

STATE OF MINNESOTA STANDARD

From the Office of the State Chief Information Officer

DNS Naming Standard

2010-11-18

Issuing Authority

This directive was issued by the State of Minnesota CIO through the Architecture Review Board.

Standard Statement

This standard covers the use by executive branch state government organizations of the Internet Domain Name System (DNS) where the names are visible from the Internet as a whole. The standard is that all information offered by the organization be available under one or all of these domain name suffixes:

- state.mn.us
- mn.gov
- minnesota.gov

While this standard only requires that information be available through one of these domains, organizations are encouraged to offer the same information across all three suffixes.

Further, these domains will be used only for Minnesota government-supported purposes.

The State's DNS provider for the above three domains will ensure that the contents of the three domains available to the Internet as a whole be identical.

Reason for the Standard

Minnesota State government's original Internet presence was built over a decade ago using the single domain "state.mn.us." Over time, additional domains were added, with each domain advancing the interests of only a fraction of state government, often only a single program.

This multiplicity of names for a single entity increases confusion among the people who access Minnesota government resources.

The rules for assigning DNS names are specified in the Internet RFCs listed below. These rules call for state and local entities to be registered using the .us suffix. In our case, this would be the state.mn.us suffix.

Over the past several years, the federal government has been promoting the use of the .gov suffix for state and local entities. As entities may have multiple domain names, it is possible to both follow the RFCs and support the federal promotion.

The use of suffixes that are not clearly identifiable with Minnesota state government can cause confusion for potential users about whether the entity that they are dealing with is really a governmental one. As there are millions of such DNS suffixes in use, potential users can find it difficult to locate governmental organizations or to be sure that they

have found the correct organization. Such confusion also makes it easier for others to impersonate governmental organizations.

The standard stated above addresses the confusion by focusing all domain suffix use on the three listed suffix forms.

Impact

This standard applies to all new domain name system registrations representing resources owned, sponsored, funded, or maintained by the executive branch for state government purposes.

This standard strongly discourages the use of alternate domain name suffixes (*e.g.*, .com and .org) to represent State government entities or supported projects, but does not preclude their use. The guidelines associated with this standard provide more information on the appropriate use of such alternate domain names. Alternate names should be linked to one of the three domain name suffixes enumerated in this document.

Who Should Know About This Standard

This standard applies to executive branch state agencies as defined in the State of Minnesota Enterprise Security Office Applicability Standard as included government entities.

Legislative, judicial and other non-executive branch organizations are invited to follow this standard.

Related Information

- *DNS Naming Guidelines*
- RFC-1480 - The US Domain
- RFC-1591 Domain Name System and Structure
- RFC-2146 U.S. Government Internet Domain Names
- RFC-3071 Reflections on the DNS and RFC 1591
- The State of Minnesota Enterprise Architecture Policy, April 6, 2010
- State of Minnesota Enterprise Security Office Applicability Standard
http://www.state.mn.us/mn/externalDocs/OET/bESOEnterprise_Security_Program_Applicability_Standard_62209_072309081937_EnterpriseSecurityProgramApplicabilityStandard_FINAL_v01.pdf
- Minnesota Statutes Section 16E.03. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=16E.03>

Contacts

Contact the State Enterprise Architecture Office within OET for further information.

Issue Date

The directive was issued November 18, 2010.

Effective Date

The directive is effective November 18, 2010.

Applicability

This standard applies to executive branch state agencies as defined in the State of Minnesota Enterprise Security Office Applicability Standard as included government entities.

Legislative, judicial and other non-executive branch organizations are invited to follow this standard.

Additional Definitions

DNS names are those names used to identify organizations, computers, services, web sites, or other resources on the Internet. *DNS names* have the general form *part1.part2...partN*, with *partN* the most general and *part1* the most specific. The consecutive string of *part2...partN* ending in *partN* are considered the *suffix*.

The executive branch of Minnesota state government is defined in the State of Minnesota Enterprise Security Office *Glossary of Information Security Terms and Definitions*.

The term *Minnesota state government* includes the executive, judicial, and legislative branches as well as all state-level public organizations and specifically includes the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

The term *Minnesota government* includes Minnesota state government as well as all county and local government (city, town, village, township, *etc.*) It does not include school districts nor does it include tribal governments.

See the State of Minnesota Enterprise Security Office *Glossary of Information Security Terms and Definitions*.

Procedures and Exceptions

No special procedures are defined. Exceptions to this standard shall follow the standard Architecture exception process which starts by contacting the Enterprise Architecture Office.