Web Leads Monthly Meeting

August 21, 2024

Agenda

- Welcome and Intros
- Roadmap and Phase 1 updates
- Maryland Plain Language Initiative
- Accessibility Updates
- Maryland.gov, Maryland State Archives, and Archive-It
- Questions & Answers

Welcome and Intros

Presenter Intros

MARYLAND DIGITAL SERVICE (MDDS)

Marcy Jacobs
Deputy Secretary
Chief Digital Experience Officer

Andrew Drummond
Director, Office of Accessibility

Bao-Tran Nguyen
User Experience Designer

Jeffrey Pass
Sr Director, Web Experience

MDDS (CONTINUED)

Lilly Madigan
Sr Director, User Experience &
Service Design

Srinivas Bandreddi
Acting Director, Web Services

GUEST PRESENTERS

Christopher Schini
Appraisal Archivist & Criminal
Research Supervisor
MSA Appraisal & Description

ALL ATTENDEES

Please introduce yourself:
Please share your name, agency, role
and favorite show or book in the
meeting chat

Roadmap & Phase 1 Updates

Web Experience Phases

Phase 1 (April 2024 - Dec 2024)	Phase 2 (Jan 2025 - Dec 2025)	Phase 3 (Jan 2026 - >)

Small: FAMLI, Governor, Gov office for Children
Medium: DoIT, DVMF, OAG

New agency template, utility banner, footer

Measurement pilot - analytics.maryland.gov

CMS platform research

5-8 Additional (medium) sites

Begin Maryland.gov research/design - homepage, top tasks landing pages

CMS roadmap, budget, pilots

Maryland.gov

Agency sites

Full CMS implementation

Maryland.gov Utility Banner & Footer

DoIT hosted sites (sites using the current template):

- Utility Banner - Complete
- Footer - Sites in TEST environment are being updated; agency POC's are being notified for review. Updates in PROD environment are on track, complete by first week of September
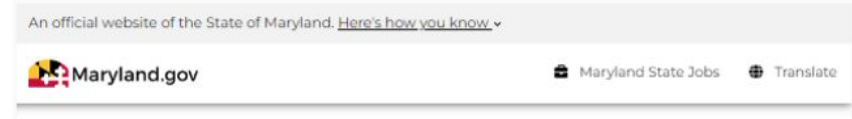
Non-DoIT hosted sites (and sites not using the current template):

- Requires a service desk ticket (service.desk@maryland.gov) to be updated with new utility banner/footer

Maryland.gov Measurement Pilot

Details on the Measurement Pilot

analytics.maryland.gov*

- Phase 1
  - Publicly available
  - Web traffic analytics
- Phase 2
  - Site Performance Scores
    - Accessibility
    - Best Practices
    - Plain language
    - SEO

*In development

Customer experience measurement

- Small pilots to evaluate two customer experience measurement platforms
- Customer Feedback Scores on ~50 sites
  - Net promoter score (NPS)
  - Customer satisfaction (CSAT)
  - Customer effort score (CES)
  - Customer sentiment
- 2-4 'deep dives' into user journeys

Maryland Plain Language Executive Order

What is Plain Language?

"**Plain language** (also called plain writing or plain English) is communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. The Plain Writing Act of 2010 defines plain language as:

> Writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience.

Language that is plain to one set of readers may not be plain to others. Material is in plain language if your audience can:

- Find what they need
- Understand what they find the first time they read or hear it
- Use what they find to meet their needs"

Source: plainlanguage.gov

Maryland Plain Language Executive Order

"The State of Maryland is committed to creating an accessible, inclusive government that all Marylanders can easily access and to removing barriers that prevent engagement with government and access to public services"

- [Maryland Plain Language Initiative](#)

"Our administration's Plain Language Initiative will help ensure that every piece of writing that comes out of our administration – in print and online – is simple, accessible, and easy to read. This is what it looks like to leave no one behind."

- Governor Wes Moore ([press release](#))

The Maryland Plain Language Initiative, Executive Order 01.01.2024.25. Signed July 23rd, 2024.

Maryland Plain Language Initiative

The Maryland Plain Language Initiative will include:

- An assessment of the State's capacity, and resources to implement plain language standards

- The creation of the Maryland Plain Language Plan to enhance the accessibility of all written communication produced by State agencies

The Maryland Digital Service will:

- Partner with the Maryland Department of Disabilities and the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives for content reviews and testing with disabled individuals

- Report to the Governor annually by December 31 on the State's progress toward achieving the goals of the Maryland Plain Language Initiative

Maryland Plain Language Initiative Will Include

- **Focused plain language efforts as part of any website design or redesign effort.**

- Plain language evaluations during discovery for any public facing application or system.

- Recommendations to build capacity, develop resources, provide training, conduct pilots.

- Identification of plain language standards.

- Consideration of the following in development:

  - Developing a style guide, templates, resources and training for all State agencies.

  - Conducting pilot projects on written documents targeted at the public and collecting feedback.

  - Identifying available resources, including contracted services, to carry out the Plan.

Plain Language Examples

Plain Language.gov (federal) provides many before and after examples illustrating how plain language can improve content. Following are a few examples:

Application Due Date
Be succinct and to the point.

✗ **Before**

The application must be completed by the applicant and received by the financial office by June 1st.

✓ **After**

We must receive your application by June 1st.

Plain Language Examples

Before/after examples continued:

Protect Yourself from Natural Disasters

Use lists to break up dense content or separate out steps.

× **Before**

Mitigation is the cornerstone of emergency management. It's the ongoing effort to lessen the impact disasters have on people's lives and property through damage prevention and flood insurance. Through measures such as, building safely within the floodplain or removing homes altogether; engineering buildings and infrastructures to withstand earthquakes: and creating and enforcing effective building codes to protect property from floods, hurricanes and other natural hazards, the impact on lives and communities is lessened.

✓ **After**

Protect your community from natural disasters!

○ Build safely in the flood zone, or remove buildings altogether

○ Engineer buildings and infrastructure to withstand earthquakes

○ Create and enforce effective building codes

Plain Language Examples

Before/after examples continued:

Lead in Water

Plain Language isn't always shorter; breaking up and presenting information in lists can make the content longer.

✗ **Before**

Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

✓ **After**

Lead in drinking water can make you sick. Here are some possible health effects of high lead levels in your drinking water:

Children:

- Delayed growth
- Learning disabilities
- Short attention span

Adults:

- Kidney problems
- High blood pressure

Accessibility Updates

* "a11y" is an abbreviation for "accessibility"

ADA Title II

On April 24, 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) released its final rule on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Title II requires state and local governments to make sure that their services, programs, and activities are accessible to people with disabilities
- All state and local government websites and mobile applications must conform to WCAG 2.1, Level AA standards by April 24, 2026 (for entities of >50,000 population)

What is WCAG?

- WCAG also known as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which are internationally recognized technical standards that help make websites, apps and other digital assets more accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility Testing Strategy

- DoIT has recently purchased an automated testing tool that will allow us to scan/test millions of pages

- These scans will provide us with actionable data where we can help determine agency needs
  - Consulting
  - Targeted manual testing
  - No action/monitor

- An accessibility consult will be set up as we roll this tool out statewide with agency staff

Example 1: Web App (Before)

- A blind constituent wanted to conduct a transaction with an agency but was unable to complete it independently even with their assistive technology. The constituent filed an informal complaint.

- Our team connected with the agency and met with the constituent to provide excellent customer service
    - Gather information on the problem
    - Mitigate risk

Example 1: Web App (After)

- MDDS a11y team manually tested the web application
  - Constituent unable to navigate several form field controls (focus & controls)
  - Unlabelled elements
- Feedback and consultation were provided to the vendor
- The vendor remediated the findings
- MDDS will validate the changes
- Constituent follow up

Example 2: Website (Before)

- Organically MDDS learned of a new website created by an external vendor for an independent agency

- To support the agency, we conducted some very cursory testing and noted a significant number of a11y issues for the newly created site

- MDDS a11y team conducted additional targeted manual testing of the website

  - Inaccessible carousel controls render the carousel useless to blind and low vision Marylanders

  - Non-text elements without an accessible name prevents blind and low vision from being able to access agency content

  - Unlabeled controls (buttons) leave blind and low vision end users lost not able to understand the button's purpose

Example 2: Website (After)

- Feedback was provided to the agency
- Consultation provided to the external vendor to discuss findings
- Vendor (partially) remediated issues
  - Remediation activity is potentially a billable activity
- MDDS validated changes and found many unaddressed critical accessibility issues
- Vendor continues remediation efforts
- MDDS will complete additional validation testing
  - Could be multiple rounds of additional validation testing depending on vendor's ability to successfully remediate the web components

PROPOSED: Procurement Updates

- IT Supplemental
  - Moving up to WCAG 2.1 Success Criteria
  - VPAT required at the time of proposal submission - failure to comply could result in not deemed reasonably susceptible to award
  - Vendor needs to furnish a comprehensive accessibility audit to DoIT prior to going into production for DoIT sign-off
  - Testing and remediation plans required for all non-compliant solutions
  - Follow up validation testing by vendor for known accessibility issues identified
  - Use of out-of-the-box or 3rd party source code must be WCAG 2.1 compliant
  - Vendor digital accessibility compliance form completed by vendor
  - Ten percent of all invoiced amounts shall be held back from each payment - released upon DoIT approval

Maryland.gov, Maryland State Archives, and Archive-It

Web Archiving Government Websites

Maryland State Archives

- Repository of all government records of permanent value
- Public Records are anything created or received in the course of public business
  - Including
    - Emails, paper files, databases, photographs, etc.
  - Excluding
    - Non-Records: Material that does not fit the definition of records (i.e. reference material, access copies)

Websites

- Websites typically contain either:
  - Public records or Non-records
    - If a record is maintained separately from the website, the copy on the website and possibly the website itself would be a copy for reference purposes
    - If a record is only available on the website, it may be a public record
- Archives is interested in public records with permanent value
  - Value is determined by an agency's records manager in conjunction with the Archives
  - Is codified in a Records Retention Schedule

Web Archiving

- Web archiving or crawling is a process used to save websites and their content
- The Archives is using a service called Archive-It, run by the Internet Archive, to perform web crawls and save web content
- This process captures the "look and feel" of a website, as well as the public records hosted there
- Web crawls have difficulty with the Deep Web, or any interface that requires input to display information. (Static HTML is captured, but searchable databases are not)

But Why is the Archives Doing This?

- We believe it is important to document both the public records are available online (pdfs, directories, etc) and how they are made accessible to the public (look and feel).
- Websites are typically seen as a means to convey information, not a record in and of itself
- Due to the blurring of lines between a traditional public record and a means of delivery, we are currently capturing websites as a whole

What can You Do?

- Visit the Archive's website guide.msa.maryland.gov to view Records Retention Schedules
- In Jump to Series By ID box, type SE52
- Scroll down to the Filter options. Choose "Description" in dropdown menu
- Type your agency name and click "Filter Results" button
- Items will be sorted by date; click on the most recent "Links" button
- Click "View as Multipage PDF"
- This Retention Schedule will show the various records your agency has as well as how long they should be kept

Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Contact Us!

Christopher Schini

Appraisal Archivist

christopher.schini@maryland.gov

410-260-6457

OR

Kathryn Baringer

Director, Appraisal and Description

kathryn.baringer@maryland.gov

410-260-6467

Questions / Discussion

Thank You

Next meeting September 26th, 2024 **in person in Crownsville**

    Topics (so far):

- Maryland.gov Measurement Pilot
- Maryland Web Design System (MWDS) update
- Process for site designs & content reviews

Your feedback is welcome: https://forms.gle/SxV9jcmUZz8EbYLq9