



GOVERNMENT WHIPS' OFFICE  
HOUSE OF LORDS  
LONDON SW1A 0PW

LORD BATES  
020-7219 1114

Telephone 020-7219 3131  
[www.lordswhips.org.uk](http://www.lordswhips.org.uk)  
[holgovernmentwhips@parliament.uk](mailto:holgovernmentwhips@parliament.uk)

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D Bates', written in a cursive style.

Following the fascinating debate on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Wide Web held on 16 January, I promised to write on points made during the debate that I was unable to respond to during my closing speech.

I thought it was a high quality, engrossing debate, and demonstrated just how important the World Wide Web is to all of us. I want to reiterate my thanks to you for securing the debate, and to all speakers for their contributions.

#### **Adult skills and digital inclusion**

Turning to specific points raised during the debate, you spoke about the four key skills that 11 million adults lack the ability to do online – communicate, transact, search and share information. As I mentioned in my speech, the Government is fully committed to addressing this issues and is working closely with the GO ON UK to tackle the issue of digital exclusion.

The government digital inclusion team, based at Government Digital Service, are currently consulting the public on a [digital inclusion checklist](#) for those helping people go online, which members may wish to explore. The government will be publishing a digital inclusion strategy early in the spring. This digital inclusion strategy will unite government and non-government activity around a shared ambition, embed digital inclusion in government policies and programmes, set out how we will develop partnerships with key public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders to deliver activities on the ground and to realise the mutual benefits that digital brings to business, individuals and society.

#### **Cyber Security**

Lord Young of Norwood Green and Lord St John of Bletso both raised Cyber Security as a key concern. The Government published the Cyber Security Strategy in November 2011. The strategy has four key aims:

- To make the UK one of the most secure places in the world to do business in cyberspace
- To make the UK more resilient to cyber attack, and better able to protect our interests in cyberspace
- Help shape an open, vibrant and stable cyberspace that supports open societies
- Build the UK's cyber security knowledge, skills and capabilities

To help meet these objectives, the Government has put in place a National Cyber Security Programme, backed up £860m of Government investment to 2016. The Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, made his 2<sup>nd</sup> annual report to Parliament in December 2013 on progress in delivering the objectives of the strategy, the National Cyber Security Programme spend and achievement, as well as outlining some of the government's forward plans. This report can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-cyber-security-strategy-2-years-on>.

### **Proposed Levy on emails**

Lord Puttnam proposed a voluntary 1p levy on all emails sent, in order to raise funds for charitable organisations or others requiring aid. My instinct is that this would need to be led by industry – not least in order to overcome the technical challenges that such a move may present. This is an interesting concept, and I would welcome Lord Puttnam's thoughts on how this may be achieved.

### **Internet access for prisoners**

Lord Taylor of Warwick raised the issue of internet access for low-security, category D prisoners, in order to help prepare for release. I will raise this issue with the Ministry of Justice and will respond more fully in due course.

### **Archiving of emails in Government**

Lord Stevenson of Balmacara raised the issue of archiving of material on the web, and of e-mails in Government in particular. All government departments have electronic records management systems, and relevant emails are stored in these systems in order to be accessible, in order to ensure an accurate audit trail for policy development and to ensure requests such as Freedom of Information requests can be responded to accurately and transparently.

Finally, during the debate we discussed how Government will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Wide Web. As I mentioned in my response, we absolutely believe this should be marked and are talking to Sir Tim Berners-Lee's office about this. We hope to be in a position to announce more detail shortly.

I would like to thank you all once more for your contributions and look forward to further debates on this subject in the House.

I will be placing a copy of this letter on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), which I feel is more than appropriate, and will circulate a link once it is live.

Very best wishes,  
Michael

BATES

Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho CBE  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW