

Quarterly report on open Government Websites (October - December 2014)

Introduction

The main government website, [GOV.UK](#), aims to provide a single point of access to HM Government services in an easily accessible way. GDS continues to work closely with departments on opportunities to close existing websites and migrate content to [GOV.UK](#) where appropriate.

Government website domains have been procured from as early as the 1990s when there was no requirement upon government departments to retain a formal record of ownership. With staff changes and new departments formed, it became apparent that departments did not have a complete view of all of the websites in their estate.

The Government Digital Service (GDS) has worked closely with departments to identify legacy websites by carrying out an audit of the complete list of domains managed by Cabinet Office under the second level domain (SLD), [gov.uk](#). This list of domains can be viewed [here](#). As well as websites on this SLD, we found that there are a number of legacy websites owned by departments under a [org.uk](#) or [co.uk](#) SLD.

In 2013/2014, over **£60m of savings** (compared to a 2009-2010 baseline) were made through the [GOV.UK](#) website. By the end of December 2014, corporate publishing transition was completed, with over [1,800 separate sites closed](#) and 312 agencies and ALB's websites transitioned to [GOV.UK](#).

Since the last report of [September 2014](#):

- 11 websites have closed
- 65 websites have transitioned to [GOV.UK](#)

The number of open governmental websites at the end of this reporting period (Oct to Dec 14) is 297. This is 70 fewer websites than in the last quarterly report.

For those government websites that have migrated to [GOV.UK](#), GDS in Cabinet Office will become responsible for reporting on that department's content, e.g. Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency - [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-standards-agency](#).

Background

The Cabinet Office committed, in the financial year 2011, to [quarterly publication of the number of open websites](#).

Definition of a website - A website is defined as a separate website if it is active and, either, has (i) a separate domain name; or, (ii) when as a subdomain, the user cannot move freely between the subsite and parent site and there is no likeness in the design.

In other words, if the user experiences it as a separate site in their normal browsing, search and other activities, it is counted as a separate site.

Definition of a closed website - a website is considered closed when:

(i) it ceases to be actively funded, run and managed by central government, either by packaging information and putting it in the right place for the intended audience on another website or digital channel; or a third party takes and manages it and bears costs associated with the site.

Where appropriate, domains stay operational in order to redirect users to the [UK Government Website Archive](#). As sites migrate to [GOV.UK](#), the full list of websites will be reduced.

Definition of the exemption process - the [GOV.UK](#) exemption process began with a web rationalisation assessment of the government's Internet estate to reduce the number of obsolete websites and to establish the scale of the websites that the government owned. Following this, each department submitted bids for websites they felt should be kept separate from [GOV.UK](#). All exempt sites went through this assessment process.

Exclusions from the central government list

Not included in the number or list are:

- websites of public corporations as listed on the [Office for National Statistics website](#), where partnerships are more than half-funded by the private sector
- charities and national museums
- specialist closed audience functions, such as the BIS Research Councils and their websites
- public bodies set up by Parliament and reporting directly to the Speaker's Committee and only reporting through a ministerial government department for the purposes of the enactment of legislation (e.g. the Electoral Commission and The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority).

From February 2013, the following sites have been included in the list:

- [.independent.gov.uk](https://www.independent.gov.uk) sites
- national parks

Inclusion under department name

Websites are listed under the relevant departmental.