

# Information Technology Management Handbook Management Plan

## Purpose

This plan is a guide for developing and maintaining the Information Technology Management Handbook (ITMH) program. The focus is on making the information centrally available, accurate, and easy to obtain.

## Audience

The primary audience for the ITMH is Commerce employees who need information on Commerce IT policy, procedures, and guidance. Users include IT professionals, such as chief information officers, IT system managers, or IT security officers, as well as others who may not have specific knowledge of technology or its management. These may include end users of the technology and their supervisors, oversight organizations, legal counsel, etc.

## Dissemination Approach

Consistent with E-Government goals, we publish the ITMH on the Office of the Chief Information Officer's Web site. Users may print the sections of the ITMH they need. There is no intent to publish a printed copy of the ITMH in its entirety.

## General Principles

What are general principles that both authors and intranet developers should follow? Here are some basic concepts.

- **Take a modular approach.** Break subject areas into relatively small and cohesive topics. This will help users select the specific information they desire and make the task of preparing updates less daunting.
- **Make the information complete and comprehensive.** The Web pages will serve as a central source of information on IT policy and guidance. Make them as complete and comprehensive as possible.
- **Keep information current.** The information is only useful if it is accurate and up-to-date.
- **Keep it simple.** The most important goal is to communicate. Make the most important points stand out; stick to the topic.

## Principles for Writing

What principles should authors follow? Here are a few ideas.

- **Use plain, easily understood language.** If your document reads as if a bureaucrat wrote it, start over. Use plain language that communicates. At the same time, assume that the reader is

not familiar with your topic, does not know all the acronyms, is not familiar with specific technology, etc.

- **Use the active voice when possible.** Avoid the passive voice, a common problem in policies.
- **Assume the reader is a professional, but not an expert.** Intelligent and fairly knowledgeable people will read the material presented; address them as such. At the same time, consider testing the document on someone who does not really know the subject to see if it is understandable.
- **Assume the readers are not just people in IT or IT management.** As noted above, the intended audience should include end users of IT resources and those who are not versed in technical or technology management issues.
- **Make it clear whom you are addressing and whether what you are saying is policy or optional guidance.** Develop language that will help improve the clarity between requirements and guidelines. If the point is to be prescriptive (telling someone to do something) make that very clear and do so quickly.
- **Get to the point quickly.** Generally, do not start with a lot of background material, regulations, legislation, etc. Get to the essence of the policy or guidance and then provide links to additional support information.
- **Think thin. Use layers.** This is similar to the point above. Remember that this is a Web site and not a book. Be as brief as possible (thin layers) at high levels and present just essential information. Provide a link to other layers (thick layers) for those who need to or want to know more.
- **Use pre-existing links.** To the extent possible, link to pre-existing pages. Do not reinvent the wheel.
- **Name links.** Do not simply say "click here". Name the links.
- **Develop documents that can be easily created, maintained, and printed.** In general, this means keep it simple.
- **Prepare documents in Word and/or .PDF format.**

## Principles for Web Presentation

What principles should intranet page developers follow? Here are a few ideas. Some, such as providing a site map, will be the responsibility of the Web Master. Others, such as developing pages that have a consistent look and feel, will be the responsibility of multiple parties: authors, editors, and Web master.

- **Use a consistent look and feel.** This applies to the main body of the Handbook, but not necessarily to all links. This will provide visual context, assist in ease of use, and convey the message that the specific information is part of a larger body of information.
- **Develop pages that are visually appealing.** Of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but a few rules of thumb hold. Use colors that improve visibility and add value to the content; use a type face that can be easily read; place the most important information in key locations. Again, keep it simple.

- **Minimize the number of clicks needed to reach a topic.** Maximum three clicks is a good rule of thumb.
- **Develop pages that can be easily created, maintained, and printed.** In general, this means keeping it simple and employing automated tools that can facilitate page development and maintenance.
- **Make the free .PDF reader available.** Link to Adobe for the free .PDF reader where needed.
- **Provide a contact for each topic.** Each topic needs a point of contact, Internet address, date of currency, and date of last review.
- **Provide a return option for each page.** This will allow the user to return readily to a starting point or key junctures, e.g., main topic heading.
- **Ensure that the Web pages meet accessible technology requirements.** Keep accessibility in mind as we develop Web pages to ensure that our information can reach the broadest audience. See attached IEEE tips.
- **Provide a site map.** A site map, organized alphabetically and functionally, will assist users in locating information.
- **Provide the opportunity for users to comment.** User feedback will be an invaluable tool to improve content and presentation.

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (IEEE)  
**QUICK TIPS TO MAKE ACCESSIBLE WEB SITES**

FOR COMPLETE GUIDELINES & CHECKLIST: [WWW.W3.ORG/WAI](http://WWW.W3.ORG/WAI)

- **Images & animations.** Use the alt attribute to describe the function of all visuals.
- **Image maps.** Use client-side **MAP** and text for hotspots.
- **Multimedia.** Provide captioning and transcripts of audio, descriptions of video, and accessible versions in case inaccessible formats are used.
- **Hypertext links.** Use text that makes sense when read out of context. For instance, do not use "click here" [without context].
- **Page organization.** Use headings, list, and consistent structure.
- **Graphs & charts.** Summarize or use the **longdesc** attribute.
- **Scripts, applets, & plug-ins.** Provide alternative content in case active features are inaccessible or unsupported.
- **Frames.** Label with the **title** or **name** attribute.
- **Tables.** Make line by line reading sensible. Summarize. Avoid using tables for column layout.

- **Check your work.** Validate the **HTML**. Use evaluation tools and a text-only browser to verify accessibility.