

TU Delft Library Service Standards

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Introduction and content

This document lists the key standards for a service delivered by TU Delft Library. By the end of the TU Delft Library's Digital Service Programme in 2024 (or earlier), each service will have embedded each of these standards.

1. Name a responsible owner
2. Have a clear, distinct purpose, understandable to users
3. Use consistent branding, aligned with the TU Delft style
4. Be simple to use
5. Use clear language
6. Be (technically) reliable
7. Define success. Publish metrics
8. Get regular user feedback to improve your service
9. Be responsive to user feedback
10. Openly publish plans, reports, successes and failures
11. Always respect users' privacy
12. Have a permanent, clear web address

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1. Name a responsible owner

The service must have a named, responsible owner, who works with a team across the library (and university) to deliver the service.



Why is it important?

Unclear ownership and governance are likely to create services with unclear direction. A service needs one person who:

- has an overview of all processes, related steps and tasks and stakeholders for the service
- can make the final decisions in processes, conflicting interests, etc.
- if approached for questions, complaints, etc. can identify the right member of staff to deal with them.
- takes responsibility for continual improvement.
- can start or participate in projects concerning the service, think of process improvements, software evaluation, user feedback, etc.



What to do?

- Provide a named, responsible owner, who works with a team within a department, across the library or in the university to deliver the service.
- Set up back-up for important roles
- Describe the key workflows of the service, via process descriptions or work instructions.
- Make sure the service is in line with the service standards.



Guidelines

- Consult the [TU Delft Library Process Toolkit](#)

2. Have a clear, distinct purpose, understandable to users

The service must have a clear one sentence description (ideally a verb not a noun) that allows all stakeholders to understand its purpose.



Why is it important?

End-users (researchers, students, teachers) are presented with hundreds of services each day as they use the Internet. Having to translate unclear names makes it more difficult for an end-user to understand what the service actually does. Confusing names also make it difficult for other users (librarians, managers, other stakeholders) to understand the service

Every service should have a one sentence description for the service. The title of the service should incorporate part of this description.

For a few large, well-known services within the university, a 'brand name' may be good enough to gain the understanding of the user. As with the one sentence service description, the responsible owner should check its suitability with user testing.



What to do?

- Create a clear one sentence description (ideally based on a verb not a noun) that allows all stakeholders to understand the service's purpose and value.
- Use the service description wherever the service is mentioned - as part of the list of TU Delft Library services, on the library website, on library communications, and as part of the service itself. Review the service description as part of the process of getting user feedback.

3. Use consistent branding, aligned with the TU Delft style

Not every service from TU Delft Library needs to look identical, but they must share a common style that makes it apparent that it is part of the Library.



Why is it important?

End-users are often not aware of the diversity and depth of services offered by the library. A consistent, lightweight brand indicates that a service is delivered by the library and can be trusted as a high-quality service. It also contributes to a sense of ownership around our services for the library staff.

A brand also contains and expresses the values that you stand for. We have TU Delft values, library values, open science values to uphold. The services are a way of living these brands, or in other words, practice what you preach.



What to do?

- Use the [TU Delft house style](#) within your service
 - Specific colours for themes from the TU Delft house style palette
 - Use photography and illustrations in accordance with the Library style guide
 - Specific tone of voice according to the Library style guide
- TU Delft branding is the default and is always the most impactful to use. Consult with the Comms team on possible exceptions.
 - Operating within the TU Delft house style, use the TU Delft Library logo - TU Delft | Library.
 - Powered by TU Delft Library: for services that are sponsored or facilitated by the Library



Guidelines

- Consult the [Library Style Guide](#)

4. Be simple to use

The service must be comprehensible and intuitive. Users should be engaged to ensure they understand it.



Why is it important?

Staff and students are busy. They are used to professional services on the Internet where language and usability can make or break a service. Complex, not easy to use services, where the end-user has to spend too much thinking time to work out how the service operates, will be used less or not at all.



What to do?

- Test the user experience of different end-user groups, using simplicity as a key design principle
- Test the user experience of end-user groups on different devices (i.e. browser based / phone based)
- Break down complex services into simpler services (where logical)
- When procuring services from third parties, ensure this standard is build into the procurement requirements
- Be aware of the accessibility of your service. Can the service be used by all end-users, regardless of any disability? If not, make a plan to improve accessibility of your service.



Guidelines

- Gov UK. [Make the service simple to use](#)
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#)
- How to improve accessibility: <https://wcag.nl>
- For further guidelines on service usability, check standard 8

5. Use clear language

The service should avoid jargon and make use of language easily understood by all users.



Why is it important?

Clear language contributes to who we are and who we want to be: an accessible and open Library. The language we use helps people easily towards the right information, service or expert. It contributes to our services being simple to use.

Clear language is achieved by:

- Avoiding jargon. Only applying specialist terms when you are sure of your audience and their level of knowledge. (Simple as default, jargon when necessary)
- Seeing things from the users' point of view and using the right language accordingly. Different audiences (students, researchers and lecturers, external visitors), level of knowledge, type of information, etc.
- Following the Library style guide, which includes: using short, active sentences; using sub headers to break up text, etc.



What to do?

- Review how language is used in the most frequently consulted parts of the service. The communications team can help
- Identify a chief content writer within the team who receives training in clear language skills.
- Embed clear and similar language across channels (website, netpresenter, handouts)
- Use user engagement to determine whether information is clear (and also whether it should be presented in English and Dutch)
- Consult the [Library Style Guide](#)



External Guidance

- Gov.UK: [Writing for User Interfaces](#)

6. Be (technically) reliable

The (digital) service must be available for as much time as possible, with downtime clearly communicated.



Why is it important?

End users depend on service and want to be able to use it at the time that suits them. Unreliable services break the trust of users, making them less likely to return.



What to do?

- Clearly communicate downtime (and support times) on the homepage of the service, and other related channels if necessary
- Identify a channel where customers can contact the service if the main channel is unavailable. If possible, advise an alternative service or means of support
- (If relevant), [finalize a Service Level Agreement with ICT at TU Delft](#) (or define a SLA with any service hosted by a third party)
- (For services with large usage or sensitive data) Work with ICT or the third party to undertake periodic stress testing (both in terms of capacity and security) to ensure the reliability of the service (and incorporate these costs in your yearly budget)

7. Define success. Publish metrics

The service must publish metrics over time to identify what is going well and what can be done better.



Why is it important?

It is important to have a sense of (shared) purpose about where each service is going. We want our users to get the most value out of our efforts. We want to create a basis on which we can have solid discussion and reflect on how a service is doing or how we can improve. And by publishing metrics, we can be honest and open about the direction the service is heading. Metrics by themselves should not be used to criticize a service, but to help provide direction.



What to do?

- Refer back to the clear, distinct purpose from Standard 2
- Define your idea of success and convert that to a fixed number of goals (eg., action-oriented, inspirational) and the related key performance indicators results for the service. Choose a timespan, e.g. over a 1, 3 or 5 year period.
- Evaluate key results on a regular basis (what is going well and what can be done better). Define “regular basis” in this standard.
- In connection with Standard 10, publish and communicate results so the library and others can learn how to improve our services. Use internal evaluation, for sensitive results and reflection



Guidelines

- John Doerr, [Why the secret to success is setting the right goals](#) (YouTube)



Get regular user feedback to improve your service

The service must regularly consult users feedback about the service, ideally using a variety of methods.



Why is it important?

We are not offering services for services' sake. We want to help researchers, students and teachers to be the best they can be with the services we provide. That's why we need to make sure we continue to meet user needs. We need to ensure we are adding value and checking this with our actual users. The library will develop a toolbox with user engagement tools teams can use to get feedback and improve. [Design Thinking principles](#) will help us here. It is important to embrace critical feedback and get better from it!



What to do?

- Regularly test their own services from the perspective of an end user. This way it gets easier to talk to users.
- Combine both digital and physical means to get user feedback.
 - Get Google Analytics in place (or similar)
- Use (and contribute to) the [Library User Engagement Toolkit](#) to collect feedback, and develop a method to analyse the feedback.
- Document and share user feedback with other services.



Guidelines

- [Library User Engagement Toolkit](#)
- <https://ucdtoolbox.com/browse-methods/>

9. Be responsive to user feedback

The service must respond to user feedback and, where possible, update quickly.



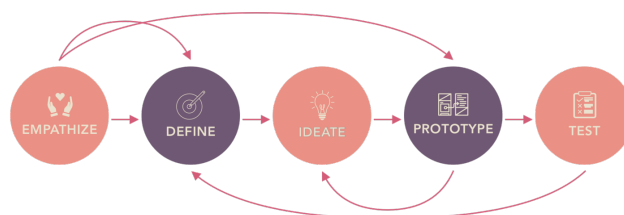
Why is it important?

To build trust and to keep trust it's important that users feel that they are taken seriously, and their voices are heard. Users who see their feedback implemented will probably advocate for the library (services) and will be more open to help again in the future. Monitor, iterate and improve not only at the early stage of the service but throughout the entire lifespan.



What to do?

- Identify and acknowledge points (from the user data and user research) that can be improved, not focus on the points that are already going well.
- Take an iterative approach to user feedback.



- Prioritize points of improvement based on user feedback.
- See if they can be over responsive to certain trends in the feedback. Six star service (going one step beyond what is expected) depends on getting to the question behind the question. Teams are not putting out fires but improving the long-term future of a service - making the solution more technically sound, more simple, richer with features or better supported by better trained people.



Guidelines

- Consult the [TU Delft Library CX Toolkit](#)

10. Openly publish plans, reports, successes and failures

The service must openly publish plans and reports and other information related to its progress.



Why is it important?

If we openly communicate what we are doing and planning this gives better insight and we can learn from each other. It also means we become visible to people working on similar things and can have (unexpected) input, support and cooperation within the library, TU Delft wide and even broader. This does not mean you have to publish everything, especially if there is sensitive private information. But even communicating failure, and steps taken to improve services, can create trust and loyalty.



What to do?

- Identify what plans and reports and other information related to its progress the service should publish, with a minimum requirement of a yearly plan and report.
- Decide which channels to use to publish (eg via a blog), and set up a schedule to determine when you publish



Guidelines

- [TU Delft Library Blogging Policy](#)

11. Always respect users' privacy

The service must ensure the privacy of users is ensured, especially in the context of the GDPR.



Why is it important?

Users should feel free to use the service without their data traces being retained and reused without permission. We have a legal obligation to follow GDPR rules to build trustworthiness and safety of our services.



What to do?

- When procuring or renewing (third-party) services, you are obliged to ensure any data storage is done within the [framework of GDPR](#).
- When procuring or renewing third-party services, ensure that a [Data Processing Agreement](https://www.tudelft.nl/en/privacy-security/privacy/data-processing-agreement) is completed (<https://www.tudelft.nl/en/privacy-security/privacy/data-processing-agreement>).
Work together with ICT and Legal services to get a Data Processing Agreement in place.
- Clearly document what data the service is collecting and for how long, asking permission where relevant.
- For services managing digital assets with complex rights (such as more users for different assets), ensure the service respects the different rights related to the asset.

12. Have a permanent, clear web address

The service must have an unambiguous web address.



Why is it important?

A permanent, unambiguous web address gives a sense of trust; long, changing URLs do not. Such an address is likely to be more feasibly found and retained by both users and search engines. It can also give a sense of what the service is about.



What to do?

- Devise a URL for each service in the format *http://library.tudelft.nl/service*. The URL should match the verb-based description used in Standard 2.
 - For example, *http://www.tudelft.nl/library/request-historical-maps*
- If a brand name already has traction with users that may be used
 - For example, *http://www.tudelft.nl/library/collegerama*
- Alternatives can also be provided but they should resolve
 - For example, *http://www.tudelft.nl/library/sg* could resolve to *http://www.tudelft.nl/library/studium-generale*
- Use this URL in all relevant comms material
- Work with the Comms team to embed this URL in the web
- (On the ending of the service), leave the webpage in place explaining why the service ended.
- Discuss possible exceptions with the Comms Team

Colophon

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