Science Mission Directorate Policy

Policy and Requirements for
SMD External Web sites

SMD Policy Document SPD-29

Recommended by SMD Science Management Council,
Approved by SMD Associate Administrator

Responsible SMD Official: External IT Lead, Science Engagement and Partnerships Division

VERSION HISTORY
Original, with erratum

Erratum
This version corrects for a dead Web link in IV(b)(6).

I. BACKGROUND
The National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended (Space Act), requires NASA to "provide for the widest practicable and appropriate dissemination of information concerning its activities and the results thereof." This must be accomplished in a manner consistent with U.S. laws and regulations, federal information policy, intellectual property rights, and technology transfer protection requirements.

The Science Mission Directorate (SMD) has a public Web presence, from the flagship Web site https://science.nasa.gov to mission-specific Web accounts to topic-based Web sites. SMD recognizes that the mechanisms by which people get their information has changed over time, and therefore, the purpose of this policy is to ensure that SMD information widely disseminated via the Web is easy to find, available to intended audiences, leveraged, and managed per federal and Agency policies and procedures in order to convey and protect SMD's information assets. It is intended for this policy to be updated on a regular basis.

II. POLICY
SMD's use of Web sites will be:
(a) Scientifically and technically correct;
(b) Appropriate for the intended audiences;
(c) Supportive of strategic messaging and information dissemination goals of NASA and SMD;
(d) Coordinated with Agency level policies pertaining to information technology (including NPR 2200.1 Management of NASA Scientific and Technical Information, NPR 2200.2C Requirements for Documentation, Approval, and Dissemination of NASA Scientific and Technical Information, NPR 2800.1B Managing Information Technology, NPR 2800.2 Chapter 2 Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility, and KSC-UG-1833 User Guide for KSC Web Policy Reference) and applies their provisions to SMD requirements.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to public-facing websites in the 'nasa.gov' domain. This policy does not apply to internal Web sites that are accessible from only within the NASA network or NASA Internet Protocol (IP) address space or websites that do not use the extension 'nasa.gov'.

IV. PROCEDURE

(a) Requests for Web sites

1) In accordance with the federal government's National Digital Strategy, the Agency is working to reduce its number of public-facing Web sites. SMD content should first integrate into existing Web sites, including the Agency flagship Web site https://www.nasa.gov/ and SMD flagship Web site https://science.nasa.gov.

2) If new Web content needs to be publicly available, the Centers and/or missions should first submit a request to the appropriate SMD division to determine how to handle the content. Options include utilizing existing Center Web sites, the Agency flagship Web site at https://www.nasa.gov, the SMD flagship Web site at https://science.nasa.gov, and other relevant and existing NASA Web sites. It is important that the Center team does not expend resources on a Web design until there is a confirmed decision on where the content will reside.

3) If the SMD Division determines that a new Web site is necessary, that recommendation shall be made to the Director for Science Engagement and Partnerships (SE&P). If approved, the Director for SE&P will provide a final recommendation to OCIO. Guidance used in making the final recommendation includes, but is not limited to, relevance to the public, federal government and/or Agency IT mandates, and Agency or SMD needs.

4) If the content cannot be integrated per III (a) and the ultimate action is determined to be creation of a new Web site, a domain request should be submitted through the OCIO process using the Enterprise Service Desk.
   a. The following guidance pertains to URL naming requests:
      i. When possible, there should be no acronyms in the URL.
      ii. The URL should be descriptive but short enough to effectively depict subject of the Web site (e.g. snow.nasa.gov).

5) The Agency OCIO has ultimate approval/disapproval of third level and higher URL requests for new Web sites.

(b) Other Information Technology Requirements for Web sites

1) SMD Web sites shall be 508 compliant in accordance with NASA policy and federal law.
   (i) SMD Web sites shall be scanned and remediated to be 508 compliant in design (alternative navigation, colors and contrast, etc.). Results of the 508 scan and remediation documentation are the responsibility of the group owning the Web site. For purposes of this policy, the group which funds the development, hosting, and maintenance of the Web site is the owner.
   (ii) Documents in diverse formats (e.g., PDF, PPT, DOC) may be posted and shall be submitted for 508 compliancy remediation within one business day of posting the non-compliant content. Once their 508 versions are ready, they shall replace the originally posted documents on the Web site (per NPR 2800.2, Chapter 2).
   (iii) Videos shall be close-captioned upon posting to a public site.

2) SMD Divisions shall work with their Center and mission counterparts to review all external Web sites to determine if they are still relevant, accurate, and up to date. This review shall occur at least annually.
3) SMD Web sites shall use Internet Protocol, version 6 (IPv6) per federal requirements.
4) SMD Web sites shall use the secure "https" protocol per White House memorandum, M-15-13 dated June 8, 2015.
5) SMD Web sites shall comply with OCIO requirements, including registration in the current Agency application tracking system and those requirements referenced in KSC-UG-1833 (https://go.nasa.gov/2ppRaNj).
6) SMD Web sites shall comply with federal government digital services requirements per OMB-M-17-06, dated November 8, 2016, including the use of nasa.gov domain for all public-facing Web sites.
7) SMD Web sites (including text, videos, and imagery) shall contain metadata to optimize external search engine processing.
8) SMD Web sites shall include the General Services Administration (GSA) Digital Analytics Program's Google analytics code into their back end to allow for analytics data gathering. It is the responsibility of the Web site owners to use the analytic data to inform any major revisions to their Web site.
9) SMD Web site owners are encouraged to create a plan, including measures of success based on analytics data. The plan may also contain milestones (e.g. generating X new content per month, engaging with public within X number days of receiving a comment/question, and/or running a broken link tool and remediating regularly). A resource for federal government Web analytics can be found at https://analytics.usa.gov/.
10) SMD Web sites shall place a banner on any site not being actively updated stating: "This site is no longer actively updated and is being kept for historical purposes." For example, for those SMD missions that do not make it to the development phase, any existing Web site shall be archived and a banner posted. Centers shall not simply remove information and unwittingly cause a "disappearing data" issue.
11) SMD Web sites may reference federal standards in Web design found at https://standards.usa.gov.

APPROVAL

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Thomas H. Zurbuchen   Date
Associate Administrator
  for Science Mission Directorate

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