, familiar and consistent placement of navigation, site search and allow users to know where they are on the website.

In addition, the links shall be short, descriptive and identifiable, and ensure a clear distinction between visited and unvisited links (for informational services only).

There shall not be frames implementation, except for the use of inline frames (i.e. iFrame).

c)   USE THE DIGITAL SERVICE

Standard 6.4
Digital Service Availability

Digital services and functionalities shall be made available to their users anytime and shall not have broken links. For digital services that are not 24/7, customers shall be informed in advance if the digital services would not be available (e.g. scheduled maintenance).

Standard 6.5
Display of Key Features and Contents

Informational services shall display key features, featured content or announcements (e.g. alerts and notices) prominently on their homepages/home screen, with useful and critical content to be 'above the fold' (i.e. readily visible to the user without the need to scroll) and present visual cues for users to scroll down.

Standard 6.6
Element Design

Digital services shall use familiar design conventions that map closely to real-world concepts for their digital service elements (e.g. buttons, links, checkboxes). The elements shall make sense within the context of the task.

Standard 6.7
Clear Content

Digital services shall deploy content that is relevant, up-to-date, and easy to understand.

For improved readability, the content shall be presented using the Sans-Serif font family (e.g. Verdana, Arial, and Helvetica) with a minimum base font with adjustable size of 16 CSS pixels.

For greater clarity, complicated data and statistics shall be presented using infographics.

Standard 6.8
Use of Multimedia

Images, audios and videos used in informational services shall be of adequate quality and have appropriate titles, descriptions and captions.

Speech videos and pre-recorded multimedia shall include the use of signposts, lower thirds, subtitles, footage and captions.

Standard 6.9
Indication of User Interface (UI) Response

Digital services shall provide users with a visual indication of the UI response, and minimise response time.

Sound or graphics shall be used to indicate if an operation (e.g. keyboard input) has been accepted or an accepted input is being processed.

**Standard 6.10
Streamlining of
Transactional
Services**

Transactional services shall be streamlined to have minimum number of steps and provide a 'Save as draft' where appropriate.

Logged-in user's name shall be displayed in a prominent location to provide visual cues that users are in a secure and personalised environment.

Key instructions and progress information (e.g. Page x of y, progress indication bar, labels, visual icons) shall be included to inform user which stage he/she is currently at, in relation to the entire transaction.

**Standard 6.11
Fields in Form**

Fields in the form of transactional services shall be labelled with common terms with mandatory and optional fields clearly indicated, include smart defaults (e.g. postal codes to retrieve address) and provide prompts to prevent data-entry errors.

Users shall be allowed to confirm and correct their inputs/information before submission.

Standard 6.12
Intuitive Error
Message

Digital services shall provide meaningful and actionable error messages which are intuitively placed, where applicable.
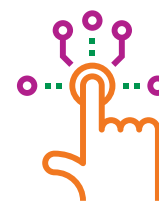
Standard 6.13
Last Updated
Date Stamp

Web-based informational services pages shall display a last updated date stamp to indicate the currency of the content at the end of each page.

Standard 6.14
Official Design
Specification for
Mobile Application

Mobile applications shall be designed to have a clear call to action, and be developed according to the native design guidelines and specifications released by the platform provider. Touch-based gestures shall follow commonly-used patterns and guidelines provided by respective platform providers.

d)   COMPLETE THE TRANSACTION

Standard 6.15
Transaction
Acknowledgement

Transactional services shall provide acknowledgement to the user upon concluding the transaction, with the relevant transaction details.
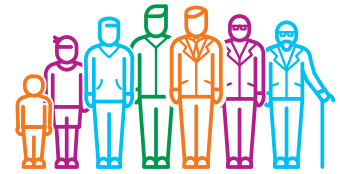
e)   TRACK THE TRANSACTION

Standard 6.16
Status
Tracking

Where the outcomes may not be immediately available (e.g. approval of application), transactional services shall allow users to track status and be informed of any updates.

PRINCIPLE

2 ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Government digital services must be designed to benefit all population segments, including persons with disabilities. We embrace the international accessibility standard, Web Content Accessibility Standards (WCAG), and is also aligned with local standard, SS618: Guidelines on User Interface Design for Older Adults.

Standard 6.17
Web Content Accessibility

Digital services, including those accessed via mobile devices, shall adhere to Level A and Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 specifications, except for WCAG clauses on 'Provide alternatives for time-based media' for which digital services need only adhere to Level A.

Standard 6.18
Mobile Responsiveness

Web-based informational services shall adopt Responsive Web Design to ensure mobile responsiveness. Web-based transactional services that are assessed as not suitable for mobile access shall be disabled for access on mobile devices, and users shall be informed and advised accordingly.

Standard 6.19
Web Rendering

Web-based digital services shall be designed to be best viewed and adjusted to fit according to the user device's screen resolution, width and orientation without the need for horizontal scrolling.

They shall be compatible[3] with the latest versions[4] of commonly used web browsers. All supported browsers and versions, as well as required plug-ins shall be displayed on the web pages.

Web-based digital services shall ensure acceptable page loading speed. They shall also be HTML W3C and CSS W3C valid, with the HTML, CSS and JS files minified, where possible.

Standard 6.20
Common Language

Digital services shall be offered in English, and have the need for additional languages reviewed based on the target users of the digital service.

If the digital services are offered in additional languages, all relevant information needed to complete the interaction or transaction shall be provided in each of the languages.

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[3] To be deemed 'compatible', users shall be able to access the information they need or be able to complete their task without layout issues causing any problems (for example vital information or form fields becoming less visible).

[4] 'Latest versions' refers to the latest stable version released by the browser software manufacturer and the version immediately before that.

Standard 6.21
User Assistance

Web-based digital services shall provide different forms of search and assistance to the user such as contextual help, phone, chatbot, etc. , with at least one avenue being written support (e.g. email, chatbot), so that the interaction or transaction can be completed easily.

Standard 6.22
Feedback and Sentiments

Digital services shall provide a means for the user to provide feedback, and put in place procedures for handling these customer queries and feedback.

All .gov.sg informational services shall provide a link to REACH and WWW.GOV.SG websites.

PRINCIPLE

3 RELEVANCE AND CONSISTENCY

Our digital services must be relevant to the needs of our citizens and businesses, and provide a consistent experience across the Government. They shall carry a 'branding' that uniquely identifies them as government digital services, in keeping with the ethos of one public service.

Standard 6.23
Commercial Advertisements

Digital services shall not show commercial advertisements or endorse products and services of private sector organisations.

If it is beneficial for the users to package information together by having links to, or content from, private sector organisations, the digital services shall clearly indicate that such information does not represent endorsement.

Standard 6.24
Global Primary Navigation Panel

All .gov.sg informational services shall adopt a Global Primary Navigation Panel for every page in the informational service. It shall provide a link called 'Who we are', 'About', 'About us' or 'About <Programme>', and any additional links.

The search icons (e.g. a magnifying glass) shall be placed at the top right side of the screen and in the same line as the Global Primary Navigation Panel.

Standard 6.25
Global Footer Bar

All .gov.sg informational services shall adopt a Global Footer Bar for every page in the informational service. If any logo is used, it shall be placed above the Global Footer Bar, positioned at the centre. The Global Footer Bar shall include name of the digital service, contact information, etc.

Standard 6.26
Official
Government
Banner

All .gov.sg digital services shall adopt the Official Government Banner (containing the Singapore Government Online Logo) for every page in the digital services.

Standard 6.27
Service Identity

All .gov.sg digital services shall adopt a Service Identity (containing the Agency/ service name and where applicable, the logo) for every page in the digital services.

Standard 6.28
Footer Panel

All .gov.sg digital services shall adopt the Footer Panel (containing the 'Report Vulnerability', 'Privacy Statement', 'Terms of Use', etc.) for every page in the digital services.

Standard 6.29
Information on
Mobile Application

Mobile applications shall include an 'About', 'Information' or equivalent screen to provide basic information about the mobile application.

The Agency name and pre-requisites shall be shared in the application store for all mobile applications.

Standard 6.30
Icon for Mobile
Digital Service

Mobile applications and web-based digital services rendered on mobile devices shall provide an icon containing the logo of the digital service or name of the digital service.

Standard 6.31
Archived
Information

Digital services shall provide past or historical information (e.g. previous laws, studies, annual reports) online, if the information is relevant or helpful to users (e.g. to understand how the Agency has evolved over the years).

GLOSSARY

Digital service (also known as government digital service) refers to any public service that is delivered digitally. A digital service can be categorised as informational service or transactional service.

An informational service is a digital service that publishes content or provides information to help users understand and connect with the Government or its programmes/initiatives.

A transactional service is a digital service that requires explicit user exchanges. A transactional service allows the user to participate in the transaction and typically involves an exchange of information, such as money, licenses, etc.

A web-based digital service is a digital service that can be accessed via a web browser software, regardless of the hardware used, and this includes microsites.

Microsite refers to an individual web page or a cluster of web pages which are designed to meet specific objectives different from the parent website.

Mobile digital service refers to a digital service such as mobile application, webpages, etc. accessed on a mobile device (e.g. tablets, smartphones, etc.) that is deployed by the Agency.

The **Frontend User Interface** refers to having a screen which the public can access via a laptop, smart phone, kiosk, etc.