

Web Content Management Systems and Recordkeeping

This Public Records Brief addresses the recordkeeping implications that can arise from the use of Web Content Management Systems (WCMS).

A WCMS supports the creation, management, distribution and retrieval of online content. WCMS are used to streamline the management of materials on websites and intranets, allowing them to grow and change rapidly while consistently meeting organisational standards.

Recordkeeping and WCMS

WCMS are business systems, designed to support business needs. Many WCMS have limited functionality or lack the ability to keep records of the transactions that are carried out online. When WCMS do include some recordkeeping functionality they may be lacking sufficient context to be used as evidence of business activities and decisions, or be incapable of capturing and retaining records for the required periods of time.

The *Public Records Act 2002* requires that agencies make full and accurate records, including records of online business activities. When choosing and implementing a WCMS, agencies should ensure that the system has sufficient recordkeeping functionality or is integrated with a recordkeeping system. The failure to keep full and accurate records of online activity will limit an agency's ability to meet legislative, business and community requirements for recordkeeping.

When agencies are selecting or implementing a WCMS, QSA's policy and guideline *Managing Records of Online Resources and Services* should be consulted to ensure that records generated on websites are treated and maintained as public records.

A WCMS won't automatically solve website recordkeeping problems

The establishment and support of appropriate processes is the key to the successful implementation of a WCMS and its integration with records management activities.

Further Reading

The Office of Government ICT (Qld) has developed a sample checklist that can be used when investigating or selecting a WCMS. The checklist can be downloaded at:

<http://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/qgcio/architectureandstandards/informationstandards/current/Pages/ICT%20Resources%20Strategic%20Planning.aspx>.

The Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) has produced a number of "Best Practice Checklists" that provide practical guidelines for effective use of new technologies in government. Two publications, *Checklist 9, Selecting a Content Management System* and *Checklist 10, Implementing a Content Management System* address issues relating to WCMS. They can be downloaded at: <http://www.agimo.gov.au/practice/delivery/checklists>.