CH 04 SCOPE OF CONTENT

Scope of Content

4.1
Information in Public Domain

The content of a Government website is its soul as the citizens rely heavily upon a Government website to access authentic and up-to-date information. Ideally, an Indian Government website ought to have the following kinds of content:

a. **Primary Content** :

   Primary content shall be the original content that is sought by target audience of the website which could be citizens, business community, overseas citizens or other Government Departments or even Government employees. Examples of such content are information about the Department, various schemes and programmes of the Department, documents, forms etc. Besides regulatory content mandated by legislation such as IT act, RTI or even directives from apex offices shall also form a part of this category e.g. parliament question and answers.

b. **Secondary Content :**

   Secondary content is generated from the assortment, packaging of primary content to suit the requirement of different audience, events and occasions Examples of such content are advertisements / banners/ spotlight / media gallery/related sites etc.

c. **Tertiary Content :**

   Information about the 'Primary' and 'Secondary' content forms a part of the tertiary content. This includes sections like About the Site, Online Help, Terms and Conditions and Frequently Asked Questions(FAQ).

Departments/ Organisations should compile their own list of contents/ sub contents which they feel should be in public domain or needed by their intended audience. Information could be free to access by all or part of information, (due to concerns of privacy & sensitivity) could be made available only to registered users.

A generic list of content is given at the following pages

Generic List of Content	
Primary Content	
Long Term Value	**Short Term Value**
About The Ministry/Department/State	News
Acts & Rules	Press Releases
Programmes & Schemes	Tenders
Documents	Recruitments
Forms	
Services	
Sectoral Profile	
Regional Profile	
Contact Information	
Secondary Content	
Special Interest Group/ Audience Specific Views	
Events / Announcements	
Disscussion Forum	
Spotlight	
Related Links	
Media Gallery	
Greetings	
Advertisements & Banners	
Tertiary Content	
About The Portal	
Sitemap, Search	
Terms and Conditions	
FAQ	
Feedback (General / Content Specific)	
Help	
Registration	
Content Contributor, Source & Validity	

Guidelines pertaining to compilation of content in some of the common content categories have been given in the following sections.
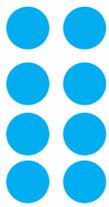
4.2
Primary Content

Primary Content forms the main focus of any Government website as it comprises information which the citizen has visited the website for. Examples are information about the Department, schemes and programmes, contact information, forms, documents, tenders etc. Broadly, the following sub categories encompass most of the Primary Content that ought to be made available on an Indian Government Website.

4.2.1 About Us
(Ministries/Department / State Govt./ Organisation/ District Administration)

This essentially refers to the content describing the owner Department of the website and comprises the following information :

- Profile
- Mission/Vision Statement
- History/Background
- Departments/Divisions/Cells
- Role/Functions/Responsibilities/Activities
- Agencies under the Administrative Control
- Organisational Structure
- Who's Who

This content should be reviewed frequently to ensure the accuracy and currency of the information. All information concerning the Legistative/Government officials MUST always be kept up to date.

4.2.2 Profile of a Sector / Region

Some websites/portals shall also be required to include a section on the overview of sector(s) they deal with naming all information concerning that sector present on their website or website of other Government entities working in that sector. This should be made accessible to give a comprehensive view to the visitors.
Similarly some of the portals are required to publish profile of a region e.g. National Portal publishes a profile of India. States Portals should publish a profile of the respective States while District websites should publish a profile of their respective district.
Detailing of this segment should be done by each Department and included in their web content policy. Policy must also include the frequency / event of updation as well as officers responsible for updating this content.

4.2.3 Programmes & Schemes

The Government Departments at the Centre and State have welfare programmes, and schemes benefiting the individuals, groups of citizens (e.g. women, physically challenged etc.) or community at large running in different regions and sectors across the country. Information about all such schemes of the Central as well as State Governments are included in this category. These schemes could be Centrally Sponsored, or being run by the State/ District Administration itself. It is important to note that these schemes should be directly benefiting the individuals, special interest groups of citizens (e.g. widows, physically challenged etc.) or the community at large. Also, information should only be highlighted with regard to those schemes, which are currently active and ongoing, and not about schemes which are no longer open/available to the public.

a. The content submitted about schemes should be reviewed at least every quarter to ensure the accuracy and currency of the information.

b. The complete official title of the Scheme MUST be reflected and should be self-explanatory. The correct title would lead to an accurate search output for information on that scheme and it would be easy for the users to locate it. Any abbreviation in the title should be expanded.

c. This site should enlist all those who are eligible to receive benefits under the scheme e.g. women, children, disabled, poor etc. Also, the details of the eligibility criteria for availing those benefits should be clearly mentioned.

d. Information should be given about whether the scheme entails monetary or non-monetary benefits. Also, what are the specific kinds of non-monetary benefits, which can be availed e.g. Subsidy, training, land allotment etc.

e. Procedure to be followed, whom to contact, supporting documents to be carried etc. for availing benefits under the scheme MUST form a part of this content.

f. Validity of the scheme MUST also be mentioned so that the information could accordingly be moved to archives after the expiry date and the visitors are not misled in any way.

4.2.4 Services

A large number of citizen services are being provided by the various Ministries, Departments and State/UT Governments. Information about these services as well as the interface to access and use them (if it is available online) should be made available on their websites.

a. It is important to clearly understand what constitutes the term 'services' in this context. Information about all services provided by the Government,
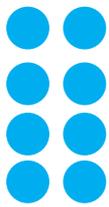
whether fully online, partially online or available offline but whose description and details exist online can be called services. For example, if the complete details about how to apply for a birth certificate in a particular State are given along with the facility to download the requisite application form, it shall be categorised as a Service. However, just information about things like a programme of any Department, or access to a some searchable database without any service associated will not constitute a 'Service'.

b. The complete title of the Service MUST be reflected and should be self-explanatory. The correct title would lead to an accurate search output for information on that service and it would be easy for the users to locate it. Any abbreviation in the title should be expanded.

c. The websites should prominently display the most often used/ accessed services, so that visitors can locate and access them quickly.

d. The website MUST provide a complete description of what the service is, how is it useful for the citizens, how it can be availed, who is eligible to avail the service, who is to be contacted and during which hours. This is very important for the common citizens to understand the significance of the service and what are the steps to be followed for availing it.

e. If the service is delivered online then it should be developed as a webservice so that other websites and portals can access it seamlessly, subject to authorisation of the owner Department. All on-line services should be made available through the National Portal as a 'web service.'

4.2.5 Application Forms

Visitors to Government websites want fast, easy service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They do not want to wait until an organisation is open for business. They do not want to wait in line or on the phone to get forms and documents to avail the desired service. Therefore, all application forms existing in the public domain and meant for applying for licenses, certificates, scholarships, grants, services, information, loans, utilities etc. should be published on the concerned Government website for the convenience of citizens.

a. All Forms MUST be provided in an accessible format (refer section 7.4.2).

b. The title of the form MUST be clearly indicated and should be self-explanatory and devoid of any abbreviations which may render it universally incomprehensible. The correct title would lead to an accurate search output for information on that Form and it would be easy for the users to locate it. Also, in case the Form is popularly known by a number (e.g. Form 16 for Income Statement or Form 4 for Driving license), the same should also be mentioned

along with the title.

c.   It should be specified whether the language of the form is English, Hindi or any other Regional language. In case of the latter, the name of the concerned language MUST be mentioned clearly. If the form is bi-lingual/ multi-lingual, it is important to mention the languages it exists in.

d.   Information assisting the user in filling up the application form should also be provided such as where to submit and which supporting documents to attach etc.

4.2.6 Acts & Rules

All the Acts passed by the Parliament as well as the State Legislative Assemblies should be reflected on the website of the concerned Government Department so that they can be accessed for reference. Further, the Rules/Sub-ordinate legislations issued by the Departments based on those Acts should also be displayed on the website.

a.   The complete title of the Act as written in the official notification MUST be mentioned which should be self explanatory and devoid of any abbreviations etc. which may render it universally incomprehensible. The correct title would lead to an accurate search output for information on that Act and it would be easy for the users to locate it.

b.   The 'Extent of the Act' or the scope or geographical region to which the Act applies should also be mentioned. In case it is a Central Act passed by the parliament, the extent is normally the whole of India. However, the Acts passed by the State Legislatures are usually confined to the boundaries of the concerned state.

c.   The Commencement Date from which the Act comes into force should also be mentioned.

d.   As far as 'Rules' are concerned their relation with respective Acts should be highlighted as far as possible.

e.   Acts and Rules MUST be compiled in an accessible format (refer section 7.4.2).

4.2.7 Documents/Reports

a.   All documents developed/published and issued in the Public Domain by Government Departments, Ministries, State/UT Governments, Public Sector Units and Organisations must be published in the website. The following list gives an idea of the variety of Government documents that can be covered
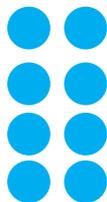
under this :

- Five-year Plan documents
- Annual Reports
- Budget Documents
- Guidelines by Government
- Citizen Charters
- Census Documents
- Survey Outcomes / Reports
- Statistical Reports etc.

b. This content should be reviewed every quarter to ensure the accuracy and currency of the information.

c. The complete official title of the document MUST be mentioned on the site, The correct title would lead to an accurate search output for that document and it would be easy for the users to locate it. For example: 'Policy on Promotion of Tourism in the State of Manipur' is a more appropriate title than just 'Tourism Policy.' Any abbreviation in the title should be expanded and the title should not be formulated on just a document number/date.

d. In case any reference to a document of another Government Department is given, it should be clearly specified as with whom lies the ownership of the document i.e. which is the exact Ministry/Department at the Central or State level which has produced/published/issued the concerned document.

e. It should be specified whether the language of the document is English, Hindi or any other Regional language. In case of the latter, the name of the concerned language MUST be mentioned clearly. If the document is bi- lingual/ multi-lingual, it is important to mention the languages it exists in.

f. It is important that if the document is valid only for a certain time period, the validity MUST be clearly mentioned on the site. In fact, the document should be moved to the archives after expiry of the validity period.

g. Documents MUST be made available in an accessible format (ref. section 7.4.2).

h. In case a document is large it may be broken down into multiple parts to facilitate easy download.

4.2.8 Circulars/Notifications

There are various Circular/ Notifications that are released from time to time by the Indian Government at the Central or State level. Information about all the Circular/ Notifications of the Central as well as State Governments should be made available on the National Portal.

a. The official title of the Circular/ Notification MUST be mentioned and should be self explanatory. The correct title will also help in accurate search output for information on that circular and thus, it would be easy for the users to locate it.

b. The ownership of the concerned circular should be specified i.e. Ministry/ Department and also the level i.e. Central/ State etc.

c. Circulars/Notifications MUST be made available in an accessible format (refer section 7.4.2).

d. If the Circulars/Notifications are valid only for a certain time period, the validity MUST be clearly mentioned on the site. In fact, the Circulars/Notifications should be moved to the archives after expiry of the validity period.

4.2.9 Tenders

Government and Public Sector Procurement / Tenders/ Notifications issued by the Central and State Governments and other public bodies across India for goods, services and works MUST be made available through the websites. As is also directed by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) following are some of the guidelines with respect to tenders.

a. Information MUST include the notifications and complete documents for tenders.

b. Tenders of all categories including open tenders, limited tenders, empanelment, auctions, work contracts, service contracts etc. should be published on the website.

c. All these tender notifications should be uploaded on the single entry Tenders Portal for the Government (http://tenders.gov.in), which is a one-stop source for tenders of various Government Departments, developed on the advice of the Central Vigilance Commission (refer- http://www.cvc.gov.in).

d. Outdated tenders MUST be immediately removed from the website and moved to archive or deleted as per the Departmental policy. If the tenders are published through the Tenders Portal it is automatically taken care of.

e. All tender documents MUST be published in an accessible format (refer section 7.4.2).

4.2.10 Recruitment

All Indian Government websites MUST provide complete and transparent information on their recruitment policies for the benefit of those who would like to join the Government and serve the nation. In case the recruitment is through some Central or State level examination or recruitment agency such as UPSC, SSC etc. that should be highlighted
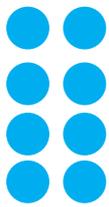
along with a link to respective pages of those organisations websites. In either of the cases information about the recruitment should abide by the following guidelines.

a. The title of the recruitment notice should be self-explanatory.

b. This site should enlist all those who are eligible for a particular recruitment. Also the details of the eligibility criteria should be clearly mentioned.

c. All required application forms should be made available on the website so that the interested person can download and submit the same.

d. Procedure to be followed, whom to contact, supporting documents to be carried etc. for the particular recruitment MUST form a part of this content.

e. All currently open vacancies may be highlighted on the Homepage of the website.

f. All recruitment notices MUST also be registered with the National Portal for wider access by target audience.

g. Information for those recruitment notices in which the last date is over MUST be either removed or moved into the archives section.

4.2.11 News and Press Releases

News having national importance and significance for the Citizens as well as Government Press Releases issued by Departments and organisations at the Central and State level should be published on the website of the concerned Department. News and Press Relases MUST carry the date and should be organised as per the Archival Policy of the website. News and Press releases should be published in RSS format so that associated offices and Departments can also consume them on their websites with due permission or based on their access policy.

4.2.12 Contact Information on Government Websites

Citizens would like to contact any Government Department or entity to ask questions, get information, seek clarifications or sort out problems. Therefore it is essential that Government websites provide them with the means to do that.

a. All Indian Government websites MUST have a 'Contact Us' page, linked from the Homepage and all relevant places in the website.

b. The 'Contact Us' page should be categorised according to the various divisions handling different kind of queries; e.g. grievance redressal, file status, procedural details etc.
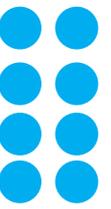
c. The contact details for the Important functionaries in the Department MUST have the telephone numbers, fax numbers, postal address as well as email address along with the timings specified for personal public dealing (if applicable). The content policy of the department should enlist the functionaries whose details are to be given on the website.

d. There should be a clear-cut policy for redress (correction) of inaccurate information found on the website. The contact details of the Web Information Manager, who is overall responsible for the content on the website, should be provided.

4.2.13   Presence on the National Portal

Mechanism MUST be in place to ensure that all Citizen Services, Forms, Documents, Schemes are registered with the respective repositories of the National Portal.

4.3
Secondary Content

Secondary content is generated from the assortment and packaging of primary content to suit the requirement of different audience, events and occasions Examples of such content are advertisements/banners/spotlight/media gallery/related sites.

4.3.1   Special Interest Group Corner

In case there is an event or ocassion, Government departments may introduce a special section for a particular target group e.g. during result time a special section for students may be put up or the Department of Social Welfare may open a section for senior citizens on its website. Here, it must be noted that the original content that is sourced from various sections of the website to make up this section should remain as such so that it may be referred to once the section has ben removed.

4.3.2   Events and Announcements

Government websites should have a section to cover various Events & Announcements such as.

- Announcements having International/National/State level importance should be published on the website.
- Announcements related to important upcoming Government events being organised by a Ministry/Department/State/UT.
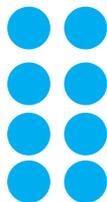
- Announcements should be worded in simple English/Regional language depending on whom it is meant for.
- Announcements related to schemes/grants/scholarships/fellowships etc.
- Warnings of Natural disasters/Epidemics etc.
- Calls for relief funds during disasters. Other help from citizens or civic agencies.
- Display of important helpline numbers in case of crisis.

Guidelines relating to events and announcements are as follows :

a. It is MUST to take off / archive the announcement once it loses its relevance or after the expiry of the time period attached to the event or happening.

b. All important announcements should also be published on the National Portal for wider access.

4.3.3 Discussion Forums & Chat Rooms

Discussion forums are becoming an increasingly popular tool for sharing viewpoints and information. Discussion Forums could be initiated by a Department on any relevant topic of public interest and can prove quite useful in obtaining opinions and viewpoints of the citizens on issues important for policy making. While initiating an online discussion forum on a Government Department's website, the following has to be kept in mind:

a. The purpose and objective of the Discussion Forum should be clearly defined. Preferably, an initiating document or background paper explaining the theme of the topic for the forum may be provided on the site.

b. Clear-cut Terms and Conditions for participating in the Discussion Forum should be indicated and a Usage Policy (see box) should be defined.

c. The discussion forums on a Government website MUST be moderated so that there is some control to avoid publishing unwanted content on the website. All the inputs submitted by the users must first be reviewed by the moderator for context and appropriateness of the language and then posted on the website.

d. The discussion forum should be open for a limited period of time and the validity of the same should be prominently indicated on the site. However, rather than closing the forum abruptly, it is advised that a summary of the inputs received as well as an Action Taken Report, if possible, should be provided on the website so that the visitors are assured that their inputs are being seriously considered and valued by the Department.
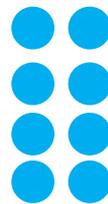
Chat Rooms

Chat rooms on a website could be used by citizens to exchange their viewpoints on some common topic amongst each other as well as by the Departments to facilitate an online conversation between a senior functionary and citizens. Like Discussion Forums, Chat rooms should also follow a Usage Policy (see box) and a proper code of conduct. It is desirable that the participants of an online chat through a Government Department's website be registered before they are allowed to log in and post their messages. Permanent chat rooms should be monitored frequently. In case of temporary or special occasion chat sessions with a senior functionary, it is advised that questions be submitted to the interviewee, before being published in the chat room.

Online Disscussion Forum : Usage Policy

A Usage Policy should be established and published alongside all online discussion forums and chatrooms on a Government website. This policy should be prominently displayed to any new user who should be made to pass through a page with this information before being able to input data. The usage policy should clearly specify that the following is forbidden :

- Insulting, threatening or provoking language.
- Inciting hatred on the basis of race, religion, gender, nationality or sexuality or other personal characteristics.
- Swearing, using hate-speech or making obscene or vulgar comments.
- Libel, condoning illegal activity, contempt of court and breach of copyright.
- Spamming, i.e., adding the same comment repeatedly.
- Impersonating or falsely claiming to represent a person or organisation.
- Posting in a language other than the language of the website.
- Invading people's privacy.
- Posting off-topic comments.

4.3.4   Related links

For every content topic in different modules of the website, a section should be provided for 'Related Links' to the concerned information.

a. Each content topic covered in the website may have some Related Links to other Government websites which provide further details on the topic.

b. For every Related Link, the complete URL of the Homepage/Concerned

webpage MUST be provided correctly along with the complete title of the Website which shall appear on the screen.

c. The validity and accuracy of the URL MUST be checked on a regular basis to make sure that the information is relevant and the linked address is correct.

Only Government websites/webpages should be provided as 'Related Links' for further information since there is no control over the veracity and availability of information on private websites.

4.3.5 Spotlight

The website may have a section called 'Spotlight' which focuses on a certain issue of importance and brings it in to the limelight. The guidelines with regard to this section is as follows:-

a. Every Spotlight topic should be chosen keeping in mind the relevance and significance of the topic in today's context. It should be ensured that the chosen topic is of significance and should interest a diverse group of audience.

b. The content for the Spotlight Section should have the following essential elements:

- Brief introductory text to appear on the Homepage of the website.

- Detailed text on the topic in the Main Page of the Spotlight section. This content should comprise key highlights of the topic and the facts ought to be sourced from authentic and official sources relating to the topic.

- Address of the Webpage/Websites which have detailed information on the topic addressed in the Spotlight.

- Graphical Banner highlighting the Spotlight topic and linked to the webpage with further details.

c. Once the new Spotlight is launched, the older one should be passed in an Archives section along with the date for future reference.

4.4
Tertiary Content

Information about the 'primary' and 'secondary' content forms a part of the tertiary content. The guidelines for this type of content are given as follows :

4.4.1 About the site i.e. Department that is responsible for the contents as well as the
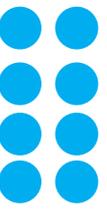
maintenance of the site, what is the purpose behind the development of the site, when was it launched, where is it hosted etc.

4.4.2 Navigation Aids Sections such as Online Help, Site Map, Search (described in detail in the latter sections).

4.4.3 Terms and Conditions with respect to the usage of content on the site. This includes policies on Copyright, Privacy, Legal Implications etc. as well as Content Disclaimers. This has been explained in detail in the previous chapter.

4.4.4 'Frequently Asked Questions' or FAQs

Although the content developers of websites make (and should make) all possible efforts to ensure that the content answers all possible and anticipated information needs of the citizens, it is sometimes not possible to address it completely. Visitors still have questions because either they couldn't find what they were looking for or because it is presented in such a manner that it is difficult for them to comprehend or understand. In such a case, a detailed list of answers to common questions can prove highly useful to the website audience. Also, it has been proved by usability studies that information presented in a 'question-answer' form is much easier for people to understand than lengthy write-ups.

Hence, Government websites, particularly the ones having frequent interaction with citizen for various services/schemes should have a 'Frequently Asked Questions' module linked from the Homepage and all other relevant places in the site.

The web information managers can compile the list of commonly asked queries and their answers through the following sources:

- Email, phone calls and letters from the public.
- A survey could be conducted amongst the public.
- Input from people who answer phones and mail in the organisation.
- Review of website usage statistics and top search terms.

4.4.5 User Feedback

A commonly used method of receiving the feedback from the visitors of the site is through feedback forms or guest books. Feedback forms, with pre-decided fields, to be filled in by the visitors, enable a much more structured way of receiving feedback and hence make it easy to categorise or analyse the same. Forms are also quite useful for receiving grievances/complaints from the users in a structured and formatted manner. The information collected through feedback forms can also be used as a means of knowing the usage pattern of the website and can be used in the enhancement of further versions of the website.

a. All feedback MUST be collected through online forms for reasons explained above.

b. All feedback forms must be prominently displayed on the website.

c. Departments MUST respond to the feedback explaining how it shall be processed.

d. Departments should also make it clear on the response screen whether citizens should expect a reply on their feedback If 'yes' then in how many days.

4.4.6 Help

A special section 'Help' on the website MUST be created, which allows and guides for a pleasant experience while browsing the website. This category includes the kind of content which allows for an easy and convenient navigation for the visitor to the website (e.g. online help, how to open files of certain formats, how to access audio/video on the portal, kinds of plug-ins required etc.). Further, the content which clarifies the purpose of the website as well as its policies for the visitors should also be included in this category.

4.4.7 Downloads and Plug-ins

a. Information about downloadable material

Downloading material from the Internet can be an expensive and time-consuming exercise. Therefore, Government websites MUST provide Information that will help visitors determine whether they want to access downloadable material. This information would concern the following:

- Self explanatory title of the document/file.
- Download and use instructions (install, open, view).
- File format & file size.

b. Size of downloads to be minimised:

The total size of the file should be kept to a minimum to ensure acceptable download times for all users, especially those that do not have high-speed, reliable Internet connections.

c. Virus Free Downloads:

Prior to making downloadable material available for visitors, Government websites MUST check for viruses and clear them.

4.5
Minimum Content

The homepage of a website is the primary entry page to the entire content of the website. It is important that the visitors to the site get to access the most important content elements from the Homepage itself.

4.5.1   Government websites MUST ensure the availability of the following minimum content elements on the Homepage. This is applicable not just to the websites of Departments but also to any Indian Government website, be it on a specific Project, a Task Force, Committee or Service etc.

Minimum Content on the homepage of a Department

- Department Name (alternatively, the name of the Project, Service etc. as applicable).
- National Emblem/Logo (as applicable).
- About the Department (including its main activities & functions).
- Link to all the major modules/sections of the site.
- Link to all the citizen services offered by the Department.
- A link to the 'Contact Us' page of the website.
- A link to the "Feedback" page.
- A link to National Portal.
- Search/Site Map.
- Terms and Conditions of Use.

4.5.2   Minimum Content on Subsequent Pages:

Apart from the Homepage, the subsequent pages of the website MUST have the following minimum information, in addition to the **main content.**

- Self explanatory title of the page.
- Link to the Homepage.
- Link to the parent section/top module of the individual page.
- Ownership (name of the Department owning the website).
- Link to the "Contact Us" page.
- Last Reviewed / Updated date.

4.6
Information meant for Internal Use

Government websites contain information and services for the public. Therefore, it has to be strictly noted that Indian Government websites should not be used to convey information specific to the Department's employees. Information meant for the internal consumption of the employees should be disseminated through Intranets. This is required, since information intended for employees can confuse the common public visiting the website.

- All information meant for internal consumption and not in public domain, presently existing on any Indian Government website should be moved to an Intranet secured through proper authentication.

In case for some reason it is not possible for the Department to develop an Intranet, the information meant for internal use may be isolated and explicitly labeled (e.g. 'for employees' or 'for internal use'), to make it clear to the public that it is not intended for them.

4.7
Information to Avoid

4.7.1 Commercial banner advertisements should be avoided on Government websites. Banner advertisements that promote and link to other Government agencies as well as social messages are permissible.

4.7.2 Any information in text, visual or any other media which may offend/harm the National sentiments, religious communities as well as security and integrity of the Country MUST be avoided on the websites.

4.7.3 Government Information which is confidential or only for restricted use should be avoided on a website meant for the common public.