

HM Treasury digital strategy

Foreword from Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander

The decisions of Treasury Ministers have a huge impact on the lives of UK citizens. Whether these involve changes to tax brackets or fuel duty, it is crucial that we keep the public abreast of the decisions we are taking, and the reasons we are taking them.

This is why I am pleased to put forward our new digital strategy, which will ensure that the Department continues to use new technologies and tools to remain open and transparent to the public.

I am keen to support our move to a 'digital by default' approach to communication. Other Departments have proven that such measures can not only increase the speed of interaction with the public, but also lead to a significant cut in costs to the taxpayer. At the same time though, we must make sure that nobody gets left behind by these changes, and continue to provide support to those people that can't or won't go online.

In recent years online technologies and tools have opened up new ways for Government to communicate with its citizens. I am determined that the Treasury embraces these opportunities, and this strategy sets out how we intend to do this.

Introduction to the Treasury

Who we are

HM Treasury is the United Kingdom's economics and finance ministry. Our role is to support the delivery of the Government's priorities and policies.

The Treasury Group comprises of the following organisations: HM Treasury, Financial Services Compensation Scheme, Money Advice Service, Office for Budget Responsibility, Office of Tax Simplification, Royal Mint Advisory Committee, UK Debt Management Office and UK Financial Investments.

Our work

Since 2010, the Government has taken decisive action to protect the economy in this period of global uncertainty, and has set out a comprehensive strategy to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth. The Treasury has three strategic priorities which support these aims, namely to:

1. Reduce the structural deficit in a fair and responsible way

Take action to tackle the deficit in a fair and responsible way, ensure that taxpayers' money is spent responsibly, and get the public finances back on track whilst protecting growth.

2. Secure an economy that is more resilient and more balanced between public and private sectors and between regions

Take action to boost enterprise, support green growth and build a fairer and more balanced economy to achieve a sustainable distribution of growth across the economy.

3. Reform the regulatory framework for the financial sector to avoid future financial crises

Replace the current system of financial regulation with a framework that promotes responsible and sustainable banking, where regulators have greater powers to curb unsustainable lending practices and take action to promote more competition in the banking sector.

Our digital strategy

This document sets out how we will help deliver the Treasury's strategic priorities while supporting the Government Digital Service's (GDS) agenda.

We define what the Government's move to 'digital by default' means for us and our audiences and explain how we will transform our approach to using online channels in order to reach and engage with those groups.

It explores our approach in full, articulating our digital vision and examining our existing audiences and channels. It also looks at some of the challenges and details our high-level plan and roadmap. It contains the following sections:

- Our digital vision – to better inform and engage;
- Current position – moving in the right direction;
- What needs to change and what are the challenges;
- How we'll achieve our vision; and
- What we'll do to support the cross-Government strategy.

Our digital vision – to better inform and engage

The Treasury is a strategic policy-making Department, unlike other many other Departments, and our work has a significant impact on our country. But we are not an operational Department responsible for the delivery of specific services to the country. Our communications strategy – and this digital strategy as part of it – reflects this.

Our traditional model of communication has focused on indirectly communicating with the public through the media, and focusing our policy announcements around a number of set-piece events, in particular the Budget. It does not include significant direct communications in the way that a Department providing day-to-day services to the public would do.

But in recent years public interest in what we do has grown considerably as economic, fiscal and financial issues have dominated policy priorities and public concern. At the same time, the arrival of digital media has provided the public with new ways of finding out information and offered the Treasury more ways of directly communicating with them.

This strategy responds to these trends and aims to ensure the Treasury makes the most of what digital technologies offer to meet our responsibility to inform the public about our policies.

The digital strategy is part of our wider agenda to ensure we have an integrated communication strategy across all of the media channels we use. That integrated approach extends from the external information we produce through to our internal set-up.

It is also based on a commitment to use the range of channels we have – and the opportunity from the development of digital channels – to provide information to the public in different ways so it is tailored to their varying requirements, whether as a member of the public, a specialist stakeholder or a member of the mainstream media.

The adoption by Government of a 'digital by default' approach provides an opportunity for us to put digital into the heart of our policy-making and communications thinking.

Digital by default for the Treasury means:

Using digital tools and channels to clearly communicate our work to new and existing audiences, engaging with them on policies that affect their lives

We will take forward a challenging change agenda, focussed on two key aims, namely to:

- **Inform** our audiences about the Government's work through a wider number of channels and make our communications model digitally-focussed; and
- **Engage** with our audiences by integrating digital tools and channels into our policy-making processes.

As part of this, embracing cost-neutral digital technologies will empower us to:

- **Improve** the way we communicate with existing and new audiences;
- **Evolve** new ways to develop policy decisions; and
- **Reduce** costs and wastage in publishing.

Informing and engaging, for us, means some key evolutions in our approach to developing and communicating policies to make them audience-focussed, including:

Changing our communication model

We will develop an integrated communications strategy embracing all of our media channels and in doing so move digital technology and its users to the centre of our planning and operations. We will bring more digital communication expertise into the Department and share resources with other Government Departments where appropriate to be as cost-effective as possible. We will develop a more coherent and strategic approach to using emerging technologies, including the use of social media channels.

Open policy making

We will use digital technologies developed by the Government Digital Service, and other free tools, to reach new and more varied citizens and stakeholders who are affected by our work and empower officials to involve the public in different ways when developing policies.

Opening up our data

We will do more to make our data accessible and transparent, and deploy digital tools and capabilities to better visualise data and explain our work in more visually compelling ways.

A digital by default approach to documents

We will reduce reliance on printed publications by moving them online where possible, saving taxpayers' money, while still meeting the requirements of Parliamentary reporting.

Supporting other Departments in their work to improve transactions

We will support other Departments in their drive to improve transactions – both on and offline – to make it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with Government, reducing costs as detailed in the Digital Efficiency Report, while ensuring that no-one is left behind in the move to digital by default.

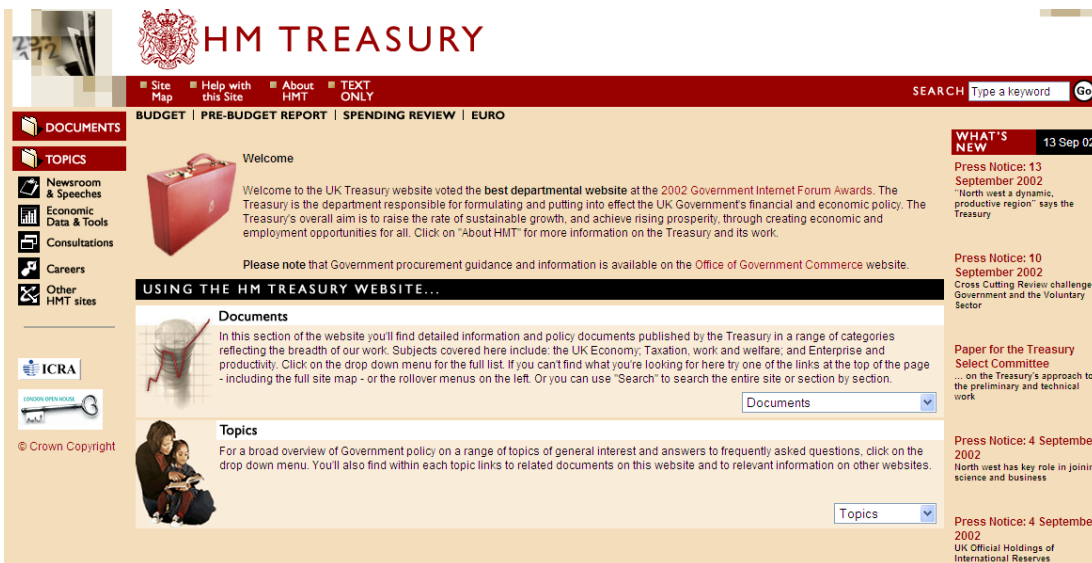
Current position – moving in the right direction

When the Treasury website was launched in 1994 we were the first Department to get online. In the early days of the internet we led the way in the provision of online information in Government.



HM Treasury website c1997

Although these early pioneers of the web and their work remained at the margins of the Department's work, they quickly established a reputation for being at the forefront of their craft. In fact, www.hm-treasury.gov.uk won an award for best Government website at the 2002 Government Internet Forum Awards.



The award-winning 2002 site

We now have a digital communications function that includes successful channels which consistently deliver quality products to large numbers of visitors. But, as other Departments have made strides in pioneering the use of digital, our approach has grown more organically.

This digital strategy is designed to build on our strong online heritage so the Treasury is at the forefront of the use of digital technologies to explain policy to the public.

Our digital culture

The Head of the UK Civil Service, Sir Bob Kerslake, said on 17 May 2012:

“The workplace of the future will have to be less rigid, less hierarchical and a lot more flexible. Participating in social media is a good way to learn how a modern workforce engages and communicates”

As one of the oldest parts of Government, the Treasury has in many ways a traditional nature. Yet conversely, it has one of the youngest workforces in Whitehall and many policy officials are well-versed in using social media in their private lives.

This strategy aims to harness our dynamic, digitally-savvy staff to help meet the changing needs of our audiences and the fast-paced world of social media channels and modern technologies. This will be managed in a way which is complementary with the Treasury’s established ways of work and supportive of our strategic objectives.

We will do this by creating a meaningful proposition for how to use social media channels to assist in policy development. We will make greater use of the GDS consultation tools matrix to find tools that are suitable for us, as well as using channels such as Twitter and Facebook to help canvass opinions from those affected by our policies. We will also provide support from senior leadership and issue clear guidelines for officials to ensure they know what to do – and not to do – when deploying digital channels. Over time we will need to continue to use modern ICT equipment to allow us to keep pace with these channels.

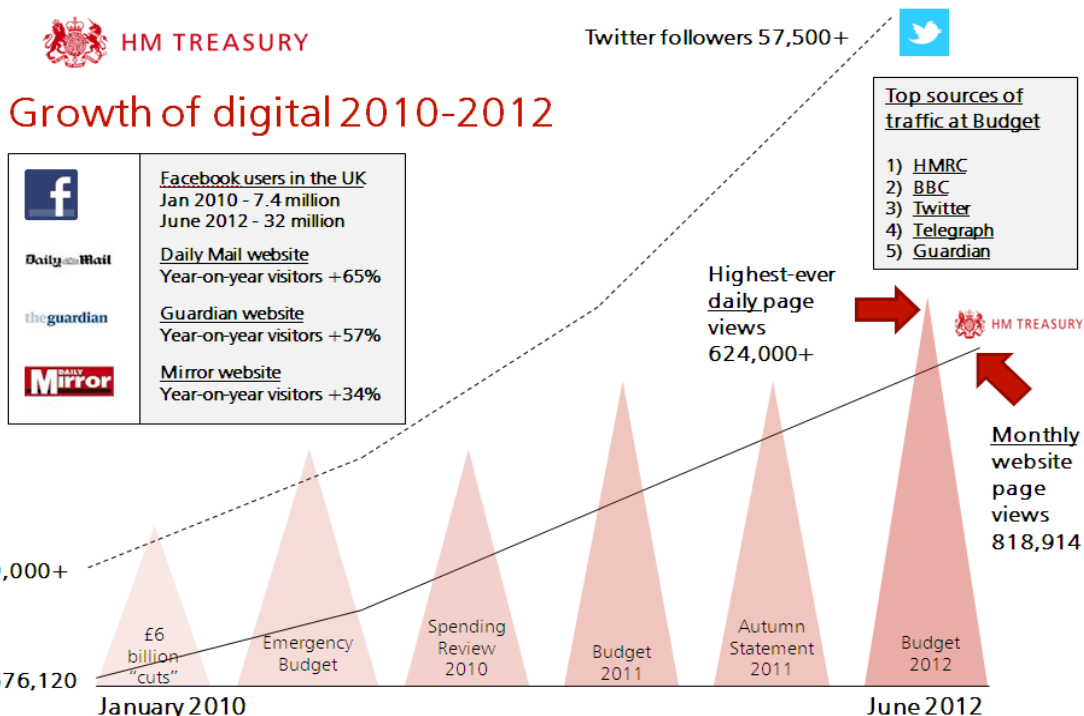


Chart 1: Growth of digital 2010-12

This chart shows how demand for our digital information has grown over the last three years. There have been several high-profile Treasury announcements during this time – the early in-year “cuts” announcement by the Coalition Government, the emergency Budget and Spending Review – and each one has seen a gradual increase in the number of visitors, demonstrating increasing interest in economic issues during the downturn and an assumption amongst our audiences that our website will provide them with the answers they are looking for.

Our digital audiences

In recent years our website has seen greater levels of interest and traffic as digital has become embedded in people’s lives through mobiles, tablets, apps and social media (see **Chart 1**). Meanwhile, the economy has been at the top of the news agenda since the financial crisis of 2007, with a corresponding increase in the demand for clear, concise information sources which explain the important issues.

These audiences can broadly be broken down into the following six groups; some of whom we cater for well and others where we need to do more to engage.

1. Mainstream media

Analysis of our user statistics shows that journalists are one of the most regular visitor groups to our websites and other channels. These stakeholders are sophisticated and our digital channels must match their levels of evolution and innovation in the coming years. As our principle method for communicating with citizens continues to be through the mainstream media, we will continue to use them as carriers of our speeches and statements but will do more to cater for them as technologies develop and the mainstream media fragments.

2. Specialist or technical stakeholders

Stakeholder groups, such as banks, financial service organisations or bodies such as the Financial Services Authority or Bank of England, are regular visitors to our website and follow our social media channels, demonstrating an appetite for digital information which we largely satisfy. We rely on these stakeholders to help us meet our goals. The move to GOV.UK will offer more opportunities to engage with stakeholders, particularly as we move towards more open policy making, increasing the opportunities for interested parties to get involved. Increasing adoption of, and engagement with, social media channels will help us identify and track concerns and issues our stakeholders have and engage with them where appropriate.

3. The public and event-based interest

Analysis of our web traffic shows that many visitors only make one-off visits, at Budget or Autumn Statement, or when there is a significant news event which is related to the Treasury's work. For example, the collapse of Northern Rock gave us one of our highest-ever daily number of visits. This audience group has an ongoing interest in the issues we cover, but is likely only to use our digital channels at these events. We will ensure our digital communication efforts remain focussed on promoting our work at these times. But we will go further, using the GOV.UK platform, to provide clear, engaging explanation of our work at set piece events, including new ways of explaining our work such as infographics.

4. Savvy and engaged

A significant number of visitors to Treasury digital channels are citizens or business owners who have a personal or professional interest in the economy and the Treasury's work. We will do more for this audience group once we move to GOV.UK, develop our social media approach and find new ways to visualise our data so that it is easy to understand while offering more ways to comment on policy decisions that affect them.

5. Digi-sphere media

We will spend more time considering the needs of bloggers and niche online publications, addressing their needs as part of our evolving communications approach. Digital will be baked-in to all our work, reaching out to these stakeholders where appropriate and alongside our approach to focus on mainstream media representatives. We will use digital evaluation tools to further identify these audiences, engage with them and reach them with key messages where appropriate.

6. Agitators

Our Twitter feed in particular is often targeted by charity or political campaigns who traditionally have used letters, postcards or emails (and sometimes still do) to communicate with the Treasury. We have at times responded with answers their question or complaint and will continue to develop this approach. We will make increased use of social media to better respond to online agitators and engage with them in open policy-making spaces.



Proportion of media and communications used, by age

Age	TV	Radio (on radio)	Print	Radio (on phone)	Email, text, social media	Other media – games etc
16-24	26%	4%	3%	9%	30%	28%
25-44	33%	11%	4%	5%	18%	29%
45-54	35%	16%	5%	4%	11%	29%
55+	51%	14%	10%	2%	6%	17%

Source: OFCOM

Chart 2 details the extent to which the media landscape is changing as younger people move away from traditional media sources to social media and gaming. Older groups still rely on old media for information.

Our channels

In addition to our accountability to Parliament, we have five established channels for communicating with our audiences, some of which have kept pace with changes in society better than others. **Chart 2** demonstrates why we must evolve our communications model to build digital channels into our approach, while still using our traditional channels, to ensure that we serve all of our audiences.

1. Mainstream media

The mainstream media is the principle way we communicate with the general public. As technologies develop these briefings may increasingly be carried out using digital formats.

2. Website

Our website receives 150,000 visits in a typical week, although this figure can reach 500,000 in a single day when we have a set piece event such as Budget. Although the website has performed well in providing information on our work for the last 17 years, it is a relatively expensive channel to run and its design and content are increasingly less fit for purpose in the context of social media and the launch of 4G technology. The GOV.UK platform we will move to in 2013 has been designed to work on any screen or device so will allow for better presentation of text and documents. We will work with other Departments on meaningful descriptions of our policy priorities. When transitioning to the new site, we will also re-visit all of our existing content, archiving material which is no longer relevant and adapting the style and tone to make our content more engaging and easier to understand.

3. Social media channels

Our main exposure to social media has been Twitter, where we have 57,000 followers (one of the highest follower numbers in government). We also use channels such as YouTube, Storify and Pinterest to disseminate content. We will continue to focus on developing these channels and consider options for expanding them, consistent with our departmental values and the needs of our audience groups.

4. Stakeholder relationships

We manage a number of relationships and partnerships with a variety of stakeholders who help us in our policy-making, offering evidence, data and ideas from different perspectives. They also help us to mitigate risks to policy implementation by offering us a clearer view of their positions. Digital tools provide an opportunity to help connect with stakeholders and gather a more diverse set of opinions and expertise in making our policies.

5. Consultations

We comply with the Code of Practice on consultations and use conventional methods such as Green Papers to gather feedback on policy proposals. As part of our move to GOV.UK, we will use digital to make it easier for people to give their views.

What needs to change and what are the challenges

The main challenges for the Treasury in delivering its digital strategy are as follows:

Improving digital communications expertise

Our communications team has traditionally been organised around media channels, with a press office, digital unit and publishing unit. We have strong expertise on all three of these areas.

But as explored elsewhere in this strategy the fragmentation of the media, the development of new technologies and the Government's drive to a digital by default agenda have changed the landscape we operate in and created new demands upon our communication function.

To address these changes, and to take account of the stretching demands of the economic agenda, we are moving to a policy-based communications and matrix management set-up. This will see digital and publishing specialists working in dedicated units alongside press specialists based around our four key policy areas. More information on how this will work is detailed in *How we'll achieve our vision*.

This will make us more agile and able to meet the evolving demands of our six audience groups listed elsewhere.

Meeting the obligations of the Parliamentary process

We detail elsewhere in the strategy that we want to adopt a digital by default approach to publishing using the GOV.UK platform, meaning that we will publish less – making more information online-only as audiences expect and reducing our printing costs in the process.

However, we will continue to meet the demands of Parliament to provide printed copies of Command Papers, often referred to as White Papers, Green Papers (consultations), government responses to Select Committee reports, as well as statistics and annual reports of some government bodies, as it is important that MPs from all parties can access the Government's publications.

Embedding digital into the culture

As mentioned elsewhere in the strategy, digital tools and channels should be more integral to a Department which has a mainly young, digitally-savvy workforce. We will encourage officials to embrace the opportunities digital offers them particularly in helping make more evidence-based policy decisions. We have already carried out roadshows across the Department to talk about the digital by default agenda and will continue this approach by developing and delivering "show and tells" to policy teams on new social media channels, digital evaluation, the influence of bloggers and so on.

Making any changes cost-neutral

Although there is a strong user-focussed aspect to the digital by default agenda, there is also an incentive for Government to improve its transactional services to meet the £1.8

billion of savings detailed in the recent Digital Efficiency Report. With this in mind the actions in this strategy are cost-neutral and include making better-use of existing resources and free online tools, bringing in extra digital skills without increasing headcount and sharing resources with other Government Departments or the GDS.

How we'll achieve our vision

As detailed in our digital vision, there are two central strands to our version of adopting a digital by default approach, which will help deliver our corporate objectives – **inform** and **engage**.

- **Inform** our audiences about the Government's work through a wider number of channels and make our communications model more digitally-focussed; and
- **Engage** with our audiences by integrating digital tools and channels into our policy-making processes.

In order to achieve this, we will take the **following seven actions**, each one designed to take us further towards adopting a digital by default approach to informing and engaging.

1. Embed digital into our communications team
2. Transition our website to GOV.UK
3. Develop an integrated approach to social media and evaluation
4. Evolve new ways to develop policy decisions
5. Move towards digital by default approach to publishing
6. Make data more open
7. Enhance our digital capability

1. Embed digital into our communications team

Our traditional strengths have been in communicating with the public indirectly through the media, and focussing policy announcements around a small number of strategic, set-piece events such as Budget and Autumn Statement. This strategy aims to strengthen how we integrate our communications across different channels, and so to provide better information online for citizens and specialists and adapt more quickly to the changing news cycle – especially the influence of social media. As **Chart 3** shows, the economy is the biggest issue for citizens and businesses and we will continue to develop different ways to explain what we're doing to stimulate growth and create jobs and prosperity.

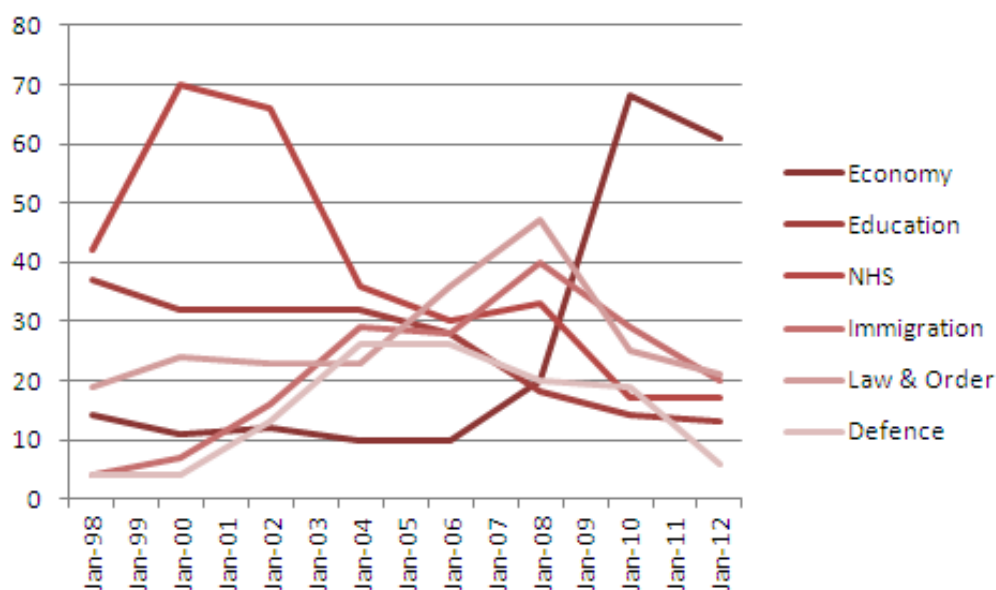


Chart 3 “What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today?” demonstrates how the economy has come to dominate people’s thoughts since the financial crisis began. Source: Ipsos Mori

As set out above, within our communications division, we have re-focussed our team around four key policy areas – economy, financial services, public spending, tax and revenue. This will bring us in line with the way in which the Department is structured, enabling us to provide stronger strategic communications to ministers. We have also agreed with the GDS that we will use these four areas as the topic headings we own within the Inside Government section of GOV.UK.

We are also bringing in more digital skills to the heart of our Communications team by improving the digital capabilities of press officers and employing new Digital Content Editors from outside government to help us improve our offering. So each policy branch within the Communications team will have a mix of press and digital skills to allow us to meet the diverse needs of our audiences.

The Digital Content Editors will take ownership of the four topic areas in GOV.UK and using their policy branch expertise, ensure the content remains up-to-date, engaging and supportive of the Treasury’s communication aims. Each one will have access to the latest technology to allow them to develop video and audio content as well as travel with ministers to live tweet, take photos or shoot and edit videos.

We will also develop, using free tools, evaluation dashboards for each branch to provide insights into how our audience groups are viewing and responding to our content.

2. Transition our website to GOV.UK

As the **Chart 1** shows, interest in our website has increased but our content proposition has not kept pace with the demands of our audiences. Because of the legacy of the Content Management System (CMS) used by www.hm-treasury.gov.uk, together with the

traditional way we have approached communications, too much of the content on the website is difficult to find and digest for non-technical audiences.

Between November 2012 to March 2013, the corporate publishing activities of 24 government departments will move onto GOV.UK. By March 2014, the information publishing aspects of all department, agency and arms length bodies websites (other than those granted a specific business-based exemption) will transfer to GOV.UK.

This means our website will close during 2013 and the websites of our arms length bodies in early 2014. This presents a unique opportunity to achieve three things: move away from a CMS and website platform which is no longer fit for purpose; move our content to a new, cost-neutral platform which will be better focussed on the needs of our audiences; and include new content which is better in quality and greater in ambition than we currently offer.

The Digital Content Editors will pay particular attention to the clear articulation of our policies and the creation of new specialist guidance which explains our work in more accessible ways. They will also look for opportunities to develop other types of content including video, audio and infographics as well as ways of presenting data and reports in easy-to-find and understand ways.

3. Develop an integrated approach to social media and evaluation

Social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn have shown extraordinary levels of growth in recent years and trends suggest that this will continue as people get faster, mobile online access and new tools and channels are introduced. Citizens now expect social media use in their news consumption. The principles of using social media in Whitehall have become well-established - that Government should communicate with citizens in the places they already are, using tools to consult and engage and be more transparent and accountable.

Our use of social media channels to date has been successful in parts but the approach has been grown organically and will become more strategic and targeted.

We will introduce a more integrated, coherent approach to using social media channels based around the needs of our users and focussed on our policy-based communication needs. For example, we will develop a meaningful Facebook proposition as we currently make little use of the platform. We will use a mixture of broadcasting and engagement approaches to use Facebook to help communicate our key messages.

We will also build on our significant user base on Twitter to answer questions from followers where appropriate, responding to campaigns and enable Ministers to take part in Q&As as an alternative way to reach audiences. As new channels come online we will evaluate each one and use those which are appropriate for the delivery of our strategic aims.

Alongside this, we will make greater use of free digital evaluation tools which allow us to measure and monitor online conversations, debates and discussions, taking part where appropriate and use metrics to better inform our future approach to using social media.

Officials will be empowered to use these tools and supported by clear guidelines and advice from the Treasury's digital specialists.

4. Evolve new ways to develop policy decisions

We are at the heart of government and are committed to delivering new policies in as open and transparent way as possible. We already have a well-developed and tested approach to developing policies in conjunction with our stakeholders. By communicating, influencing and listening to the views of our stakeholders, we involve them in developing and helping to deliver our policies.

As a Department we will consider when and how we undertake formal consultations ensuring they are only carried out when appropriate, and in an open and collaborative way, using different channels for communication in a better way. By articulating the Treasury's needs and objectives, our reputation and credibility as a Department will be enhanced and we greatly improve our chances of delivering our three strategic objectives.

But we want to reach new and more varied citizens and stakeholders who are affected by our work, increasing the opportunities for people to get involved. So we will make greater use of the GDS consultation matrix to find tools that are suitable for us, as well as using channels such as Twitter and Facebook to help canvass opinions from those affected by our policies. For example, by using informal polls and surveys like the Department for Health's Conversations Facebook site. <http://www.facebook.com/healthconversations>

5. A digital by default approach to publishing

The Treasury currently publishes a wide range of materials and reports including:

- consultation documents;
- discussion papers;
- policy documents;
- independent reviews;
- guidance documents;
- economic and statistical data; and
- press material.

Since October 2010 we have reduced the number of documents we have printed, moving towards a model where we only print House or Command papers, saving more than £350,000 in the process.

But we want to go further, writing fewer paper-based documents, shifting towards making greater use of more cost-efficient and audience-friendly communications channels. Our focus will be on ensuring that the content which is being produced is planned and targeted to its audience and by doing this we will be able to reduce the number of documents being published and printed.

There are only a limited number of reports that we are required by legislation or Parliament to produce as formal publications with printed copies. These include:

- Government Estimates;
- the Budget;
- Autumn Statement;
- Spending Review; and
- any other reports that have a major parliamentary interest.

We now only print hard copies of publications (reports, documents etc) when they are House or Command Papers resulting in a statutory obligation to provide copies to the House. In those cases, copies are limited to the numbers required for Members of the House.

Treasury paper-based documents are often produced as the default model for communications, although they are resource intensive and not always the most appropriate channel for our stakeholders and audiences.

We will use the GOV.UK platform to ensure that the information that we share remains freely available but in a way that is less reliant on PDFs as the default end model of publishing.

6. Make data more open

The Treasury is a Department of numbers. We publish and release statistics, charts, graphs and other data sets on a regular basis. We depend on accurate and timely fiscal and economic data and publish a wide range throughout the year. In addition to the information we publish, information on the UK economy is also released by other organisations including the Office for National Statistics, the Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility. The Treasury's Open Data Strategy, published in 2012, is based on the first six of the information principles developed for the UK Public Sector, these are:

- Principle 1 – Information is a valued asset
- Principle 2 – Information is managed
- Principle 3 – Information is fit for purpose
- Principle 4 – Information is standardised and linkable
- Principle 5 – Information is re-used
- Principle 6 – Public information is published

Nearly all data that the Treasury produces or collates falls under the category of “big data” – that is, it routinely collected and held by us as part of its everyday activities. On a routine basis we publish the following types of big data on both our website and www.data.gov.uk.

We regularly produce and release important statistics on the state of the nation's finances, including:

Public Expenditure Statistic Analyses (PESA)

Publication of information on government spending

Pocket databank

Publication containing major economic indicators and series for both the domestic and international economies.

Whole of Government Accounts

A consolidation of the accounts of about 1500 bodies from central government, devolved administrations, the health service, local government and public corporations.

We will continue to meet all aspects of the Government's transparency agenda, in particular, continuing to work to embed best practice and to encourage a more open culture.

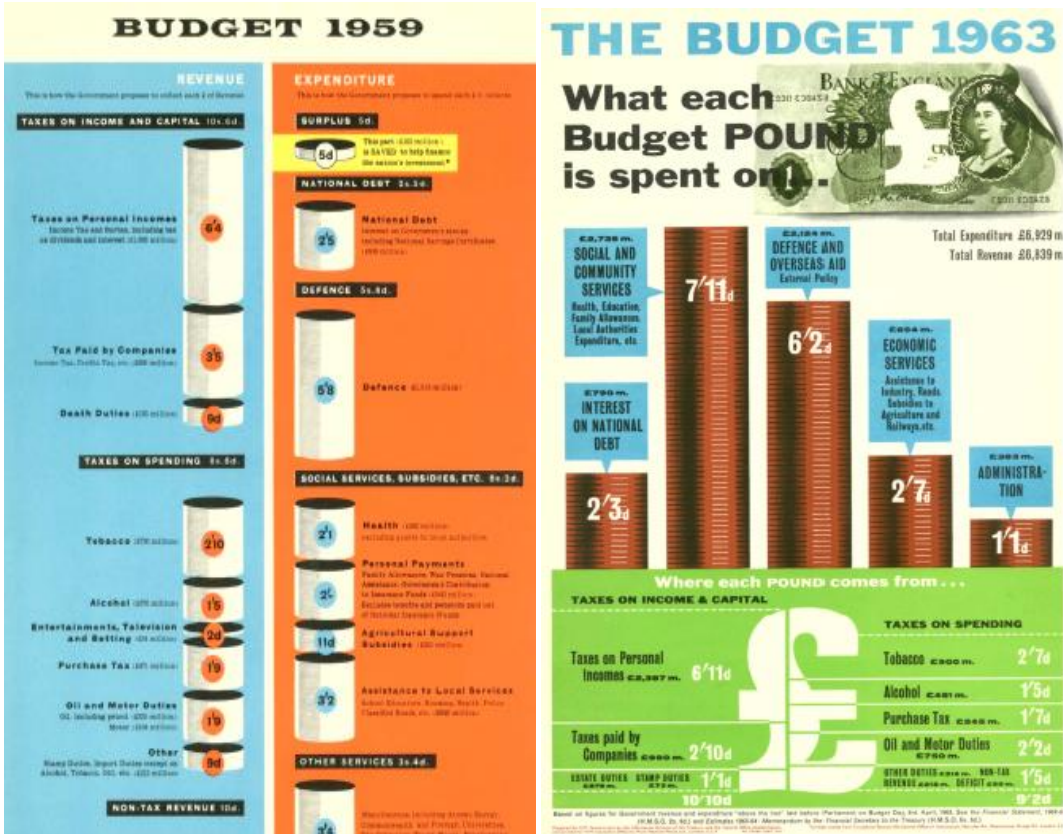
Publication of the data allows the success of our policies to be evaluated, provides confidence that the state of the economy and public finances are understood and puts individuals, businesses and other organisations in a position to make decisions based upon the best analysis of public finances and the economy. The Government's default position is that the public has a right to information so we will continue to publish data where possible in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Over the term of this Parliament, we are focused on providing greater transparency around our structural priorities. We are also using transparency to improve efficiency and effectiveness; this includes participation in Government-wide initiatives on benchmarking and the release of spending data. Where public monies are spent, transparency encourages value for money and accountability. We know there is scope to go further and have agreed to publish (as far as possible) the data asked for in requests to the data unlocking service run by the National Archives.

As set out in our Data Strategy, we will conduct an annual review to identify new information assets or transparency datasets. To share best practice, we will work closely with our arm length bodies and other Departments, this will also ensure datasets are published promptly and accurately. All Treasury datasets will be made available on GOV.UK once we have transitioned in 2013, as well as on www.data.gov.uk.

Although our specialist audiences are happy to consume these products, by definition much of what we publish is very detailed. Many organisations use our data and visualise it, bringing numbers to life to illustrate trends or concepts.

So we will explore ways to bring those numbers and the policy decisions they represent to life ourselves through the use of infographics or data visualisations. Historically the Treasury was providing first-class infographics before the term was even invented. In a similar fashion to how we once led the way in how the Government used the web to deliver information, from the 1950s to the 1970s we had an industry-leading approach to creating graphics which explained our work. The following examples of Budget posters from 1959 and 1963 show how well-developed this approach was.



Early infographics from HM Treasury c1950s/60s

In keeping with this digital age, we will create a visual identity in the best traditions of Treasury design that make our work more open and transparent. For example, by illustrating key announcements from Budget in ways that are more meaningful for a general audiences than the technical charts and graphs included in the main document. We launched our infographic style at Autumn Statement 2012.



Infographic showing investment in roads, Autumn Statement 2012

7. Enhance our digital capability

We already have a dedicated Head of Digital and departmental Digital Leader as set out above but will add Digital Content Editors into our policy-themed communications division.

These experts will take active ownership of the engagement strands of this strategy and help us drive forward with our digitally-focussed communications approach. We will deploy a training plan which ensures that all our communications professionals have core digital skills.

We will not add in-house developing resource as it is not cost effective for us to do so, but will look to share expertise with other Government Departments where practical or commission the Government Digital Service where appropriate.

What we'll do to support the cross-Government strategy

Transforming transactions

As the recently-published Digital Efficiency Report estimates, £1.7 to £1.8 billion could be realised as total annual savings to the Government and service users. These savings can be achieved whilst maintaining and ultimately improving service quality.

The Digital Efficiency Report found that the average cost of a central government digital transaction can be almost twenty times lower than the cost of a telephone call and thirty times lower than face-to-face.

The advantages of transforming transactions are not just in cost-saving though – they are in improving the way government provides services to citizens. As Francis Maude said on 6 November 2012:

“The same people who do their shopping, banking and social networking online are still interacting with Government on the phone, in person or on paper at less convenience to them and more cost to us ... Government provides more than 650 transactional services, used about 1 billion times every year – but presently there are only a handful where a large majority of people who could use the online option do so. Half don't offer a digital option at all – and apart from a handful of services, if there is a digital option few people use it because it's not a sufficiently fast or convenient option.”

We want to support Departments in their work make it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with Government, reducing costs as detailed in the Digital Efficiency Report, but also that services provided are first-class and meet user needs.

Appendix A – Our digital roadmap



Appendix B – Government Digital Strategy

The following section details what the Treasury will do to meet the actions detailed in the cross-Government digital strategy published in November 2012. For more information on each one see the relevant section of this strategy.

1. Improve Departmental digital leadership

Action 1. Departmental and transactional agency boards will include an active digital leader

We have a dedicated Head of Digital Communications and departmental Digital Leader who is also Head of Communications. He advises the Chancellor and senior officials on all communications issues, including digital, and will ensure that digital enjoys a high profile within the Department.

Action 2. Services handling over 100,000 transactions each year will be re-designed, operated and improved by a suitably skilled, experienced and empowered Service Manager

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we are not a transactional Department.

2. Develop digital capability throughout the civil service

Action 3. All Departments will ensure that they have appropriate digital capability in-house, including specialist skills

We will deploy a training plan which ensures that all our communications professionals have core digital skills. We will not add in-house developing resource as it is not cost effective for us to do so, but will look to share expertise with other Government Departments where practical or commission the Government Digital Service where appropriate.

Action 4. Cabinet Office will support improved digital capability across Departments

3. Redesign transactional services to meet a new Digital by Default service standard

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we are not a transactional Department.

Action 5. All Departments will redesign services with over 100,000 transactions per year

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we are not a transactional Department.

Action 6. From April 2014, all new or redesigned transactional services will meet the Digital by Default service standard

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we are not a transactional Department.

4. Complete the transition to GOV.UK

Action 7. Corporate publishing activities of all 24 central government departments will move on GOV.UK by March 2013, with agency and ALBs online publishing to follow by March 2014

This means our website will close during 2013 and the websites of our arms length bodies in early 2014. This presents a unique opportunity to achieve three things: move away from a CMS and website platform which is no longer fit for purpose; move our content to a new, cost-neutral platform which will be better focussed on the needs of our audiences; and include new content which is better in quality and greater in ambition than we currently offer. Increase the number of people who use digital services.

Action 8. Departments will raise awareness of their digital services so that more people know about them and use them

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we do not offer online services.

5. Provide consistent services for people who have rarely or never been online

Action 9. We will take a cross-government approach to assisted digital. This means that people who have rarely or never been online will be able to access services offline, and we will provide additional ways for them to use their digital services

We support the commitments behind the cross-Government digital strategy to ensure that every citizen has equal opportunity to access key services and transactions and that no one is left behind in this move to a Digital by Default approach.

6. Broaden the range of those tendering to supply digital services including more small and medium sized enterprises

Action 10. Cabinet Office will offer leaner and more lightweight tendering processes, as close to the best practice in industry as our regulatory requirements allow

While HM Treasury does not offer digital transactional service, we will adapt our procurement processes if appropriate to take advantage of the new leaner and more lightweight tendering processes developed by Cabinet Office.

7. Build common technology platforms for Digital by Default services

Action 11. Cabinet Office will lead in the definition and delivery of a new suite of common technology platforms which will underpin the new generation of Digital by Default services

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we do not offer online services.

8. Remove unnecessary legislative barriers

Action 12. Cabinet Office will continue to work with Departments to remove legislative barriers which unnecessarily prevent the development of straightforward and convenient digital services

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we do not offer online services.

9. Base service decisions on accurate and timely management information

Action 13. Departments will supply a consistent set of management information (as defined by CO) for their transactional services

Not applicable for HM Treasury as we are not a transactional Department.

10. Improve the way the Government makes policy and communicates with people

Action 14. Policy teams will use digital tools and techniques to engage with and consult the public

We will make greater use of the GDS consultation tools matrix to find tools that are suitable for us, as well as using channels such as Twitter and Facebook to help canvass opinions from those affected by our policies.