

Federal Web Managers Council

Group Charter

Who We Are

The Federal Web Managers Council (Web Council) was created in January 2004 as a way for federal Web Managers to collaborate across government, and share common challenges, ideas, and best practices. Since then, it has grown into a dynamic and influential community of practice, representing all federal Cabinet agencies, as well as Congressional support agencies, and major independent and sub-agencies that deliver top citizen tasks. Members work in various branches of their respective agencies, including Policy, Communications, Public Affairs, and CIO staffs.

Our Purpose

The purpose of the Federal Web Managers Council is to:

- Create the most citizen-focused and visitor-friendly government websites in the world;
- Address high-level web policy issues that affect all agencies;
- Advise and make recommendations to policy-makers, partners and other stakeholders, to improve government web content and strengthen web content management policies;
- Educate the government web community - give them tools to improve web content today, and prepare them to handle the challenges of tomorrow;
- Promote intra-agency, cross-agency and inter-governmental collaboration;
- Provide a way for government Web Managers to share skills, knowledge, best practices, ideas, and solutions;
- Communicate our successes (and challenges) to stakeholders, to bring greater recognition and support for our work and the government web as a whole; and
- Leverage the size and influence of our community to get things done across government that would be harder to do individually.

Our Goals

Our long-term goals are:

- 1) Help the public quickly and easily accomplish their most critical tasks online;
- 2) Improve U.S. Government online content so it's on par with the best content in the world; and
- 3) Support and expand our dynamic community of government Web Managers from across the country.

What We Do

To accomplish these goals, we:

- Manage Webcontent.gov, a repository of federal web requirements and best practices;
- Organize training and workshops through Web Manager University;
- Manage a networking website for community members to connect and collaborate;
- Maintain email listservs for members to communicate with each other;
- Coordinate the work of various Sub-Councils to provide guidance to the government web community around high-level web policy issues;
- Sponsor and organize an annual training conference for government Web Managers;
- Provide oversight and guidance to a large community of federal, state and local government web content professionals;

- Coordinate regular conference calls to discuss common challenges, exchange ideas, share best practices from other agencies, and hear from web experts;
- Host New Media Talks with industry thought leaders, to keep our community informed of the latest tools and technologies;
- Help agencies identify and improve completion rates of customer top tasks, and leverage USA.gov to make those tasks easier to find online;
- Monitor innovative policies and practices used by other governments, look for opportunities for replication and coordination;
- Sponsor and partner with similar communities of interest such as plain language, K-12, regional groups, or CSLIC; and
- Conduct the Web Managers Best Practice Peer Awards to showcase best-in-class government websites.

Organization

The Federal Web Managers Council has a Sponsor, two Co-Chairs, and limited membership. It oversees the work of several Sub-Councils, as well as the larger government web community known as the Forum. At least two Council members must work outside of the Washington DC area, to inform decisions with a perspective from other parts of the country. The Web Council is comprised of: leading Web Managers at each Cabinet agency and at major independent and sub-agencies that deliver top citizen tasks; New Media Directors; and Sub-Council Co-Chairs.

- **Leadership:** The Web Council is sponsored by GSA's Office of Citizen Services, because of its role in managing USA.gov, the official portal for all federal, state, and local government information on the Web. The Council is managed by two Co-Chairs, one of whom leads GSA's Government Web Best Practices Team.
- **Sub-Councils** meet regularly (usually once a month) to develop and share best practices and topic-specific resources with the larger community. Sub-Councils are created by the Web Council Co-Chairs, who also select the initial Sub-Council Co-Chairs. As of the date of this document, the current Sub-Councils are:
 - Accessibility/Section 508 Compliance
 - Governance and Operations
 - Metrics/Analytics
 - Multilingual Websites
 - Search/SEO
 - Social Media
 - Technology and Innovation
 - Training and Development
 - User Experience/Usability
- **The Forum** is a vibrant community of over 1,600 web content professionals from federal, state, local and tribal U.S. Government agencies. Forum members communicate and collaborate via a listserv and networking website, forum.webcontent.gov. To join the Forum listserv:

Members must be employees of a federal, state, local or tribal U.S. Government agency. Most members are people who are responsible for creating and managing government online content, but any government employee who has a strong interest in improving the content of U.S. government websites is welcome to join. Since the purpose of this group is to exchange ideas among people who are in these roles, contractors or other private individuals are not admitted on the Forum listserv.

Relationships

The Federal Web Managers Council depends on regular collaboration with members and stakeholders to ensure that our work products align with the goals of the larger web community. Stakeholders include: White House Office of New Media; CIO Council and agency CIOs; Public Affairs Offices; General Counsels; GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy; OMB; the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C); the Privacy Committee, and others.

Funding

The Federal Web Managers Council Co-Chairs submit to the Director of USA.gov an annual request for funding to cover the Council's activities, which include maintaining Webcontent.gov and the Forum networking site forum.webcontent.gov, Web Manager University, and other activities related to the management and oversight of the U.S. Government web community.

Rules of Operation

These rules govern day-to-day Web Council operations:

- **Philosophy** – “All for one, one for all”
- **Membership** – Membership is by invitation only, and members are chosen by the Council's Executive Sponsor (Director of USA.gov) and the Web Council Co-Chairs.
- **Meetings** – The Web Council must meet at least once each month, to ensure that issues are dealt with quickly, but no more than once per week. Most meetings are conducted by conference call.
- **Collaboration** – The Web Council is responsible for ensuring that its decisions and recommendations are based primarily on input from federal web content managers, as well as other staff who support federal websites, industry thought leaders, expert advisors, other stakeholders, and citizens, as appropriate.
- **Responsibilities**
 - Web Managers and New Media Directors serve as liaisons from the Web Council to their respective agencies. They are responsible for regularly attending Council meetings, participating in and informing their agencies of Council activities, and soliciting input from their agencies as needed. They also advocate within their agencies for support of agency web efforts, work together on web policy issues, and collaborate with others on the Web Council to further government-wide web initiatives.
 - Sub-Council Chairs serve as liaisons from the Web Council to their Sub-Council, and are responsible for informing Sub-Council members of Council activities, as appropriate, and soliciting input from Sub-Council members as needed.
- **Backups** – Web Managers and New Media Directors should designate backups both for Council representation, and for emergencies. This may be the same person, or members may appoint one “policy” contact and up to two “emergency” contacts. Agency New Media Directors may act as sole representative for their agency on the Council if the lead Web Manager position at the agency is vacant. Each Sub-Council should have two Co-Chairs, who provide backup for each other at Sub-Council meetings, and when representing their group on the Council.
- **Participation** – To ensure agencies have adequate representation on the Web Council, the Co-Chairs may replace members who are inactive (for example, members who miss several meetings).
- **Voting**
 - Each Agency has an equal voice, and each Agency is allowed one vote per issue.
 - All recommendations, positions, and decisions of the Web Council must be approved by the Group as a whole, either through consensus or by majority vote.

- Sub-Council Chairs who are not also the lead Web Manager for their agency are generally considered non-voting members, but are expected to advise Web Council members on matters related to their areas of expertise.
- **Confidentiality** – Members must keep deliberations confidential until the Co-Chairs decide to share information outside the Web Council.
- **Press relations** – Any Council members who are cleared by their agency may speak to the press on behalf of the Web Council and the Forum, but they should inform the Council Co-Chairs before giving any interviews.

Duties of Co-Chairs

To support all activities of the Council and the Forum, the Web Council Co-Chairs:

- Send regular updates to Forum members to communicate accomplishments and activities – to keep them informed and motivated, and to promote sharing of best practices;
- Manage the Forum and Council ListServes;
- Coordinate Web Council meetings and monthly Forum training conference calls;
- Oversee Webcontent.gov, the Forum networking site, Web Manager University, and all other training, communication and outreach initiatives;
- Guide the work of the Sub-Councils to ensure they contribute to the larger goals of the Council, and the government web community; and
- Represent the Web Council in the larger web community.

The Co-Chairs may invite members of the Forum or others with specialized knowledge and experience to be involved in specific tasks and activities.

Sub-Councils

These communities of interest advise the Web Council and help our community develop best practices and recommend policies to improve government websites.

- **Composition and Duties**
 - Sub-Councils have two Co-Chairs, who are either appointed by the Web Council Co-Chairs or voted in by Sub-Council members.
 - Sub-Councils are primarily comprised of members of the Web Managers Forum. Requests to add non-Forum members will be considered by the Web Council Co-Chairs.
 - Sub-Council Co-Chair responsibilities include:
 - Coordinate meetings and work projects;
 - Provide regular updates and content reviews for webcontent.gov;
 - Communicate accomplishments to Council and Forum members;
 - Collaborate with other Sub-Councils on overlapping areas of interest/expertise.
 - To join, contact the Sub-Council point-of-contact listed on Webcontent.gov.
- **Rules of Operation**
 - All members are expected to contribute to the Group's activities and deliberations. Co-Chairs determine the specific contribution requirements for membership.
 - The Sub-Council Co-Chairs may replace members who are inactive (for example, members who miss several meetings).
 - The Sub-Council Co-Chairs will establish a regular meeting schedule, giving members ample time to plan.

- The Sub-Council Co-Chairs will regularly document group activities and accomplishments (via meeting minutes, wikis, blogs, etc.).
- **Mission Statements**
 - The **Accessibility/Section 508** Sub-Council helps agencies deliver accessible web content in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
 - The **Governance and Operations** Sub-Council helps agencies improve internal web governance and website management, and leverage the web to achieve agency mission and goals.
 - The **Metrics/Analytics** Sub-Council helps government Web Managers define and measure the success of their websites through analysis of site visitor behavior, outcomes, and experience data.
 - The **Multilingual Websites** Sub-Council develops best practices to help agencies manage non-English web content.
 - The **Search/SEO** Sub-Council develops best practices to help agencies improve search results and content findability.
 - The **Social Media** Sub-Council is a group of government web managers at the federal, state, and local levels bringing together social media best practices and other resources for the benefit of government agencies.
 - The **Technology and Innovation** Sub-Council is a group of government web managers at the federal, state, and local levels bringing together best practices and other resources for solving common technical challenges and sharing information on new and upcoming technologies of relevance to the Web Manager community.
 - The **Training and Development** Sub-Council coordinates and provides training to help government Web Managers improve government websites.
 - The **User Experience/Usability** Sub-Council works to enhance the public's trust in government websites by proposing and promoting actions to make all government websites useful, accessible, informative, authoritative, and objective.