Ministry of Defence

Digital in Defence

The Digital Strategy of the Ministry of Defence

Foreword

The importance of Digital in the modern world cannot be overstated. It permeates every part of our lives – the way we communicate, the way we work, the way we relax. Defence has long enjoyed Digital pre-eminence in the battle space, but we have lagged behind in the way we exploit Digital to make our business more efficient and effective. The Government Digital Service's 'Digital by Default' initiative has given us the incentive to do much better, not only in the way we interact with the British public –with those we wish to recruit, with our veterans and with those who simply wish better to understand Defence – but also in the way we manage our business.

My vision is that, in five years' time, Digital in Defence will feel very different from how it does today: it will be cutting edge, keeping pace with the best in the private sector, and a major factor in creating the best-in-class Department envisaged in Lord Levene's Defence Reform Review. Each of you has a role to play in that, by opening up your thinking to Digital solutions, by working on your Digital skill set and by developing Digital approaches to the challenges we face over the coming decade.

Jonathan Thompson

Executive Summary

- This strategy sets out the important role the Ministry of Defence has to play in delivering the Government's digital agenda, particularly 'Digital by Default'. This is part of the Defence Vision's requirement to introduce "modern, innovative ways of doing business". It is largely not concerned with Digital in the battle space.

- Digital in Defence aims to: strengthen the Department's Digital leadership; work closely with the Government Digital Service (GDS) and other Government Departments on Digital issues; and develop our Digital capability.

- Defence has made a solid start in delivering Digital, with the appointment of a Departmental 'Digital Leader', its role as a 'trailblazer' department in transferring content to GOV. UK, initial work on providing new access to MOD services for potential recruits and veterans, progress on exploiting social media and the roll-out of more modern applications, including Internet Explorer 8, for Defence information and communications technology (ICT).

- The MOD needs now better to understand the user requirement; to develop digital awareness among the Department's senior leadership and skills across its workforce; to explore the redesign of its principal interfaces with citizens, focused particularly on recruiting and veterans; and to continue the improvement of its ICT capabilities for business delivery.

- Digital in Defence is now embedded in the Department's strategic planning documentation, and progress in implementation will be assessed through the Defence Performance Framework. We will continue to monitor the key risks against the strategy, including the balance between the Department's security requirements and modern digital solutions, alignment with the Government's overall digital strategy and supporting the citizen's need for information about Defence. We will also need to ensure that, with costs lying where they fall, implementation of Digital in Defence is adequately resourced.

DIGITAL IN DEFENCE - the Digital Strategy of the Ministry of Defence

Introduction

1. The Government's Digital Strategy is focused on service delivery to the public, budgetary savings and improving citizens' experience of interacting with Government. The Ministry of Defence does not offer many direct services to the public, but nevertheless has an important role to play in delivering the digital agenda, particularly as an early adopter of website rationalisation and as a Department seeking wholesale modernisation of its obsolescent internal digital systems through Defence Transformation. Against that backdrop, this strategy sets out our plans for realising the Government's Digital Strategy in Defence.
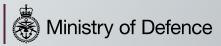
Scope

2. Digital in Defence is concerned primarily with improving the Department's digital interfaces with the citizen – known as 'Digital by Default1' – and supporting the Government Digital Service's (GDS) rationalisation of the Government's web presence. In line with the Defence Vision's requirement to introduce "modern, innovative ways of doing business", Digital in Defence also maps a path towards a step change in the effectiveness of the Department's digital business practices, to parallel the cutting edge employment of digital technology by Britain's armed forces. It is specifically not concerned with Digital in the battle space, except where the utilisation of business or personal digital technology impinges on operational factors (for example, the use of social media by deployed personnel).

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1   http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/
default/files/resources/Martha%20
Lane%20Fox's%20letter%20to%20
Francis%20Maude%2014th%20
Oct%202010.pdf

Objectives

3. In line with the Government's Digital Strategy, *Digital in Defence* aims to:

- Strengthen the Department's **Digital leadership**.

- **Work closely with GDS and other Government Departments** to ensure the success of GOV.UK and to establish common approaches to Digital issues.

- Develop our **Digital capability** – digitise and improve our interfaces with the citizen, our approach to policy-making and our internal business practices, including management information. New digital approaches hold out the prospect of reduced costs, increased efficiencies and improved ways of working. Above all, we need to place the needs of the user at the heart of Digital in Defence.

4. Achieving these objectives requires Defence to support and stimulate innovation and creative thinking and to acquire reliable, high performance ICT systems which are intuitive for the user.

The Current Position

5. Defence has made a solid start in seeing through the Government's digital agenda:

- Director Transformation has assumed the role of Departmental 'Digital Leader', working closely with the Chief Information Officer (CIO), and has direct access to the Defence Board and Board members on Digital issues.

- As a 'trailblazer' department, Defence is moving the online publishing of its corporate content to GOV.UK and will close www.mod.uk by December 2012. A rationalisation exercise of in-house literature means that the majority of printed publications have now moved online or have been replaced by an alternative digital approach to reaching audiences.

- Defence is moving the www.veterans-uk.info portal to GOV.UK in early 2013. This will create a new 'Veterans-UK' branded information hub for the ex-Service community, advisers and others needing access to information on Government support for veterans.

- Defence has made significant progress in exploiting social media for external communication with a vast range of national and international audiences[2].

- Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) will start rolling out Internet Explorer 8 early in 2013 and allowing access to targeted social media channels, enabling greatly improved access to web-based business solutions and communications media. The Department is exploring the use and potential adoption of social media tools for incorporation into its internal communications channels.

6. But there is a lot that needs yet to be done:

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2   An online awareness campaign around the importance of personal online security gained industry recognition and has helped train and educate Service and civilian personnel in the safe and responsible use of social media.

- Digital awareness among the Department's senior leadership remains at a relatively low level. Across the wider workforce, awareness is mixed, with the greatest opportunities for skills development through private engagement with Digital, rather than business-oriented training and development.

- We have started to explore the redesign of our principal interfaces with citizens, with the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) and Service Recruiting to support a move towards 'digital by default' being our main method of providing public facing services. A number of other areas in Defence including Support for Britain's Reservists & Employers (SABRE) are beginning to redesign work to enable digital interfaces with the citizen.

- The Department's business information and communications technology leaves a great deal to be desired in terms of overall system performance, obsolescence, search performance, user support, training, support to flexible working patterns and access.

Making Digital in Defence a Reality

7. Digital in Defence is already embedded in the Department's framework documentation, including Defence Strategic Direction, the Defence Plan and the new operating model Blueprint. Our success in delivering Digital in Defence will be assessed through the Defence Performance Framework.

8. Key elements of Digital implementation include:

- Strong leadership from the Defence Board, both collectively and through its individual members, as well as support through subordinate Boards such as the Defence Strategy Group.

- Better understanding the user requirement, with interface and content tailored to our primary citizen interfacing audiences, namely:

  a. Members of the press, opinion formers, political and industry influencers, international allies and partners;

  b. Members of the public with an opinion of Defence and its constituent organisations;

  c. Potential recruits, their parents, friends and families;

  d. Gatekeepers, educationalists, career advisors;

  e. Service and ex-service personnel claimants for SPVA services;

  f. Veterans, their families and their friends; and

  g. The families and friends of Service and civilian personnel.

- A review of the business processes behind the delivery of recruit marketing services and veteran support with a view to redesigning the services to remove duplication, reduce costs and develop shared technologies and platforms. A Cabinet Office 'Deep Dive' findings report into Defence Recruitment Marketing directed greater aggregation and closer collaboration, with digital at the heart of marketing planning to reduce resource inefficiencies and ineffective work practices. These are areas where work should be focused in the short-term to deliver quick wins.

- An assessment of SPVA's pensions, medals, compensation, welfare and other services to the ex-Service community and development of digital access to those services where possible and appropriate.

- Developing the Digital skills of the MOD's workforce. Work is now in train to review or develop courses to fast track senior leadership digital skills, base lining a standard level of digital competencies, and developing skills for all staff to use social media safely and responsibly.

- Developing our digital processes and systems to facilitate business improvement in line with the aims of Defence Transformation.

- Instilling a new culture of competition by benchmarking Defence with other government organisations and commercial partners to ensure we learn from best practice, continually seek improvement and set a pace for positive change.

- Placing a higher priority on mobile digital solutions, while

recognising the security constraints under which Defence operates.

9.   Full details of our implementation plans are at Annex A.

Risk

10.   The key risks are:

- **Striking the right balance between the Department's security requirements and modern digital solutions.** There is an inevitable tension between the need for some elements of Defence business to be highly classified, and the drive towards a more digital future with, for example, cloud-hosted solutions to ICT requirements. Nevertheless, a great deal of Defence business takes place at Unclassified or Restricted level. In data terms, many services delivered to the Veteran community are comparable with those delivered by DWP and other Government departments. That said Defence needs to strike a balance between allowing access to modern ICT and digital channels against the risks associated with operational

and information security at the highest levels. Other nations are starting to show the way on striking this balance.

- **Future Defence ICT solutions do not align with the Government's overall digital strategy.** We need to ensure that the Defence Core Network Services (DCNS) programme, which provides the successor ICT to DII, is shaped to keep pace with the latest digital solutions.

- There is significant evidence that the **citizen's need for information** concerning Defence has not been fully supported, making the search for information challenging and unsuccessful. Unless addressed and unless Defence keeps pace with emerging approaches to 'engagement', this will erode the Department's ability to engage effectively with internal and external audiences, posing a reputational risk with possible impact on recruitment and public support for Defence.

Resources

11.   The Government Digital Strategy makes it clear that costs lie where they fall for Departmental Digital activity. This is challenging at a time where there is considerable pressure on both financial and staff resources. Nevertheless, Digital has the potential to unlock significant savings and business improvement, so should be adopted wherever its introduction makes business sense.

12.   Work is yet to start in earnest to gain deeper understanding of user needs and preferences for those services that deliver in excess of 100,000 transactions. As mentioned above, SPVA and Single Services Recruit Marketing are the two key areas of attention.

13.   Resource implications encompass potentially significant changes to the IT infrastructure, ICT support, administrative processes, back office functions, human resources and capability development. Work on digitisation of our key transactional processes will include full cost-benefit analysis to calculate the costs of current processes and identify long-term savings post rationalisation and business re-engineering.

14.   14.SPVA receives and processes in excess of 622,000 transactions per year, much of which comprises offline processes that deliver pension and compensation claims, requests for medals or badges, notifications and pensions payments. Initial estimates of running costs for the delivery of key SPVA Veterans' Services functions are in the region of £20m. Whilst recent restructuring and process re-engineering have driven down some costs, further benefits can be achieved from making Digital the default method of access where it is appropriate and logical.

15.   Recruitment for regular and reservist personnel across the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army and Royal Air Force requires us to reach an increasingly Digital-literate population. Currently, within a global audience of 1.9m potential recruits (16 – 24 year olds in the UK), marketing and operational costs of £48m deliver around 200,000 interactions, of which 36.7%[3] of contacts were online, illustrating the potential savings that Digital in Defence can offer.

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3   **British Army online interactions represent the lowest of the three services, with the RAF operating at an optimum 100% digital contact. The Royal Navy's online contact constitutes around 70% of total interaction.**

Annex A

Digital in Defence Implementation Plan by Government Digital Strategy Objective

Improve departmental digital leadership

- Director Transformation (shortly to become Director Defence Strategy) was appointed as Digital Leader on May 2012 with access to Board members, to ensure that Digital enjoys a high profile within the Department as part of the Transformation programme.

- The Department is in the process of creating (and appointing to) a new, Director General level CIO post to ensure that the ICT dimension of Digital is led at the very top of the Department.

Develop digital capability throughout the Government

- We are in the process of recruiting a Service Manager who is suitably skilled and experienced to take forward and implement the redesign of key services of over 100,000 transactions.

- The Directorate of Media and Communications (DMC) will create and empower a central hub of excellence for 'super users' with advanced digital skills and knowledge by merging the Defence Online Engagement and Web Governance groups to establish the digital hub for all Defence directorates and sub organisations.

- We are working with DCDS (Pers & Trg) and Human Resources Directorate (HRD) to plan and develop new digital skills training, work-based learning opportunities and a mentoring programme for Senior Military Personnel and Civil Servants that will cultivate and extend their digital skills.

- The CIO will work to remove as many ICT barriers as possible, managing and upgrading the obsolete and incompatible technologies that make work in Defence difficult and cumbersome.

- We are working with DCDS (Pers & Trg) and HRD on reviewing the programme of training and education of all Defence staff to include cyber skills, information security handling and acceptable and responsible use of social media.

- HRD will investigate and implement a programme to support Defence Fast-Streamers in the development of digital skills.

- DMC will continue to run regular campaigns aimed at Defence personnel on the safe and responsible use of social media.

- We are working with Single Service Recruit Marketing teams to provide personnel with the right skills to use core services and business applications from any device and at any location. This will ensure that recruitment applications are not adversely affected as High Street Career Offices are reduced, with mobile offices becoming the norm and connectivity becoming a critical business need at a Tri-Service level.

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

- We have embedded 'digital by default' in the Department's core strategic planning documents (Defence Strategic Direction, the Defence Plan and Command Plans).

- Where assistance to go online is required, we will accommodate the lack of access or supplement with relevant support. For veterans, that is likely to include support from SPVA's veterans' welfare service in collaboration with the ex-Service charity sector.

- We will enable quicker and more agile delivery by the introduction of fast, modern, flexible, ICT that supports today's standards of handling and consuming information which users actually like using. We have begun a small controlled roll out of Internet Explorer 8 which will be completed early in 2013.

- We will report against the criteria as set out in the Digital Efficiency report for those sub-organisations that offer in excess of 100,000 transactions; and

implement change to processes that will facilitate the delivery of relevant information.

- SPVA will be the trailblazing part of MOD in the redesign and digitisation of services (replacing old services where necessary) with the needs of our veterans and their families in mind, in keeping with GDS standards and criteria.

- We will reduce the reliance on offline, traditional media where appropriate by redesigning services that demonstrate a reduction in running costs, in line with best practice principles, and report accordingly.

Complete the transition to GOV.UK

- DMC will migrate Defence corporate content from www.mod.uk to GOV.UK and provide support to sub organisations in their transition to the same platform.

- SPVA will complete the transition of the Veterans-UK information portal to GOV.UK. DMC will facilitate and close outstanding Defence websites and migrate to GOV.UK.
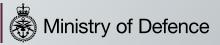
- DMC will establish a new publishing model for future Defence communications and exploit the opportunity offered by GOV.UK.

Increase the number of people who use digital services

- DMC will conduct a review of offline channels and traditional communications media, with a view to closing 90% of all traditional offline channels and plan for a shift to online or digital services.

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

- For those Defence audiences who are not online, such as some members of the veterans community, SPVA will provide those unable to access digital the means with alternative support in collaboration with third sector organizations or other means of communications as an exception.

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

- CIO will refresh the Defence ICT strategy to reflect current government direction.

- The Chief of Defence Materiel (CDM) will stimulate the opportunity to place contracts and work with small to medium sized enterprises, including the supply of modern digital services.

Build common technology platforms for digital by default services

- The Deputy Chief of Defence for Personnel and Training (DCDS(Pers & Trg) will require the single Service Recruit marketing teams to collaborate on the redesign of offline recruitment marketing processes with the potential recruit in mind, seeking to reduce duplication of costs and technology development.

- CDM will remove barriers to procurement of commercially available, faster, cheaper and more flexible ICT in the common domain to enable greater systems and software interoperability.

- We will share and, where possible, reuse common technology platforms for Service Recruit marketing.

- The Director General Transformation and Corporate Strategy (DG T&CS) will ensure that holding to account effectively supports contemporary thinking to ICT procurement and implementation.

- DMC will own and support a hosting strategy that offers exempt Defence web presences with an accredited and secure hosting environment in the Cloud in line with the Government ICT strategy.

Remove unnecessary legislative barriers

- SPVA and Defence Policy (Remuneration policy team) are assessing what legislative barriers need to be removed from pensions and compensation legislation to facilitate Digital by Default access to services.

Base service decisions on accurate and timely management information

- CIO will update and develop policy and guidance on Information Management (IM) in line with GPMS (Government Protective Marking Scheme)

- The Defence Board will aim to shift the approach to risk management from risk-averse to risk-aware.

- DMC will conduct audience research to derive a deeper understanding of their information and communication needs.

- The Finance and Military Capability area will embed the

requirement to meet Government standards for benchmarking, efficiency, sustainable development targets and business priorities and report on savings within the Defence Plan.

- The Finance and Military Capability area will develop coherence and efficiency in management information delivery to improve evaluation of service performance and costs.

Improve the way the government makes policy and communicates with people

- DMC have developed guidelines and processes on the appropriate use and exploitation of social media, together with a communications campaign to ensure that members of the Department do not misuse such media.

- CIO will develop and embed effective local information structures so information is better managed, stored and found across the Department.

- DMC will involve a wider base of users more in debate and policy-making through the adoption of social media tools.

- DCDS (Pers & Trg) will require single Services Recruit marketing teams where possible to share common principles of a social media strategy and seek to identify further digital interfaces with potential applicants by designing services and channels around the users' needs.