



understanding our audiences

supporting our clients

engaging the citizen

COI Annual Report 2007–08



Central Office of Information
Annual Report for 2007–08

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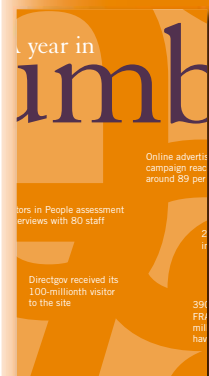
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Chief Executive's foreword

With so much change in society, in government and in the world of communications, COI has to be in a state of permanent review.



COI's Management Board. The board also includes two non-executive directors, Chris Wood and Marilyn Baxter

Alex Butler

Graham Hooper

Neil Martinson

Andrew Wade

Alan Bishop

Although society, government and the media are constantly changing, COI always has the same two balancing acts to pull off:

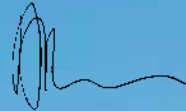
- How can we nurture the professional esprit of each of our many specialist communications disciplines, while at the same time joining them up and integrating our service more effectively?
- How can we provide an efficient centre for government communications, while at the same time supporting our diverse clients across government and the public sector?

The reorganisation of COI described in this report was our latest response to the first question, while the introduction of new governance helps to answer the second.

The reorganisation maintains the integrity of the specialist teams but redeploys them, in order to support the new way we want to plan our work – from insight, through execution, to evaluation.

The new governance – the Government Strategic Marketing Advisory Board – brings together key government stakeholders with some of the most respected marketers from the private sector, to ensure that COI delivers against mutually agreed marketing priorities.

Although the way we work is changing all the time, our purpose stays the same. We need to make the very best use of our unique cross-government insight into a wide range of audiences to create, or help to create, the most engaging, motivating and efficient communication – and then to make it as easy as possible for everyone to use our services.



Alan Bishop
COI Chief Executive



Sally Whetton

Peter Buchanan

Graham Beasant

Mark Cross

Emma Lochhead

Ian Hamilton

Our year in summary

Turnover and operating expenditure levels

COI turnover for 2007–08 was up £54 million (15.9 per cent) on the previous year and our operating expenditure was also 15.9 per cent higher.

The largest part of our turnover continues to be advertising, the media element of which accounts for £157 million (40.1 per cent) of our total turnover, compared with £136 million (40.3 per cent) in 2006–07.

Turnover by service £000	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Advertising: Media	167,580	165,426	154,680	135,909	156,859
Non-media (production costs, etc)	10,667	19,507	13,262	18,825	10,785
Total	178,247	184,933	167,942	154,734	167,644
Direct and Relationship Marketing	36,870	35,893	27,167	29,926	33,471
Events	6,605	9,730	7,494	10,918	12,994
Broadcast	14,431	11,301	12,040	13,677	17,687
Publications	26,629	34,279	36,496	32,107	31,377
Digital Media	3,003	11,067	12,113	22,452	35,375
Research	15,897	13,215	17,703	17,376	22,668
PR and Sponsorship	15,440	19,116	23,702	22,736	29,219
Strategic Consultancy	5,977	7,861	7,207	9,724	11,936
GNN/MMU	10,301	10,224	9,681	9,344	9,670
Directgov				13,510	13,884
GovGap					3,981
Other and accrual adjustment	4,477	6,166	779	1,075	1,185
Total	317,877	343,785	322,324	337,579	391,091

Total operating expenditure over the year was £392.7 million. Our operating expenditure can be split into:

- our own running costs, which totalled £52.4 million (£46.7 million in the previous year); and
- costs we have incurred on our clients' behalf, which totalled £340.3 million (£292.1 million in the previous year).

The running cost increase is mainly due to staffing costs. £4 million of this relates to the exceptional demand for our new GovGap service (explained in more detail on page 9). The remainder is for agency and freelance staff used to meet the increased client demand for Directgov and Digital Media services.

Savings for clients

We have continued to leverage our strong centralised buying position for advertising, enabling us to secure significant savings for our clients. In 2007–08, we secured a 47.7 per cent reduction in media costs measured using recognised industry benchmarks.

	2003 04	2004 05	2005 06	2006 07	2007–08
Savings on media costs against industry benchmarks	40.4%	42.1%	44.1%	46.0%	47.7%
Improvement on previous year	1.4%	1.7%	2.0%	1.9%	1.7%

Balance sheet and treasury management

At 31 March 2008, our net current assets totalled £7.1 million against £7.0 million for the year ended 31 March 2007. Our fixed assets are primarily IT equipment, and the overall net book value has decreased by £50,000 in the year, to £1.3 million. Our debtor balances are high at £96.2 million – £12.8 million higher than previous year balances – reflecting end-of-year activity to complete open jobs and the increase in turnover.

We seek to maximise all assets at our disposal and undertake active treasury management of our cash. During the year, we borrowed and repaid to the National Loans Fund £17 million at an interest cost of £151,000. Investment of surplus cash balances generated £622,000 of bank interest. Improved client billing and credit control contributed to the significant improvement over the previous year.

Ministerial targets

We are annually set a financial, an efficiency and a quality target:

- to achieve a 2.5 per cent reduction in the unit cost of outputs;
- to achieve a break-even position year on year; and
- to achieve quality targets as measured by the Customer Feedback Survey (CFS).

We have consistently met our financial target, and annually achieved unit cost reductions significantly in excess of the 2.5 per cent target. Feedback from clients continues to be positive – reflected in us exceeding our CFS target for the eighth year running. Response rates are above the revised target due to the implementation of e-CFS returns.

Our performance against our targets

Financial performance		2003 04	2004 05	2005 06	2006 07	2007-08
To achieve break even	Target	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Out turn	£1.0m	£0.3m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Efficiency						
Unit cost reduction	Target	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
	Out turn	3.8%	3.6%	4.8%	6.6%	3.5%
Customer satisfaction index						
Score (out of 10)	Target	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25
	Out turn	8.63	8.75	8.65	8.83	8.61
% score of 6 or more	Target	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0
	Out turn	97.6	96.9	96.7	97.0	96.4
% response rate	Target	62.0	62.0	62.0	62.0	39.9
	Out turn	48.0	42.5	37.6	36.3	41.3

Changes in 2007–08

On April 1 2006, the central operations functions of Directgov transferred to COI. This transfer reflected our offer of shared services across the whole spectrum of communication activity. It also acted as a catalyst for us to review our governance and operational structures in order to support Directgov and the wider transformational government strategy, and to reflect the changing communications landscape.

The first outcome of this process was a new internal structure that recognises several key factors:

- the central role COI can play in helping to resource government communications through our GovGap service, which facilitates the effective deployment of professional communicators on both a permanent and a temporary basis;
- the importance of supporting our clients by taking a broad overview of their objectives and working with them on their strategic issues;
- COI's need to offer a proactive news management and PR service;
- the increasing need to personalise contact between government and people;
- the changing face of the paid-for media market and the mainstreaming of digital media;
- the importance of high creative standards within government communications; and
- the requirement for truly objective thinking on how to plan communication activity that employs the full range of current and emerging channels, and how government can develop new channels of its own.

COI's new structure was announced in outline in April 2007 and took effect from September. While ownership of Directgov moved to the Department for Work and Pensions on 1 April 2008, joint working between Directgov and the rest of COI has become well-established and Directgov's continuing location in Hercules House will foster close co-operation, from which citizens will benefit.

The second outcome was the creation of the Government Strategic Marketing Advisory Board, which replaced the Advisory Committee on Advertising and will monitor the effectiveness of all government marketing activity in the new media age.

These changes have been positively received by our clients, who recognise that we are working hard to ensure that we deliver the services they need.

Looking ahead to 2008–09

In the coming year, we will build on these changes. We will discuss with our clients and stakeholders what government now needs from COI. We will introduce new flexible ways of working that will drive greater efficiency for government.

We have also revisited our role as a centre of excellence within government, and believe that the key element we contribute in the current context is our overarching view of audiences. It is vital that government derives the maximum value from this, as we shift towards the delivery of personalised services to people.

We are sensitive to the financial environment faced by our clients through the pressures of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the tightening of budgets; the changes we are making to our remit will continue to deliver savings and efficiencies to our clients. We expect our trading environment for 2008–09 to be similar to that of 2007–08.

Demand for our services is very strongly client-led, and therefore accurate long-term forecasting of our trading activity is challenging. Based on our current knowledge of our marketplace, the wider financial environment our clients are operating in and early indications from clients of likely activity, our operational units have mostly set provisional turnover and expenditure budgets at similar levels to their 2007–08 budgets.

In reaction to the fluidity of our trading environment, we maintain our financial flexibility through our budget control processes. Our own budgets, which are predominantly made up of staff costs (67 per cent), are based on a steady-state financial environment for 2008–09. Should demand for our services change during the year, we are able to manage our costs by flexing our use of agency and freelance staff.

Our budgets for next year include ongoing investment in our systems and processes, and our programme of development will be constantly reviewed in the light of the prevailing trading environment. To give us further financial flexibility and to allow us to react to changing trading patterns, our specialist teams review their trading performance on a monthly basis, and submit revised forecasts for formal review by the Management Board.

Internal review

In September 2007, COI restructured in order to maximise internal coherence, integration and innovation.

“COI is all about optimising delivery for our clients and ultimately our service to the citizen. We continually examine what we do, and how we could do it better – and that’s why COI restructured last year following our internal review,” says Graham Hooper, Director of the newly-formed Client Service, Strategy and Insight (CSSI) team.

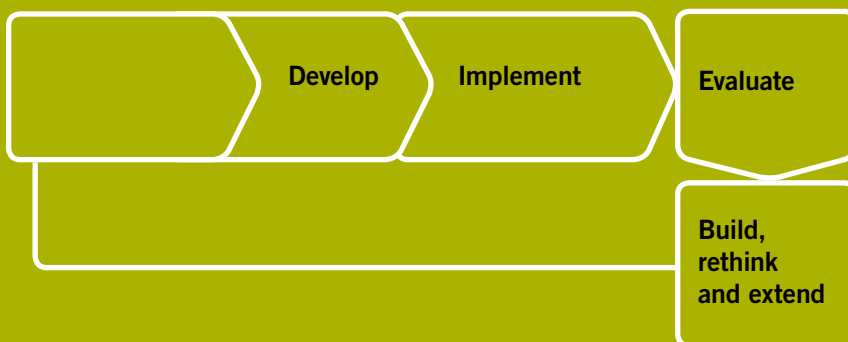
Internal coherence

COI’s organisation works best when projects follow the simple planning steps laid out in the Government Communication Network (GCN) Engage framework that is used across government: scope – develop – implement – evaluate – build, rethink and extend. COI’s internal review recommended that our own structure and organisational workflow should be aligned in a way that mirrors this framework.

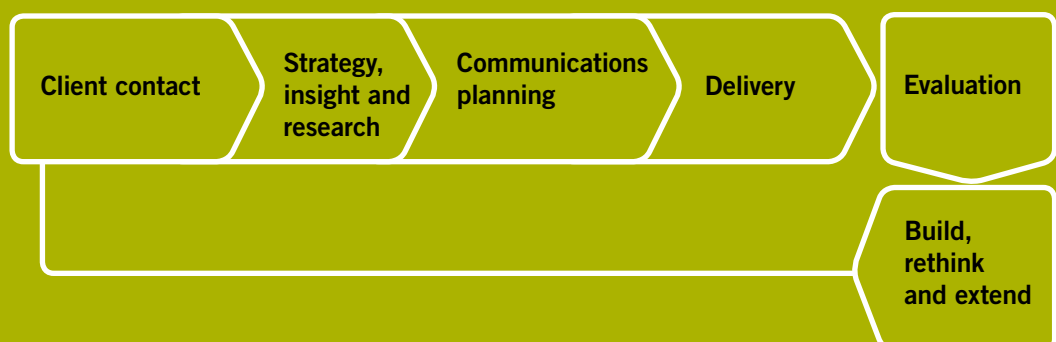
“Redefining our clients’ journey in terms of Engage enabled us to identify and focus on a potential gap in our offer and to re-examine how COI could best deliver leading-edge communications planning,” explains Graham. “In addition, we had new products and services such as GovGap (our recruitment service for interim communications staff), which we wanted to integrate fully into our overall offer.”

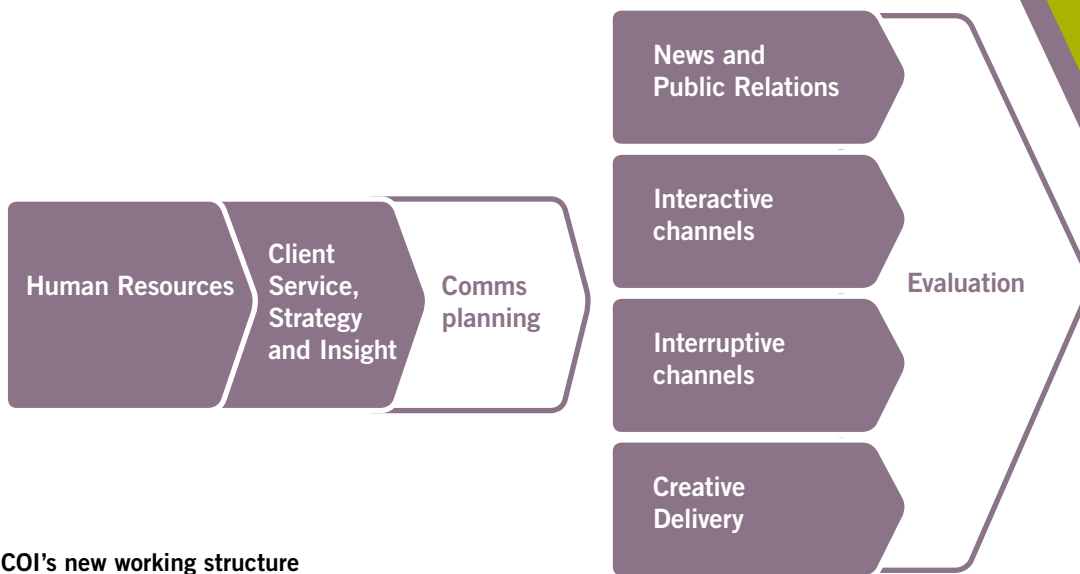
The result was a different way of expressing the client journey itself. This journey is increasingly initiated through contact with the Human Resources (HR) function and GovGap. Scoping, development and communications planning then lead into, across and through the impressive range of delivery channels offered by COI.

The Engage framework



Our organisational workflow





COI's new working structure

Evaluation and feedback throughout – and, critically, linking back into further scoping and development following actual delivery – is a vital factor in achieving and sustaining the high standards our clients expect.

Depending on the specific nature of the brief, clients can obviously start their journey at any point in the process. However, in a complex project, getting the earliest research, scoping and communications planning stages right at the outset ensures that issues and audiences are fully understood – and that ultimately, the client gets the best solution.

Integration

The new structure is not just about redefining the client journey, it is also about achieving greater integration across COI's full range of services.

"Clients had told us in the past that we should be more joined up," **Graham says**. "So these new groupings are not about creating a new set of silos. They exist to encourage business units sharing similar expertise to align their thinking and their work much more closely and enable them to collaborate better, delivering the very best quality communications advice to all our clients."

And staff are working very closely together under the new structure. To take the example of CSSI, client directors in the Client Account Team, managing consultants in Strategic Consultancy and team heads in Research meet frequently to share insight into emerging policy developments and knowledge about clients and the issues faced by their departments.

Likewise, the new News and PR team now blends these two complementary services under a single new director, Neil Martinson – a collaboration that promotes knowledge- and skill-sharing and represents a unique mix of expertise.

Innovation

The restructure has also allowed COI to continue to innovate. A key plank of the reorganisation is the strengthening of COI's communications planning function.

Mark Cross, who joined as COI's Communications Planning Director in October 2007, explains: "Today's citizen is increasingly empowered both by the shifts within our communications environment and by wider social and economic trends.

"The models of communication are evolving – and in a world where everything and everyone is a communications medium, we need to ensure that we are anticipating these shifts to define the most relevant solutions from all the available channels – including paid for and non-paid for and our own unique channels."

As well as looking across all the channels currently available, the Communications Planning team is exploring emerging issues such as the role of mobile technology and how social media could be integrated into the mix.

They are also looking to integrate media-buying processes. In autumn 2007, COI commissioned an independent consultant to review these processes, capturing insight both from within COI and from government departments, media owners, agencies and other external commentators.

The analysis concluded that media buying does not exist in isolation of a wider system for effective communications, and it highlighted the challenges of change. COI has responded to the report by launching its own agenda for integration, to ensure that we fully exploit the opportunities of a more converged future.

As Mark says: "The complexity of our clients' briefs, the quality of our suppliers and the strengths of our staff give us a fantastic opportunity to set the pace and create best practice in an increasingly uncertain world. COI's internal review and our agenda for integration will allow us to position ourselves at the forefront of the industry in rising to the challenges of the new communications ecology."

Change for the future

COI continues to develop its ability to innovate. One 2007 appointment to the Management Board will give this a strong boost: new non-executive director Chris Wood will be actively involved in the work of COI, challenging and assessing the impact of business decisions, making a creative contribution and bringing an independent view to the table.

As Graham Hooper concludes: "Our landscape is constantly changing. The newly established Government Strategic Marketing Advisory Board – which unlike its predecessor is responsible for overseeing strategic marketing across government – will certainly bring about changes in the way we operate.

"We welcome that fresh challenge, and we'll work to remain nimble enough to respond rapidly to the changing demands made upon us and flexible enough to anticipate and accommodate new opportunities of almost any kind."

2007–08 timeline

- **May 2007:** Results of COI's internal review announced.
- **September 2007:** Changes and the new groups that were created as a result of COI's internal review become operational; Mark Cross joins COI as Communications Planning Director.
- **October 2007:** Neil Martinson joins COI as the new Director of News and PR.
- **January 2008:** Government Strategic Marketing Advisory Board replaces Advisory Committee on Advertising; Chris Wood appointed as COI's second non-executive director, alongside Marilyn Baxter.
- **March 2008:** Interactive Services team created, integrating COI's existing Digital Media and Transformational Government teams.



Does this mean we're

Consulting the public has always been key to intelligent government, and the Prime Minister is hugely in favour of engaging with the citizen. Effective engagement can address the democratic deficit, helping to generate higher levels of trust and reduce public scepticism.

But in a world where communication channels are proliferating to a bewildering degree, what's the best way to approach a public engagement exercise? Brian Parry, COI's newly appointed Head of Public Engagement, lends his insight.

What is public engagement?

Public engagement can be defined as any kind of structured communication or dialogue that occurs between government, citizens and other interested parties, as part of policy development or service implementation. There are many different forms that engagement can take – from traditional information-sharing to consultation and more newly developed techniques such as co-decision-making.

Does every policy need an engagement exercise?

“Here at COI, we would be wary of encouraging anyone to carry out engagement exercises for the sake of it,” Brian comments. “While consultation is important and can provide valuable insights that lead to better outcomes, it has to ask the right people the right questions – and, critically, at the right time in the policy-making process. Most importantly, public engagement needs to have a set of goals attached that demonstrate how it will make a difference in terms of the policy or service being developed or refined.

“If you can't summarise what you plan to achieve from engagement – for example, responses that could inform a policy or plan, or indications of where funding should be directed – then it probably isn't the right time to do it.”

The Children's Plan consultation

Following its creation in June 2007, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) began to develop a children's plan to secure the wellbeing of children and families in the United Kingdom.

DCSF wanted to carry out a major consultation to ensure that the plan would meet the needs of young people, parents, teachers and other practitioners working with young people. The Department approached COI to create a major deliberative engagement event.

Stage 1: September 2007

This whole-day event involved 100 people drawn from the plan's key audiences, in four separate locations. Prime Minister Gordon Brown attended the London event, while Ed Balls, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families was at the Leeds event.

The events involved group discussions, as well as plenary sessions in which information was presented about children's services and participants could feed back key discussion points.

All the locations were linked via satellite, allowing the Prime Minister and Secretary of State's addresses to be broadcast to all the participants. Electronic voting keypads were also used, to enable participants to answer questions about the plan's priorities.

Stage 2: March 2008

In March, following publication of *The Children's Plan*, COI reconvened the event in all four locations, inviting back a number of the same participants and using a similar format. Participants had the chance to discuss whether they felt that the Plan reflected what they had said at the September event.

engaged?

“Top-down pulling of the lever solutions are not always going to work best... You really have to involve people and build a national consensus, if you are going to solve the challenges of the future.”

Prime Minister Gordon Brown



Citizens' jury on crime

The Home Office wanted to gather insight on community views about neighbourhood policing. COI was commissioned to set up a one-day 'citizens' forum' event in Leicester, involving 100 people in small groups of about 10, grouped by government regions.

The groups discussed neighbourhood policing plans, including levels of crime data that should be released and how they would like this information to be communicated. Participants were asked to think about trade-offs between the need for transparency and concerns about how data could be used – for example whether it might affect insurance premiums and house prices.

The Prime Minister and the Home Secretary attended the event – creating a unique opportunity for the Prime Minister, government policy-makers and the public to collaborate in developing policy. Number 10's YouTube page also has a film clip of the event.

English for Speakers of Other Languages

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) wanted to use consultation to explore how provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) could be more specifically targeted to foster community cohesion and integration.

A formal consultation ran for 13 weeks and the public were invited to respond online or submit written responses. To complement this process, DIUS held a series of stakeholder events in Ealing, Stoke, Rochdale, Peterborough and Bristol, organised by a blended COI team comprising Strategic Consultancy and Live Events.

Each event involved 20–50 people drawn from colleges and training providers, community and voluntary organisations and local authorities. Small table discussions were complemented by presentations, plenary feedback and Q&A sessions.

The consultation process garnered some 200 responses, which were processed and analysed in house by Strategic Consultancy. The results will be used to inform DIUS policy – the Department aims to draw up a set of national criteria that will give local areas the flexibility to map their English language teaching needs.

DIUS's Louise Robinson has this to say: "COI organised these events in a very short timescale and to a very high standard. The facilitation was excellent as participants were encouraged to make their points known, and some very interesting debates ensued. The plenary sessions were equally impressive, with an enviable ease of delivery."

What's the best way to plan an engagement exercise?

Public engagement programmes need to be planned in advance. "You need to be clear about the purpose of the engagement and identify early on what kind of participants you need to engage and what kind of outcomes you want to achieve. This will help determine the form of engagement most appropriate to your needs," Brian says.

"It is also crucial that you are clear about the degree of influence that the engagement will have over the final outcome – COI often works right from the beginning with clients to understand this, so that expectations are met on both sides."

COI works closely with the Better Regulation team at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform to ensure that its engagement activity is as consistent as possible with recently revised guidelines on running formal consultation exercises.

What form should engagement take?

The scale and type of the exercise is usually determined by the type of audience and the breadth of opinion that's needed. Some audiences are more effective in smaller groups. Some – such as the young – respond better to events involving the use of technology, while for some topics it's important to engage a broad cross-section of society in the debate.

"It's all about getting the balance right," says Brian. "Small citizens' juries of around 12 people can be the perfect way to draw out valuable insights. In another case, it might be appropriate to run a big deliberative exercise over several days. The most important thing to remember is that big does not always mean most effective."

What does success look like?

"If you run a public engagement exercise, you need to know before the start what you want to get out of it," Brian says. "It could be a set of parameters for defining funding, or a range of public opinions that could inform the contents of a new policy."



“It’s also a good idea to build in an element of evaluation, to help determine whether objectives have been met and ensure that those involved learn from the experience.”

How is public engagement evolving?

The engagement model is constantly changing. Currently, Brian is looking at innovative new ways of engaging audiences using a range of communications techniques and methods of capturing participants’ views over time – such as returning after an interval to examine how their views have adjusted to outside stimuli. COI has also identified growing interest in the use of technology and online engagement techniques.

“Feedback is key,” Brian adds. “Participants want to know how their involvement has shaped things – what the results are going to be. This is often a challenging aspect of engagement, but it’s the one way in which we can demonstrate that participants’ input has made a difference and that government is listening.”

How can COI help me?

Getting public engagement right is one of the most important challenges confronting government today. Thanks to COI’s recent restructure, its public engagement experts are now working together more closely than ever to help clients to plan engagement effectively.

Restructuring to put the focus on insight

COI’s internal review in 2007 created a new Client Service, Strategy and Insight (CSSI) group that placed the Client Account Team, Strategic Consultancy and Research teams side by side, providing seamless strategic communications support for a range of needs – including engagement.

“It’s about bringing groups of people who are expert in this field together so they can collaborate as closely as possible,” explains Brian. “Research, the Client Account Team and Strategic Consultancy have always worked together, but now it’s as part of a more integrated process.”

As part of the focus on insight, COI created a brand new Public Engagement team, working across CSSI, with Brian as its head.

Brian believes that COI’s clients will benefit from the new structure almost immediately – and so should the general public. “When public engagement is carried out as part of a planned strategic exercise – and when the findings go on to inform a cohesive communication campaign – the result should be information that’s clearer and more effective. That’s good for everyone.”

Insight into creativity



Harnessing our creativity – and ensuring that both clients and the citizen feel the benefits – is one of COI's most exciting challenges.

What does creativity in communications look like? COI's strength in creativity emerges not just in the products it and its suppliers generate – such as TV fillers, door drops, video-streaming and banner ads – but in its creative processes.

What is creativity good for?

At COI, we use creative thinking to make a connection with audiences. “In the same way that channels connect policy and delivery, creativity reaches out and opens up a connection with audiences – acting as a conduit for the message and making it clear, relevant and motivating,” explains Peter Buchanan, Deputy Chief Executive and one of COI's Creative Champions. “It's about using creativity to capture attention or stimulate a dialogue.”

COI's Creative Champions are tasked with driving creativity. Their goal is to ensure that COI lives up to its positioning of ‘connection through creativity’.

“Our focus on creativity came out of the realisation that we are under-using our internal creative resources,” comments Peter. “Ironically enough, this emerged from our search for a Creative Director, during which we realised that COI already possessed the knowledge and drive at senior level to champion creativity.”

COI's Management Board wants to boost creativity not just in outward-facing business areas, but within support teams such as Finance and HR. “We want to release everyone's creative potential,” Peter says. “Everyone here should be excited about working for a creative organisation.”

Where does COI's creativity come from?

Insight is key. The Government Communication Network (GCN)'s Engage process describes insight as a revelation about what compels people to act, think or feel the way they do. Insight can come from many sources – from formal research to an in-depth understanding of audience needs that stems from first-hand experience, both professional and personal. This is what drives COI's creativity.

COI works closely with its clients, acquiring an in-depth understanding of their needs. Increasingly, through GovGap arrangements, COI staff are themselves working at the heart of client departments. When GovGap staff return to COI they bring a closer understanding of the vision behind key policies and the specific needs of different audience groups. Not least, they have experienced the very real pressures under which our departmental colleagues might be operating.

All of these factors can better inform the creativity of COI's approach to a brief.

Insight into audiences

For COI's communications, there is not one audience, but many – and with enormous differences of scale. One day, Publications could be crafting a leaflet for a niche audience of survivors of forced marriages, and the next, Interactive Services could be communicating the Smokefree campaign to 30 million people. For every project, the same focus on audience needs is essential.

A particular area of expertise is communicating to diverse audiences. These can include those who have trouble reading or hearing, for example. Barry Sawyer, COI's Head of Informability, makes the point that: “Disabled people make up around

20 per cent of the population, and they need the same information as everyone else.”

Led by Barry, COI provides consultancy on all aspects of communicating with disabled people – from creating ‘easy reads’ for people with learning disabilities to procuring formats such as Braille, audio CDs, digital talking books and British Sign Language on DVD.

Equally, COI is adept at reaching culturally diverse audiences that don’t speak English confidently or use mainstream media channels.

“Understanding our target audiences is at the heart of what we do to aid the development of effective campaigns,” explains Patricia Macauley, Head of the Cultural Diversity team.

“It’s essential to get underneath the skin of the audience you’re trying to engage, and we go to great lengths to ensure that we understand the communication barriers and develop solutions to overcome these.”

Patricia continues: “We’re advocates of research and we also make it our business to get involved with the audiences at a grassroots level – for example, we attend cultural events to see first-hand how various communities interact and respond to government information. It’s an eye-opening experience and provides real audience insight.”

Innovation through interactivity and integration

Of course, one size will never fit all, and one communications approach can never satisfy the huge number of audiences that COI talks to – which is why COI’s client-serving teams have evolved to cover a huge range of communications channels.

Interruptive Media includes direct marketing, media buying and sponsorship, while **Interactive Media** is where clients will find the latest digital media technology. These days you aren’t anyone if you aren’t blogging, and COI – like its minister Tom Watson – is (see www.tom-watson.co.uk).

Last year, Publications and Moving Image and Audio Content (MIAC) worked together on a project for the RAF. For six months, Gunner Paul Goodfellow recorded a daily video blog from Kandahar airbase that appeared on YouTube. Such was the popularity of the videos that, on his return to the UK, the Gunner recorded a further 10 weeks of blogs.

Social media is still relatively untested as a communications tool, but its freshness and immediacy are exciting. COI is working with the Cabinet Office to develop guidelines that will help government communications teams to use social media effectively.

Integration, integration, integration

Despite the need for bespoke communication tools for different audiences, COI works best when it’s working collaboratively. COI’s new Communications Planning Director, Mark Cross, is working on more effective integration of communications activity.

This results in real benefits to cross-channel campaigns, where instead of the client working with dozens of independent agencies, they can harness the best of COI’s internal and external talent, working in harmony.

Peter Buchanan agrees: “One of COI’s unique offerings is our ability to harness the best external talent and blend it with our own creative resources, using a multi-talented team to deliver complete solutions.”

Sally Whetton, leader of COI’s in-house creative powerhouses – MIAC and Publications – adds: “I’d like to see MIAC and Publications working more closely together. There are many areas where the two teams can now meet – such as the challenge of producing creative and engaging content for today’s interactive channels.

“But I also think there are exciting possibilities inherent in the things we do very differently. Imagine how MIAC might work with Publications to produce a department’s annual report as an interactive visual and audio product.”

Looking forward

Championing creativity is one of COI’s new corporate objectives. In the year ahead, COI will be looking at the internal creative product and boosting support systems. Once this is achieved, attention will focus on work with creative suppliers.

Ultimately, COI’s creative focus is driven by market need. “Our clients are becoming more demanding – in a good way,” says Peter Buchanan. “They need more from us. And we will make sure we’re ready to deliver.”

Creative gallery

Uses for a condom:

- A condom placed over the barrel of a gun helps stop sand and dirt from jamming the weapon.
- Non-lubricated condoms make excellent water carriers and are also light and compact when not in use.
- Condoms are very good for stopping bleeding and preventing sand, dirt and water from getting into wounds.

COI skillset: the direct marketing expert RAF Regiment

COI's Direct and Relationship Marketing (DRM) team took on a novel challenge in promoting the RAF Regiment (the Gunners) to potential recruits. To attract footfall to a live event in Manchester, the team mailed contraceptives to the target audience of young men aged 18–24.

The pack shows a condom mounted on a card featuring the strapline 'Apply to weapon when on manoeuvres'. Another message, 'Place in sock and fill with water to create emergency carrier', shows one of the many military uses for a condom.

To meet the brief, the team had carried out qualitative and quantitative research and identified key geographical areas that a new campaign could focus on. They created a regional recruiting strategy based on three live events, and developed a direct marketing campaign to drive traffic to the first of these, which was in Manchester.



“The agency Tullo Marshall Warren developed a concept showing a variety of RAF Regiment uses for everyday items,” explains DRM’s Emily White. “Their initial concept used bubblewrap, but we thought it should be more exciting. I asked them to develop a version with a condom.”

To make doubly sure that attendance at the event was high, a specialist agency carried out experiential marketing that invited people to test themselves against the Gunners doing sit-ups and press-ups.

The RAF Regiment reported that the campaign attracted a greater volume and higher calibre of potential recruits than any previous campaign.

COI skillset: the news and PR expert

Changing Lives, Making Communities Safer

Could subjecting journalists to a mock drug arrest help the Home Office to communicate falling crime levels?

This was one of the many ideas devised by COI's News and PR team to help support Home Office partners in promoting local action to tackle crime and increase positive local media coverage.

Working from its 10 regional offices, and harnessing a wealth of local contacts, COI developed a strategy involving creative, simple and cost-effective campaign ideas that partners could adapt locally – from 'arrest a journalist' to 'now you see it, now you don't', which aimed to get communities involved in clearing beer cans from their neighbourhood.



"The project showed how a relatively small investment at a local level can deliver increased confidence among partners and real results," says Wendy Miller, News and PR Regional Director in the Leeds office. "We achieved over 1,500 items of newspaper and TV/radio coverage."

The Home Office's crime and drugs communications team commented: "COI News and PR worked closely with us to develop the

creative campaign ideas and generate support for the approach, which have been very well received on the front line. The amount of positive coverage generated as a result of COI's involvement was excellent."

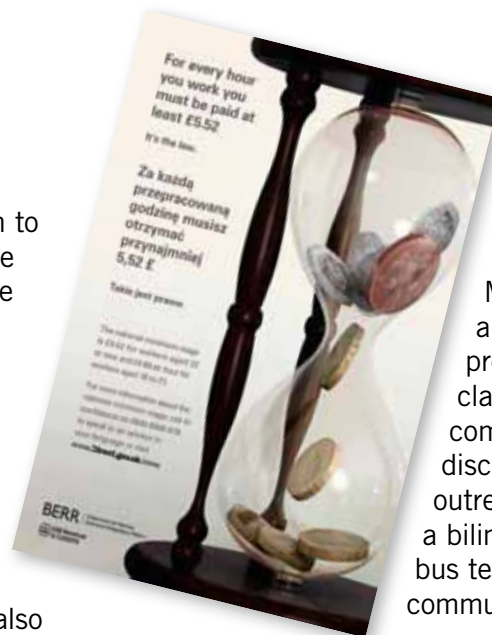
COI skillset: the cultural diversity specialist

National Minimum Wage

To make sure its cross-channel campaign to promote the new National Minimum Wage and a confidential multi-language helpline reached a key audience group of Polish, Lithuanian and Slovakian migrants, the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) consulted COI's Cultural Diversity team.

COI advised on audience data, communication channels and how to ensure that the imagery and messages would resonate with the audience. They also looked at how to approach translations across different communication platforms, in line with the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's translation guidelines, which COI helped to develop.

This insight helped to shape the campaign's creative. "Our findings enabled us to provide clear direction to the agency developing the communications plan," explains Head of Cultural Diversity Patricia Macauley.



The campaign was planned and executed by Mediareach Advertising and involved specialist press advertising, PR, classified web banners, community forum discussions, posters and outreach activity – including a bilingual team focusing on bus terminals, churches and community centres.

The campaign generated an impressive increase in helpline enquiries, with an amazing 400 per cent increase in calls.

"The migrant audience is a very important part of our overall target audience and presents particular communication issues," comments BERR's Steve Sheekey. "COI and Mediareach helped greatly in reaching this audience by using a strategic multi-channel approach."

Creative gallery

COI skillset: the radio producer

Clear Ahead

The Highways Agency's traffic officers are always on the move, helping to manage incidents and congestion on the motorway network. Out of reach of conventional internal communications, they needed their own channel – so the Highways Agency asked COI to help create an audio magazine.

“Rather than launch straight in, we tested a pilot with the audience,” explains Brian Jenkins, COI's Head of Radio. “We met a group of traffic officers to find out about their likes and dislikes.”

The result was *Clear Ahead*, a bi-monthly audio magazine that's created in-house by COI and distributed on CD, cassette and intranet to the Traffic Officer Service.

Jo Bevan, Radio Producer in Moving Image and Audio Content, puts each issue together.

“I attend the Highways Agency's editorial board, then carry out interviews all over the country. I write the scripts and the final programme is put together in the studio.”

The Highways Agency's Dave Fawbert is delighted with the magazine, now in its fifth issue. “*Clear Ahead* is a real joint effort between COI and the Highways Agency and it's having a big impact on our communications with the Traffic Officer Service,” he says.



COI skillset: the multi-disciplinary project manager

Shattered Lives

In 2006 there were 10,000 major injuries and more than 240 deaths caused by slips, trips and falls in the workplace. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) approached COI for help to get the message across to employers and employees.

The team recognised that to try and address every possible target audience would weaken the campaign's impact.

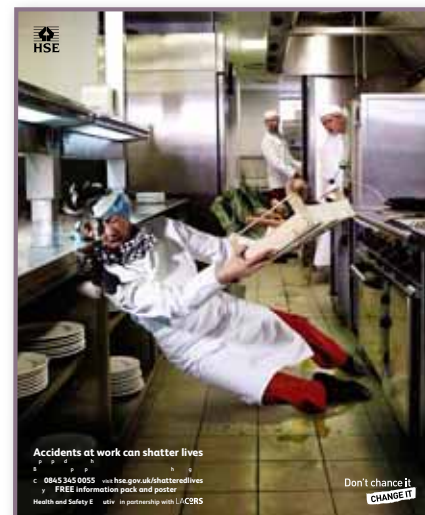
A workshop was held to develop a more focused strategic plan. HSE wanted to identify key audiences and their behaviours and barriers standing in the way of change, as well as finding messages and incentives to drive change.

Following the workshop, a campaign was developed to focus on larger retail chains, small and medium-sized food manufacturing and catering businesses and construction maintenance companies.

“The creative proposition was ‘stop small accidents ruining lives’,” explains the Client Account Team's Alison Gilbert.

COI's Client Account Team managed the multi-disciplinary project, involving radio advertising, national, regional and trade press advertising (using the agency Cheetham Bell JWT), internet advertising and website development (using Euro), CDRM (using WPN) and PR (supported by COI News and PR).

“This was a complex campaign covering a range of media and audiences,” adds HSE's Frank Dolan. “The creative process produced an extremely strong image-set that drove responses beyond anything we had previously seen from HSE campaigns.”



COI skillset: the brand specialist and the designer

Royal Marines Commando recruitment brand

The Royal Marines Commando approached COI's Publications team to create a recruitment brand that could successfully attract the calibre of recruits it needs.

Stage 1: strategic model

"We identified that the symbols that mean a lot to the Royal Marines, such as the beret and insignia, don't mean anything to the target audience," explains brand specialist Daniel Barley. "The challenge was to identify parallel symbols that the audience can relate to."

Stage 2: mood boards

Mood boards were created to capture the lifestyle of the target audience. The Publications team then worked on mapping the links between this world and the world of the Commandos.

Stage 3: creative concepts

The team came up with a number of visual themes based on the mood boards and experimented with how the visuals could be interpreted for use in different environments.

Stage 4: logo design

After the client selected a route, COI's designers crafted it to make it as versatile as possible. "We had to ensure that the finished logo could be reproduced in many different materials, such as enamel and cloth, for use in different situations," comments designer Duncan Moss.

Stage 5: operational

The Royal Marines Commando recruitment logo is used for recruitment purposes only.



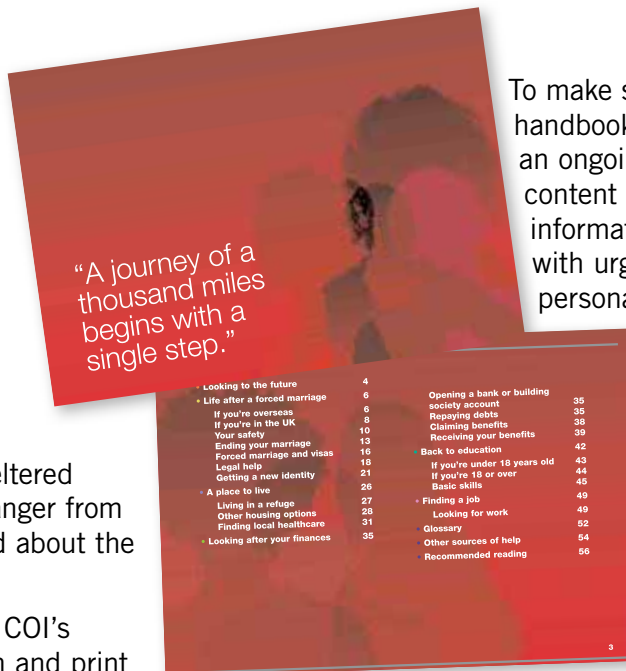
COI skillset: the writer

Forced Marriages Survivors' Handbook

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Forced Marriage Unit helps British citizens who are taken overseas and forced into marriage. These are mainly young women from relatively sheltered backgrounds. They may be in danger from their spouse or family, frightened about the future and unsure who to trust.

The Forced Marriage Unit asked COI's Publications team to edit, design and print a handbook to support its caseworkers as they help survivors rebuild their lives.

Cultural sensitivity was key. "We were careful to avoid making assumptions about our readers. Forced marriage is not confined to one religious or cultural group and affects men as well as women," explains writer Leyla Moazzen.



To make sure that the handbook can be used as an ongoing resource, its content reflects readers' likely information needs, starting with urgent priorities such as personal safety and housing, and moving on to cover education and work.

The handbook contains blank pages so that readers can personalise it with their own notes, while a discreet

cover design avoids its user being identified as a victim.

At the handbook's launch, a 17-year-old survivor of forced marriage said she believed she wouldn't have felt suicidal if the book had been available to her when she first escaped.



Perspective on GOV

COI's GovGap interim service brings clients and other high-calibre communications professionals together. We get a 360° view of the service.

Emma Lochhead, Director of HR, sets the background:

“Working with Directors of Communication, it became clear that there was a need for skilled, professional communications interims that was not being met by the external supplier market.

“There were issues around availability, skill, knowledge of government, security clearance and, of course, value for money. The solution was GovGap.”

John Ellery, Head of GovGap, explains in more detail:

“GovGap was set up in April 2007 and provided 185 placements for 32 clients in its first year. The service provides the right people to fill jobs in press, PR, marketing, strategy, research, digital media and internal communications, filling both temporary and long-term vacancies ranging in length from two months to two years.

“We not only provide staff from our external pool of talented professionals, we also have the provision to place COI staff into positions that become vacant. Or indeed engage staff on short-term COI contracts on behalf of our clients, as with the Army example.

“In this way there is a sharing of both expertise and experience.”

“We see positives from all angles,” adds Emma. “Positives for COI staff who become GovGappers include insight into working directly with Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and policy colleagues, plus the understanding of the priorities and pressures they face. Positives for clients include greater understanding and exposure to the way COI works and the skills it can deploy, alongside access to a central pool of specialists for government communications teams.”



Julie Wakley was engaged on a one-year COI fixed-term contract and placed at the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) via GovGap, where she is working with the Further Education Reputation Strategy Group to enhance the national reputation of further education in the UK.

“GovGap is a great opportunity, it gives you the chance to work with highly skilled marketing and communications professionals in many different areas of government departments.”

Julie Wakley
Further Education Reputation Strategy Group
LSC



The British Army is one of GovGap's clients. We asked its Marketing and Communications Director Mark Bainbridge to give us the client's-eye view.

"We approached GovGap in 2007 with the brief to recruit 10 regional marketing managers and a central regional marketing co-ordinator. Over the subsequent six months, 10 regional interview boards were co-ordinated and started recruiting staff.

"The GovGap service was exceptional and certainly far ahead of commercial sector recruiting consultancies in terms of responsiveness and quality of administration. Members of the GovGap team were involved in developing tailored interview programmes. They provided insightful and valued input into staff selection, and as a result we now have a network of outstanding brand practitioners in place.

"These people are destined to help recruit for the British Army in a time when it has a particularly challenging relationship with the British public, so it was doubly important that we got the right people for the job.

"COI's insights into government, linked with the clarity of the client organisation, made for a briefing and implementation process that was unambiguous.

"The results, for us, are extremely important, as new marketing executives are parachuted into some of the most important public-facing communications roles.

"They are fully equipped and pastorally supported in a way that makes them swiftly operationally effective and in doing so brings new resources to the heart of the Army's recruiting operations."

"The GovGap service was exceptional and certainly far ahead of commercial sector recruiting consultancies in terms of responsiveness and quality of administration."

Mark Bainbridge
Marketing and Communications Director
The British Army

Audience-focused for the future

Transformational government aims to put the citizen at the heart of government communications. COI's experts are working within and across government departments to help make this vision a reality, by ensuring that each and every citizen can easily access the information and services they need, whenever they need them.

Launched in 2005 by the e-Government Unit of the Cabinet Office, the transformational government strategy sets out how government can deliver public services more effectively to citizens. It gained even more momentum with the publication of Sir David Varney's *Service transformation* review, which outlined the difficulties that citizens face in accessing and using public services.

As the government communications expert, COI is playing a key role in driving the transformational government strategy. COI's Transformational Strategy Director Alex Butler says: "COI's role is to help government departments identify and reach their audiences. We know how to determine citizens' needs, then develop the solutions and use the right channels to engage with them. This means that we can offer a great deal to the transformational government agenda."

Setting the agenda

COI's role in transformational government is a broad one: not only is it involved in the delivery of audience-focused communications, but also in shaping policy. In the last year, COI has brought together the specialist knowledge of our Transformational Government unit with the expertise of our Digital Media department to form a new Interactive Services team. This team is uniquely positioned to offer clients insight at both the policy and implementation stages.

The team's remit is to advise clients on how to create, develop and deliver audience-focused communications using digital media technology – a broad spectrum that spans from making effective use of social media to meeting government standards on web rationalisation.

Involvement in policy is a relatively new area for COI. As Nick Jones, Director of Interactive Services, says: "It's certainly unique for policy and delivery teams to work so closely together, but it's an approach that is already bringing great benefits. Now we're able to advise our clients on how they can make the most of digital media and digitally enabled services to truly engage with their audiences."

Streamlining the Government's online offering

The Interactive Services team is also heavily involved in website rationalisation – working closely with a range of clients including the Department of Health, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. This work follows on from Sir David Varney's recommendation that government information is streamlined by housing all citizen-focused content on www.direct.gov.uk and all business-focused content on www.businesslink.gov.uk. The process is well under way and is scheduled to be complete by 2011.



Public services all in one place

Launched in 2004, the Directgov website now receives around

7 million
visitors a month.

It provides integrated and relevant citizen-facing information – all in one place.

The migration of content from hundreds of disparate websites onto two central sites brings a number of challenges. Jayne Nickalls, Directgov Chief Executive, says: “It’s important to remember that website rationalisation is about truly transforming services, not just moving content from one site to another. As the Directgov and Business Link websites grow, there will be more pressures around maintaining quality and usability – to achieve this, we will need to maintain our focus on audience needs first and foremost.”

Audience awareness

Getting a clear understanding of audience needs is one remit of the cross-government Customer Insight Forum, chaired by John Mayhead. Its role is to help departments to understand the needs and behaviours of the people they are trying to reach – so that government can be more effective by being more responsive to the needs of the users of government services.

COI’s Director of Research, Fiona Wood, represents COI on the forum. Fiona says: “The Customer Insight Forum’s recent work on customer-journey mapping and customer satisfaction guidance will provide departments with practical tools to become more audience-focused. This work will also help us to start thinking about the overall experience people have when using government services, and whether we’re using the right channels in the first place.”

Using social media technologies to promote Veterans Day

COI’s Interactive Services team has created a website to promote Veterans Day and raise awareness of associated regional and national events taking place across the country.

“The Ministry of Defence wanted the site to help transform perceptions of veterans: showcasing the stories of men and women, young and old, who have served in the forces,” says May Race, Senior Digital Media Manager. “We were able to take advantage of multiple social media services – for example, the video stories actually sit on YouTube; the Yahoo Upcoming service

Setting standards across government

COI plays a central role in putting this knowledge into practice – developing tools to help government departments to manage their web presence effectively. David Pullinger, COI’s Head of Digital Policy, is involved in developing cross-government web standards on issues like web accessibility, site naming and effective measurement. David says: “We want people to have a consistently good experience on government sites. So it’s important that we have cross-departmental standards in place that we can all work towards.”

David also outlines the work being done to help departments make use of increasingly popular social media. “We’re developing social media guidance so that our clients can be more confident in their use of newer channels to reach their audiences, alongside existing web, mobile, phone and face-to-face channels.

“The improvements we’re making – from using the right mix of communications to working more closely across government – are all driven by a common aim: to engage more directly with our audiences, using the methods they prefer. And that’s essentially what transformational government is about.”

and the photo-sharing site Flickr are being used to publish details about the events; and we used the Google Maps application to show where events are taking place. As we were using these existing technologies rather than building our own, we were able to deliver our solution quickly and cost-effectively. The content is published on the website and across the different services, making it easier for audiences to contribute to and find.”





“COI has been hugely influential in the transformational government agenda: acting as a central point of contact for government.”

Caroline Woodbridge, Head of E-Communications at the Department for Work and Pensions

By 2011, all citizen-facing information will be housed on www.direct.gov.uk and all business-facing information will be on www.businesslink.gov.uk



Purchase power

COI's procurement expertise

Using COI for the procurement of communications goods and services offers clients a wide range of benefits:

Industry knowledge in-house

As the government's marketing and communications procurement expert, COI offers clients unparalleled knowledge and experience. With many members of staff coming from a private sector background, COI has an in-depth understanding of the industry and knows exactly what to look for in suppliers.

Quicker turnaround

Setting up procurement processes can be lengthy and time-consuming, delaying the start of a project. However, COI is able to hit the ground running because it has the tools and processes in place to speed up procurement and introduce cost savings.

Better buying power

COI has up-to-date knowledge of typical rates for the goods and services that clients want to buy, which enables effective negotiation and bargaining. Additionally, COI can secure lower prices through aggregate buying power – particularly when it comes to media buying.

A safe pair of hands

COI aims to set the highest professional standards and is fully compliant with rules, regulations and best practice concerning procurement. As well as having internal audit processes in place, COI is regularly monitored by the National Audit Office and the Office of Government Commerce (OGC).

Every day, COI expertly navigates the procurement jungle, purchasing a wide range of marketing and communication services for government and the public sector.

Procurement is the process by which services, goods and works are acquired from third parties. As a government procurement expert, COI buys a range of marketing and communications services – including everything from research and sponsorship to advertising. As Head of Procurement Bob Ager explains: "We offer a highly valued service. Many of our clients rely on our knowledge of procurement legislation, such as the Public Contract Regulations."

Open and fair competition

The Public Contract Regulations, amended in 2006, are designed to open up the EU public procurement market to competition and promote the free movement of goods and services. For COI, the regulations have meant significant changes in how tenders and frameworks are run. "Every public body has to follow the regulations when procuring," says Bob. "COI has an in-depth understanding of the regulations, so we can make sure that tenders meet all of the right criteria. At the same time, we're focused on achieving best value for money for our clients."

Improving expertise across the board

The past year has seen a renewed focus on sharing procurement best practice across COI in order to ensure a widespread understanding of the 2006 Public Contract Regulations.

COI's dedicated procurement team is responsible for setting up frameworks (formerly known as rosters), while each business unit awards and runs the contracts on a day-to-day basis. Through a mixture of formal training and refresher workshops, everyone who is involved in managing contracts is kept up to date with the latest regulations and best practice.

The future of procurement

So what are the challenges that lie ahead for procurement across government? As Bob Ager says, COI is continually looking for new ways to speed up procurement processes. "We've already seen much improvement with the introduction of e-tendering, which is quicker, easier and cheaper than submitting tenders by post – and it provides a clear audit trail.

"Another area we're focusing on is supplier relationship management – how to engage suppliers and assess their work effectively. We're also developing regional marketing frameworks, so that clients outside London can work with local integrated suppliers.

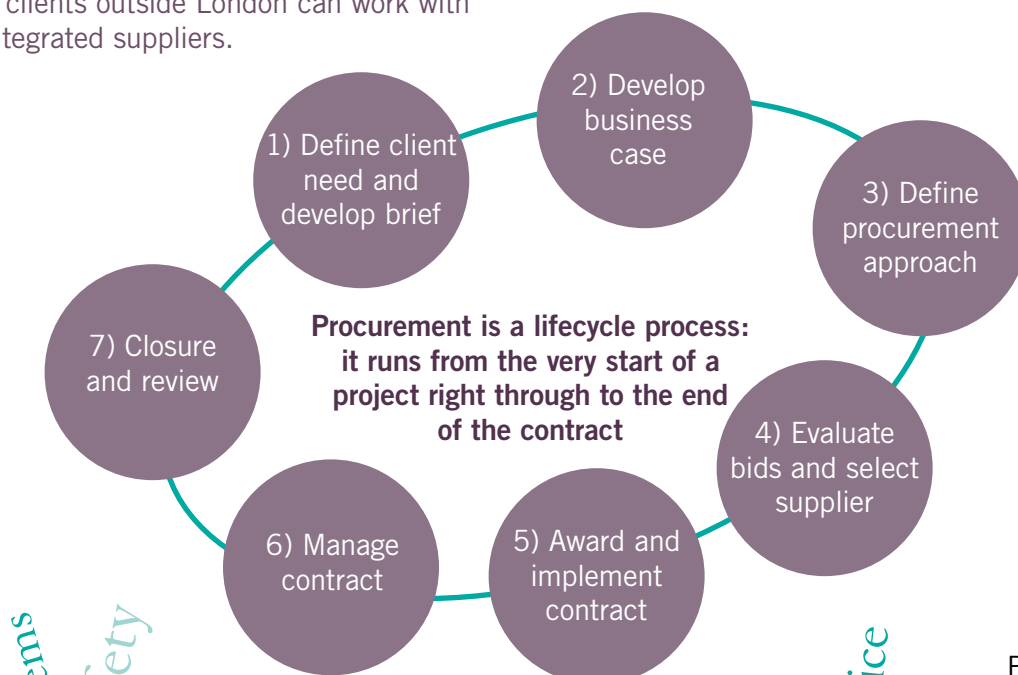
"Like any other business area, procurement is facing new challenges every day, particularly around creating standardised and sustainable ways of working. It's COI's job to keep ahead of the game and identify new opportunities for our clients."

Rachel Carter joined COI in September 2007 on the OGC Government Procurement Graduate Scheme.

"The best thing about working in procurement is that it offers a great deal of challenge and variety – no two days are the same. Every project is different and brings its own context, specifications and requirements.

"With 30 frameworks, each of which has to be renewed every four years, there's a lot of work involved in updating terms and conditions, liaising with suppliers and getting new specifications out.

"COI is a great place to learn and I've been lucky to work within so many different business units. It's given me a great all-round perspective and I've been able to see first-hand the value that COI adds to clients' communications."



Greening government

‘Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the future’ lies at the heart of the Government’s sustainable development strategy. We talk to COI staff about how they’re helping clients to meet their green targets.

Green is the new black, and for government it is no exception. Against a background of worldwide climate change, all central government departments have agreed on new sustainable development targets – targets that must be delivered not just through policies and services, but also through day-to-day support activities such as communications.

As the government’s centre of excellence for marketing and communications, COI is in a key position not only to set the example, but also to help its clients ensure that sustainable communications become the norm, rather than the exception. Earlier this year, for example, COI made the news by announcing that it would no longer supply plastic bags for use in government communications activity.

Creating a green paper trail

According to Olaf Dudley, COI Publications Print Buyer, we need to use creative solutions to confront the environmental challenge. Paper may grow on trees, but buying it is a complex business – and Olaf is COI’s expert on paper procurement.

In 2007–08 alone, COI Publications purchased 2,700 tonnes of paper. Of this, 1,226 tonnes (approximately 45 per cent) was recycled.

“Most of the paper that COI uses is termed 50/50, which means it is made up of 50 per cent recycled pulp and 50 per cent virgin pulp. The government-wide target is that all departments should have graduated to 75/25 by October 2009,” Olaf explains.

He goes on to put the figures into context: “Using 1,226 tonnes of recycled paper prevents 800 tonnes of CO₂ being released into the atmosphere – that’s the equivalent of 250 cars being removed from the road! It also uses up

740 tonnes of waste paper that would otherwise end up in a landfill site – the equivalent of 93 lorry-loads.”

With the green agenda on everyone’s mind, new and resourceful processes are constantly being created. Olaf gives an example: “In some paper mills that extract the lignin from virgin wood pulp, it is used to generate electricity to run the plant, with the surplus fed back into the national grid – so you end up with paper that does not turn yellow with age, with the process providing a source of green energy too!”

Buying with a conscience

Sarah Walsh, Team Head of COI Merchandising, agrees that good business practices need not conflict with sustainability. “When we recommend a product, we always consider how it is produced and how it can be disposed of appropriately.”

For example, COI Merchandising recommends reusable bags made from materials like cotton, canvas or jute, and makes sure that clothing – like t-shirts – is printed using specialist water-based inks, which are free from solvents and ozone-damaging chemicals.

Being organised is crucial to meeting the green agenda. “A lot of clients ask about shipments from the Far East by sea rather than air freight to reduce their carbon footprint. Sea freight can be a lot cheaper too, because of fuel costs, but it takes at least a month longer to organise,” Sarah explains.

COI Merchandising is even helping to develop policy on sustainable working practices, working with the British Promotional Merchandise Association to develop a code of conduct. “It’s great to be involved right from the start,” says Sarah.



Ballpoint pens made from recycled car parts and pencils made from CD cases were produced for the Royal Air Force and used at maths and science workshops in schools around the UK.



The five-a-day cotton shopper bag was produced for the Department of Health and printed using environmentally friendly inks.



Polypropylene files, like this one produced for the Home Office, are not only biodegradable but can be recycled as well.

Small changes, big wins

“Live events inevitably create an environmental impact,” says Simon Hughes, COI’s Director of Live Events, “but we are constantly looking at ways of mitigating such impacts.”

Simon’s team is always eco-focused. “Where possible, we ensure that paper usage is minimised; materials come from sustainable sources; venues are selected to encourage the use of public transport; and exhibition displays are designed with reusability in mind.

“The default position across COI is that the most sustainable solution possible is offered to the client. Technical advances help – for example, newer LED-based lighting solutions are already cheaper to transport and operate than traditional lamps.”

Simon acknowledges that there are barriers to achieving a consistent level of environmental awareness – particularly in catering, where commercial contracts often limit the scope for using locally sourced or fair-trade products – but the situation is improving: “Small changes, big wins is the principle that underpins a lot of our work. Whenever we see an opportunity to influence the environmental impact in a positive manner, we’ll advise the client accordingly.”

Some of the things we do as standard are replacing paper invites with digital platforms, logging presentations online and offering delegate materials on reusable disks or memory sticks, rather than as packs. The team is even investigating the possibility of including in delegate materials information about alternative transport options, such as car-sharing, to help those attending events to tread the green path too.

Making the eco message direct

“Direct marketing (eg direct mail, door drops, inserts) is very dependent on the printed word and as such can be seen as potentially ‘environmentally unfriendly,’” admits Rebecca Vaux, from COI’s Direct and Relationship Marketing (DRM) team.

However, last year, DRM implemented changes that have now been standardised. “The biggest change is that almost everything we produce is now printed on recycled paper,” says Rebecca.

Rebecca’s team also advises clients on formats that can reduce the negative impact on the environment – such as designing artwork without bleeds and avoiding high levels of ink coverage, die cuts and odd-sized mailings. Laminates, varnishes, coloured or fluorescent ink and windowed envelopes should be avoided where possible because they can be difficult to recycle.

There are, however, some instances when the green agenda needs to be balanced with other issues. Rebecca explains: “For example, peel and seal are the worst envelopes to use as they require more chemicals to produce. However, it may be easier for the elderly to use peel and seal. We always take every issue into account before making our recommendations.”

At COI, greening the government is a long-term vision. However, we will only succeed if we can unite the sustainability agenda with the needs of our clients and the citizen – and by channelling our creativity to confront the environmental challenge.

Headline news

In 2007–08, a variety of major stories hit the headlines. Here's how COI played a vital role.

Digital switchover

By the end of 2012, all TV services in the UK will be completely digital. COI's Live Events and Direct Relationship and Marketing teams helped with the roll out of the Digital UK switchover awareness roadshow, which visited 70 locations in the Wales and Border TV regions.



Foot and mouth



In August 2007, a case of foot and mouth disease was confirmed in Surrey. COI's News and PR regional network pulled together a team of press officers to handle the media on the infected farms, at the disease control centre and at the Institute for Animal Health laboratory at Pirbright. The team played a vital role in getting the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' messages out to the public, and in minimising the spread of the disease.

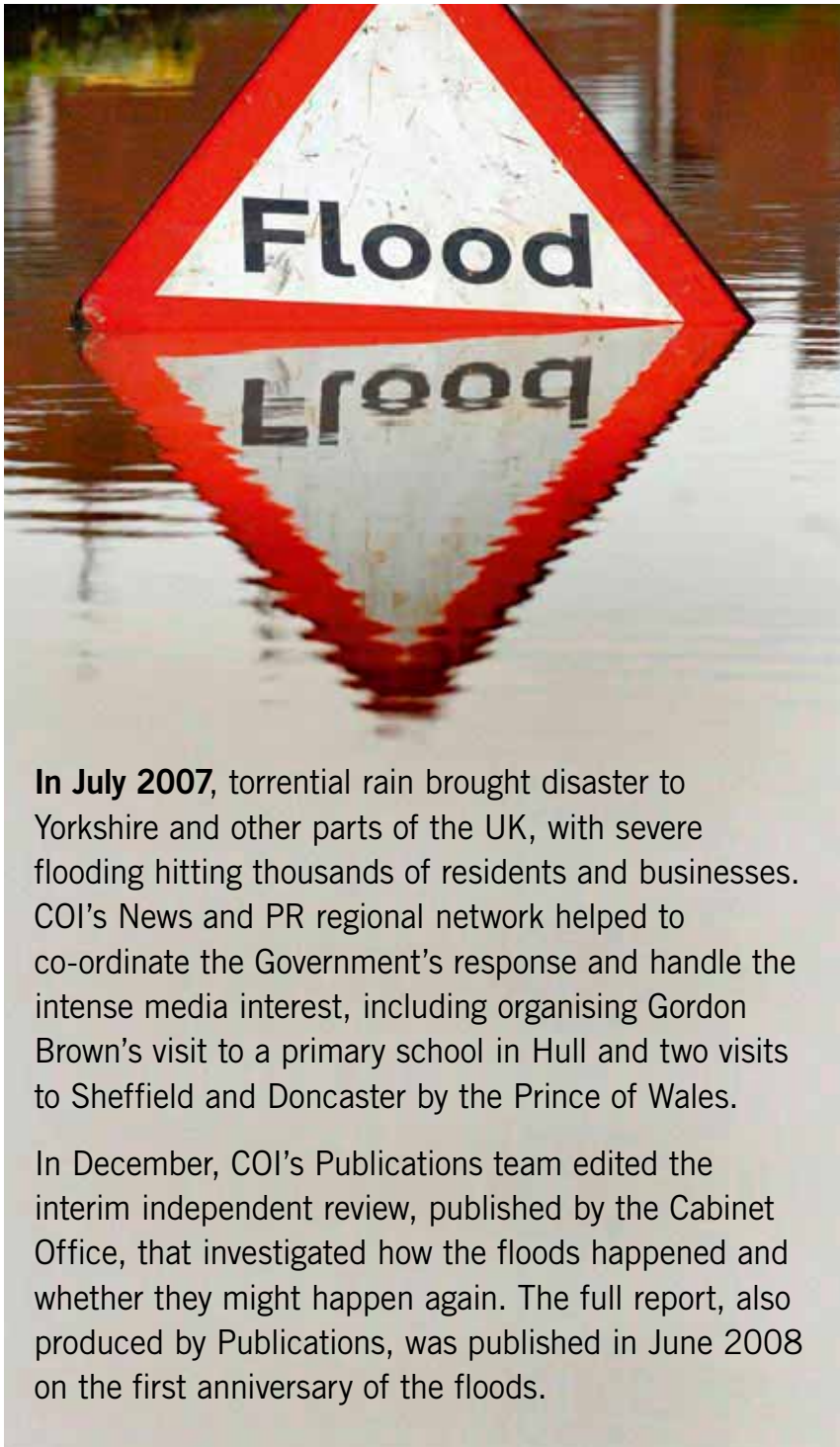
News and PR also secured emergency IT support, helped to co-ordinate ministerial meetings with farming leaders and was responsible for keeping COBRA (the Government's emergencies committee) informed.



Calculate your CO₂ emissions

COI helped develop an official government 'carbon calculator' with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, as part of the cross government Act on CO₂ campaign, which aims to highlight how people can reduce their carbon emissions.

The calculator works by taking account of factors such as how people travel, what home appliances they use and whether they have central heating. Check it out at www.direct.gov.uk/actonco2



In July 2007, torrential rain brought disaster to Yorkshire and other parts of the UK, with severe flooding hitting thousands of residents and businesses. COI's News and PR regional network helped to co-ordinate the Government's response and handle the intense media interest, including organising Gordon Brown's visit to a primary school in Hull and two visits to Sheffield and Doncaster by the Prince of Wales.

In December, COI's Publications team edited the interim independent review, published by the Cabinet Office, that investigated how the floods happened and whether they might happen again. The full report, also produced by Publications, was published in June 2008 on the first anniversary of the floods.

Plastic no longer fantastic

COI itself hit the headlines in February 2008 when it announced that it will no longer supply plastic bags for use in government marketing activity. The decision was taken as part of COI's drive towards taking a more sustainable approach to its activities – both internally and in the way we advise our clients.



7 ft 'pint' glass

In the run-up to Christmas 2007, an ex-offender appeared in a 7 ft beer glass at various locations across the country, to highlight the dire consequences of a drink-driving conviction.

These innovative events formed part of the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Think! road safety campaign, and DfT's press office worked closely with Red – an agency from COI's PR framework.

News and PR's regional network also supported the summer and Christmas Think! campaign launch, using a range of creative ideas and photocalls.

185 people went on a GovGap placement

The News Distribution Service issued 13,553 press releases

Over 1.1 million COI 'fillers' were screened on 103 TV stations

1.5 million children sat the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority school tests, which were produced by COI

A year in numbers

There were around 60,000 visitors to COI

Online advertising for the Smokefree England campaign reached 30 million people – around 89 per cent of the UK's online population

COI's Investors in People assessment involved interviews with 80 staff

280 staff are now enrolled in the COI 'Bodyworks' gym

Directgov received its 100-millionth visitor to the site

390,000 people have now added the FRANKbot to their buddy list, and 3.5 million conversations have taken place

Results 2007–08

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Director's report

History

COI was established in 1946 after the demise of the wartime Ministry of Information, when responsibility for information policy was taken up again by departmental ministers. COI became a common service agency, concentrating expertise to avoid a wasteful duplication of specialists throughout Whitehall and taking advantage of centralised purchasing. In 1981, the then Prime Minister approved the move to a repayment service, which was introduced on 1 April 1984. On 5 April 1990 COI became a vote-funded executive agency, and on 1 April 1991 it became a trading fund under the Central Office of Information Trading Fund Order 1991.

Statutory background

On 22 June 1992 ministerial responsibility for COI was transferred to the Minister for the Cabinet Office from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. COI continues to be a department of the Minister, who is accountable to Parliament and its select committees for all COI's activities. Taking into account the advice of the Chief Executive, the Minister determines the overall policy and financial framework within which COI operates but does not normally become involved in day-to-day management.

The Chief Executive of COI is also the Accounting Officer and is formally responsible to the Minister for the operations of the agency within the overall framework set out in COI's Framework Document.

As a government department, COI continues to receive a small provision in respect of central advisory services. This is included as income to the trading fund account and is also accounted for separately through COI's resource account. Details of the COI resource account are available on the COI website (www.coi.gov.uk).

Aims and objectives

The aim of COI is to enable central government to secure its policy objectives through achieving maximum communication effectiveness and best value for money. COI's objectives are to improve the effectiveness of, and add value to, its clients' publicity programmes through its consultancy, procurement and project management services across all communication channels.

Review of activities

COI's principal activities throughout the year continued to be:

- providing strategic advice to departments and agencies on achieving their communication objectives;
- providing purchasing and project management services implementing those strategies; and
- supplying directly those services that, for propriety or other reasons, can only be provided by a government organisation.

Results

A surplus of £6,777 was made for the year, which has been retained and carried to reserves.

Events after the balance sheet date

Responsibility for Directgov transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions with effect from 1 April 2008.

Management Board members during 2007–08

A. Bishop, Chief Executive
G.W. Beasant, Director, Finance and Corporate Resources
P.M. Buchanan, Deputy Chief Executive
A. Butler, Director, Transformational Strategy
M. Cross, Director, Communications Planning
I.R. Hamilton, Commercial Director
R. Haslam, Director, Government News Network
G. Hooper, Director, Client Service and Strategy
E. Lochhead, Director, Human Resources
N. Martinson, Director, News and PR
A. Wade, Board Director, Strategic Consultancy and Research
S.E. Whetton, Board Director, Broadcast, Publications and Live Events
M. Baxter, Non-Executive Director
C. Wood, Non-Executive Director

Directors' statement with respect to conflict of interest

All Board members have confirmed that they have no significant outside interests that conflict with their management responsibilities.

Supplier payment performance

COI's policy is to pay all suppliers within 30 days of receipt of goods or services or of a correctly documented invoice (whichever is received later), or according to contract where a different payment period is agreed. COI observes the principles of the CBI Better Payment Practice Code.

Using the Civil Service standard measure, during 2007–08 COI paid 91 per cent of supplier bills within 30 days (92 per cent in 2006–07).

Recruitment

COI recruits staff on the basis of fair and open competition and selection on merit, in accordance with the recruitment code laid down by the Civil Service Commissioners. Systems are subject to internal and external checks.

107 staff were recruited during 2007–08:

	Male	Female
Unified grades	12	6
Information	23	48
Administration	7	11
Total	42	65

In addition, Chris Wood was appointed as a Non-Executive Director during the year.

Ten people from ethnic minority groups were recruited. 9.5 per cent of COI's staff are from ethnic minority groups and 1.3 per cent have a disability as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The permitted exceptions to the principles of fair and open competition and selection on merit were not used on any occasion for appointments over 12 months.

Employee involvement

COI encourages the involvement of its staff in the daily running of its affairs through normal line management contacts. Information is disseminated through office circulars, email, the intranet, an electronic staff newspaper and distribution of the Annual Report and Accounts. Regular workplace meetings are also used to pass on information to staff and to answer questions. Since 2005–06, a Representative Council has been in operation, which allows staff to have a say on important issues that affect the organisation and to provide the COI Management Board with an insight into popular thinking, which can be considered as part of the decision-making process. The Representative Council fulfils the requirements of the EU consultative directive, which gives employees rights to be informed and consulted about the business they work for.

COI has formal contact with its trade unions through the departmental Whitley Council and more frequent and less formal discussions through several sub-committees.

People with disabilities

In relation to employees with disabilities, COI complies with the equal opportunities legislation and provides special facilities where necessary.

Pension liabilities

These are covered in notes 1(f) and 6(a) to the accounts.

HM Treasury accounts direction

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with accounts direction given by HM Treasury, in accordance with section 4(6)(a) of the Government Trading Funds Act 1973.

Disclosure of relevant audit information

As far as the Chief Executive is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the COI's auditors are unaware, and the Chief Executive has taken all the steps he ought to have taken to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that COI's auditors are aware of that information.

Audit services and costs

The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is head of the National Audit Office and is appointed as the auditor of the COI trading fund under section 4(6) of the Government Trading Funds Act 1973. The auditor's remuneration payable is £53,750 for the year ended 31 March 2008 (£53,750 for the year ended 31 March 2007). The C&AG has been appointed by COI under a non-statutory letter of engagement to provide an independent review of the systems and workings supporting performance indicators reported in the annual accounts. The audit fee payable for the review of performance indicators is £2,500 for the year ended 31 March 2008 (£2,500 for the year ended 31 March 2007). The C&AG has also been appointed to complete the statutory audit of the resource account under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000. The notional audit fee payable is £4,850 for the year ended 31 March 2008 (£4,850 for the year ended 31 March 2007).

Remuneration report

COI remuneration policies for senior staff

Board directors

All COI Board directors are members of the Senior Civil Service (SCS), and the independent Review Body on Senior Salaries (SSRB) advises the Government on appropriate remuneration for SCS members. In setting the remuneration of Board directors, it is COI policy to adopt the recommendations of the SSRB. COI's Remuneration Committee for setting directors' salaries comprises the Chief Executive and the Head of Human Resources (HR). Decisions are subject to ratification by the Employment and Reward Group of the Cabinet Office.

The principal objectives of the pay system for directors adopted by COI, based on SSRB recommendations, are:

- aligning directors' pay with the market, to enable COI to recruit and retain high-calibre people; and
- reinforcing policies to raise the performance of individual directors by relating pay to performance within a formal performance management system.

Details on the remit and work of the SSRB can be found at www.ome.uk.com

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive's remuneration is determined by the Cabinet Office Remuneration Committee.

Non-Executive Directors

COI has two non-executive directors who attend all Management Board and Audit and Risk Committee meetings. They report the Committee's findings and recommendations to the Management Board. Remuneration of the non-executive directors is set by the Chief Executive and the Director of HR, and is reviewed annually. For the financial year ended 31 March 2008, the non-executive directors' remuneration was £16,000. COI does not contribute to the pensions of the non-executive directors.

Performance assessment of senior COI staff

In line with COI's policy of linking individual performance to pay, COI's Board directors are appraised under the standard SCS appraisal system against agreed targets and objectives. The objectives of Board directors are linked to the corporate objectives identified by the Board as part of its annual corporate-planning and budget-setting process, in line with ministerial targets. The performance and targets of the Chief Executive are determined by the Cabinet Office.

The Chief Executive formally assesses each Board director's performance against his/her objectives at a six-monthly interim stage and annually at the end of the business year, to ensure that progress is being made against targets.

Duration of directors' contracts

Civil Service appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which requires appointments to be on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition.

The appointments of all COI's Board directors and Chief Executive are open-ended until they reach the normal retiring age of 60. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

The non-executive directors are appointed on a fixed-term contract, renewable annually. The appointments can be terminated with three months' notice by either side.

Directors' remuneration for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

Remuneration of directors and the Chief Executive comprises a base salary, non-consolidated performance pay, corporate bonus scheme and pension. No benefits in kind are paid to directors. The remuneration of the Chief Executive, directors and non-executive directors for the year ended 31 March 2008 is set out in the table overleaf.

Director's name and position	Salary (including performance pay and bonuses) at 31.3.08	Salary (including performance pay and bonuses) at 31.3.07	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at 60	Total accrued pension at aged 60 at 31.3.08	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) at 31.3.08	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) at 31.3.07	Real increase after adjustment for inflation and adjustment to market investment factors
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
A. Bishop* Chief Executive	165–170	160–165	0–2.5	5–10	179	121	29
G. Beasant** Director	75–80	70–75	0–2.5 plus 0–2.5	15–20 plus 40–45 lump sum	348	292	18
P. Buchanan** Deputy Chief Executive	120–125	115–120	0–2.5 plus 2.5–5.0	30–35 plus 100–105 lump sum	883	751	26
A. Butler* Director from 01.04.07	80–85	N/A	0–2.5	2.5–5.0	51	30	13
M. Cross*** Director from 25.10.07	25–30 (70– 75 full-year equivalent)	N/A	0–2.5	0–2.5	19	0	18
I. Hamilton** Director	95–100	90–95	2.5–5.0 plus 10–15	35–40 plus 110–115 lump sum	816	650	72
R. Haslam** Director to 31.12.07	70–75	85–90	0–2.5 plus 0–2.5	40–45 plus 120–125 lump sum	1,054	961	16
G. Hooper Director	95–100	85–90	2.5–5.0	25–30	337	255	35
E. Lochhead** Director	100–105	90–95	0–2.5 plus 2.5–5.0	5–10 plus 15–20 lump sum	106	72	19
N. Martinson* Director from 01.10.07	40–45 (85–90 full-year equivalent)	N/A	15–20	15–20	304	0	303
A. Wade** Director	90–95	85–90	0–2.5 plus 2.5–5.0	25–30 plus 80–85 lump sum	510	452	(36)
S. Whetton** Director	70–75	65–70	0–2.5 plus 2.5–5.0	20–25 plus 60–65 lump sum	369	299	14
M. Baxter Non-Executive Director	10–15	20–25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
C. Wood Non-Executive Director from 24.01.08	0–5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*has opted to join the Premium pension scheme

**has opted to join the Classic pension scheme

***has opted to join the Nuvos pension scheme

Pension benefits

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 30 July 2007, civil servants may be in one of four defined benefit schemes – either a ‘final salary’ scheme (**classic**, **premium** or **classic plus**) or a ‘whole career’ scheme (**nuvos**). These statutory arrangements are unfunded, with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under **classic**, **premium**, **classic plus** and **nuvos** are increased annually in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a good quality ‘money purchase’ stakeholder pension with a significant employer contribution (**partnership** pension account).

Employee contributions are set at the rate of 1.5 per cent of pensionable earnings for **classic** and 3.5 per cent for **premium**, **classic plus** and **nuvos**. Benefits in **classic** accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years’ pension is payable on retirement. For **premium**, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike **classic**, there is no automatic lump sum. **Classic plus** is essentially a hybrid, with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per **classic** and benefits for service from October 2002 calculated as in **premium**. In **nuvos**, a member builds up a pension based on his/her pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March), the member’s earned pension account is credited with 2.3 per cent of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with RPI. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The **partnership** pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 3 per cent and 12.5 per cent (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee from a panel of three providers. The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3 per cent of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer’s basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.8 per cent of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill-health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium** and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**.

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement that the individual has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement), uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period, and does not take account of any actual or potential reduction of benefits resulting from lifetime allowance tax that may be due when pension benefits are drawn.



Alan Bishop

Chief Executive

2 July 2008

Statement of trading fund's and Chief Executive's responsibilities

Under Section 4(6) of the Government Trading Funds Act 1973, HM Treasury has directed the Central Office of Information trading fund to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis set out in the accounts direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the trading fund's state of affairs at the year end and of its income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the trading fund is required to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by HM Treasury, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going-concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the trading fund will continue in operation.

HM Treasury has appointed the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer of the Central Office of Information and for the Central Office of Information trading fund. His relevant responsibilities as Accounting Officer, including his responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances and for the keeping of proper records, are set out in the Accounting Officers' Memorandum, issued by HM Treasury and published in *Managing Public Money*.

Statement on internal control

Scope of responsibility

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of COI's policies, aims and objectives, while safeguarding the public funds and departmental assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in *Managing Public Money* and the COI Framework Document, issued by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The Minister for the Cabinet Office receives an annual business plan with an assessment of the key corporate risks and actions taken to actively manage the risks identified. I also report to the Permanent Secretary, Government Communications on cross-government co-ordination of research, marketing and campaigns.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of departmental policies, aims and objectives; to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in COI for the year ended 31 March 2008 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, and accords with Treasury guidance.

Capacity to handle risk

The Management Board has primary responsibility for identifying and monitoring the key risks facing COI. Annually, the Management Board approves the corporate objectives and business plans and considers the main risks to the organisation in the context of the objectives; mitigating actions are determined and the success of these actions monitored.

The Audit and Risk Committee, a sub-committee of the Management Board, examines and reviews, in conjunction with internal and external audit, the adequacy of the arrangements for accounting, risk management, internal control and governance. A non-executive director, who is a member of the Committee, reports formally to the Management Board after each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

A Management Board member is responsible for the development and improvement of COI's risk management policies and procedures. The structure and content of the risk registers, and the supporting guidance, are updated annually. A series of workshops are held annually as part of the business planning and risk identification process. This involves identification of risks at corporate and business unit level. There are also plans to introduce an e-learning package on risk. Guidance for completing and reviewing risk registers, which includes direction for risk escalation, is regularly updated and provided to all areas.

All relevant staff have written delegated authorities and are trained in respect of risk management appropriate to their level of responsibility. Risk management processes are embedded across COI, with a corporate risk register and business unit risk registers in

place. In addition to assessing risk during business planning and budgeting, risks are also assessed when major projects are initiated. Guidance in place includes HR policies, project management standards, procurement policy, the finance manual, information security policy and the risk strategy and process guidance.

The HR Director is responsible for ensuring that COI employs good staff management systems and practices, so that staff possess the right levels of knowledge, skill and competence to run the business efficiently and effectively. HR policies set out the principles and rules of conduct, including duty of care, standards of propriety and rules relating to conflict of interest, to which staff are expected to adhere.

The risk and control framework

Our management of risk is embedded in planning and delivery through:

- a risk management strategy and process;
- the business planning process with risk registers;
- project management standards with risk identification for IT-enabled change programmes; and
- policies, procedures and framework controls over procurement, finance, IT, information security and HR.

In COI, the main processes that are in place for identifying, evaluating and managing risk are:

- an annually reviewed risk management strategy and process;
- workshops at Management Board and business unit levels;
- project management standards, overseen by the Business Improvement Delivery Group, which include a requirement for all new projects to undergo a risk assessment;
- corporate and business unit risk registers facilitating regular reviews of risk; and
- the Information Security Forum overseeing IT security risks.

I have assessed my most significant risks. These are associated with:

- achieving ministerial targets;
- building strong client relationships;
- matching staff skills and experience with business needs;
- supporting effective, integrated business systems; and
- organising the business flexibly to cope with changes in demand.

Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the department who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports.

I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Management Board and the Audit and Risk Committee, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the systems is in place.

The main processes that have been applied in reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control include:

- monthly meetings of the Management Board to consider planning, performance and change management. Each meeting includes a review of a number of operating units, with the aim of seeing all units at least twice a year;
- a process to monitor progress towards the key strategic objectives and to ensure that the management of underlying risks, both at a strategic and operational level, is satisfactory;
- monthly meetings of the heads of the business units, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive;
- periodic reports from the Information Security Forum and the Business Improvement Delivery Group;
- a process of regular risk reporting, which is being further developed, particularly in respect of collating unit risks with corporate risks;
- regular reports by Internal Audit, including the Head of Internal Audit's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of COI's risk management, control and governance systems, together with recommendations for improvement;
- a formal half-yearly and year-end sign-off process by senior management in order to ensure, as far as is possible, that the controls and safeguards are being operated in line with established procedures, policies and standards (these are reviewed by Internal Audit on a rotational basis); and
- comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and reports.

Information security

A formal review of data handling and information security has taken place. This includes the identification of information risk and the implementation of an action plan to mitigate these risks.

In 2006–07, COI identified some weaknesses in its processes for the review of work in progress, including the identification of income in advance. Specific action was taken during 2007–08 to strengthen monitoring and control processes in these areas. Other areas for improvement in the control environment were identified in individual audit reports and summarised in the annual internal audit report, with agreed remedial actions implemented or in hand.



Alan Bishop

Chief Executive

2 July 2008

Income and expenditure account

for the year ended 31 March 2008

	Notes	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
Turnover	2	391,091	337,579
Other operating income	3	1,274	1,160
Operating costs	4	(392,733)	(338,816)
Gross operating deficit		(368)	(77)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets		(96)	(50)
Deficit on ordinary activities		(464)	(127)
Interest receivable	7	622	588
Short-term interest payable	7	(151)	(455)
Retained surplus for the period	13,15	7	6

All income and expenditure arises from continuing operations.

There were no recognised gains or losses in either year other than those recognised in the income and expenditure account.

The notes on pages 54 to 65 form part of these accounts.

Balance sheet

as at 31 March 2008

	Notes	2008 £000	2008 £000	2007 £000
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	9	755		728
Intangible assets	8	581		658
Total fixed assets			1,336	1,386
Current assets				
Work in progress	1 (c)	2,549		11,679
Debtors	10	96,164		83,425
Cash in hand and at bank	11 (a)	27,556		15,169
		<u>126,269</u>		<u>110,273</u>
Current liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(119,153)</u>		<u>(103,269)</u>
Net current assets			7,116	7,004
Total assets less current liabilities			8,452	8,390
Provisions for liabilities and charges	6 (b)		(104)	(38)
TOTAL ASSETS LESS TOTAL LIABILITIES			8,348	8,352
FINANCED BY CAPITAL AND RESERVES				
Capital				
Public dividend capital	14		265	265
Reserves				
Revaluation reserve	15	436		447
Income and expenditure account	15	<u>7,647</u>		<u>7,640</u>
			8,083	8,087
			8,348	8,352

Alan Bishop
Chief Executive, COI
2 July 2008

The notes on pages 54 to 65 form part of these accounts.

Cash flow statement

for the year ended 31 March 2008

	Notes	2007-08 £000	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities	16		12,477	(16,274)
Returns on investments and servicing of finance				
Interest received		622		588
Interest paid		(151)		(455)
Net cash inflow from returns on investments and servicing of finance	7		<u>471</u>	<u>133</u>
Capital expenditure				
Payments to acquire intangible fixed assets	8	(283)		(299)
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	9	(278)		(311)
Net cash outflow from capital expenditure			<u>(561)</u>	<u>(610)</u>
Increase/(decrease) in cash	11(b)		12,387	(16,751)

The notes on pages 54 to 65 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the accounts

1 Accounting policies

(a) General

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention modified by the inclusion of fixed assets at their value to the business by reference to current costs. Without limiting the information given, the accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 1985 and accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board so far as those requirements are appropriate. Significant departures from accounting standards are disclosed and explained in the notes, and the financial effects quantified where practicable.

(b) Turnover

Turnover represents the invoiced amount and accrued amounts to be invoiced of goods sold and services provided (net of value added tax) from the ordinary activities of the business. It also includes money received from Parliament in respect of central advisory services.

(c) Jobs

For jobs open at the year end, it is assumed that income and costs will match, with an accrual made to either income or cost, as necessary, on a job-by-job basis, to bring them into balance.

(d) Fixed assets

(i) Fixed assets are valued at modified historic cost, except where current cost adjustments are immaterial. Depreciation is charged using the straight-line method at a rate chosen to recover the cost of the asset over its anticipated useful life, as follows:

Intangible assets	over one to five years
New technology equipment	over one to 10 years
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	over one to 20 years

(ii) Items of equipment costing less than £2,000 are expensed in the year of acquisition.

(e) Early retirement costs

Full provision is made in the accounts for all future liabilities in respect of payments to employees who have retired early. Payments are due from COI from the date of early retirement until age 60, when the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) assumes the liability.

(f) Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Civil Service Pension Schemes, which are described in the remuneration report. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded and are non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. COI recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the PCSPS of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS. In respect of the defined contribution schemes, COI recognises the contributions payable for the year.

(g) Leasing

Rentals under operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

2 Turnover

Clients are charged the actual cost of external goods and services purchased in respect of their work, together with a fee for the time of COI staff, set at a level to recover COI staff and all overhead costs.

3 Other operating income

	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
Rent received under operating leases	1,274	1,160
	1,274	1,160

4 Operating costs

	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
(a) Staff costs:		
Wages and salaries	28,700	25,988
Social security costs	2,319	2,109
Other pension costs	5,325	4,843
Agency staff	7,888	5,186
Total staff costs	44,232	38,126

Raw materials and consumables	3,680	7,655
Other external charges	344,317	292,580
Depreciation and other amounts written off tangible assets	504	455
Total operating costs	392,733	338,816

(b) Other external charges include:

Auditor's remuneration	54	54
Auditor's remuneration for non-audit work	3	3
Operating leases in respect of hire of plant and machinery	74	124
Operating leases in respect of office accommodation*	1,800	1,800

*Relates to the Hercules House lease, which expires in 2033, with a minimum annual rental of £1,800,000

(c) Other external charges are net of:

Advertising discounts	3,372	3,366
	3,372	3,366

(d) Volume discounts are received from suppliers based on the volume of work placed by COI with them.

5 Staff

(a) The average number of employees* during the year is made up as follows:

	2007–08	2006–07
Permanent*		
Unified grades	173.9	137.6
Information	426.5	394.5
Administration	131.2	146.6
Support	12.8	20.4
Secretarial	0	1.4
Total	744.4	700.5

*Includes casual staff, staff on fixed-term contracts of over one year and agency staff

6 Pensions

(a) The employees of COI are civil servants to whom the conditions of the Superannuation Acts 1965 and 1972 and subsequent amendments apply. Employees are eligible to join the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), an unfunded, multi-employer, defined benefit scheme.

For 2007–08, employers' contributions of £5,276,555 were payable to the PCSPS (£4,797,308 in 2006–07) at one of four rates in the range 17.1 to 25.5 per cent of pensionable pay (17.1 to 25.5 per cent in 2006–07), based on salary bands. The scheme's actuary reviews employer contributions every four years, following a full scheme valuation. The salary bands and contribution rates were revised for 2005–06 and will remain unchanged until 2008–09. The contribution rates reflect benefits as they are accrued, not when costs are actually incurred, and reflect past experience of the scheme.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, which is a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £45,067 (£41,662 in 2006–07) were paid to one or more of a panel of four appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 3 to 12.5 per cent of pensionable pay (3 to 12.5 per cent in 2006–07). Employers can also match employee contributions up to 3 per cent of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of £3,183 (£3,287 in 2006–07), 0.8 per cent of pensionable pay, were payable to the PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill-health retirement of these employees. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the balance sheet date were £253. No contributions were prepaid at that date.

There were no cases of retirement on ill-health grounds during 2007–08.

(b) Provisions for liabilities and charges are in respect of early retirement costs (see note 1(e)).

The provision is made up as follows:

	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
Balance at 1 April	38	83
Use of provision	(33)	(117)
Increase in provision charged to income and expenditure account	99	72
	104	38

The liability falls due in the following timescales:

	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
Within one year	42	28
Within two to five years	49	10
After five years	13	0
	104	38

7 Interest

	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
Interest received from the National Loans Fund	52	66
Interest received from the Paymaster General	570	522
	622	588
Interest on short-term borrowing	(151)	(455)
Net cash inflow from returns on investments and servicing of finance	471	133

8 Intangible fixed assets

The movement between the opening and closing balances is accounted for as follows, using the current cost accounting convention (in accordance with accounting policy note 1(d)):

	Software licences £000
Gross replacement cost or valuation	
Opening balance at 1.4.07	1,044
Acquisitions	283
On disposals*	(238)
Closing balance at 31.3.08	1,089
Amortisation	
Opening balance at 1.4.07	386
Provided during year	260
On disposals*	(143)
Revaluation**	5
Closing balance at 31.3.08	508
Net book value	
Closing balance at 31.3.08	581
Opening balance at 1.4.07	658

*Disposal costs include the write-off of £110,000 of software licence fees relating to specialist equipment, as a result of the decision to terminate a Media Monitoring Unit project following a cost/benefit review. Further costs of £115,000 relating to the project have been expensed during the year

**Assets have been re-lifed to reflect continued use

9 Tangible fixed assets

The movement between the opening and closing balances is accounted for as follows, using the current cost accounting convention (in accordance with accounting policy note 1(d)):

	New technology equipment £000	Equipment, fixtures and fittings £000	Total £000
Gross replacement cost or valuation			
Opening balance at 1.4.07	678	812	1,490
Acquisitions	262	16	278
Disposals	(194)	(50)	(244)
Closing balance at 31.3.08	746	778	1,524
Depreciation provision			
Opening balance at 1.4.07	205	557	762
Provided during the year	170	74	244
On disposals	(193)	(50)	(243)
Revaluation*	16	(10)	6
Closing balance at 31.3.08	198	571	769
Net book value			
Closing balance at 31.3.08	548	207	755
Opening balance at 1.4.07	473	255	728

*Assets have been re-lifed to reflect continued use

10 Debtors

	31.3.08 £000	31.3.07 £000
Trade debtors	87,392	73,790
Prepayments and accrued income	8,662	9,438
Other debtors	110	197
	96,164*	83,425*

*Intra-government balances are disclosed in note 22

11 Cash in hand and at bank

(a) The balance of cash in hand and at bank is made up as follows:

	31.3.08 £000	31.3.07 £000
Cash with Paymaster General	27,553	15,169
Girobank	3	0
Cash in hand and at bank	27,556	15,169

(b) Analysis of changes in cash during the period:

	31.3.08 £000	31.3.07 £000
Balance at 1 April	15,169	31,920
Balance at 31 March	27,556	15,169
Increase/(Decrease) in cash	12,387	(16,751)

12 Creditors

	31.3.08 £000	31.3.07 £000
Trade creditors	20,138	15,241
Other taxes and social security	14,647	12,182
Accruals for jobs	76,722	69,728
Deferred income	4,380	1,575
Accrued expenses	3,266	4,543
	119,153*	103,269*

*Intra-government balances are disclosed in note 22

13 Financial target

COI was set a financial target of break-even. It achieved a surplus of £6,777 (£6,437 surplus in 2006–07).

14 Capital

(a) The COI trading fund was established on 1 April 1991 under the Government Trading Funds Act 1973 with an originating debt of £1,792,279.50. The debt comprised:

(i) Public dividend capital of £265,000; and

(ii) a deemed loan from the National Loans Fund of £1,527,279.50, bearing interest at 10.5 per cent and repayable, in equal instalments of capital, over six years. Repayment of the loan was completed during 1996–97.

(b) Other long-term finance is provided by retained surpluses on the income and expenditure account and by the revaluation reserve (see note 15), which represents changes made to the value to the business of fixed assets to reflect current costs.

15 Reconciliation of movement in government funds

	Revaluation reserve £000	Income and expenditure £000	Total £000
At 1 April 2006	8	7,626	7,634
Transfer to reserve	(8)	8	0
Retained surplus for the year	0	6	6
Revaluation surplus	447	0	447
At 31 March 2007	447	7,640	8,087
Retained surplus for the year	0	7	7
Revaluation deficit	(11)	0	(11)
At 31 March 2008	436	7,647	8,083

The revaluation reserve comprises the increase in gross replacement cost less prior year backlog depreciation on fixed assets.

16 Reconciliation of surplus to net cash inflow from operating activities

	2007-08 £000	2006-07 £000
Retained surplus for period	7	6
Less net interest received	(471)	(133)
Depreciation	504	455
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	96	50
Decrease/(increase) in work in progress	9,130	(5,257)
(Increase) in debtors	(12,739)	(23,146)
Increase in creditors	15,884	11,796
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	66	(45)
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities	12,477	(16,274)

17 Operating leases

At 31 March 2008, COI was committed to making the following payments during the next year in respect of operating leases expiring:

	Land and buildings £000	Plant and machinery £000
Within one year	1,800	62
Within two to five years	0	73
Over five years	0	0
	1,800	135

18 Capital commitments

At 31 March 2008, no orders had been placed for capital expenditure (£0 at 31 March 2007).

19 Related party transactions

The COI is a trading fund of the Central Office of Information. The Minister for the Cabinet Office has ministerial responsibility for the activities of the COI trading fund and the COI department and is therefore regarded as a related party. During the year ended 31 March 2008, COI had various material transactions with both the COI department and the Cabinet Office.

In addition, COI has various material transactions with most government departments and other publicly funded bodies.

None of the board members, key management staff or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions other than payment of salaries and expenses with COI during the period.

20 Contingent liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities.

21 Financial instruments

COI has no long-term borrowings and relies for its cash requirements primarily on receipts from clients. Due to timing differences between income and expenditure, there are cash surpluses or forecast cash deficits. In the former case, surplus cash is deposited short term with the National Loans Fund (NLF). In the latter case, COI borrows short term from the NLF, but all such borrowings are repaid before the end of the year. Interest rates on both borrowings and deposits are fixed at the date at which the transaction takes place.

All material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling, so COI is not exposed to significant currency risks. FRS13 disclosures exclude short-term debtors and creditors. All of COI's financial instruments are short term and no numerical disclosures have been made.

22 Intra-government balances

	Debtors: amounts falling due within one year £000	Debtors: amounts falling due after more than one year £000	Creditors: amounts falling due within one year £000	Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year £000
Balances with other central government bodies	76,668		19,808	
Balances with local authorities	1,448		0	
Balances with NHS trusts	1,957		9	
Balances with public corporations and trading funds	2,846		1,488	
Subtotal	82,919		21,305	
Balances with bodies external to government	13,245		97,848	
As at 31 March 2008	96,164	0	119,153	0
Balances with other central government bodies	73,087		16,325	
Balances with local authorities	254		0	
Balances with NHS trusts	1,246		0	
Balances with public corporations and trading funds	3,687		385	
Subtotal	78,274		16,710	
Balances with bodies external to government	5,151		86,559	
As at 31 March 2007	83,425	0	103,269	0

23 Events after the balance sheet date

The Central Office of Information's trading fund accounts are laid before the Houses of Parliament by the National Audit Office. FRS21 requires the Central Office of Information to disclose the date on which the accounts are authorised for issue. This is the date on which the certified accounts are despatched by the Central Office of Information's management to the National Audit Office.

The authorised date for issue is 16 July 2008.

The certificate and report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Central Office of Information for the year ended 31 March 2008 under the Government Trading Funds Act 1973. These comprise the income and expenditure account, the balance sheet, the cash flow statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the remuneration report that is described in that report as having been audited.

Respective responsibilities of the Central Office of Information, Chief Executive and auditor

The Central Office of Information and Chief Executive as Accounting Officer are responsible for preparing the Annual Report, which includes the remuneration report, and the financial statements in accordance with the Government Trading Funds Act 1973 and HM Treasury directions made thereunder and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. These responsibilities are set out in the statement of trading fund's and Chief Executive's responsibilities.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements and the part of the remuneration report to be audited in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

I report to you my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and whether the financial statements and the part of the remuneration report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Trading Funds Act 1973 and HM Treasury directions made thereunder. I report to you whether, in my opinion, the information included within the Annual Report, which comprises the information on pages 4 to 50 inclusive and the unaudited parts of the remuneration report, is consistent with the financial statements. I also report whether, in all material respects, the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

In addition, I report to you if the Central Office of Information has not kept proper accounting records, if I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit, or if information specified by HM Treasury regarding remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed.

I review whether the statement on internal control reflects the Central Office of Information's compliance with HM Treasury's guidance, and I report if it does not. I am not required to consider whether this statement covers all risks and controls, or form an opinion on the effectiveness of the Central Office of Information's corporate governance procedures or its risk and control procedures.

I read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. I consider the implications for my report if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. My responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

Basis of audit opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. My audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements and the part of the remuneration report to be audited. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Central Office of Information and Chief Executive in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are most appropriate to the Central Office of Information's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements and the part of the remuneration report to be audited are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error, and that in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements and the part of the remuneration report to be audited.

Opinions

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with the Government Trading Funds Act 1973 and directions made thereunder by HM Treasury, of the state of the Central Office of Information's affairs as at 31 March 2008 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- the financial statements and the part of the remuneration report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Trading Funds Act 1973 and HM Treasury directions made thereunder; and
- information included within the Annual Report, which comprises the information on pages 4 to 50 inclusive and the unaudited parts of the remuneration report, is consistent with the financial statements.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

T.J. Burr
Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office
151 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 9SS

Date 10 July 2008

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HR and Development

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GovGap

The team provides interim recruitment solutions to government departments and the public sector.

With a pool of talented professionals, GovGap provides easy and flexible access to experts to meet clients' communications needs, including press office, marketing, strategy, research, digital media and internal communications.

Head – John Ellery

T: 020 7921 2744

E: govgap@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Client Service, Strategy and Insight

Director – Graham Hooper

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Client Account Team

The Client Account Team (CAT) helps to ensure that COI always puts clients' needs first. The team builds strategic partnerships with clients and develops the best possible

understanding of their business, so that COI can offer effective advice and delivery across all marketing and communications specialisms. CAT leads multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that clients receive a wholly integrated service from COI.

The regional Client Account Teams are based in Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and Leeds. With their in-depth knowledge of the local area and access to the complete range of COI services, their role is to ensure that the regional requirements of clients are fully met.

Director – Wendy Proctor

T: 020 7261 8313

E: wendy.proctor@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Strategic Consultancy

COI's strategic consultants and analysts develop insightful, innovative, practical and effective marketing strategies and solutions for government departments and agencies.

The team offers advice at the early stages of a project, before implementation begins, and helps to develop the knowledge, understanding and insight that underpin the strategy. The team looks at planning and communications issues related to all areas of public sector marketing, from the initial business case and feasibility studies supporting the earliest stages of policy development onwards.

Director – TBC

Diversity

COI's Diversity team is a unique centre of expertise within the public sector. The team specialises in understanding, engaging and recruiting audiences who are most likely to suffer from social and/or information exclusion.

The team improves the overall effectiveness and accessibility of government communications by giving advice and encouraging best practice across the full range of communication activities. The team has expert knowledge about and insight into many diverse audiences, from older people and culturally diverse communities, to disabled people and people with learning difficulties

Research

The research specialists at COI work with clients to deliver insightful and cost-effective research, from consultancy through to procurement and project management. The team offers a range of research solutions, based on its extensive research experience across government departments and in-depth knowledge of the research industry, via its comprehensive framework

Director – Fiona Wood
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Creative Delivery

Director – Sally Whetton
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Moving Image and Audio Content

Moving Image and Audio Content is COI's team of experts in the production and

marketing of moving image and audio content. The team works on content that flows across all broadcast and non-broadcast media, and where distribution is via traditional channels or the new digital and mobile technologies.

Director – David Seers
T: 020 7261 8528
E: david.seers@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Publications

The Publications team's consultants, designers, writers and print specialists provide integrated creative solutions to help clients to reach diverse audiences and achieve their communications goals.

Working across print and interactive media, services include: branding; copywriting; editing; proofreading; indexing; graphic design; project management; print and production; and translations.

Director – Andrew Prince
T: 020 7261 8830
E: andrew.prince@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Interactive

Transformational Strategy Director – Alex Butler
T: 020 7261 8780
E: alex.butler@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Interactive Services

The Interactive Services team advises departments and agencies on how to develop and deliver services and campaigns that create a closer, more interactive relationship with audiences.

Experts are uniquely sited to provide insight and advice at both the policy

and implementation stages. They cover transformational change, digital communications channels, web 2.0 applications and services, digital presence on a variety of platforms and how to meet digital standards.

Director – Nick Jones
T: 020 7261 8831
E: nick.jones@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Contact Centre Strategy

The Contact Centre Strategy team provides advice about building long-term contact strategies - data driven relationships with citizens to affect attitudes and behaviour. Specialists can advise on contact centre provision and fulfilment services.

Director – Marc Michaels
T: 020 7261 8391
E: marc.michaels@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Live Events

The Live Events team provides expert design input, content development and logistical support across all areas of live events. Services range across exhibitions, roadshows, conferences, launch events, event vehicles, awards ceremonies, experiential activity, interactive systems and large-scale public consultations.

With award-winning work in experiential events and expert delivery of deliberative consultation projects, the team uses the latest interactive technology to engage and inform everyone from staff and stakeholders to citizens.

Director – Simon Hughes
T: 020 7261 8884
E: simon.hughes@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Interruptive

Director – Peter Buchanan
T: 020 7261 8386
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Channel Integration Management

The Channel Integration Management team provides evaluation, campaign management and advice for online and offline media buying, sponsorship and digital campaigns.

Communications planning experts will help clients to reach target audiences in an effective and timely way to encourage response or reaction. This includes communicating via digital channels – predominantly online, but also mobile, interactive TV, gaming and other emerging platforms.

The team offers consultancy on a wide range of sponsorship activity, including advertiser-funded programming, partnership marketing and educational marketing.

Director – Corinne Purton
T: 020 7261 8947
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Direct and Relationship Marketing

The Direct and Relationship Marketing team has expertise in all areas of outward direct marketing – direct mail, email, door drops, face-to-face (field/experiential) marketing, outbound calling, inserts and SMS.

The team also manages creative agencies, sources data, profiling and segmentation services and campaign evaluation for all media activity through the COI Artemis response and conversion analysis service.

Director – Marc Michaels
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News and PR

Director – Neil Martinson
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News and PR

From high-profile public engagement campaigns to press office support, the News and PR team offers a mix of in-house consultancy and agency expertise. The team engages and influences citizens using creativity and strategy development as well as managing pitches for PR and media evaluation suppliers.

With a network of eight offices across the UK, the team offers unique local intelligence along with long-standing relationships with regional media and stakeholders.

The News and PR team also delivers media training and crisis communications services.

Director of PR – Pauline Hughes
T: 020 7261 8291
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News Distribution Service

The News and Distribution Service, partnered by the Press Association, delivers news and information directly to the media in electronic form, around the clock, 365 days a year. It distributes more than 17,000 news releases each year, enabling over 30,000 journalists to receive the latest government information.

Director – Hugh Brown
T: 020 7261 8445
E: hugh.brown@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Media Monitoring Unit

The Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) provides 24-hour coverage and in-depth news briefings for press officers, policy officials, special advisers and ministers across all government departments.

MMU also keeps track of major breaking news and significant developments on running items and provides transcripts of all major broadcast news items.

Head – David Gadd
T: 020 7261 8328
E: david.gadd@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Merchandising

Merchandising can extend a campaign's reach through a range of promotional items. The team offers access to a full range of manufacturers and discounted buying rates to meet branding, propriety and licensing needs.

The team also manages a number of staff reward and recognition schemes for clients, as part of their wider internal communications and staff engagement strategies.

Head – Sarah Walsh
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