

CHAPTER 6 – EVALUATION OF SAPS WEBSITE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the evaluation of the current SAPS website, using the websites evaluation instrument, as discussed in Chapter 5. Four evaluators expressed their expert opinion, in the seven categories of website content, website architecture, information structure, technology, style, service delivery and e-Government.

The rating system used to evaluate the SAPS website is as follows:

| | |
|---|--|
| 3 | Full compliance – all aspects of the criteria are covered |
| 2 | Evidence of compliance to most aspects of the criteria |
| 1 | Some evidence of compliance; comply to some of the aspects |
| 0 | Do not comply at all |
| - | Could not be evaluated |

The sequence of ratings and notes are presented from Evaluator 1 to 4. (Refer to the websites evaluation instrument given in Chapter 5 and the evaluations in Annexure B, namely those of Evaluator 1 (Annexure B: 1), Evaluator 2 (Annexure B: 2), Evaluator 3 (Annexure B: 3), and Evaluator 4 (Annexure B:4).)

The *italicised* inserts following the ratings and notes are recommendations that could contribute directly to developing the SAPS website and to SAPS online service delivery.

Annexure C contains a summary of the recommendations.

6.2 Evaluation of SAPS website content

6.2.1 Evaluators' ratings and notes

(a) General

- Identification (Ratings 2, 1, 2, 2): The ratings indicate that the site is fairly clearly identified.
- Clarity of purpose (Ratings 1, 0, 2,1): The evaluators differ on this item, which has to do with the purpose of the website, i.e. to inform, make contact, get feedback and interaction, or to provide value-added service. *Stating the purpose of the website therefore needs to be addressed.*
- Home page (Ratings 2, 1, 1, 2): Ratings are average, indicating that users are not immediately engaged in the website. *The matter of establishing engagement in the website needs attention.*

- Home page quality (Ratings 2, 0, 2, 2): The ratings show that the quality is fairly satisfactory, except in the case of Evaluator 2 who states that there is no compliance to criteria.
- Home page coverage (Ratings 1, 1, 3, 2): The ratings indicate that the evaluators do think that the scope of the site can be identified from the home page.
- Target audience and relevancy (Ratings 2, 2, 2, 2): The evaluators agree that the website is relevant to the target audience.
- Differentiation and branding (Ratings 3, 3, 3, 3): The evaluators are positive about this item. As Evaluator 2 states “the police star makes it fairly unique”.
- Reason to return (Ratings 2, 0, 1, 2): The evaluators differ here. Two comments “No reason to return” and “Content outdated and old” indicate need for attention. *Establishing reasons to return needs to be addressed.*
- Website alignment (Ratings 2, 1, 1, 1): Ratings are low. They do, however, indicate that the content is – to a degree – in line with the website’s purpose.

(b) Content

- “About us” page (Ratings 0, 0, 2, 2): The ratings indicate divergent opinions. Evaluator 1 states that it is difficult to find information (it should be more prominent). Evaluator 2 states that there is “nothing from front page”. However, there is evidently (based on the others’ evaluation) some compliance to criteria. *Such a page should be considered.*
- “Where to find us” page (Ratings 0, 0, 2, 0): Generally, the evaluators are negative. Evaluator 1 states that it is difficult to find information (it should be more prominent). Evaluator 2 indicates that there is only an e-mail address for web information. Evaluator 4 refers to the *Servamus* site (a law enforcement-related website that has important contact details) and he suggests that SAPS should follow suit urgently. *This aspect needs to be addressed.*
- Organisation structure (Ratings 1, 2, 3, 2): The ratings indicate that the SAPS website is on the right track here.
- Press releases/ official news (Ratings 2, 3, 3, 3): The ratings indicate that the SAPS website is on target here.
- Calendar of events (Ratings 0, 0, -, 0): The ratings indicate an undeniable shortcoming. *A calendar of events should be considered.*
- Reports (Ratings 2, 2, 2, 3): The rating indicate that the SAPS website is on the right track. Evaluator 2, however, cautions that the reports are not up to date. *Updated reports should be posted on the website.*
- Initiatives (Ratings 1, 1, -, 3): The evaluators differ widely on this item. *Attention needs to be paid to this.*
- “What’s New” section (Ratings 1, 0, -, 2): The evaluators differ on this item. The evaluators’ notes are telling: “Overdone on menu items”, and “Not a section, but flashing graphics indicate new sections”. *Such a section could be developed.*
- FAQs (Ratings 2, 1, 2, 1): The evaluators indicate that there is some compliance to criteria. The notes are important: “Shortage of info”, “No dates provided” and “Not what is usually provided in FAQ. Only three questions answered”. *The FAQ section needs to be developed.*

- Glossary (Ratings) 0, 0, -, 0); No glossary given. *A glossary could add value to the website.*

(c) **Credibility**

- Content authority (Ratings 0, 0, -, 1): Overall the evaluators indicate that users do not know whom to contact about content issues. Evaluator 4 indicates that there is one “e-mail us” address. *This should be addressed.*
- Authorship (Ratings 1, 0, 1, 1): The evaluators indicate that only contact details for the webmaster are given and not for the team and that only on some pages authors’ details are given. *This needs to be considered.*
- Author (Ratings 0, 0, 3, 1): The evaluators – with the exception of Evaluator 3 – feel that it is not clear who the authors are. *Consideration should be given to this.*
- Content style (Ratings 2, 0, 3, 2): The evaluators’ views are diverse. Evaluator 2 is negative, while the others are more positive.
- References (Ratings 1, 0, 2, 2): Evaluator 2 gives a negative rating. The others’ ratings are more positive. Evaluator 4 states that “official documents” are identified.
- Accuracy (Ratings 2, 2, 2, 2): The content is regarded as accurate.
- Objectivity (Ratings 1, 1, 3, 2): The objectivity is on average rated as fair. Evaluator 4 states that this is a government site and that “it seems objective”.
- Completeness (Ratings 2, 1, 2, 2): The ratings indicate that coverage is regarded as fairly complete.
- Breadth of coverage (Ratings 2, 1, 3, 2): The evaluators’ rating differs – but all feel that coverage is fairly wide. Evaluator 4 states “Contact numbers and addresses omitted”.
- Depth of coverage (Ratings 2, 1, 1, 2): The evaluators concur that there is a degree of depth of coverage. However, information could sometimes possibly be buried too deep, i.e. require too many clicks to find it. Evaluator 4 cautions, “sometimes good information is four levels deep”. *This aspect should be looked into.*
- Timeliness of coverage (Ratings 2, 1, 1, 2): The evaluators do share the opinion that fresh content is provided and that content reflects topics of interest to the assumed target. Evaluator 2, however, states that new information is occasional.
- Verification (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 2): This item is generally rated negatively, but Evaluator 4 does mention the reference to *Servamus*, the law enforcement-related journal. *Verifying reports by referring to print versions, where applicable, is recommended.*
- Content currency (Ratings 2, 0, -, 1): Ratings vary, but there is an indication that the dates of articles are written is not given, updates are not indicated and revision is not indicated. *Giving dates when copy is published online should be considered.*
- Dates and updating (Ratings 0, 0, 0, 0): Ratings indicate that there are no updates. *Updates should be considered.*

(d) Content quality

- Quality control (Ratings 1, 1, 1, 2): Ratings indicate that there is a degree of quality control, i.e. there is evidence that the information is checked and verified, there is attention to detail and there is an absence of mistakes. Evaluator 4 indicates that it is “Adequate to good”.
- Quality of verbal expression (Ratings 2, 2, 1, 2): The ratings indicate that the site measures up in terms of readability and that grammar and language usage are fair. Evaluator 4 advises “Brevity and clarity of writing could improve substantially”.
- Clear and concise wording (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 2): The ratings indicate that an appropriate literary style has been adopted. Evaluator 4 states that the “Style could generally be improved”.

(e) Legal issues

- Terms of use (Ratings 2, 1, 3, 0): The evaluators differ on this item. Evaluator 4 states that there is “No separate page”. *It should be determined whether the provision made is adequate.*
- Copyright notice (Ratings 2, 1, 0, 2): Evaluator 4 indicates that this is given on the home page. Evaluator 3 states it is not given (perhaps this is an oversight on her side). *It should be ensured that the copyright notice is conspicuous.*
- Disclaimer (Ratings 2, 2, 3, 3): This item is rated as satisfactory.
- Privacy statement (Ratings 0, 0, 0, 0): *A privacy statement should be considered.*
- Content suitability (Ratings 2, 2, 3, 3): Ratings are good.

6.2.2 Recommendations

The four evaluators’ assessments of the SAPS website content indicate that there is scope for improvement.

The following recommendations regarding content are given:

(a) General

- The purpose of the website should be spelt out clearly.
- Attempts could be made to make the home page more engaging.
- More reasons to return should be built into the website content.

(b) Content

- An “About us” page should be considered.
- A “Where to find us” page should be considered.
- A Calendar of Events should be established.
- Updated reports should be posted on the website.
- Initiatives should be published regularly.
- A “What’s new” section should be considered instead of the flashing “New” notices on the home page.

- A glossary could add value to the website.

(c) **Credibility**

- Giving contact numbers for content providers should be considered.
- Giving contact numbers for the web team – and not only the webmaster – should be considered.
- Contact details for authors of articles should be considered.
- An attempt could be made to limit the depth of content to three clicks, or less, away.
- Reports could be verified by referring to print copies, where applicable.
- Dates of articles should be given.
- Updates should be provided.

(d) **Legal issues**

- Terms of use should be clear.
- Copyright conditions should be displayed conspicuously.
- A privacy statement should be attached.

6.3 Evaluation of SAPS website architecture (overall design)

6.3.1 Evaluators' ratings and notes

(a) **Website structure**

- User-centric structure (Ratings 0, 0, 3, 1): The evaluators' differ widely on this item. Evaluator 4 states, "It is not designed for an intuitive flow". *This needs attention.*
- Positioning clear (Ratings 1, 1, 3, 1): Overall, the opinion is that the positioning is not clear and that the information is not categorised to allow logical movement through the site. *Information should be positioned in such a way that users would logically find it.*
- Intuitive structure (Ratings 1, 0, 3, 1): The evaluators differ on this item. This links to the previous two items and there is scope for improvement.
- User-centric layout (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 1): There is consensus – to a degree – that the layout is designed to follow the user's thought processes and that it is easy to use. This response may seem contradictory to the previous two responses. However, it was the evaluators' prerogative to respond as they wished. The notes "Unappealing look" and "Information sometimes in unexpected places" need to be considered.
- Balanced design (Ratings 1, 0, 3, 2): The evaluators differ on this item. Evaluator 2 is negative. The others state the "balance is okay".
- Site organisation (Ratings 2, 0-1, 3, 2): The evaluators differ on this item. Overall it could be taken that the organisation is regarded as fair.

(b) Navigation

- Consistent link structure (Ratings 2, 0-1, 2, 1): Indications are that the link structure is consistent.
- Commonly used web navigation labels (Ratings 1, 1, 1, 2): The ratings indicate that they exist. Evaluator 3 states that only two exist. Evaluator 4 suggests that pages for “About us”, “Contact us”, “Site Map”, “Feedback” and “Help” would be helpful. *This should be considered.*
- Easy to navigate (Ratings 1, 0, 1, 3): Evaluator 3 makes the point: “Not possible to move without returning to the home page”. *This should be addressed.*
- Easy to find (Ratings 1, 2, 3, 3): Ratings are good. Evaluator 2 makes the suggestion: “In terms of SA’s language policy details on search engine could be in more than one official language”. *This should be considered.*
- Image maps (Ratings 1, 0, 1, -): Ratings negative. Evaluator 4 points out image maps are not used.
- Site map (Ratings 0, 0, -, 0): No site map. *This should be considered.*
- Index (Ratings 0, 0, -, 1): Although there is no table of content or index, Evaluator 4 points out that there are some indices on pages. *A site map is recommended.*
- Flow (Ratings 1, 1, 3, 1): Ratings differ. Evaluator 4 states that there is little flow or transition. *Flow on the SAPS website should be investigated.*
- Background (Ratings 2, 0, 3, 2): Divergent views on background. Criticisms noted are “Children’s page background overwhelming”, and “Backgrounds sometimes overwhelming and ... backgrounds differing widely”. *This needs to be addressed.*
- Indication of page position (Ratings 1, 0, 2, 0): The overall view is that the site is not always structured to make it clear where the user is in the site. *This needs to be addressed.*
- Navigation aids and scrolling (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): The ratings are low. The evaluators draw attention to the speeches and the History page. *Use of navigation aids should be looked into.*

(c) Links and menus

- Links (internal) (Ratings 1, 1, 0, 3): The evaluators differ on whether internal links are adequate. *This indicates that the matter should be revisited.*
- Links (external) (Ratings 2, 0, 0, 2): The evaluators differ on whether external links are adequate. Evaluator 4 points out that there is a dead link. *This indicates that the matter should be revisited.*
- Link description (Ratings 1, 1, 0, 3): The evaluators differ on this item. *It is therefore important to assess whether the link descriptions are indeed descriptive enough to clearly indicate where and to what they lead to.*
- Link colour (Ratings 2, 1, 0, 3): The evaluators differ on this item. *This therefore needs to be checked.*
- Links back ‘Home’ (Ratings 2, 2, 3, 3): The evaluators are positive about this.
- Top menu bar (Ratings 0, 0, 0, 0): *The ratings indicate that this needs attention.*

- Menu bar (Ratings 0, 0, 0, 0): *The ratings indicate that this needs attention.*

6.3.2 Recommendations

The four evaluators' assessments of the SAPS website architecture (overall design) indicate that there is scope for improvement.

The following recommendation regarding architecture are given:

(a) Website structure

- Design for an intuitive flow should be looked into: Positioning of information should be logical – information should be categorised to allow easy movement through the site. The structure and layout should be user-centric.

(b) Navigation

- More navigation labels should be considered, such as “Site map”, “Feedback”, “Contact us”, and “Help”.
- It should be possible to navigate within the website without returning to the home page.
- A site map would add value to the website.
- The quality of backgrounds used in the website should be investigated.
- The indication of page positions should receive attention: Users need to know where they are on the site.
- Greater use of navigation aids should be considered: Where text is long and vertical scrolling is required, navigation aids in the text – such as indicating “Back to top” – could be used.

(c) Links and menus

- All links – external and internal – should be revisited to ensure that they are adequate and that dead links are removed. The issue raised that it is not possible to navigate within the site without each time returning the home page should be rectified.
- A top menu bar should be implemented and the other menu bars should be examined to determine whether they should be improved.

6.4 Evaluation of SAPS information architecture (information structure)

6.4.1 Evaluators' ratings and notes

- Information architecture (information structure) (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 2): Ratings regarding coherent presentation of information are fair. Evaluator 4 points out the following: “Child abuse is not expected between the colouring pages of Kiddies' Corner,” and “Farms attacks addressed on two different pages”. *The structure of information on the entire web page needs to be checked.*

- Information construct clarity (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 2): Ratings are fair. Evaluators share the opinion that information is chunked together in digestible blocks.
- Coherent presentation of information (Ratings 1, 1, 3, 2): Ratings are fair, i.e. packaging of information is effective – not too long or too short.
- Effective categorisation (Ratings 0, 0, 3, 1): Evaluators differ on this. *This needs attention.*
- Use of menus for finding information (Ratings 1, 1, 3, 2): Evaluators differ on this, but do indicate that menus are used. Evaluator 4 indicates that all menus have a different look and feel. *This should be looked into.*
- Menus provide effective grouping (Ratings 0, 0, 3, 1): Evaluators differ on this. Evaluator 4 points out that this is not always clear. *This needs to be addressed.*
- Organisation (Clear headings, subheadings) (Ratings 1, 0, 3, 2): Evaluators differ on this. Evaluator 1 notes that this aspect could improve. Evaluator 4 sums it up: “Information organisation mostly clean, some pieces in unexpected places”. *Some tidying up of information is thus recommended.*
- Information access (Ratings 1, 0, 3, 1): Evaluators differ on this. Evaluator 4 points out that it is not always clear where the information is. *This needs attention.*
- Uncluttered/easily scanned (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 2): Evaluators indicate that the SAPS website is on the right track here.
- Attention to detail (Ratings 0, 1, 1, 2): Evaluators indicate that attention is paid to detail, but there is scope for improvement. Evaluator 4 points out that there are some dead links.

6.4.2 Recommendations

The four evaluators’ assessments of the SAPS website architecture (information structure) indicate that there is scope for improvement.

The following recommendations regarding information structure are given:

- The structure of information on the entire website should be re-assessed. Child abuse is, for example found under the Kiddie’s Corner – where it should not be. Hints on how to act to prevent/counter farm attacks are given on two separate pages.
- Following from above, an overall check-up should be undertaken to determine whether information is categorised effectively.
- Menus have a different look and feel, according to one evaluator. Consistency should be striven for in order to contribute to the website identity.
- Regarding information access, it is not always clear where to find information. This shortcoming needs to be addressed.

6.5 Evaluation of SAPS website technology

6.5.1 Evaluators' ratings and notes

(a) Features and facilities

- Search facility (Ratings 0, 0, -, 0): None present. *This needs to be considered.*
- Forms (Ratings 1, 0, -, 0): None available. *This needs to be considered.*
- Downloads (Ratings 2, 0-1, -): None available, according to evaluators. (The annual report is, in fact, downloadable.)
- Browser support (Ratings 1, 0, -, -): Evaluator 4 points out that this cannot be evaluated. He states that it “displays well in IE 5.5”. Evaluator 2 suggests the following “Specify on which browser and resolution (best viewed by...)”. *This should be considered.*
- Innovative use of technology (Ratings 0, 0, -, 0): This is not done, e.g. no use of multimedia. Evaluator 1 notes that it is not used, but cautions that it must be use carefully.
- Interactivity (Ratings 0, 0, 1, -): Evaluator 3 states that there is some interactivity. The others disagree. *This aspect should be considered.*
- Singularity of purpose (Ratings 1, 1-2, -, 2): Two evaluators agree that there is no “attention clash”. However, Evaluator 4 states that the home page animation is a hindrance. *This should be considered.*
- Responsiveness and connectivity (Ratings 2, 1, -, 3): Speed of connection, response times and download time seem to be satisfactory.

(b) World Wide Web factors

- URL (Ratings 2, 0, -, 3): The URL is not seen to be satisfactory, except in the case of Evaluator 4 – who, in any case, suggests that it should be a “gov” domain and not “org” as is the case. He adds that not everybody would know what SAPS stands for. The URL needs to be reconsidered.
- Website management (Ratings 1, 1-3, 1, 0): Ratings on this differ. Evaluator 1 notes that this could improve. Evaluator 4 indicates that there is no evidence of this. *It is recommended that evidence be given.*

6.5.2 Recommendations

The four evaluators' assessments of the SAPS technology indicate that there is scope for improvement.

The following recommendations regarding technology are given:

(a) Features and facilities

- A search facility should be implemented.
- Downloadable forms should be considered.

- Interactivity is limited to e-mail to the Internet communication official (response@saps.org.za). More interactivity should be encouraged.
- Browser support could be indicated, i.e. it could be specified on which browser the website is best viewed.
- Technology is not used innovatively, e.g. no use of multimedia. This could be considered.
- The URL could be reconsidered.
- There is little attention clash on the website. However, the flashing “New” on the home page could be distracting. This could be looked into.

(b) **World Wide Web factors**

- The evaluators are not sure how much website management is undertaken. Such management could be indicated, by, for example indicating when information is updated and by regularly announcing new initiatives.

6.6 Evaluation of SAPS website style

6.6.1 Evaluators’ ratings and notes

(a) **General style**

- General impression in keeping with purpose (Ratings 1, 0, 1, 2): Ratings differ. Evaluator 4 states that it is “Functional rather than attractive”. Not one evaluator sees it as very stylish or attractive. *There is scope for improvement.*
- Overall visual appeal (Ratings 1, 0, 2, 1): The overall visual appeal is not rated highly. Evaluator 4 states that there is no consistent visual identity or look and feel. *This needs attention.*
- Visual aspects’ functionality (Ratings 1, 0, 2, 1): This item is not rated highly. Evaluator 4 states “flashing graphics distracting”. *This needs attention.*
- Overall presentation (Ratings 1, 0, 1, 1): This item is not rated highly. Evaluator 4 states that it is “Functional rather than enticing or professional”. *This item needs attention.*
- Ease of reading (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 1): Evaluator 4 indicates “Wording sometimes lengthy and clumsy in conveying facts”. *Evaluations indicate scope for improvement.*
- Readability (Ratings 2, 2, 3, 2): Ratings indicate that readability is acceptable.

(b) **Specific elements**

- Relevancy of graphic images (Ratings 2, 1, -, 1): The ratings are low. Evaluator 4 notes that “Images not used very effectively” and “SAPS logo not very sharp”. *This needs attention.*
- Use of graphics (style) (Ratings 2, 0, -, 1): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 notes “ Images seem old-fashioned and grainy”. *This needs attention.*
- Legibility (Ratings 1, 1, 1, 1): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 notes: “Widely varying backgrounds, usually readable, except bright blue text such as ‘Local partnership policing’”. *This needs attention.*

- Writing style (Ratings 2, 1, 1, 2): Ratings are fair. Evaluator 4 notes: “Wording sometimes too lengthy, technical, not aimed at average SA citizen”. *This needs attention.*
- Consistent use of fonts (Ratings 2, 2, 1, 2): Ratings are fair. Evaluator 2 notes: “Problems with printing of page”. Evaluator 4 notes: “Not always the same. Usually readable”. *This aspect could be addressed to improve quality.*
- Consistent colour scheme (Ratings 1, 0, 1, 0): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 notes “Widely varying backgrounds and styles – seems like 13 different websites”. *This needs attention.*
- Ease of use (Ratings 1, 0, 1, 2): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 notes: “Sometimes confusing, but it works”.
- Titles (Ratings 2, 2, 3, 2): Ratings are good.
- Usability testing (Ratings -, 0, -, 0): Not undertaken. *Needs to be considered.*
- User matching (Ratings 0, -, 0): Not done.

6.6.2 Recommendations

The four evaluators’ assessment of the SAPS website style indicates that there is scope for improvement.

The following recommendations regarding style are given:

(a) General style

- The website is described as “functional” rather than attractive. However, to be optimally functional by attracting users, a website needs to be attractive. Work needs to be done to make it more attractive.
- The visual appeal is lacking and there is no consistent look and feel or identity. This needs to be addressed.
- Visual aspects are not always functional, for example the flashing graphics on the home page are described as “distracting”. The functionality of graphics needs to be examined.
- The information on the website is written in such a way that it is sometimes clumsy. All material should be edited before being posted on the website. In addition to impeccable language use, the writing style should be adapted for websites. Sentences and paragraphs should be short. Entire documents should be brief, if possible.

(b) Specific elements

- Legibility is not always good. It is sometimes hampered by incorrect use of backgrounds. All text on the website should be examined for legibility and distracting backgrounds changed or removed.
- Backgrounds and style are widely divergent. Consistency is necessary to establish an identity.
- Usability testing could add value because it could result in features that hamper usability being changed.

6.7 Evaluation of SAPS website service delivery

6.7.1 Evaluators' ratings and notes

(a) Police-specific content

- Target audience identification (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 0): Ratings are low. Target audience should be clearly identified and objectives concerning target audience stated.
- Content relevancy (Ratings 1, 2, 2, 2): The rating is fair.
- Police service strategy (Ratings 2, 3, 3, 0): The ratings are contradictory. This is possibly because Evaluators 2 and 3 saw the link to the strategy but did not click on it. Evaluator 4 did – and found a dead link. This needs to be rectified.
- Vision and mission of police service (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): Three of the four evaluators could not find it. It should be placed prominently on the website.
- Organisation structure (Ratings 2, 1, 3, 3): Ratings are good – except for Evaluator 2 who is of the opinion that the structure should be more comprehensive. This should be looked into.
- Police Service Acts (Ratings 2, 3, 3, 3): Ratings good. This is available.
- Policy documents (Ratings 2, 0, 3, 2): Published – but Evaluator 2 is of the opinion that they are not complete. This should be looked into.
- Police service documents (Ratings 2, 0, 0, 2): Ratings. Evaluator 4 notes: “A few – should be more”. This aspect needs attention.
- Statistics and crime statistics (Ratings 1, 0, 1, 1): Ratings low. Notes by evaluators are that the statistics are outdated. This needs to be addressed.
- Successes reported (Ratings 1, 0, -, 0): This needs to be addressed.
- Customisation (Ratings -, 0, -, -): Introducing customisation could be investigated, although there is a general feeling that this is not required for a police agency website.
- Emergency service (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): Emergency contact number not furnished. This needs to be addressed.
- Special attention to topical issues (Ratings 2, 0, 0, 1): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 indicates there are some – but more needed. This needs to be addressed.
- Attention to high-profile crime (Ratings 2, 1, 1, 2): Ratings are generally low. Evaluator 4 states that the website reports “Between Jan and Aug 1996, there were 8 740 hijackings in South Africa of which 5 251 were in Gauteng”. So what, he asks? No hotspots mentioned. Advice should be given on what to do during a hijacking. This should be followed up.
- Other services (Ratings 1, 1, 2, 1): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 suggests more services should be given. This should be followed up.

(b) Contacting the police

- Reporting crime (emergencies) (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 1): The ratings are low. Evaluator 4 makes the following comments:

- 0800 11 12 13 is hidden under 'CrimeStop Schematic presentation of how crime operates' – not directly on the home page
- 'Crime Stop' page listed as No 13 on the Home Page menu – no indication of 'emergency services'
- 10111 described as alternative
- 08600 10111 (Share-Call Service) listed separately – purpose the same?
- Childline buried very deep – 080 055555
- Procedure explanation clumsy across many pages
- No clarity on emergency status of the call

These aspects need attention.

- Reporting crime (non-emergencies) (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 1): Ratings are low. *This needs attention.*
- Reporting crime by e-mail (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 1): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 notes two places where e-mail addresses are given. *This needs attention.*
- Contacting the police for reasons other than reporting crime (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 1): Ratings are low. Evaluator 4 notes: "Difficult to find, not much on offer, no search function to hunt it down". *This needs attention.*
- Single point of contact (simple enquiries) (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): Ratings show that evaluators do not think there is a single point of contact. *This should be addressed once e-Government principles are adopted.*
- Contact information for head office (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): This is not given. *This needs attention.*
- Contact information for local offices (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 1): Ratings are low. As Evaluator 4 notes; "This is buried deep under 'Organisational Profiles' – this is not intuitive. Only telephone and fax numbers are given – no physical addresses". *This needs attention.*
- Response to enquiries (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 1): Ratings are low – although there is such contact e-mail address. *This needs attention.*
- Languages supported (Ratings 2, 0, 0, 1): Ratings are low as this is not available. *This needs attention.*

6.7.2 Recommendations

The four evaluators' assessments of the SAPS service delivery indicate that there is scope for improvement.

The following recommendation regarding service delivery are given:

(a) Police-specific content

- The target audiences should be clearly identified and the objectives regarding the audience stated.

- Although the police service strategy has been posted on the web, the one evaluator encountered a dead link in trying to access it. This should be rectified.
- The vision and mission should be placed on the website.
- Policy documents and police service documents do appear on the website. However, there are not many. More major documents should be accessible.
- Police service successes should be published on the website.
- The statistics on the website that are outdated should be updated.
- Topical issues, for example the Nigerian scam and the spiralling drug abuse, should receive far more coverage on the website.
- Details of emergency services should be prominently displayed on the website.
- Ways of presenting high-profile crimes need to be addressed. As is stated in the evaluation, it serves no purpose to relate incidences of hijacking. Users should be told how to avoid this happening and what to do when it happens.
- More services offered by the police should be promoted on the website.

(b) Contacting the police

- Reporting emergency and non-emergency crime, as well as matters other than crime, is not sufficiently aided on the website. In the case of emergency service, emergency contact numbers are, in some cases, “hidden” somewhere on the website, or buried deep – requiring many clicks – or are confusing. Non-emergency contact numbers are not given. This matter needs to be rectified.
- Reporting crime via e-mail is not encouraged. This is an important service that could be rendered and should be addressed.
- Contact numbers for head office divisions and departments are not given. This should be addressed.
- Contact numbers for police stations are difficult to find (under profiles). This should be changed to make it easy for users to find.
- South Africa has 11 official languages. Contacting the police in emergency situations and other situations should be facilitated for people belonging to language groups other than English. This aspect needs attention.

6.8 Evaluation of SAPS e-Government service

6.8.1 Evaluators’ ratings and notes

(a) General

- Self-service (Ratings 1, 0, -, -): Low rating. However, evaluators mostly note this is not applicable.
- Portals (Ratings 1, 0, -, -): Low rating. However, evaluators mostly note this is not applicable.

- “Life events” approach (Ratings 1, 0, -, -): Low rating. However, evaluators mostly note this is not applicable.
- Digital democracy (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): *This needs attention.*
- Links (Ratings 2, 1, 3, 2): Ratings vary, but this is discussed in earlier categories.
- Appropriate security (Ratings -, 0, -, -): Low rating. However, evaluators mostly note this is not applicable.
- Database integration (Ratings -, 0, -, -): Low rating. However, evaluators mostly note this is not applicable.
- Customer service and client respect (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): *This needs attention, as there is no evidence of customer service management.*
- Matches user sophistication level (Ratings 2, 0, -, 1): Ratings are generally low. Evaluator 4 comments, “Most users would be able to read basic content. Historically disadvantaged users would battle to find information”. *This needs investigation.*
- Personalisation: The ability to create “my site” (Ratings 1, 0, -, -): Low rating. However, evaluators mostly note this is not applicable. Evaluator 2 comments “Do not think there is a need for this now”.

(b) Interactive features

- Interactivity (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): *This needs attention.*
- Newsletter (Ratings 1, 0, -, -) Low rating. However, evaluators mostly note this is not applicable.
- E-mail links (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): *This needs attention.*
- Feedback (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): Evaluator 4 notes: “2 in CrimeStop and in a few other places”. *This needs attention.*
- Vacancies (Ratings 1, 2, 3, 3): Ratings high. Evaluator 2 notes “Details on vacancies, but nothing on how to join the police”. Evaluator 4 notes: “only to be submitted by mail or hand”.
- Emergency situations (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): Evaluator 4 notes “Not easy to find”. *This needs attention.*
- Initiatives (Ratings 1, 0, 3, 2): Ratings vary. Evaluator 4 notes: “Basic information. Does not seem to be updated often”. *This needs looking into.*
- Surveys on user needs (results available online) (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 0): *This should be addressed.*
- Promotion of police service objectives (Ratings 1, 0, 2, 2): These ratings indicate that the evaluators generally rate the promotion of objectives as fair.
- Ensured reaction (Ratings 1, 0, 0, 1): Evidently evaluators do not rate the website as being one phase higher than an electronic brochure. Evaluator 4 notes: “Not very inspiring”. *This needs attention.*
- Contact information (Ratings 2, 1, 3, 3): The ratings are fair here. See, however, ratings above.
- User support (Ratings -, 0, 0, 0): *This needs attention.*

6.8.2 Recommendations

The four evaluators' assessments of the SAPS website e-Government service delivery indicate that there is scope for improvement.

The following recommendations regarding architecture are given:

(a) General

- Digital democracy needs to be promoted – possibly in the form of discussion forums, online forms and feedback mechanisms.
- The customer service offered via the response@saps.org.za should be promoted. The Internet communication official responds to queries and complaints received via this e-mail address. However, there is no indication on the website how this is managed. Posting such information on the website would let users know that needs are catered for.
- The website should match user sophistication level. Where South Africa has 11 official languages and many communities from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, these aspects need to be considered in upgrading and developing the website.

(b) Interactive features

- Interactivity should be promoted on the website. This could be done by allowing users to submit content to the website and by enabling more feedback mechanisms and e-mail communication.
- The SAPS journal (a print publication) could be published on the website – giving users more access to SAPS-related information.
- Police initiatives should be published and kept up to date.
- There should be more information on how to deal with emergency situations.
- Vacancies are published, but users are not advised on how to join the SAPS. This should be done.
- User support should be developed.
- Surveys on user needs should be regularly conducted.

The Gartner Four Phases of e-Government Model is discussed in Chapter 2. It is used in measuring progress of e-Government initiatives and to establish a roadmap to achieve the desired levels of constituency service. It could be of value if used in the development of the SAPS website.

6.9 SAPS website measured against Gartner Group's e-Government model

From the results of the evaluation done in this chapter, the current SAPS website is rated as follows, using the Gartner Group's e-Government model:

Table 32 SAPS website measured against Gartner Group’s e-Government model

| Phase | SAPS website |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Phase 1: Presence | The SAPS site informs the public about its role and functions. It provides some basic documents to users. |
| Phase 2: Interaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public can access some critical information online through the website. • Some links to relevant sites are given. • e-Mail addresses are provided for offices and officials. • No search capability is provided. • No forms can be downloaded. |
| Phase 3: Transaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No self-service applications can be built for public online access. • No tasks can be conducted online by SAPS users (the public). • Not many services can be gained by using the website. • Not much shared services with other government departments or agencies. |
| Phase 4: Transformation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SAPS website does not represent a new definition of government service delivery. • It does not provide a single point of contact, making government department organisation transparent to users. Users do not participate directly in government activities. • No government information is pushed to citizens, with seamless interfaces back to the SAPS. |

It is clear that (as far as online service delivery is concerned) the SAPS website is mostly in Phase 1 of the Gartner framework (Presence), with a few functions from Phase 2 (Interaction). No features exist in phases 3 or 4, as no transactions can be conducted, and services are not transformed by the use of online media.

In the South African context, this finding is not surprising, as most other government departments and agencies are still in the early days of this form of service delivery. The finding should, however, be seen against the South African government’s clear statement of intent of providing online service delivery in meeting the needs of its constituency.

What should be borne in mind that the introduction of e-Government services is not about technology; it is about service delivery. Technology is the ‘tool’ used to deliver the service. Di Maio is clear on this

“E-Government is much more about transforming relationships than about technology. There is no smooth transition from “government” to “e-Government.” In going from just a presence on the Web to a profound transformation, with new services and processes and a seamless integration inside and across agencies, government organizations must resolve four sets of issues:

- 1) Existing strategies and policies may be inadequate to address new kinds of internal and external relationships, and to exploit new delivery channels;
- 2) people may strongly oppose changes;
- 3) bureaucratic processes developed for a hierarchical organization may prove inadequate to support constituent-centricity; and
- 4) new technologies and architectures must be managed.

Progressing through e-Government phases implies increasing costs and complexity, but also greater constituent value. Most of the technology challenges are faced in Phase 3, when online transactions require unprecedented reliability, availability and security levels. In Phase 4, people, organization and process challenges become the main stumbling block to overcome. Policy and regulatory impact will be considerable in Phase 3 and Phase 4. While most initiatives try to achieve Phase 4, effective transformation, they must be rooted into the social, constitutional, legal, economic and technological context which they will influence" (Di Maio 2001).

6.10 Assessing the responses

Evaluators' ratings usually clustered around an average value. In some cases the evaluators' ratings varied by 1 or 2 points for the same criterion. This could possibly be attributable to factors such as the following:

- The criteria for evaluation were not stated in great detail. The meanings attributed to terms was the general meaning, which could be interpreted differently.
- The sample size was very small.
- All the evaluators did not look at the same version of the SAPS website, as their evaluations were spread over a period of four months.
- The possibility of bias in the case any evaluator (e.g. always rating much lower than the average is not excluded.
- In some instances certain web pages seemed to be dead links on specific dates.

Taking all factors into consideration, the value of the evaluations lie in the consensus opinion, which still provides a clear statement on the quality of the SAPS online services in early 2003.

6.11 Benchmarking the SAPS website and service delivery

In section 4.12 the best practices for a police service agency website were identified, based on the seven international websites evaluated. In Table 33 the SAPS website is measured against identified best practices.

Table 33 SAPS website measured against the best practices identified

| Topic | Evaluation of SAPS web presence |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Website content | <p>Website strategy: A link to strategy is provided, but it did not function properly.</p> <p>Audience-specific content should be provided: Very little content is audience-specific, e.g. the web pages for children.</p> <p>Cultural sensitivity, catering for language groups: Cultural sensitivity is not indicated. The only language used is English.</p> <p>Logo significance. The logo on the home page should spell out what the police and the website are striving for.</p> <p>The content should be in line with the mission of the police service agency: The content is in line with the mission. But the mission does not appear on the website.</p> <p>Breadth of information: The breadth of information is adequate.</p> <p>Source reference: Sources references are lacking.</p> <p>Police-specific content: (The structure, leadership and history of the police service agency. Media releases, crime statistics, and details of campaigns, launches, successes, employment opportunities and conferences, etc.): This is covered fairly widely.</p> <p>Contact details (for emergency and non-emergency situations): Contact details are minimal and need to be extended.</p> <p>Availability of publications (police agency publications): The annual report is published. More publications could be published.</p> <p>Consistency of website design guidelines: No guidelines are given.</p> <p>Surveys to ensure usability: No such surveys undertaken.</p> <p>Strategy for bridging the digital divide: No strategy is in place.</p> <p>Comment and feedback: There is an avenue for comment and feedback.</p> <p>Community participation: This is limited to the single “response” address given on the website.</p> |
| Website architecture (overall design) | <p>Ease of finding location (clarity of URL): Satisfactory</p> <p>Overall layout: It is fairly easy to use and follow.</p> <p>Site organisation: The organisation of the site is fair.</p> <p>Consistent look and feel: The look and feel is not consistent.</p> <p>Intuitiveness of design: There is scope for improvement.</p> <p>Useful menu bars: More menu bars would add value. More effective grouping of menus is required.</p> <p>Home page informative, inviting, concise and easy-to-read: The home page does not immediately engage users in it. This should be worked on.</p> <p>Police service identity and services visible to the user: The logo makes it identifiable. Various services are indicated.</p> <p>Search facility: There is no internal search facility.</p> <p>Uncluttered appearance and restrained use of graphics: The appearance is not</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>overall attractive. Graphics are not used optimally.</p> <p>Consistent use of menus: Menus have a different look and feel.</p> <p>Site maps/indices: No site map is given.</p> <p>Indication of website and pages updates. There is no indication of updates.</p> |
| Information architecture (information structure) | <p>Effective information chunking: Chunking of information is overall fair. But some organisation is still required.</p> |
| Website technology | <p>Efficient click-throughs: Click-throughs are fairly satisfactory.</p> <p>Effectiveness of external and internal links: Both need to be addressed and updated.</p> <p>Downloadable documents: Only the annual report is downloadable.</p> <p>Adequate navigation on pages: This needs to be improved, e.g. more navigation labels should be considered.</p> <p>Investment in technology: This needs to be researched.</p> <p>Ensuring user privacy and security: This is not given.</p> <p>Visual aspects – effective graphics: Graphics are not used effectively.</p> |
| Website style | <p>Consistency. Layout and language style should be consistent throughout: Consistency is lacking.</p> <p>Text. Text should be interesting, appealing, readable and legible: This needs to be improved.</p> <p>Visual aspects. Graphics add to the attractiveness of the page: This needs to be improved.</p> |
| Service delivery | <p>User welcome, a sense of community and fun: This is lacking.</p> <p>Latest policing news: This is given in the form of press releases. More successes and campaigns, etc, should be given.</p> <p>Electronic forms: Not available.</p> <p>Downloadable publications: Only the annual report.</p> <p>Identification: Police websites is generally well identified: it is questionable whether the “saps” in the URL is internationally known.</p> <p>Appeal to a universal audience: This needs to be researched.</p> <p>Delivering service to the community: Still in phase one (of Gartner Group’s model – interaction limited and transactions absent).</p> <p>Contact details: This needs to be expanded. It is very limited.</p> <p>Benefits of police service to the community: This needs to be developed.</p> <p>Glossary of policing-specific and web-based terms: Not available.</p> <p>Mission, vision and strategy of police agency and website: Mission and vision not given. The link to the SAPS strategy is dead.</p> <p>Motto and brand building: This needs to be developed.</p> <p>Community relationship section and partnership policing: This needs to be developed.</p> <p>Multicultural diversity section: No available.</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| | <p>Disabled person's accessibility: Not available.</p> <p>Youth focus: Attention is given to this, but it needs to be developed.</p> <p>Educational use: Fair – but needs improvement.</p> <p>Campaigns: They are posted but not extensively.</p> <p>Research, e.g. investigation of the fear of crime among community members: Not done.</p> <p>Complaints against the police service (community participation): Only through response@saps.org.za.</p> <p>Website feedback: Only through response@saps.org.za.</p> <p>Surveys regarding the website and service delivery: Not undertaken.</p> <p>Business specific content: Needs to be developed.</p> |
| Delivery of e-Government services | Evidence that e-Government principles are coming into play: There is no evidence of this. |

6.12 Comparison to previous measures

6.12.1 Ask Africa survey (1997)

This survey was discussed at length in Chapter 1. The objective of the expectations measure was to provide the SAPS with guidelines to be used in deciding on initial content for its website. The aim of the research was to describe what specific information the public would like to receive from the SAPS in general and on a web page. It did not go into great detail on the design and technology of the website.

In the final report submitted to the SAPS in 1997, Ask Africa identified customer information. The extent to which these needs have been addressed is indicated in Table 34.

Table 34 Correlation with “Ask Africa survey” findings

| Ask Africa: Need identified | Instrument findings |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Crime statistics | Not addressed satisfactorily |
| Criminals | Not addressed (reasons for this given elsewhere) |
| Missing persons | Not addressed |
| Community policing | Not addressed satisfactorily |
| Structures and strategies | Satisfactory |
| Policing strategy | Not addressed satisfactorily |
| Success rates | Not addressed satisfactorily |
| Area specific crime rates | Not addressed satisfactorily |

| | |
|---|--|
| Wanted criminal information | Not addressed (reasons for this given elsewhere) |
| Missing persons information | Not addressed |
| Channels for community involvement in the fight against crime | Not addressed satisfactorily |
| Safety tips | Not addressed satisfactorily |

The correlation between the findings of the Ask Africa survey and the present evaluation is clear.

6.12.2 GCIS study

The shortcomings pointed out in the GCIS audit (2001) included issues in the content, organisation, navigation, design and layout of the SAPS website. It has remained largely unchanged since that audit. The findings of this study largely correlate with those of the GCIS audit, especially several of the shortcomings identified. Table 35 shows the correlation:

Table 35 Correlation with GCIS audit findings

| GCIS audit finding | Instrument findings |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. It is difficult to find information on most sites. This is attributed to factors such as poor information organisation and navigability, design and layout that could be improved and the need for improved search engines. | This is found in some instances. |
| 2. Interactivity only takes place to a limited extent. | Agree |
| 3. The choice of main categories on the home pages is often not logical. | Agree |
| 4. Information is sometimes presented in confusing categories. | Agree |
| 5. The choice of headings (also for links) is often not logical. | In some instances |
| 6. Hierarchical structures are often deep - this requires many clicks to get to the actual information. | Agree |
| 7. A lack of clearly defined aims. | Agree |
| 8. Insufficient indication of publication dates. | Agree |
| 9. A lagging behind in updating web sites. | Agree |
| 10. A poor indication that web pages form part of a specific web site. | In some instances |

It is clear that the findings of the present evaluation largely correlate with the GCIS audit findings.



6.12.3 Content updates

A major issue with websites is that the information is usually not regularly updated. This is regarded as a policy issue, with providing for sufficient skilled manpower to attend to content matters. It is not strictly a technology issue, although technology solutions could be used effectively to support the designated officials in executing their tasks. Such software tools are called Web Content Management (WCM) solutions. Solutions could be obtained from a simple to a very sophisticated level of control. It is recommended that SAPS management plan for the use of such automated techniques, by raising the issue with its service provider, SITA.

6.13 Conclusion

Chapter 6 discusses the evaluation of the SAPS website by four evaluators who applied the websites evaluation instrument. The evaluations of all seven categories in the evaluation instrument are followed by recommendations for improving the SAPS website and SAPS online service delivery. A summary of the recommendations is given in Annexure C.

In each of the above sections recommendations were compiled based on the evaluators' ratings and opinions expressed on each of the seven main evaluation areas. These evaluations will be presented to the website owner, and to the website team responsible for the redesign of the SAPS website.

The successful evaluation of the SAPS website proved the effectiveness of the website evaluation framework developed in Chapter 5. The framework is a reflection of current best practices. Adherence to the specific issues addressed in the framework will ensure that the SAPS website communicates effectively to its target market, the South African public. This will ensure that electronic media is used optimally in supporting the SAPS national strategy.

CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Study overview

The concluding chapter summarises the main findings and shows how the evaluation of the SAPS website has contributed in achieving the main aims of the study and confirmed the hypotheses set out in the initial chapters.

It discusses the possible implementation of the recommendations. It further gives pointers for possible future research.

7.2 Achieving the aims and confirming the hypotheses

7.2.1 Aims and hypotheses

In the introductory chapter, the aims of the study were stated as the following:

- To determine how police online resources could provide service delivery by a study of international best practices in the online (website) policing domain
- To assess the current state of the SAPS web presence by evaluating the current SAPS website
- To make recommendations regarding the development of the SAPS website from being a basic web presence to a dynamic service delivery tool – in line with e-Government principles

The study has two hypotheses.

- Hypothesis 1: In an increasingly connected world, the task of policing is growing more complex and a “static” web presence is inadequate in serving the constituency.
- Hypothesis 2: The use of online resources could assist in transforming police service delivery and involve/enable the citizen in directly supporting policing goals.

7.2.2 Methodology

The following methodology was used in the study:

- Literature study
- Requirement analysis
- Survey of “state of the art” police agency websites
- Development of a websites evaluation instrument
- Evaluation of the current SAPS website
- Recommendation: Developing the SAPS website from its present state to an e-Government service delivery tool.

7.2.3 Findings: Aims

- (a) **Aim: To determine how police online resources could provide service delivery by a study of international best practices in the online (website) policing domain.**

At the outset the study looks into what makes for best practices for websites. It makes it clear that much has been written and researched about the requirements for an effective website in general (and that such requirements also apply to police agency websites).

Fundamentally the literature survey in Chapter 2 shows that a golden rule applies if an online resource (in this case a website) is to provide service delivery: A website must be user-centric in terms of both content and structure. Such a “user-centric” approach is vital. Information must be presented in an intuitive fashion, allowing even the most inexperienced user to find his way around.

The study refers to the Gartner Group’s e-Government model. The model demonstrates the progression of e-Government in the connected environment, and identifies the factors that contribute to success. By adopting e-Government principles, a police agency website can migrate from a static phase to dynamic service delivery – as is illustrated by this model.

The GCIS audit of government websites (including the SAPS website) is subsequently discussed. One of the main conclusions of the audit is that the websites assessed were not user-centric and therefore not geared towards service delivery. The audit gives direction in terms of how the SAPS website should be improved and developed to provide greater service delivery.

This study examined international efforts in the online (website) policing domain. Contacts in other countries were established to determine the requirements for police agency websites specifically. The effectiveness of these resources was tested by conducting personal/e-mail interviews and by surveys with webmasters and by the questionnaires they completed.

Several international police agency websites were analysed for their content, architecture, information structure, technology, style and services delivered. From this, the typical nature and functions of a police agency website were deduced. The “best practice” guidelines for such websites could also be derived.

The first aim was thus achieved: It was possible to determine how online resources in the policing domain could provide service delivery.

- (b) **Aim:** To assess the current state of the SAPS web presence by evaluating the current SAPS website.

To evaluate the current SAPS website, a websites evaluation instrument was developed. Its development was based on the requirements indicated by the early Ask Africa survey (which preceded the establishment of the SAPS website – cf. Chapter 1), the literature survey (discussed above – cf. Chapter 2), the analysis of the requirements of SAPS website users over a period of a year (cf. Chapter 3), and the best practices of several police agency websites (cf. Chapter 4).

The current state of the SAPS website was assessed and this second aims thus achieved.

Regarding this current state the following was found: The SAPS website is still predominantly in phase 1 of the Gartner Group’s model of e-Government (Presence), with a few functions in phase 2 (Interaction). No features exist in phases 3 or 4, as no transactions can be conducted, and services are not transformed by the use of online media.

- (c) **Aim:** To make recommendations regarding the development of the SAPS website from being a basic web presence to a dynamic service delivery tool – in line with e-Government principles.

In Chapter 6 recommendations are made regarding the development of the SAPS website. These recommendations – if and when implemented – will assist developing the SAPS website to enhance its service delivery capabilities. This aim is therefore achieved.

7.2.4 Findings: Hypotheses

- (a) **Hypothesis 1:** In an increasingly connected world, the task of policing is growing more complex and a “static” web presence is inadequate in serving the constituency.

The study supports Hypothesis 1. Where police agency websites – as government websites – are primarily concerned with service delivery, static websites are no longer making the grade.

Websites must be user-centric. Up-to-date information is crucial in serving the community. The mere presence of a website is no guarantee of repeat visits. Users who visit a website twice and find the same information, more often than not do not return to that website. Providing information that has been left static for months or years reduces the site to an electronic version of a brochure, with the resultant lack of interest by users. In today’s world of abundant information on offer – also on the World Wide Web – websites compete fiercely for usership. A static web presence is indeed an obsolete presence.

Further, the international best practices (as set out in Chapter 4) also confirm the hypothesis. The overriding opinion shared by all four evaluators who assessed the SAPS websites is that a dynamic “web presence” is required.

(b) Hypothesis 2: The use of online resources could assist in transforming the police service delivery and involve/enable the citizen in directly supporting policing goals.

The study confirms Hypothesis 2. Police service delivery is about serving the community. As is pointed out in Chapter 1, service delivery within the SAPS includes determining and meeting its clients' information needs that pertain to safety and security and combating crime and prevention, as well as rendering other services they require.

This ties in with the South African government's *Batho Pele* initiative to improve the delivery of services to the people. By using online resources police service delivery can be transformed. A website has basic search capabilities, it can host forms to download, and has links to relevant sites, and e-mail addresses of offices or officials. It can give members of the public access to critical information online and enable them to receive forms that previously required a visit to a government office. Users can conduct entire tasks online. A website could therefore enable the transformation of police service delivery and make it possible for users to participate directly.

7.3 Implementation of recommendations

Following the analyses and assessments in earlier chapters, numerous recommendations were made in Chapter 6 as to how the SAPS website and associated service delivery could be improved.

The implementation of such recommendations would, however, require streamlined management of the website. In the case of the SAPS website – as is pointed in Chapter 1 – there has been the problem of inadequate staff allocation and consequently lack of planning. In the past the task was not clearly allocated to specific staff, and staff members at different offices would attempt to develop the website when their other tasks permitted.

It is thus clear that the management aspect of the SAPS website must be developed before recommendations could be implemented successfully. Recent discussions with staff at the SAPS department of communication and liaison – which has recently been given the task of overseeing the SAPS website – indicate that this much needed function is now being addressed. Staff has recently been appointed permanently to develop the website.

7.4 Stumbling blocks in implementing recommendations

Various stumbling blocks exist within the SAPS for implementing these recommendations. It could include the following:

- Existing strategies and policies could possibly be inadequate in addressing new kinds of internal and external relationships, and in exploiting new service delivery channels.
- There could be staff members who could strongly oppose change. A reasons for this could that police agencies worldwide are known to be conservative.
- The perception is still fairly common that an online presence is a “nice to have” but that it is not vital. This is especially true in the South African context. A very small percentage of the South African population has access to computer technology and websites. The question is often asked what portion of the SAPS constituency could actually benefit by online service delivery.
- Bureaucratic processes developed for a hierarchical organisation may prove inadequate in supporting the new constituent-centric approach.

New technologies and architectures must be managed. Budgetary constraints are a daunting factor in this regard. The SAPS is “fighting” a serious war against crime and funds are required and applied first and foremost in the direct crime-combating arena. Its information systems division must state its business case clearly to ensure sufficient investment in technology in the next few years, thereby realising the potential of online services.

An online service delivery strategy needs to address such stumbling blocks.

7.5 An online service delivery strategy

A vital aspect that goes hand in hand with such development would be the drawing up of an online service delivery strategy and guidelines and a development roadmap for the way forward.

A strategy and guidelines are indispensable in raising the maturity level and quality of the SAPS website. Such a strategy would show what the SAPS would like to achieve with its online service, analyse the current situation, and devise plans for achieving the goals. It would further spell out how the website supports the vision and mission of the organisation it represents – which, in the case of the SAPS, is primarily about service delivery.

Management support from executive level is a very high priority in this regard, as considerable resources could possibly be necessary consistently to support the implementation of such strategy. Support from senior management also underlines its dedication to service delivery, which will give the initiative the required momentum to go from planning to development and implementation. In the long run, senior management support is the critical factor that will determine the success of the effort.

In this regard, Unruh (1997:336 – 337) gives the following three essential conditions for organisations that want to fully use information as resource:

- Senior management that acknowledges the importance of information management to add value to client service
- An organisation culture that encourages and support knowledge-sharing
- Acknowledgement of the importance of the best possible technological infrastructure as an empowering factor in value-creation.

Oleson (1997: 31) cautions that “technology alone is not going to win the race for you”. A flexible management team, which can cope with change brought about by development in technology is required.

A development roadmap is equally important. The purpose of such roadmap is the continued development of the SAPS online services to ensure an effective policing service. Such a roadmap for the SAPS could be based on the detail found in the Gartner Group’s Model for e-Government.

7.6 Further research

At the Regional Workshop on Building e-Governance Capacity in African countries, held in Johannesburg in October/November 2002, issues such as whether Africa is “e-ready” were discussed. Arguments persist that Africa does not need computers, but water and clothes and other necessities.

The counter-argument made by South African public service and administration minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi was that service delivery to all citizens could be improved by making use of technology. She emphasised that slow forms of development in this field had to be leapfrogged (Emdon 2002).

The concept of e-governance is still fairly new to the world at large. It is definitely a form of transparency and democratic behaviour that has not been considered much by police agency websites. This is made clear by the assessments of police agency websites of other countries in this study (see Chapter 4).

The adoption of e-governance by police agencies therefore requires in-depth research. This is especially true for police agencies in Africa, where the digital divide is an undeniable reality. E-Government is primarily about access – creating access to services for citizens through the means convenient to them.

The SAPS could benefit by further research into how e-governance could impact positively on police service delivery. The following research areas are indicated:

- A strategy and guidelines for improving the quality of the SAPS website, supported by a roadmap that provides more detail on the steps required in the development of online services.

- Measuring the impact that electronic media could have on the South African citizen's life as far as safety and security is concerned. This may include increased awareness of high-crime areas, scams, incidence of vehicle thefts, etc.
- Mechanisms the SAPS should apply for bridging the digital divide, in order to deliver its services online to the large part of its constituency that does not have access to information and communication technologies.
- Ways that South Africa, as a leader in the use of telecommunications on African continent, could assist other African countries in combating crime and ensuring a peaceful and fair society, through the use of online service delivery methods.
- The use of automated mechanisms to ensure updated content on a website such as the size of the SAPS website. This should be supported by clear policy that states the responsibility for content.
- The role of Nepad and its role-players in drawing up an African development plan for information and communication technologies – and, specifically, the SAPS participation in this regard.
- The role of electronic government and information systems in supporting the fight against crime.
- The role of the electronic media in improving the image of SAPS with the constituency – including ways in which this media could support the government's commitment to transparency and good governance.
- Ways that the SAPS electronic media could be used in supporting the SAPS training and development goals, such as by creating an internal awareness of the SAPS national strategy, and of its special programmes and objectives.
- The development of a measurement tool for quantifying the impact of online services on the SAPS in reaching the eight objectives of the South African government's *Batho Pele* ("People first") initiative.

7.7 Conclusion

In the initial study for this work, it was found that a framework for measuring an effective police agency website was not readily available. This was confirmed in discussions with several police agencies elsewhere in the world.

A study was conducted to determine current best practices in some of the English-speaking countries. A measuring instrument was designed that reflected current best practices.

Knowledgeable evaluators measured the current website and provided feedback on its features.

This resulted in a clear definition of the weaknesses of the current website, with pointed recommendations for enhancing online service delivery and e-governance by using a solid online service deliver strategy and a development roadmap.



The evaluation of the SAPS website proved the effectiveness of the website evaluation framework. Adherence to the specific issues addressed in the framework will ensure that the SAPS website communicates effectively to its target market, the South African public. This will ensure that electronic media are used optimally in supporting the SAPS national strategy.