Tasmanian Government Web Publishing Framework

Tasmanian Government Web Domain Naming Guidelines

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1   Policy Context

These Guidelines have been developed in consultation with agencies through the Web Publishing Reference Group, for use across the Tasmanian Government as part of the Tasmanian Government Web Publishing Framework.

These Guidelines provide guidance for agencies in the implementation of the Tasmanian Government Web Publishing Standards (TGWPS).

This document is not a stand-alone document, and should be read in conjunction with the Tasmanian Government Web Publishing Standards (http://www.go.tas.gov.au/web_publishing/tgwps/tgwps_complete_publication.shtml), in particular the Minimum Requirements in relation to Consistent User Experience and the Whole of Government Communication Policy. More information can also be found at www.domainname.gov.au

2   Introduction

Domain names are an important component of the Tasmanian Government's online presence, to provide a better service to Government clients, and to ensure a consistent approach to communication of Government initiatives and services.

Domain names should reflect a consolidated approach to the State Government's online presence, whereby the accuracy, consistency, discoverability and marketability of tas.gov.au domain names are improved.

The Tasmanian Government publishes information to the World Wide Web under a range of domains. The allocation of URLs and sub domains is generally at the discretion of the agency.

3   Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this paper is to provide guidelines on naming websites within the Tasmanian Government web publishing environment and, to establish clearly the process by which business units and project managers can apply to register and delete website addresses.

These Guidelines will facilitate the effective administration of the tas.gov.au domain, allowing agencies to manage their own website names. In general, agencies/organisations will nominate the form of the URL, and will be responsible for ensuring consistency across all publications.

4   Rationale

The rationale behind good domain name management is to have URLs that are easy to type, remember, guess and find. The world wide web is just one of a suite of tools the State Government uses to both deliver its services, and to communicate with its target audiences, primarily the Tasmanian public, but including (and not limited to) particular interest groups and stakeholders, other governments etc. These Guidelines compliment the Whole of Government Communications Policy, in ensuring a consistent approach in the allocation of URLs within the Tasmanian Government.

The marketing of URLs also requires a considered approach. Problems can occur if URLs are created which are long, cumbersome, unnecessary, and with little consideration to the communication imperatives of Departments, and the State Government as a whole.

New URLs should only be created after consultation with Agency Communication Managers, who should also provide advice on the marketing of existing URLs in the context of agency, and whole of Government communication considerations.

Adherence to these Guidelines will provide a rationale for, and consistency of, naming as described in the Domain Name Principles and the Naming Standards. These Guidelines also provide information on the processes for registering and deleting domain names.

5   Scope

These Guidelines apply to all Tasmanian Government websites using the tas.gov.au domain.

6   Domain Name Management

6.1 Domain Name Principles

6.1.1   Consider how best to direct users to your particular type of information or service

There are several ways to direct users to your information or service, including:

- registering a new domain name (requires approval of Director - Communications Policy)
- creating a sub domain within an existing domain name
- creating a new directory within an existing domain name

Consider which of these options suits your requirements, and **seek the advice of your Agency's Communication Manager before creating a new domain name.**

You may prefer to register a separate domain name, eg: www.seniors.tas.gov.au , if:

- your information or service has a particularly high profile (eg: Seniors Card)
- there is a sufficiently distinct and stand-alone organisational unit or concept that requires separate branding, eg www.seniors.tas.gov.au
- there is a need to present your information or service independently of a parent agency/organisation or topic
- a separate domain name will make your information or service significantly easier for users to locate
- the volume of information for the website is of an appropriate quantity to require a separate domain name
- your information or service will have a lifespan of more than twelve months. Domain names associated with projects, business units, programs, or organisations with a lifespan of less than twelve months, should only be approved where a need for an Internet presence and identity distinct from the main agency/organisation website can be rigorously demonstrated.

A directory address should be used eg www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/gis/, within an existing domain name, if:

- your information or service is short term, eg a six-month project
- your target audience relate the subject matter to agency business (or can be educated to)
- your target audience is largely internal to government, or inter-governmental (please seek advice from your Agency Communications Manager)
- you would like to avoid the administrative burden of managing a separate domain name
- the information or service should be presented within the context of an agency/organisation. In most cases, agency information (from sections and programs that are direct services of the agency) will be published to the respective agency tas.gov.au domain directory structure.

It is noted, however, that due to hosting arrangements it may not be possible to have a directory structure for all agency/organisation websites. You will need to check with the web manager of the domain name if this is possible for your preferred domain. The directory structure can usually only be set up if the online information or service is located on the same web server.

You may prefer to use a sub domain, eg www.startingschool.education.tas.gov.au/, within an existing domain name if:

- your information or service is short term, eg a six-month project
- you would like to avoid the administrative burden of managing a separate domain name

- it is important to present your information or service within the context of a topic or "brand" name.

In general, agencies/organisations – after consultation with Agency Communication Managers - will nominate the form of the URL that will be used, and will be responsible for ensuring consistency across all publications.

6.1.2 Consider how best to present your information or service in a domain name format

Domain names are intended to be easy to memorise addresses that direct to online information or services.

In order to translate the name of an agency/organisation, project, service or function into the domain name format, preference should always be given to generic names of functions, eg police, treasury etc. However for multifunctional Agencies abbreviations, acronyms or keywords may be required.

An agency domain name should be the commonly accepted name or, in the case of an agency with a long name, the commonly accepted acronym for that agency. It is recognised that, although department names change, eg from the Department of Community and Health Services (dchs) to the Department of Health and Human Services (dhhs), abbreviations of the previous name may still be required.

A domain name not consisting of an agency/organisation name should describe the function performed by the project or activity.

There is also a requirement for whole-of-government domain names, eg www.publicinfo.tas.gov.au/.

In short domain names must be:

- logical and intuitive
- short and simple
- easy to say
- easy to memorise
- easy to type and spell
- only in lowercase
- avoid duplicate letters between words
- stable, ie no need to change if the structure of the Agency/organisation changes.

Website owners may make their own decisions about naming files and folders within the allocated URL.

Where appropriate, the path to a file following the web address should be service/program based, eg

- www.education.tas.gov.au/oer/ - represents the home page for the Office for Educational Review. This URL is agency-based.

- www.education.tas.gov.au/admin/hr/policies/teacheremployment.htm represents an interface to recruitment and HR issues. This URL is service/program-based.

A group or concept that spans multiple areas, eg *Service* Tasmania, may have duplicate URLs pointing to the same resource, eg www.servicetasmania.tas.gov.au and also www.service.tas.gov.au.

The following are examples of different naming formats.

Example 1: Full name

Sample: www.crownlaw.tas.gov.au

Advantages:
- An exact match to the function
- An exact match to other forms of branding, such as letterhead or signage

Disadvantages:
- Likely to contain several words, and therefore not easily read or typed, and not easily remembered

Recommendation:
- Only use if the full name is short and easily remembered

Example 2: Acronym

Sample: www.tafe.tas.gov.au

Advantages:
- Short
- Easy to read and type

Disadvantages:
- May not be meaningful to users

Recommendation:
- Only use if the acronym is well-known by users, eg www.ato.gov.au

Example 3: Abbreviation

Sample: (www.publicinfo.tas.gov.au)

Advantages:
- Short

Disadvantages:
- May not be meaningful to users

Recommendation:
- Only use if the abbreviation is well-known to users

Example 4: Key word

Sample: www.police.tas.gov.au

Advantages:
- Short
- Easy to read and type
- Usually meaningful to users
- Memorable

Disadvantages:
- In some instances, may be too generic, and mislead users about the type of information being provided. For example, users might assume a domain name such as www.complaints.tas.gov.au links to all information provided by government about that topic, when in fact it only directs to information provided by a single agency/organisation or project.

Recommendation:
- Suitable in most cases, but be careful to make sure the domain name represents the nature of the information being provided

6.1.3   Consider how government changes might impact your domain name

Creating domain names can mean balancing meaningful names with simplicity, while considering the impact of changes to Government.

Try to select domain names that are less likely to be impacted by government changes.

Generally, acronyms and full names that represent a collection of areas, eg infrastructure, energy, resources - www.dier.tas.gov.au, are more likely to be impacted then single keywords, eg www.education.tas.gov.au.

6.1.4   Using non-government domain names

Government agencies should only register outside of the tas.gov.au domain:

- If there is a compelling commercial business reason where organisations may not be readily recognised as government bodies, eg tourism sites - www.discovertasmania.com/
- In order to protect against the use or misuse of government brands in other domain spaces. Note it would only be necessary for high profile or commercially valuable brands.

If agencies do register outside the tas.gov.au domain, they should also register the tas.gov.au equivalent.

6.1.5 Alias domain names

Although it is recognised that alias domain names might need to be registered to allow better discoverability, a single consistent URL should be promoted in consultation the Agency's Communication Manager.

6.2 Naming Standards

The following requirements determine the eligibility of names applied for within the tas.gov.au domain and sub domains.

Business units / projects	Domain names for business units or specific projects should only be used if the requesting authority demonstrates a need for a web presence distinct from that of the parent entity.
Composition of names	All names should contain only lowercase letters (a-z), numbers (0-9) and hyphens (-) or a combination of these. Names should not consist entirely of numbers. Note: URLs with underscores or spaces are difficult to interpret in the printed format, due to the hypertext formatting in MS Word documents.
Common acronyms	Names in the form of acronyms should not be used if they are also the name of a more broadly recognised organisation or company. Names of government departments, agencies or local government entities should be represented by the commonly accepted acronym for that organisation.
Electoral division names	Electoral division names should not be used.
English spelling	Names should conform to correct English spelling, grammar and syntax.
Generic words	Generic words, eg www.complaints.tas.gov.au should not be used, unless either: • Referring to an agency specific function • The site is for whole-of-government use.

Geographical names	Geographical names should not be used unless referring to the name of a government department, agency or local government authority, eg www.brighton.tas.gov.au
Long names	Domain names should be as short as possible and, ideally, less than 20 characters in length before the tas.gov.au part of the domain name.
Naming formats	Domain names for Agency Internet websites should be described in the format: www.agency.tas.gov.au.
Non-agency names	Domain names **not** consisting of an organisational name should describe the function performed by the project or activity.
Offensive names	Names should not contain obscene or offensive language, or otherwise prejudice the credibility or reputation of the tas.gov.au domain.
Other State / Territory names	Names preceding the State's suffix should not refer or appear to refer to a State other than that indicated by the suffix, eg tas.nsw.gov.au.
Personal names	Personal names should not be used.
Political statements	Name that express a value judgement, political statement or bear any correlation to a registered Australian political party should not be used.
Registered trademarks	Registered trademarks or copyrighted text should not be used unless registered to the applying agency.
TAS identifier	Names preceding the State suffix should not contain either the words 'Tasmania' or the State suffix, eg www.ecommercetas.tas.gov.au.

6.3 Registration of Domain Names

TMD Networking Tasmania is responsible for allocating tas.gov.au URLs as well as the technical and operational management of the URLs within the tas.gov.au domain space. The Director - Communications Policy is responsible for approving tas.gov.au URLs.

The Networking Tasmania Customer Care Centre on behalf of TMD carries out the registration process.

6.3.1 Who can apply for a tas.gov.au domain?

The requesting organisation must be, or be part of:

- A Tasmanian Government Agency, Statutory Authority, Government Business Enterprise, State Owned Company or Local Government Authority as defined by an Act of Parliament or government regulation;

An applicant seeking to register a tas.gov.au domain name must be an employee of the requesting organisation, and shall certify that they have delegated authority from the head of the organisation, eg Head of Agency, to register a domain name on behalf of that organisation.

6.3.2 Information to be provided when registering a domain name

The registration form is available at:
http://www.communications.tas.gov.au/toolkit/publishing_print,_multimedia_and_web/internet_and_electronic_communications/domain_name_request_form

Requests for consideration of domain names must be submitted on the approval form, and include:

- organisational information: organisation name and postal address
- name of Agency Communications Manager (to allow verification of their approval of the request)
- nominated domain name
- the purpose of the request and rationale for the selection of domain name if applicable)
- Administrative Contact Information (the person to be contacted regarding content issues): name of contact, position title, phone number and email address
- Technical Contact Information (the person who provides technical support for the website): name of contact, position title, phone number and email address
- Customer Help Desk Contact (the person who responds to IT help desk enquiries): name of contact, position title, phone number and email address
- details of at least two DNS servers (three preferred)
- invoicing details, including a billing address
- Networking Tasmania account number (if an existing account exists)
- Customer Business Contact and officer to receive invoices: name of Authorised Contact Officer/s, position title, postal address
- acknowledgement of acceptance of the set-up fee.

You may be asked for the following information in support of your request:

- purposes for which the domain name will be used

- reason for separate website (ie why it is not able to run as a sub domain of an existing site)
- proof of ongoing nature of an initiative
- relevancy to core operations or major initiatives.

6.3.3 Process for Registering a Domain Name

To register a URL in the tas.gov.au domain, complete the registration form as described above in 6.3.2.

The form will be submitted to the Director – Communications Policy and, if approved, will be forwarded by TMD Networking Tasmania to the Telstra Networking Tasmania Customer Care Centre.

You should allow up to 10 working days for registration from the Telstra Networking Tasmania Customer Care Centre.

NOTE: Charges for registering domain names apply and are the responsibility of the applicant.

6.4 Deleting Domain Names

Prior to retiring or decommissioning domain names, it is recommended you:

- Decide whether the domain name will be maintained and redirected, or whether it should be completely decommissioned
- Consider any other services that may be reliant on the domain name, including email, file transfer protocol (FTP) and sub domain names
- If the domain name is to be decommissioned, the Administration Contact should request the deletion
- If the domain is to be redirected, ensure that redirection instructions are built into the Domain Name System record

7   Implementation

All new URLs should be created according to these Domain Naming Guidelines.

URLs which are no longer used ie: projects or initiatives which no longer exist etc, should be decommissioned.

All existing URLs still being used will remain, with corresponding new URLs created according to these Domain Naming Guidelines, the old existing URLs mapped to the new URLs and the old existing URLs progressively phased out.

8   References

- AGIMO *Domain Provider Discussion Paper: Future development of gov.au domain policy and better practice advice*, 22 September 2004
- AGIMO (Draft) *Better Practice Checklist,* 2004
- AGIMO *Government Domain Name Policies (gov.au)* http://www.domainname.gov.au/guidelines.php
- Northern Territory Government *Web Services Policy and Procedures* http://www.nt.gov.au/dcis/it/it_policies/web_services_policy_v1_0.doc
- Queensland Office of Government ICT *Domain Names, Information Standard 39* http://www.governmentict.qld.gov.au/02_infostand/standards/is39.htm
- *Service* Tasmanian Online *Tasmanian Government Organisations* http://www.service.tas.gov.au/govorgs/.
- Tasmanian Department of Education *Web Naming Scheme*, 29 April 2004
- Tasmanian Department of Justice *Domain Naming Guidelines*, October 2004

9   Contact information

For further information about these Guidelines, please contact:

Director - Communications Policy

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Phone: (03) 62 33 7293

For specific information about URLs and domain names, please contact:

TMD Phone: (03) 62 32 7633