LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

CERTIFICATE OF ENACTMENT
NOTWITHSTANDING THE GOVERNOR'S VETO

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT, Bill No. 35-0236 - An Act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code by adding a chapter 33A to enact the "21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act " to improve governmental agency digital services, and for other purposes passed by the Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands at its regular session held on June 24, 2024, (a copy of which is attached hereto) and vetoed by the Governor on July 9, 2024, was duly enacted by override by the Thirty-Fifth Legislature at its regular session held on July 22, 2024, pursuant to section 9(d) of the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, 48 U.S.C. §1575 (d).

DATED: 7.29.24

Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
President

ATTEST:

for Carla J. Joseph
Legislative Secretary

OVERRIDDEN
DATE: 07/22/2024

ACT NO. 8857

VETOED
JUL 09 2024
GOVERNOR

BILL NO. 35-0236

THIRTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Regular Session

2024

An Act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code by adding a chapter 33A to enact the "21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act " to improve governmental agency digital services, and for other purposes

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WHEREAS, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands finds and declares that:

(a) ensuring the Virgin Islands' global leadership position in technology and electronic government services requires an approach that narrows the growing gap between the digital demands of citizens and the methods by which the Government of the Virgin Islands provides digital services to the Territory;

(b) the enhancement of citizen-facing digital experiences can change the paradigm for the delivery of government services and dramatically reduces the cost of government operations;

(c) many government websites are not equipped to provide an enhanced experience to the growing number of citizens who access government services remotely through a computer or mobile device, such as a laptop, tablet, or phone;

(d) the local, state and federal governments lag far behind the private sector in providing a modern, seamless, personalized, and consistent digital experience that provides useful information and services to citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders;

(e) the implementation of modern customer service experiences, such as citizen-centric design, comprehensive self-service capabilities, live or automated customer service queries, and on-line payment solutions as well as uniform mobile rendering will be key to facilitating the transition from an analog, paper-based government to a digital government that delivers information and government services in an efficient and effective manner;

(f) transitioning from paper processes to adaptive and intuitive digital forms document viewers, and digital signature capabilities will significantly improve government services; and

(g) all government websites should be accessible to individuals with disabilities; Now, Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. Title 3 Virgin Islands Code is amended by inserting a chapter 33A, which reads as follows:

"Chapter 33A. 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act

§ 891. Short Title

This chapter may be cited as the "21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act" or the "21st Century IDEA".

§ 892. Definitions

As used in this chapter:

(a) "Director" means the Director of the Bureau of Information Technology within the Office of the Governor.

(b) "Agency" means any department, office, board, commission, bureau, or division.

(c) "Legacy website" means a website that still uses frameworks or techniques that have been superseded by newer code and methods in modern sites.

§ 893. Website modernization

(a) An agency that creates a website or digital service that is intended for use by the public, or conducts a redesign of an existing legacy website or digital service that is intended for use by the public, shall ensure to the greatest extent practicable that any new or redesigned website, web-based form, web-based application, or digital service:

(1) is accessible to individuals with disabilities;

(2) has a consistent appearance with standards to be developed by the Bureau of Information Technology;

(3) does not overlap with or duplicate any legacy websites and, if applicable, ensure that legacy websites are regularly reviewed, eliminated, and consolidated;

(4) contains a search function that allows users to easily search content intended for public use;

(5) is provided through an industry standard secure connection;

(6) is designed around user needs with data-driven analysis influencing management and development decisions, using qualitative and quantitative data to

determine user goals, needs, and behaviors, and continually test the website, web-based form, web-based application, or digital service to ensure that user needs are addressed;

(7) provides users of the new or redesigned website, web-based form, web-based application, or digital service with the option for a more customized digital experience that allows users to complete digital transactions in an efficient and accurate manner; and

(8) is fully functional and usable on common mobile devices.

(b) The head of each agency that maintains a website or digital service that is made available to the public shall:

(1) review each website or digital service; and

(2) submit to the appropriate legislative committee, a report that includes:

(A) a list of the websites and digital services maintained by the agency that are most viewed or utilized by the public or are otherwise important for public engagement;

(B) from among the websites and digital services listed under subparagraph (A), a prioritization of websites and digital services that require modernization to meet the requirements under subsection (a); and

(C) an estimation of the cost and schedule of modernizing the websites and digital services prioritized under subparagraph (B).

(c) The head of each agency shall ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that any intranet or enterprise system established after the effective date of this chapter conforms to the requirements described in subsection (a).

(d) The head of each agency shall:

(1) report annually to the Director on the progress of the agency in implementing the requirements described in this section for the previous year; and

(2) include the information described in paragraph (1) in a publicly available report that is required under 3 V.I.C. § 61(a).

§ 894. Digitization of Government Services and Forms

(a) The Director shall issue guidance to the head of each agency that establishes a process for the agency to:

(1) identify public non-digital, paper-based, or in-person government services; and

(2) include in the budget request of the agency:

(A) a list of non-digital services with the greatest impact that could be made available to the public through an online, mobile-friendly, digital service option in a manner that decreases cost, increases digital conversion rates, and improves customer experience; and

(B) an estimation of the cost and schedule associated with carrying out the modernization described in subparagraph (A).

(b) The head of each agency shall regularly review public-facing applications and services to ensure that those applications and services are, to the greatest extent practicable, made available to the public in a digital format.

(c) The head of each agency shall ensure that any paper-based form that is related to serving the public is made available in a digital format that meets the requirements described in section 893(a).

(d) If the head of an agency cannot make available an in-person government service, form, or paper-based process in a digital format, the head of the agency shall document:

(1) the title of the in-person government service, form, or paper-based process;

(2) a description of the in-person government service, form, or paper-based process;

(3) each unit responsible for the in-person government service, form, or paper-based process and the location of each unit in the organizational hierarchy of the agency;

(4) any reasons why the in-person government service, form, or paper-based process cannot be made available; and

(5) any potential solutions that could allow the in-person government service, form, or paper-based process to be made available, including the implementation of existing technologies, procedural changes, regulatory changes, and legislative changes.

(e) Each agency shall maintain an accessible method of completing digital services through in-person, paper-based, or other means, such that individuals without the ability to use digital services are not deprived of or impeded in access to those digital services.

§ 895. Customer Experience and Digital Service Delivery

The head of each agency, or a designee, shall:

(1) coordinate and ensure alignment of the internal and external customer experience programs and strategy of the agency;

(2) coordinate with the management leaders of the agency, including the Chief Information Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, and any program manager, to ensure proper funding to support the implementation of this chapter;

(3) continually examine e-Governance and the digital service delivery strategy of the agency to the public and submit recommendations to the Director of the Bureau of Information Technology providing guidance and best practices suitable to the mission of the agency; and

(4) using qualitative and quantitative data obtained from across the agency relating to the experience and satisfaction of customers, identify areas of concern that need improvement and improve the delivery of customer service.

§ 896. Standardization

(a) Each agency shall, to the extent practicable, seek to maintain as much standardization and commonality with other agencies as practicable in implementing the requirements of this chapter to best enable future transitions to centralized shared services.

(b) The chief information officer of each agency, or a designee, shall coordinate the implementation of the requirements of this chapter, including the development of standards and commonalities as set forth by the Bureau of Information Technology."

SECTION 2. Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 33A, sections 893(a), 893(b), and section 894(a) must be implemented not later than one year after the date of enactment of this chapter.

SECTION 3. (a) The Government of the Virgin Islands shall prioritize the utilization of funds from the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment grant program before accessing funds from the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands for broadband and IT-related projects.

(b) The Bureau of Information Technology (BIT) shall conduct a comprehensive assessment of all IT personnel and resources within the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI). This assessment must be completed not more than one year from the enactment date of this act. BIT is responsible for developing a centralized electronic delivery service for the Government. This service must be operational by the year 2026.

(c) BIT shall develop and implement a five-year transition plan to transition the GVI from analog paper-based systems to fully digital operations. The transition plan must be implemented in accordance with the following timeline:

Year One: Initial phase of the transition.

Year Two: Not less than 25 percent completed.

Year Three: Not less than 50 percent completed.

Year Four: Not less than 75 percent completed.

Year Five: The transition must be 100% complete.

Thus passed by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands on June 24, 2024.

Witness our Hands and Seal of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands this 27th day of June, A.D., 2024.



Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
President

Carla J. Joseph
Secretary