Digital Continuity Plan

The National Archives has developed a Digital Continuity Plan and other advice and guidance to help agencies ensure that their business information remains accessible and usable for as long as it is needed. The plan includes key actions intended to help agencies to achieve the digital continuity outcomes. Agencies should develop their own staged plans for achieving digital continuity, informed by Check-up 2.0 assessments and shaped by their particular business priorities and risks.

Focus on the business

Outcome: benefits of digital information to your business, the government and the community are optimised.

- Review your information to understand what information your agency creates, uses and holds, and identify accountabilities, opportunities, compliance obligations, cost, value and risks.
- Develop action plans to address the highest priority issues raised by the information review.
- Regularly update and evaluate the information gathered in the review.

Focus on people, processes and technology

Outcome: people, processes and technology are aligned to support effective information management.

- Establish a governance framework for digital information which is aligned and integrated with agency governance.
- Define, assign and resource accountable digital information management roles, including senior responsibility.
- Inform, train and support users of information.
- Provide processes, systems and tools that can support effective management and use of information.
- Monitor and review ongoing management of digital information against agency objectives.

Focus on the information

Outcome: information is fit-for-purpose over its life.

- Define, assign and manage appropriate metadata.
- Provide digital information in a format that is accessible and usable.
- Ensure that digital information can be exchanged among systems and agencies, and with the community.
- Establish a system of ongoing checks to ensure that digital information remains usable.
- If information is already in a digital format, continue to manage it in a digital format.
- Plan and implement an ongoing program to dispose of information in accordance with the *Archives Act 1983* and other legislation.

Digital continuity
Keeping and managing digital information to ensure it can be used in the way that is required, for as long as required, and no longer.

Digital Continuity Principles
The critical features of effective digital continuity

Digital Continuity Plan
Key actions to achieve the outcomes

Practical guidance

Digital continuity outcomes

- Benefits of digital information to your business, the government and the community are optimised.
- People, processes and technology are aligned to support effective information management.
- Information is fit-for-purpose over its life.

Contact

More information on digital continuity is available from naa.gov.au or through the Agency Service Centre via recordkeeping@naa.gov.au or (02) 6212 3610.

Join GAIN Australia (Government Agencies Information Network) for online updates and discussion. Contact gainaustralia@naa.gov.au to request access.

Follow us 🄴 naa_digital

Better information = better business

Ensuring that your business information remains accessible and usable for as long as it is needed

Digital continuity for senior executives

Overview

Digital continuity is an approach to keeping and managing digital information to ensure that it can be used in the way that is required, for as long as required.

Rapid advances in technology and the online environment have fundamentally changed the way that government business is conducted. Due to the proliferation of formats and exponential growth in the volume of information, all government agencies face huge information management challenges.

Although all agencies now work in a digital environment, many are continuing to convert digital records to paper to store and manage them and thereby are missing out on business and cost efficiencies.

Information management is fundamental to agency governance. It needs to be integrated with ICT governance, security and risk management, business continuity, accountability and compliance. Lost, unreliable or poorly managed information can have a significant impact on citizens' rights and entitlements, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and exposure to risk.

Agency heads have a critical leadership role in driving the cultural change needed for effective digital information management and realising the efficiencies and other benefits that this can provide.

In every agency a senior officer should oversee implementation of the government Digital Transition policy and ensure that the agency information remains accessible and usable. Senior executives, information management specialists, business line managers, ICT specialists and other staff should understand their information management responsibilities and have the capabilities and resources they need to meet their responsibilities.

Benefits of digital continuity

- Improved corporate governance
  - Legislative obligations
  - Transparency and accountability
  - Risk management
- Improved business processes
  - Access, retrieval and information sharing
  - Informed decision making
  - Improved service delivery
- Reduced costs
  - Savings in staff time
  - Storage savings

Digital Continuity Principles

1. The value of digital information as a business, evidentiary and community resource is understood and the information is managed accordingly.

2. The governance of digital information is integrated with agency governance, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined and allocated.

3. Digital information is authentic and reliable.

4. Digital information is discoverable, accessible and usable.

5. Digital information is managed digitally.

6. Digital information is managed, protected and preserved for as long as required and then disposed of appropriately.

Digital continuity outcomes

By adopting the Digital Continuity Principles, the following outcomes should be realised:

- Benefits of information to agency business, the government and the community are optimised.
- People, processes and technology are aligned to support effective information management.
- Information is fit-for-purpose over its life.

The key actions in the Digital Continuity Plan are aimed at achieving these outcomes.