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## Web Governance

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## Quick overview:

- Define web governance
- Present 3 different governance models



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## Web governance: a definition

How decisions and policies get made and implemented with respect to content, data and applications published on an organization's Web site(s). It implies an authoritative administrative structure and an enforceable set of policies and standards.

*Observation: many organizations have strong Web IT governance and weak Web content governance.*



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## Web governance lifecycle

- Policy setting
- Standards codification & dissemination
- Standards implementation
- Standards enforcement
- Policy and standards evaluation, review and revision



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## Policy setting

- Informed by Web or Internet strategy
- Defines “rules” for the Web
- Generally informed by cross-functional senior management body
- Sounds vague to those in the trenches
- Determines the organizational structure for operating the web

*“In order to support the agency’s mission to communicate clearly with all citizens via the Web, all Web content must be written in an easy to read, jargon-free manner.”*



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## Standards Codification and Dissemination

- Explains exactly how stakeholders should uphold policy.
- Performed by cross-functional mid-management body and subject matter experts, knowledge workers, developers and data experts.
- Interpretive function. Here lies real power.
- Detailed specifications are created.
- Built around specific standards categories
- Defined dissemination processes

*The handbook which is updated quarterly by the Web Team says: “All content shall be written in plain language. Plain language means language as defined in The Plain Language Handbook V3. All Web authors with publishing rights must be certified in plain language. Certification means....”*

CONTENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION



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## Standards Implementation

- Controlling the web site output and management through repeatable processes that will produce a high quality, effective and consistent product.

*“All content written by non-plain language certified personnel must be reviewed by the Web editorial department prior to publication on the Web. This review process will be managed by the workflow engine of the content management system.”*



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## Standards Enforcement

- Making sure people are following the rules.
- There must be clear a accountability and authority chain.
- Controlling access privileges.
- Removing non-compliant content.

*“Sally put up a page that says: ‘The CIO and ARGR are going to have an annual meeting at the GTI. For lunch they will have PBJ.’ We’re takin’ it down!”*



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## Policy & Standards Evaluation

- Making sure policies and standards continue to make sense over time.
  - Organizational objectives change
  - Web site user needs change
  - Technology-base changes
  - Practical concerns
    - Personnel
    - Administrative

*At the semi-annual standards review meeting, someone says:  
“Hey, there’s a version 4 of The Plain Language Handbook. Do we  
want to change our standard?”*



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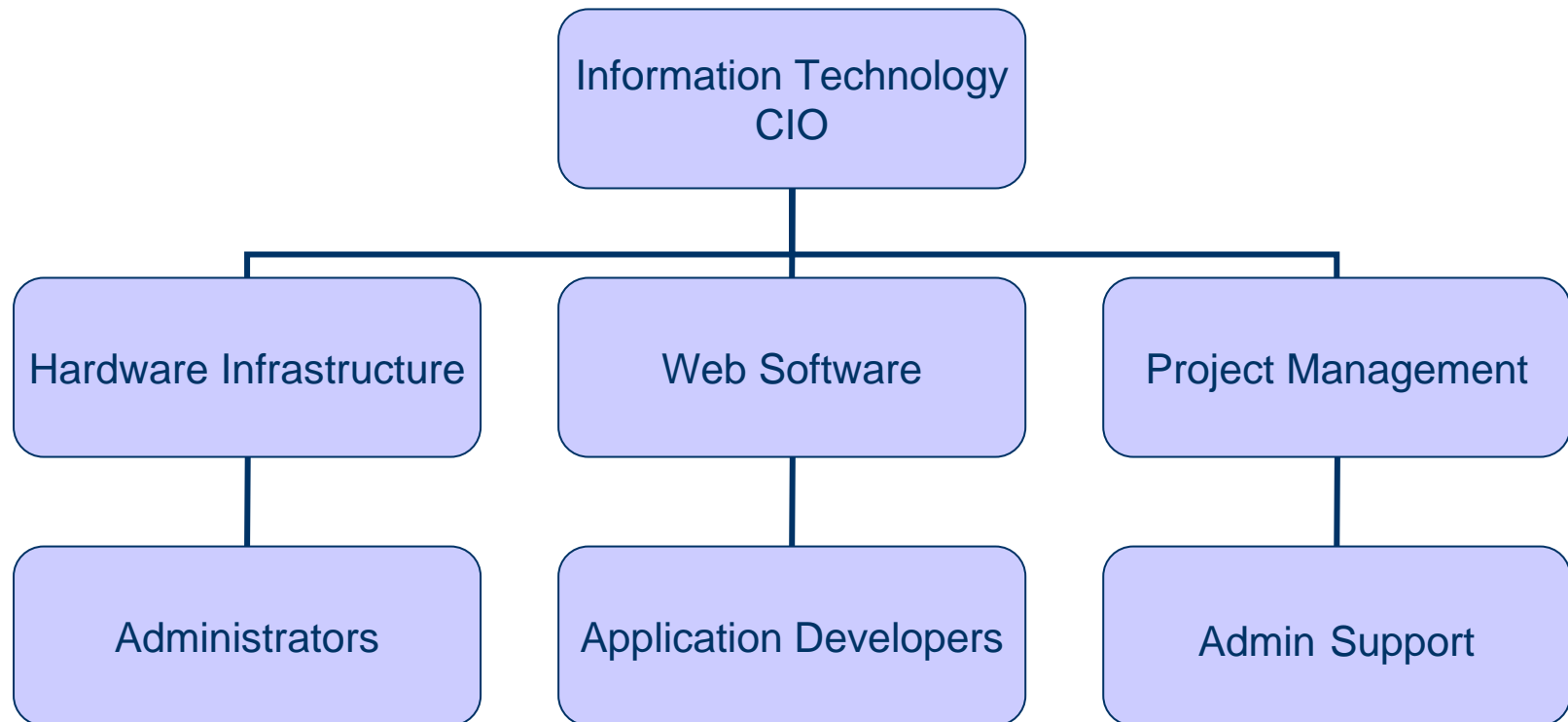
## Governance structures

- IT
- Public Affair/Communications
- Fusion



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## The IT model



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## Benefits when IT is charge

- IT usually has no trouble getting money for systems.
- IT usually understands the importance of a repeatable, measurable development process.
- Senior IT usually has the ear of the lead of the organization.



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## Drawbacks when IT is in charge

- IT folks are usually systems and application experts not content and usability experts.
- IT folks view content contributors as clients not team members. Sometimes they even consider their needs to be frivolous and unwarranted.
- IT tends to operate on a slower than web-time timeline.



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## The Communications model



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## Benefits when Communications is in charge

- Tend to be very customer/user centered and want to respond to their needs.
- The organization is designed to react to the real-time nature of the web.



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## Drawbacks when Communications is in charge

- Communications folks generally don't understand anything about application development.
- Tend to believe that they know (natively) what the user wants/needs.
- Can tend to be culturally smug and a little simplistic in their view of the web.
- Seem to view IT as a stick in the mud, process-bound organization.



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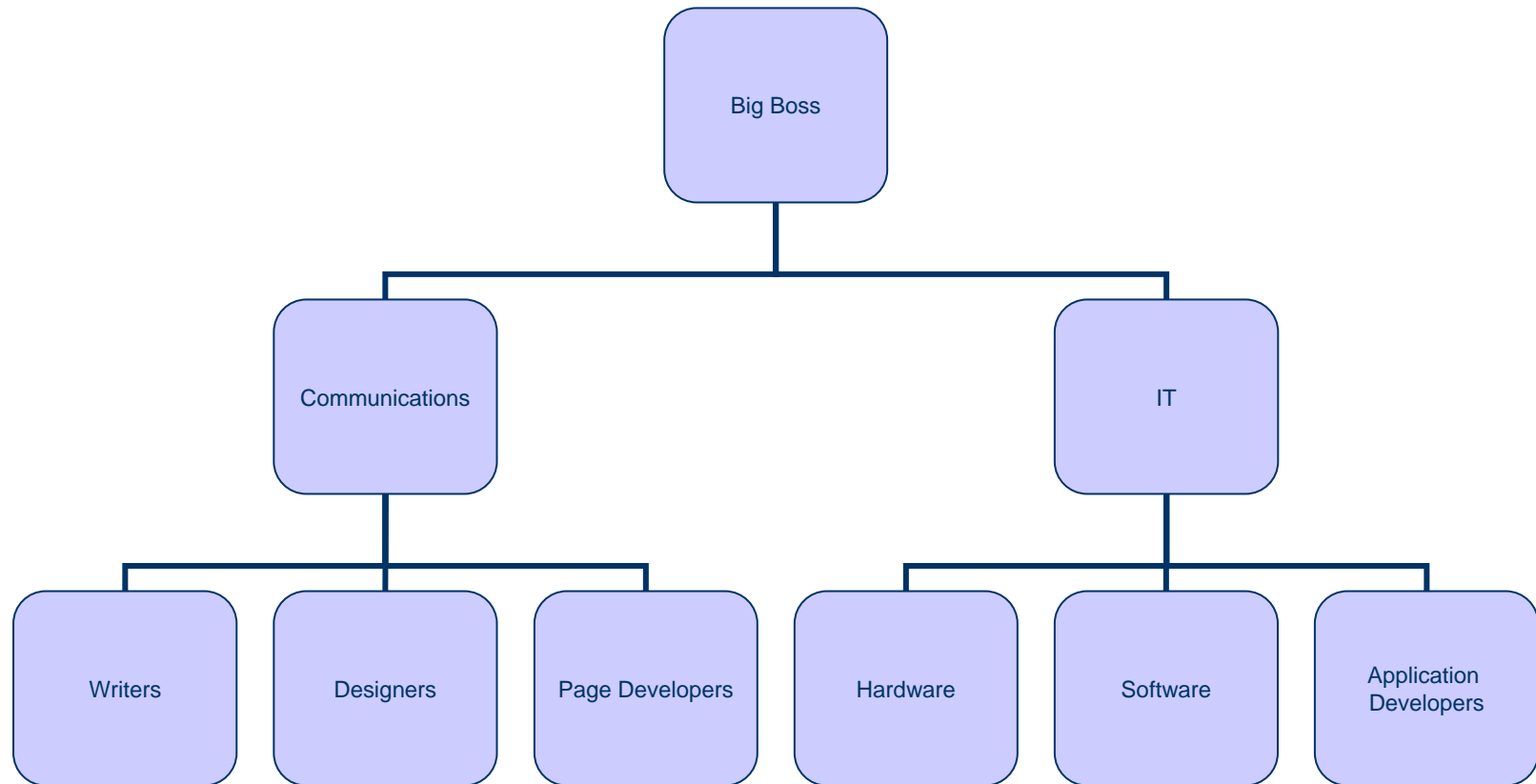
## What to do if you're stuck with either of the two previous models

- Develop permanent and project based cross-functional teams in order to solve real problems.
- Develop cross-discipline educational programs to broaden the perspective of both IT and Communications focused personnel.
- Work to broaden the perspective of the CIO and Director of Communications.
- **<blink>**Hire web-specific SMEs as “glue” between IT and Communications**</blink>**



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## A natural fusion



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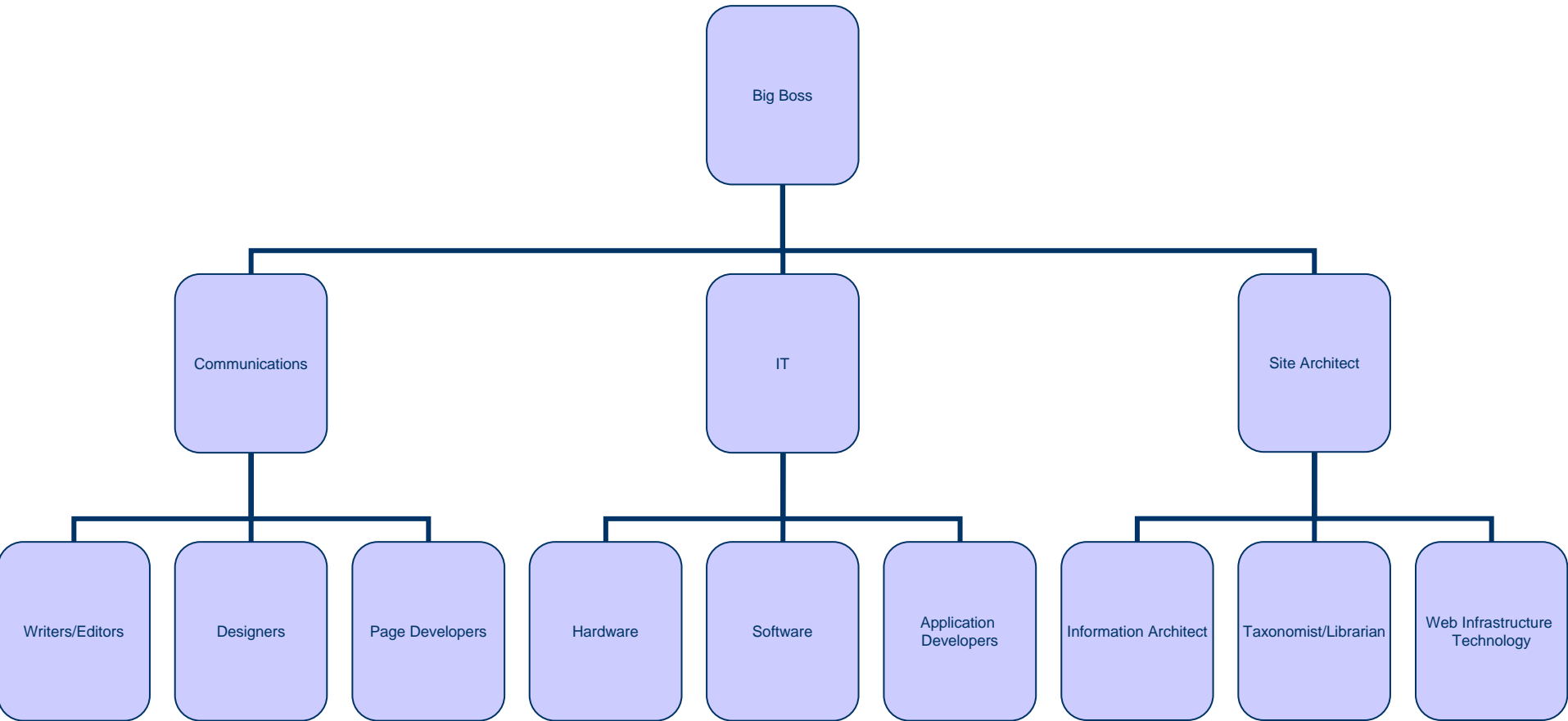
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## What's missing

- The Gap Professions
  - Information architecture
  - Taxonomists
  - Web infrastructure application technologists



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## Impact of this model

- Provides a continuum of knowledge
- Takes the hierarchy out of the relationship between IT and Communications
- Strains the traditional relationship between IT and Communications
- Adds new functions/job roles to the organization
- May require re-organization.



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## Questions?

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