

New Zealand Government Data Management Policies

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Introduction

Preface

The need for a government-wide set of policies and standards on data management is evident from a number of key observations about the nature of current practice, and how this has evolved since the 1980s. It is also based on the assumption that Crown data and document stores are of great value and need to be preserved for both operational and policy development purposes.

Before the widespread use of computer workstations, the bulk of Crown information assets were managed through paper document filing systems and a few large central databases. Filing systems had developed over many years, were mostly well organised, and had to be understood by employees for them to function. Data held in the central systems was protected by tight security and the discipline required to run a big data centre.

Since the advent of the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986 and the State Sector Act 1988, responsibility for Crown information assets has been devolved within the public service and to state, public and privately owned agencies. In addition, new technologies and media for creating and managing information have led to the breakdown of paper based information management structures. Large central computer systems have been split up with every agency now using its own applications and often running its own machines and network. Most workers in most government agencies can no longer function without a personal computer workstation connected to the agency network.

Crown data and document assets are now managed under a wide variety of regimes with little central guidance or control. The day-to-day management of electronic data and document resources is often in the hands of external commercial service providers. Unless business managers have a clear understanding of where responsibilities lie, and the limitations of technology, the assets are placed at high risk. These policies and standards are intended to address this risk.

This vision for electronic government is that agencies and the public will be able to do business through a standard electronic environment, that promotes public participation and trust. Secure and reliable electronic transactions operating with reliable data are a fundamental part of that environment. Without transparent, auditable policies, standards and procedures for data management, there is little chance that agencies will trust each other's data, let alone that the public will have confidence in such systems.

There are three policy sections which aim to cover all the essential business aspects of data management and allow available technology to be applied constructively.

Control policies and standards cover ownership, security, custodianship and related aspects. A structure for government-wide policy, standards and monitoring through the function of Crown Data Steward is described.

Definition policies and standards concentrate on identifying and describing data and document assets in a consistent way across government agencies. The objective is to improve the efficiency of data and document exchange, and hence information flow, both within and between agencies, and between agencies and the public.

Integrity policies and standards are aimed at the quality and reliability of data and document assets, and hence the reliability of any information derived from them. They will enable agencies to identify their prime data sources and ensure that content can be retrieved, audited, interchanged and retained to both legislative and business requirements.

These policies and standards are intended to assist agency chief executives and anyone delegated custodial responsibilities for Crown owned data or document assets. They are mandatory for public service departments and contracted agencies handling Crown data and document assets. They are optional but highly desirable for State Owned Enterprises and other organisations funded by the Crown, particularly where information needs to be exchanged.

The Policies and standards were developed by a working group assembled from interested government agencies. They are based on material originally developed for the Department of Social Welfare. The working group drew on its own collective experience, other electronic government projects under way at the time, the work of other government agencies, and a variety of international standards and related material.

The Policies and Standards need to be read in conjunction with the associated E-Government Information Systems Policies and Standards. They should not be used as a substitute for familiarity with applicable legislation, such as the Privacy Act, but for data management issues where cross-sectoral legislation will be relevant, they endeavour to act as pointer to the legislation.

The approach taken can be summed up as follows:

- Keep it simple, but don't oversimplify
- Do what is relevant to your position and responsibility
- Do equivalent tasks the same way
- Know who's got what
- Track information flows effectively
- Give someone responsibility to ensure it all happens.

The Policies and Standards should be regarded as living documents, to be improved by regular reviews based on feedback from the Public Service, legislative changes, developments in international standards etc. It is unlikely that any government agency will be fully compliant from day one, however every agency will be required to demonstrate reasonable progress towards compliance.

Contributing Agencies

The table below lists the people and government agencies that directly contributed to the Policies and Standards. The input included initial comments on the terms of reference and the DSW standards, membership of the Working Group, specialist advice on particular topics, and periodic reviews of documents.

Additionally, we acknowledge the assistance of the States Services Commission in selecting the Working Group, facilitating liaison between the various E-Government projects and with the Chief Executives' IM/IT group, and keeping project managers informed of E-Government developments in other countries.

We also acknowledge the support and vision of the Chief Executives who championed the E-Government projects which these Policies and Standards form a part of. They were bold enough to seek and embrace the short-term discomfort of change for the ultimate benefit of the New Zealand Public Service.

Working Group

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External Contributors

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| Inspector John Spence | Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet |
| Michael J Steemson | The Caldeson Consultancy |
| Robin Turner | Crown Law Office |
| Dallas Welch | Statistics New Zealand |

THE BIG PICTURE

The diagram on the following page provides a one-page overview of the interrelationships between the Principles, Policies and Standards.

Interrelationships of Principles, Policies & Standards

http://www.govt.nz/egovt/policies_and_guidelines/map_principles_policies_stds.xls

or

http://www.govt.nz/egovt/policies_and_guidelines/map_principles_policies_stds.pdf

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Founding Principle:

Collaboration between and within agencies for the common good is fundamental to delivering E-Government benefits, especially those of open government, streamlined services and reduced cost.

1. Standardisation of policies within an agency and across agencies is beneficial to both the agency and to government as a whole.
2. Agencies must manage data and business documents in ways that are both deliberate and explicit, based on the adoption of relevant international and industry standards and guidelines.
3. Policies and standards should be straightforward and beneficial, applicable to any size of organisation and formulated to encourage good practice.
4. Data and business documents owned by the Crown are strategic assets.
5. Government agencies will be good corporate citizens, behaving responsibly with the data and business documents held by them.
6. Treaty obligations and cultural awareness issues pertain to data and document management.
7. Data and business documents will be publicly and equitably available and accessible unless explicit reasons preclude this.
8. Privacy and confidentiality of individuals and commercial interests will be protected.
9. Collection, use, retention and disposal of data and documents must be subject to legal and defined business requirements.
10. Data and business documents must be controlled, defined, and have integrity so that they are fit for the purpose of their collection.
11. Data and business documents should be collected or created once into a prime authoritative data source, then used many times.
12. Data and document management policies apply irrespective of storage medium.

Policies Summarised

Policy title and key statement

Ownership

Data collected by or for a government agency under statutory provisions, or by contract, or through an information-matching agreement under the Privacy Act, is owned by the Crown, not the individual agency. Other data may be supplied for use by agreement with an external owner. Business documents created or collected by or for a government agency are owned by the Crown.

Stewardship

The Crown through a responsible minister will appoint a Crown Data Steward with a government-wide mandate to manage and develop the Crown's data and document assets in accordance with established policies and standards.

Custodianship

Every item of data and every business document held by, or maintained for a government agency on behalf of the Crown, will have a Business Custodian and a Physical Custodian.

The role of Business Custodian is assumed by the agency's Chief Executive, who may delegate day-to-day responsibility to an appropriate employee. The role of Physical Custodian will be assigned to the service provider holding the data under an explicit directive or agreement.

Treaty of Waitangi Obligations and Cultural Awareness

Each agency will recognise and meet Treaty of Waitangi obligations and, where Maori are affected, consult with Maori in all issues relating to access, capture, usage, storage, transfer and retention of data and business documents. Each agency will also attempt to accommodate identified cultural, ethnic and religious issues related to data and document management, where they do not conflict with statutory and explicit business requirements.

Charging/Cost Recovery

Agencies may need to recover costs in some cases where information is disseminated from government data or document stores.

Agencies must apply the PFGHI (Policy for Government Held Information) pricing principle where information is disseminated from government data or document stores.

Agencies should refer to *Cabinet Committee Minute CGA(97)M10/1, 16 July 1997, "Government Information Supply Activities"* to determine an appropriate charging regime for the service.

The *Ministry of Justice Charging Services Guidelines* will set the actual price for the service, to ensure consistent pricing across Government.

Charges relating to an information privacy request where an individual requests access to, or correction of personal information, are governed by the Privacy Act.

Agencies will work in consultation with Treasury when establishing charging or cost recovery schemes.

Access Rules

The Business Custodian will establish and maintain access rules for the categories of data and business documents under his/her control. Access rules must be based on the principle of public and equitable access to information unless explicit reasons preclude this.

Data Identification

Government agencies will identify data elements for which they hold custodial responsibility by defining and maintaining their metadata in a data catalogue.

Document Identification and Capture

Agencies will create and implement policies and standards to identify and capture all business documents created or received in their processes.

Context

Contextual information about logical business data stores or complex datasets will be captured and stored in the agency's data catalogue.

Contextual information about business documents will be captured and associated with the documents and managed according to organisational policies and standards.

Source

Agencies will be able to identify and locate the prime authoritative source of their data elements and business documents. Where it is cost effective, prime authoritative sources should be held electronically.

Authenticity Integrity and Retrievability

Data and business documents will be managed to preserve and demonstrate their authenticity, integrity, and retrievability to meet business and statutory requirements.

Auditability

Data elements and business documents must be defined in a consistent manner and stored in a consistent format across all stores and, where required by the Business Custodian, changes to form or content must be recorded in an audit trail.

Interchange, Replication and Interfaces

Within legislative provisions and access protocols, information may be interchanged between agencies. The preferred method is via a defined electronic system interface to the appropriate data or document stores.

Retention

Data and business documents will be managed within a defined retention process.