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# 1.0 Technical Standards

Technical standards are meant to include ways that web technologies are used to display and relate information. This includes how to make the content accessible and usable, and best practices for code and markup to utilize the abilities of modern browsing devices while still accommodating older web browsers. It also includes methods of aggregating content, gathering analytics, and policies on privacy and security.

Technical standards and guidelines are set by the georgia.gov Interactive Team, with cooperation and participation from the Georgia Web Strategy Working Group. Level 1 Standards are enforceable by the georgia.gov Interactive Team and the Governor's Office.

## 1.1 Georgia.Gov Domain Name Standards

**POC for Changes:** Georgia.gov Interactive

**Synopsis:** Domain naming convention and Federal Dot-Gov Final Rule.

### 1.1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the GTA Portal Domain Naming Standard is to create a consistent, predictable way to assign domain names for state agency websites and email addresses. Having a managed domain name such as georgia.gov unifies all state entities under one naming convention, establishes consistency and assures citizens that they are accessing an official government site.

### 1.1.2 SCOPE

All State of Georgia governmental entities and programs, including those governmental entities and programs of political subdivisions of the State of Georgia that request a georgia.gov or ga.gov domain name space for web or email usage.

Domain names ending in **state.ga.us** will no longer be issued, but the maintenance of existing names will be governed by the rules and conventions set forth in Federal RFC 1480.

### 1.1.3 STANDARD

**Ownership:** As the trustee and provider of the State of Georgia's web presence, the Georgia Technology Authority will manage and authorize the assignment of third-level domain names under the [georgia.gov](https://www.georgia.gov) [1] and ga.gov second-level domains. Entities assigned a third-level domain name will manage the use of paths located within their sub-domains.

**Eligibility:** Eligibility for these domain names is limited to qualified State of Georgia (including its political subdivisions) government organizations and programs.

**IP Address:** All third-level domain names must point to a uniquely named server that has a direct address and a unique IP address.

## Secure Socket Layer Certificates

Organizations are responsible for purchasing and managing Secure Socket Layer Certificates. GTA will authorize use of the [georgia.gov](http://georgia.gov) [1] and [ga.gov](http://ga.gov) [2] domains for certificate providers.

## Domain Name Registration Process

Requests for domains should be directed to Georgia.gov Interactive at [creative@gtga.gov](mailto:creative@gtga.gov) [3]. Entities wishing to reserve a name for future or internal use (as opposed to an immediate need) may register as well.

The requestor must include the proposed domain name and the purpose of the website in which the domain name will be used. If approved by Georgia.gov Interactive, the request will be submitted to AT&T via OrderNow for creation.

*\* Note:* The person applying for the domain name should be authorized to speak for the entire organization in this matter. The person must obtain the agreement of all interested parties within the organization prior to submission. GTA may require confirmation of a registration request from the Agency Head or highest ranking IT official.

## Email Address Use

Eligible entities may request ga.gov email addresses (ex. @yourorg.ga.gov) through the same process and may use them prior to the establishment of a georgia.gov website. The email address should use the same naming convention as the organization's third-level domain name character string (e.g. [jdoe@gtga.gov](mailto:jdoe@gtga.gov) [4]).

## Domain Name Selection

The requesting entity must ensure that it has the right to use the name it is requesting. GTA will check its DNS records and databases, and GTA will not issue a georgia.gov domain name to the organization that is in conflict with an officially recognized title (including the acronym) of another georgia.gov state government organization without further clarification.

The following additional general rules apply:

- Obscene names are not permitted.
- Permissible characters are lowercase letters and digits. No hyphens will be used.
- The word "georgia" cannot be in the third level domain name, since georgia is already in the second level domain.
- The agency acronym should suffice for most agency websites, as determined by the Office of Planning and Budget.
- Websites for statewide programs and initiatives may use either acronyms or a word that describes what the program is for or what it benefits - e.g., children.georgia.gov.

## Domain Name Disputes

Georgia.gov Interactive will decide on all matters related to registration and subsequent use of an assigned georgia.gov domain name.

Disputed decisions can be appealed to the State CIO and Executive Director (or his/her designee). The GTA Executive Director is the final authority on all matters relating to registration and subsequent use of georgia.gov domain names.

## Exemptions

Any state entity requesting a domain name that does not meet the general rules outlined in Section 3.7, Domain Name Selection, must submit an exemption request outlining the reason behind the exemption. GTA will work with entities requesting domain name exemptions from the guidelines to understand if the reasons for the exemption outweigh the benefits of consistency and predictability gained from adherence to the guidelines.

## Second Level .gov Domains

As a rule, second level domains (xxx.gov) are not allowed. Any exceptions must be submitted to GTA's Chief Technology Officer along with justification for the exception. Any new .gov domain requests must be approved by the state CIO.

## Fourth-Level Domains (Ex: four.three.two.gov)

Fourth-level domain names are difficult to remember and are discouraged from use. The preferred option is to use a directory name that appears after the domain name - e.g., agency.georgia.gov/division.

# 1.2 Website Accessibility Standards

**PSG Number:** SA-14-001

**Topical Area:** Web Design and Development

**Issue Date:** 11/1/2013

**Effective Date:** 11/1/2013

**Document Type:** Standard; Published (approved by Web Standards Group and GTA)

**POC for Changes:** Georgia.gov Interactive

**Synopsis:** Accessibility guidelines for State of Georgia web sites.

## 1.2.1 Purpose

All people should be able to enter your Web site and use its information. No physical or technological challenges should prevent their doing so. Numerous efforts are underway in government to ensure that all users have equal access to the Web. These web accessibility standards are intended to establish a baseline for coding and writing to ensure that all constituents have access to the information they need.

## 1.2.2 Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Priorities.

**All websites owned and managed by state agencies SHALL meet at least the minimum standards for accessibility as defined by the W3C guidelines.** (See [w3.org/WAI](http://w3.org/WAI) [5] for more information.) The W3C establishes conventions, standards and best practices that designers can use to ensure that their Web sites meet the mandate for international accessibility. You can test the validity of your site using a variety of software and online tools. A list is available at [w3.org/WAI/eval](http://w3.org/WAI/eval) [6].

### Alternates and fallbacks.

You shall provide alternates, or fallbacks, for any information that is presented in any medium besides plain text. Some examples of alternates for common elements include:

- **Images** need a text description in the image tag  
<img src=?image.jpg? alt=?Description of my image?>

- **Flash** - use the Accessibility tools built into Flash to make text accessible, and provide text descriptions for non-text elements.
- **Video** - provide a transcript of the audio, as well as a description of visual content (if applicable) of the video.

HTML5 example:

```
<video src=?movie.ogg?>
<a href=?movie.txt?>get the transcript</a>
</video>
```

- **Audio** - provide a transcript. HTML5 example:

```
<audio src=?speech.mp3?>
<a href=?movie.txt?>get the transcript of this speech</a>
</audio>
```

### Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) based on accessibility guidelines.

Use CSS to style your pages. Not only does CSS make web development easier, but it also helps display pages properly for people with disabilities and allows those visitors to customize pages to meet their accessibility requirements. Do not use tables to control page layout; use CSS to control layout.

### Add ?Skip To? navigation so users can skip repetitive navigation or text.

A "Skip to Content" or "Skip Navigation" link at the top of the page allows users with screen readers or text-based browsers to skip to specific sections of a Web page.

### Provide and test for ?graceful degradation.?

Designers should consider the current hardware, software and Internet connection that the average Web site reader will be using. At a minimum, follow these guidelines:

- **Turn off graphics** in your Web browser and view the pages to ensure that they can still be easily read and used.
- **Design your Web site for all major browsers.** If possible, use analytics tools to determine the browser versions used by 85-90% of your users, and optimize your site for those browsers. While your site may not need to look exactly the same in the lesser used browsers, be sure that any key content and all navigation still functions in the non-supported web browsers.
- **Try to avoid using browser plug-ins**, or position the material that depends on them deeper within your site. Use of Flash and other third-party plugins (such as Java, Shockwave, Quicktime) is discouraged. At minimum, key parts of your web page should not require elements such as Flash or Javascript to convey the information. For example, the navigation should not be built in Flash, nor should the navigation rely on Javascript in order to function. (See [w3.org/WAI](http://w3.org/WAI) [5] for more information.)

These guidelines are also reflected in more detail in the W3C's Accessibility Guidelines, and are noted as Priority 1 checkpoints from the W3C. For more details view the [W3C Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) [7].

### 1.2.3 Section 508 Compliance

Section 508 Compliance is required for all federal government websites. Based on the federal mandate, they stand out

as guidelines that **all State of Georgia websites** should follow in order to provide websites that are accessible. Below are the relevant [Section 508 guidelines](#) [8] for Internet sites and applications that the Georgia.gov portal follows.

- Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).
- Design web pages so that all information conveyed with color can also be understood without color. (e.g. Don't just highlight errors with red text; also note it with a symbol or Error text)
- Organize documents so they are readable without an associated style sheet.
- Provide additional text links for any item that is linked via an image map.
- Identify row and column headers in data tables.
- Use markup to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
- If an iframe is required for functionality, it shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
- Do not include any text or graphic elements that flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz (e.g. blinking text or flashing graphics).
- When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
- Online forms shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
- Use a skip-to content link at the top of a page that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
- When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

#### 1.2.4 Resources

- [NonVisual Desktop Access \(NVDA\)](#) [9]- Screen Reader for Windows only
- [Fangs Screen Reader Emulator](#) [10]- Firefox extension Screen Reader
- [Color Contrast Analyzer](#) [11]

#### 1.2.5 References

- [W3C Accessibility Guidelines](#) [5]
- [Accessibility Evaluation Tools](#) [6]
- [W3C Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) [7]
- [Section 508 Federal Accessibility Compliance](#) [8]

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Source URL: <http://portal.georgia.gov/interactive/web-standards/10-technical-standards>