

Local government digital



Principles and best practices for
local government digital services.

Numbers



.gov traffic

Visits by device to federal government websites:

- **Mobile** (54.5%)
- **Desktop** (43.9%)
- **Tablet** (1.6%)

Source: analytics.usa.gov (March 2023)

Digital government principles



Build digital services, not websites

“A **service** is something that **helps people to do something**. Our job is to **uncover user needs**, and **build the service that meets those needs**. Of course much of that will be pages on the web, but **we’re not here to build websites**. The digital world has to connect to the real world, so **we have to think about all aspects of a service, and make sure they add up to something that meets user needs.**”

Source: [UK Government Design Principles](#)

Make it simple and intuitive

“Using a government service shouldn’t be stressful, confusing, or daunting. **It’s our job to build services that are simple and intuitive enough that users succeed the first time, unaided.**”

Source: [U.S. Digital Services Playbook](#)

Prioritize accessibility

“Think about people who have been **traditionally excluded**, like **people who use screen readers or reside in low bandwidth regions.**”

Source: [California Design System](#)

Optimize performance

“When you build services and products, **think about people on a range of devices and internet speeds.**”

Source: [California Design System](#)

Iterate. Then iterate again

“The **best way to build good services** is to **start small and iterate wildly**. **Release minimum viable products early, test them with actual users ... deleting things that don't work and making refinements based on feedback. Iteration reduces risk. It makes big failures unlikely and turns small failures into lessons.** If a prototype isn't working, **don't be afraid to scrap it and start again.**”

Source: [UK Government Design Principles](#)

Digital government best practices



Carousels

“The consensus was carousels met the internal, official need to share information. However, **most agreed carousels were a necessary evil, but in general preference, were an annoyance.**”

Source: [Digital.gov](https://www.digital.gov)

PDFs

“Compared with HTML content, **information published in a PDF is harder to find, use and maintain.** More importantly, **unless created with sufficient care PDFs can often be bad for accessibility and rarely comply with open standards.**”

Source: [UK Government Digital Service](#)

Resources



Resources

- [U.S. Digital Services Playbook](#)
- [U.S. Web Design System design principles](#)
- [UK Government Design Principles](#)
- [California Design System](#)