

Annual report on Open Central Government Websites

[based on data dated 1 August 2012]

Background

Following a National Audit Office report, the Public Accounts Committee published a critical review of progress in improving the Government's Internet practices on its 16th report of session 2007/08.

Last year, the now closed Central Office of Information (COI), after delivering the [standards and guidance](#) recommended, invited departments to report on their progress. This evidence was published 7 October 2011 and can be [found here](#)

Following the closure of COI and the strategic report conducted by the UK Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox in the context of advising, "how efficiencies can best be realised through the online delivery of public services", The Government Digital Service (GDS) was set up and amongst other tasks, was charged with developing a single domain for government to provide better, simpler, more accessible information for citizens that will be cheaper and easier to operate for Departments. This website, GOV.UK, to be launched in October 2012, will support the closure of many more central government websites by making information available in one place.

Open Government Websites

On 1 August 2012, there were **383 open websites**, that included public body sites such as museums and regional organisations. The total number of closed websites is 1,700. Of these, 149 were websites that the National Archives have identified since 1 July 2011 as belonging to central government.

In supporting the launch of GOV.UK we are verifying the need for some central government websites to be retained. Once this work is completed the list of those websites will be made available.

GDS invited departments to update the data they had supplied to COI last year. In some instances metrics for some sites has been aggregated together. From the information derived:

Costs of Central Government Websites

From data supplied by departments that are following [TG128 \(measuring website costs\)](#) guidance, non staff costs are shown in five areas of spending:

A Strategy and planning - This includes the cost of strategic work before the website is built or redeveloped, ongoing planning and project management.

B Design and build - The cost of creative and technical work in producing or updating the website

C Hosting and infrastructure - The ongoing software, hardware and hosting costs associated with the website.

D Content Provision

E Testing and evaluation

In addition to these non staff costs, departments provided data on the number of full-time equivalent staff who worked in any capacity on the particular website. This indicates that from the data provided and excluding National Insurance and other uplift costs, the total estimated cost of the open government websites which provided information was just under **£108m**.

Table 1: Reported costs of Central Government sites summarised by Department

Department	Total Number of reports received / expected	Non staff costs	Staff costs	Total Reported costs
Attorney General Office (AGO)	7/7	£181,624	£108,578	£290,202
Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)	31/81	£4,288,516	£2,632,167	£6,962,683
Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	5/17	£106,117	-	£106,117
Cabinet Office (CO) *This includes Directgov	7/16	£9,251,632	£9,918,332	£19,169,964
Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)	9/43	£372,243	£289,294	£661,537
Energy and Climate Change (DECC)	4/6	£361,256	£314,750	£676,006
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	10/50	£570,703	£932,021	£1,502,724
Education (DFE)	5/10	£3,389,728	£365,568	£3,755,297
International Development (DFID)	3/3	£258,648	£557,007	£815,655
Transport (DFT)	10/11	£7,432,876	£596,174	£8,029,050
Health (DH)	19/49	£21,322,427	£1,398,888	£22,721,315
Work and Pensions (DWP)	12/13	£1,491,672	£1,092,295	£2,583,967
Foreign and Commonwealth (FCO)	5/6	£1,502,073	£626,581	£2,128,654
Treasury (HMT - Incl HMRC, UKTI)	12/17	£15,448,362	£6,256,844	£21,705,206
Home Office (HO)	2/19	£1,124,116	£1,082,551	£2,206,666

Defence (MOD)	25/31	£2,028,337	£922,482	£2,930,819
Justice (MOJ)	3/13	£347,000	£224,514	£571,514
The National Archives (TNA)	3/4	£1,566,319	£871,525	£2,437,844
UK Statistics Authority (UKSA - incl ONS)	6/6	£3,576,040	£1,966,760	£5,542,800
Miscellaneous (incl Charity Commission and Regulators)	7/18	£2,588,995	£602,588	£3,191,583
Totals	186/382	£77,095,333	£30,748,321	£107,843,654

For more detail on costs per website, please see Annex A

Usage of Central Government Websites

The departments that reported usage of their websites as outlined in the guidance [TG116 \(measuring website usage\)](#), indicated that the total visits for central government websites was 2.9 billion (2,956,693,241). There may be some repetition in this figure because of linking from one site to another during a single visit.

Customer Satisfaction ratings

Aggregated percentages for sites where data has been provided in Annex A

- The majority (56%) of users “Got everything”, or “most of” what they wanted when visiting .gov websites.
- The majority (56%) of users were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their experience.
- The majority (55%) of users rated gov.uk websites “ease of use” as “very good” or “good”.
- The majority (55%) of users rated gov.uk websites “design” as “very good” or “good”.
- The majority (60%) of users rated gov.uk websites “editorial quality” as “very good” or “good”.
- The majority (59%) of users rated the “content accuracy” of gov.uk websites as “very good” or “good”.
- Only 50% of users when asked how easy it was to find information said this experience was “very good” or “good”.

- Only 45% of users found their website's search tool as "very good" or "good".

More detail on quality measures per website, per department can be found in Annex A

Accessibility scores

Standard methods for ensuring that websites are accessible to the widest range of people are described in the guidance [TG102 \(delivering inclusive websites\)](#). They include:

WCAG single A conformance measured using automated testing;

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Of the sites that responded;

- 64% are WCAG single A compliant
- 61% are WCAG double A compliant

More detail on accessibility scores per website per department is provided in Annex A