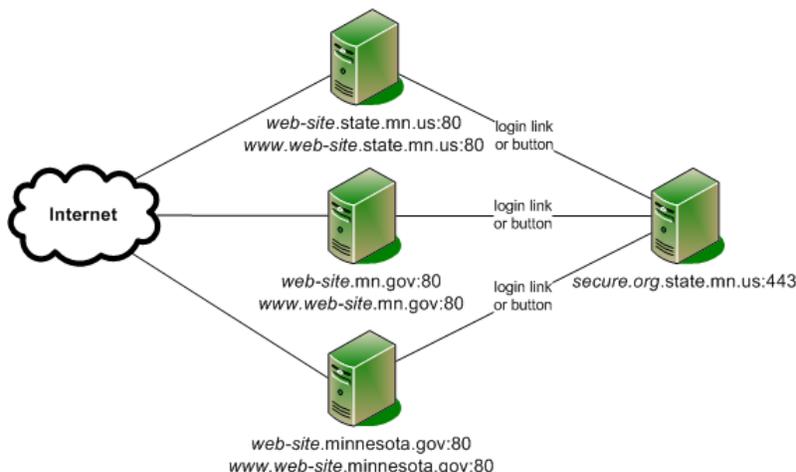# ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE OFFICE

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Enterprise Architecture Office Resource Document Design Note - Web Sites and SSL

The *DNS Naming Standard* assumes the model of web site organization that is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Web Site Model

In this model, the URL published for the web site is to a port 80 landing page. From that page, the user can then log in to the portion of the site secured by SSL. The model has these properties:

- Only one URL need be advertised. For example, *web-site*.mn.gov.
- The user can access the site using any of three name forms. For this example, *web-site*.state.mn.us, *web-site*.mn.gov and *web-site*.minnesota.gov can be used interchangeably.
- Name forms both with and without the leading "www." can be supported.
- Initial access is always to port 80 / HTTP. Thus, users do not have to manually enter the initial "https://" text.
- The above points enable browser name expansion to work smoothly.
- Once at the main site, access to the secure portion always uses the same name.
- For reasons explained below, this name will normally end in ".state.mn.us".
- Thus, only one SSL certificate is needed for all forms of user access.
- The above fully comply with the *DNS Naming Standard* and all points in its accompanying *Guidelines*.

In theory, the SSL portion can use any of the name forms. In practice, there are good reasons to use only one of the forms.

First, due to limitations in cross-domain scripting, cookies, and similar techniques, single sign-on using the state's identity and access management (IAM) solution will only work on one of the domains and "state.mn.us" has been selected for that purpose.

Second, it is not always quick or easy to obtain SSL certificates for names in the mn.gov or minnesota.gov domains. Due to the practices followed by the domain registrar for all .gov names (dotgov.gov), there can be substantial delays in processing certificate requests for names in .gov zones.

As there is no need to publish the name of the SSL portion of the site, the use of the state.mn.us domain for all secure portions should not present any problems for site branding.