



State of Kansas

WEBSITE MIGRATION

Transforming Digital Services for Kansans

Digital Experience:

Agency/Program Solutions

August 2022 - September 2024

Elesha Hazel, elesha.hazel@ks.gov

Tanya Heffel, tanya.heffel@ks.gov

Jeff Maxon, jeff.maxon@ks.gov

Office of Information Technology Services





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Web Services, a critical arm of the Infrastructure Services department at the Kansas Office of Information Technology Services (OITS), plays a pivotal role in providing website solutions and consulting services to cabinet and non-cabinet agencies within the State of Kansas. Responsible for managing and supporting 26 websites, the team recognized the need to modernize current website services and solutions, prompting them to embark on a transformative journey – Website Migration: Transforming Digital Services for Kansans. While the scope of the project targets the 26 managed websites, the Web Services team has also received requests from agencies outside of the initial migration to create new websites using our partner solution. In addition to our modernization efforts, we are also reaping the rewards of scalability and standardization, which enhances Kansans' online experience when interacting with websites that share a consistent look and feel.



What problem or opportunity does the project address?

In August 2022, the Web Services team began the initial planning of website migrations for 26 supported websites. Many of the websites required updates and rebuilds, but our web services environment was dependent on outdated software, and the websites were dependent on outdated templates.

These websites also lacked accessibility features and were incompatible with cellphones. The Web Services team estimated that many of those websites would become nonfunctional within 2 years. Support through the current solution was increasingly difficult and a change was needed as some of the website and their functions are business-critical.

Why does it matter?

The website migration, which focused on transforming digital services for Kansans, project was aimed at the following:

- Modernizing the webservices currently being offered to State Agencies: bringing modern features and functionality to the websites, to include mobile friendly and other digital offerings to enhance the overall digital experience for all Kansans.
- Enhancing the Security of the digital experience: modernizing the websites ensured the continuity of services and prevented security vulnerabilities with the deprecation of legacy hardware and software elements as well as disparate code basis.
- Enriching the user experience: Most Kansas websites do not follow a similar look and feel, leaving constituents with a lack of consistency. Standardizing our approach creates a more user-friendly experience for constituents as they can now navigate state websites that share a similar look and feel.



What makes it different?

The project is a value add as we implement standards for the State of Kansas websites. Phase 2, standardization of guidelines, is taking place simultaneously with Phase 1. As we migrated websites to our modernized solution, we developed a standardization of guidelines document for agencies to adopt. Therefore, creating a more cohesive presentation and engagement for Kansans with Official State of Kansas Agency websites.

What makes it universal?

The impact of this project is the digital experience, the ability to impact our constituents and others, to foster a positive, efficient and elegant experience with State Agencies and their services and to create a cohesive marketing and online presence for the State of Kansas. The impact of this project and its conscious approach to cyber security, ensures that those using our State Agency websites can feel confident and secure in their interactions. This project will impact the initial 26 agencies, but the scope of the project and the immediate successes being seen have expanded the scope to include additional Agencies not in the initial 26 website migration.

Website Migration Project Agencies

- ❖ Attorney General
- ❖ Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board
- ❖ Board of Examiners in Optometry
- ❖ Board of Healing Arts
- ❖ Board of Pharmacy
- ❖ Executive Branch Information Technology
- ❖ Hispanic & Latino American Affairs Commission
- ❖ KanCare
- ❖ Kansas African American Affairs Commission
- ❖ Kansas Board of Mortuary Arts
- ❖ Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns
- ❖ Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ❖ Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office
- ❖ Kansas Dental Board
- ❖ Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services
- ❖ Kansas Department of Agriculture
- ❖ Kansas Department of Credit Unions
- ❖ Kansas Real Estate Commission
- ❖ Kansas Water Office
- ❖ Native American Affairs
- ❖ Office of the Child Advocate
- ❖ Office of the Governor Grants Program
- ❖ Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- ❖ Public Square
- ❖ State Board of Technical Professions
- ❖ Sentencing Commission



IMPLEMENTATION

What was the road map?

Our roadmap to complete this project was constructed through implementation of phases with the starting point being August 2022 and the ending point being September 2024.



Phase 1: Modernization of the Platform - websites required updates and rebuilds, but our web services environment was dependent on outdated software and the websites were dependent on outdated website templates.

Phase 2: Standardization of Guidelines - developing a standardization of guidelines document for agencies to adopt. Standardizing our approach creates a more user-friendly experience for constituents as they navigate state websites.

Phase 3: Measure Impact - Indicate how project serves as a model for how they might do this with other states.

Project Implementation: August 2022

Phase 1: Modernization of the Platform

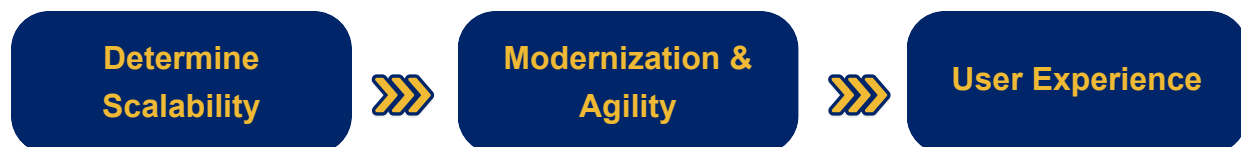


Phase 2: Standardization of Guidelines

Simultaneous Launch with Phase 1



Phase 3: Measure Impact

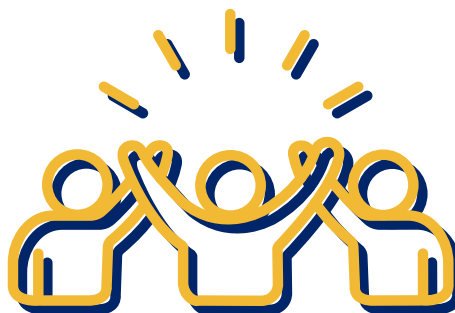


Project Completion: September 2024



Who was involved?

- Donnita Thomas- Project Manager OITS
- Tanya Heffel, CTO
- Travis Combes, Deputy CTO
- Matt Ludwick, WebServices Manager
- Multiple State Agencies
- Granicus- Vendor



How did you do it?

The project followed a combination of waterfall and agile methodologies and had clearly defined milestones and expected deliverables. Each proposed site scheduled for migration followed a structured implementation plan, which included kick off meetings, design meetings, site map planning, development, content migration, QA (quality assurance phases), website reveal, training, UAT (user acceptance training), Go Live, and project completion and hand-off.

Alongside the defined phases and milestones, the Project Management team conducted multiple vendor, customer, and agency meetings (weekly and biweekly) to ensure transparency and project success.

Funding: The funding for this effort was secured from two different funding sources. We utilized a portion of the cost from a Repair and Restore fund and the additional came from ARPA grant. The secured funding allowed OITS to eliminate any migration costs for the agencies and minimize the financial impact on OITS.



IMPACT

What did the project make better?

- Scalability
- Modernization and Agility
- Security
- User and Digital Experience
- Accessibility

In Collaboration with our vendor partner, Granicus, we embarked on a website migration that encompassed 26 websites being migrated simultaneously; this was the first ever of its kind initiative for Granicus and the success of this project now serves as a model for how Granicus executes on projects of this size in other states. The Granicus platform provides the ability for our State Agencies to focus on curating and creating the needed content for the digital experience, without the IT burden.



Migrating to a modernized platform allows us to evolve alongside technological advancements and adapt swiftly to changing requirements and emerging trends. We are also now very quickly able to deploy new Agency websites, that are ADA compliant, conform to our standards guide and make immediate and effective changes to Kansans and are modern and feature rich. By also working closely with our partner/vendor the state of Kansas was also afforded the benefit of enterprise contract vehicle with repeatable and known yearly costs associated with website hosting efforts.

Migrating away from an outdated legacy platform improves accessibility, solves vulnerabilities and other security concerns. Granicus takes on the IT burden by providing a solution that is hosted in secure, U.S.-based data centers with industry-standard protections: DDoS mitigation, firewalls, daily backups, and 24/7 monitoring. Regular security updates and compliance checks are included. The platform is designed to meet federal, state, and local security standards. Accessibility is a core offering—templates and features are WCAG 2.1 AA compliant out of the box. Built-in tools help maintain ongoing compliance, and Granicus offers training and regular audits to prepare for DOJ and federal/state accessibility deadlines.

How do you know?

Larger cabinet agencies are seeing the benefits of the website migration, and it has prompted several of them to utilize our existing contract with Granicus to transition their websites. The Kansas Department of Labor is one example of a cabinet agency that recently transitioned to a Granicus supported website (<https://www.dol.ks.gov/>).

What now?

Citizens now have more consistent and user-friendly experiences when using our websites. As of September 2024, all original 26 agency websites slated for migration have been completed:

1. Executive Branch Information Technology (<https://www.ebit.ks.gov/home>)
2. Kansas Dental Board (<https://www.dental.ks.gov/>)
3. Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board (<https://www.ksbsrb.ks.gov/>)
4. Kansas Water Office (<https://www.kwo.ks.gov/>)
5. Kansas Board of Mortuary Arts (<https://www.ksbma.ks.gov/>)
6. State Board of Technical Professions (<https://www.ksbtp.ks.gov/>)
7. Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (<https://www.kcdhh.ks.gov/>)

Additionally, the following additional websites were added to our project scope:

Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services

Kansas Board of Cosmetology

Water Hub

Office of the Governor

Kansas Public Employees Retirement System

Kansas Judicial Council

Kansas Department of Labor

Kansas Department of Transportation

Kansas Office of Early Childhood

Kansas Department of Insurance

Kansas Wildlife and Parks

User Testimonies



“The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) provided a preview of the new website at regional staff meetings over the past two weeks. We received great feedback from KDA staff, especially from those who work remotely across the state and use the website frequently, and from those who work directly with licensees that use our website to access forms and licensing information for their businesses. They’re all very happy with the layout and design and eager to share it with the public! We were very happy to hear such a positive response!”

- Heather Lansdowne,
Director of Communications,
Kansas Department of Agriculture

OITS is spearheading the effort to standardize State of Kansas websites. As we transition to a more modern, user-friendly platform, citizens can more confidently interact with state websites and have a consistent experience across the different agencies. Additionally, it sets the tone for agencies outside the scope of the project to update their websites utilizing our vendor partner.

-Jeff Maxon,
Executive Branch
Chief Information Technology Officer

The Kansas Office of Information Technology Services (OITS) had a transformation and modernization initiative to unify the websites of all state agencies under the same web space. In the past, state agency websites were set up and hosted in different ways: Some were on-prem and some were with vendors who were underperforming. Through the close partnership with Granicus, Kansas discovered an opportunity to not only host this new web space on secure government servers, but to create an integrated government experience that State residents and staff are eager to use. This has created a wonderful and innovative win for Kansas, decreasing the amount of time and IT resources used to maintain its web presence and making updating webpages as simple as drag and drop.

At the same time, OITS is helping Granicus better understand and meet the needs of large states with multiple websites and stakeholders, in a partnership that will help Granicus — and Kansas — pave a way forward for future innovation in web and customer experience at the State level. “We have so many great partnerships in Kansas, and Kansas State CTO Tanya Rodriguez-Heffel and the Office of Information Technology Services are among our favorites,” said Granicus State Enterprise Account Executive Matt Russell. “Their work — going beyond a simple website overhaul — is a perfect example of how a holistic, human-centered transformation can deliver a truly unified digital government experience.”

- Granicus, Citizen Experience Platform