



Title <b>World Wide Web Publishing Technology Standard</b>	Effective Date <b>April 18, 1998</b>
Department/Issuing Agency <b>Information Resource Council</b>	Type of Action <b>NEW</b>

A standard is an acknowledged measure of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value. It's a criterion that's commonly used and accepted as an authority and conforms to established, educated usage. But most notably a standard sets forth a degree or level of requirement, excellence, or attainment.

For the purposes of this document, a standard is a generic term for a collection of rules and guidelines. Rules require compliance; guidelines should be followed unless you have a good documented reason not to do so. Rules should be audited; guidelines should be monitored (since if no one is following them, they probably shouldn't exist). Every standard here consists of either a rule or guideline.

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish standards to ensure that King County has a consistent approach for all of its on-line communication, whether for the public or employees. Users who access these sites not only access individual agencies' sites - they tap into the complete, integrated resources of the County's presence on the Web.
  
2. **STANDARDS:**
  - 2.1. **Guideline:** County World Wide Web sites should publish content that will be useful to the intended audience. To define the target audience, try asking the following questions:
    - What information does the target audience want to receive?
    - What information will answer questions or make doing business with the agency easier?
    - Is the content in language a user who is unfamiliar with the agency can understand?
    - Is the content directly related to the agency's programs and services?
    - Has a commitment been made to refresh the site's content on a regular basis to keep users coming back?
    - Does the site include links to other King County or government agencies with complementary information?

Example: Generally the target audience for Internet publication is County citizens.

Reason: Identifying the appropriate audience determines the content and presentation of the information.

2.2. **Rule:** Each County agency will determine who will review and approve content and site design for that agency's World Wide Web site.

Example: Options might be the agency public information officer, the technology manager, or the director.

Reason: It is important that the content of World Wide Web sites be appropriate and reflect the County's and agency's mission.

2.3. **Rule:** Before publishing a new World Wide Web site on the Internet, test it out on the Intranet.

Reason: The site can be reviewed and tested by agency staff and ITS before it is published on the Internet.

2.4. **Rule:** All County World Wide Web sites will include the following:

- the **name and e-mail address** of the person responding to questions about the content of the agency's pages;
- a **standard County comment form** for users to enter comments and their email addresses;
- the **agency's location, phone, fax, and TTY numbers, and hours of business** (parking information, directions, accessibility information can also be useful);
- a set of **standard graphic elements** (provided on the template);
- descriptive **META tags** so the site is indexed by search engines correctly.

Example: See [metrokc.gov.exec](http://metrokc.gov.exec) for an example of a County Internet site that conforms to these standards. ITS can provide a template from which to start.

Reason: A common look and feel for all County WWW sites provides a common corporate identity, simplifies use, and decreases development time.

2.5. **Guideline:** Additional graphics on King County WWW sites should:

- keep the size of additional graphics under 30 KB, although this is not always possible;
- if a large graphic file must be used, consider making it a separate link and indicate the file size and type next to the link or create a thumbnail of the image.

Example: Put "Map (78 KB .gif)" next to a link to a map graphic.

**Reason:** Keep your target audience in mind when you make use of graphics. The home user dialing in at 14.4 or 28.8 kbps might get have difficulty loading a large graphic file.

2.6. **Rule:** Each agency must develop a protocol for quick response to questions or comments about its World Wide Web site.

**Example:** Suggestions are to:

- Designate one or more persons as responsible for responding to WWW email (consider setting up a designated email address that is routed to more than one person).
- Set and publish a response deadline (typically within 24 hours).
- Keep a log of all questions and comments.

**Reason:** Quick, informative responses to questions make the County's World Wide Web site successful and reflect the County's mission to serve the public.

2.7. **Guideline:** Alternatives to publishing large documents on the WWW should be carefully considered.

**Example:** Reports or large documents can be converted to HTML files or to Adobe Acrobat files, or saved in their original formats and made available for download.

**Reason:** Consider the size of the audience the document will appeal to, the conversion time involved, and the nature of the document when making your decision.

2.8. **Rule:** Check any files made available for download for viruses before putting them out on the World Wide Web.

**Reason:** It is possible to spread viruses by putting infected documents out on the World Wide Web.

2.9. **Rule:** All County Internet web sites must be designed for and use technology that allows for the widest feasible readability.

**Example:** Web sites must be fully operational and viewable by anyone using the Netscape or Internet Explorer browsers.

**Reason:** The purpose of the County's web sites is to provide access to County information. They must be accessible by as many people as can be reasonably accomplished.

3. DEFINITIONS:

- 3.1. **Internet:** a global set of interconnected smaller networks that transfer data between computer applications.
- 3.2. **Intranet:** an interconnected network that is separated from the Internet by a firewall, generally internal to an organization
- 3.3. **World Wide Web:** a world wide set of documents, software, and the rules to connect them; one of the services offered across the Internet; often abbreviated as WWW.
- 3.4. **Download:** to copy and retain computer files.
- 3.5. **World Wide Web Server:** a computer that is at least partially dedicated to processing WWW requests; a server that has an Internet application that services HTTP protocol requests.
- 3.6. **META tags:** descriptive phrases about WWW sites that are used by WWW search programs when providing search functionality
- 3.7. **Adobe Acrobat:** a product supported by Adobe that allows print-formatted files to be published on the World Wide Web
- 3.8. **HTML:** a text file containing the content of the WWW page and links to related pages; stands for hypertext markup language
- 3.9. **Firewall:** software or hardware that isolates a corporate intranet from the Internet; typically allowing access to the Internet but not allowing users from the Internet access to the intranet.

4. REFERENCES:

- 4.1. King County World Wide Web Publishing Policy
- 4.2. INF 8-1 (AEP), "Internet and World Wide Web Usage" policy

5. KEY WORDS:

- 5.1. Internet, Intranet, World Wide Web, WWW.

6. APPENDICES:

- 6.1. None.