

Annual report on Central Government Websites

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 Government Digital Service (GDS) after delivering the [standards and guidance](#) recommended, invited departments to report on their progress. This evidence was published in August 2012 and can be [found here](#).

Following the government response to the 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, 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, was launched in October 2012 and by May 2013 all central government departments had transitioned to it. As part of this, departments are working to support the closure of many of their existing websites whose content can be better made available on GOV.UK, as part of the establishment of the single domain.

Central Government Websites

On 1 April 2013, there were **508 websites** to be reported on. The total number of closed websites is around 1,700.

GDS invited departments to update the data they had supplied to GDS last year. In some instances metrics for some sites have been aggregated together.

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 - This includes the cost of research, commissioning, editing and proofreading associated with the website.

E Testing and evaluation - This includes the cost of technical, usability and accessibility testing as well as research into site usability and user satisfaction

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 government websites which provided information was just over **£111m**.

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	£90,736	£93,484	£184,220
Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)	63/68	£9,711,510	£3,553,916	£13,265,435
Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	10/18	£2,232,058	£1,746,329	£3,978,387
Cabinet Office (CO)	33/45	£14,868,081	£8,292,454	£23,160,535
Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)	11/25	£417,358	£580,361	£997,719
Energy and Climate Change (DECC)	21/21	£964,560	£470,246	£1,434,806
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	22/59	£422,203	£683,272	£1,105,475
Education (DFE)	19/21	£4,832,677	£489,307	£5,321,984
International Development (DFID)	4/4	£233,858	£370,388	£604,246
Transport (DFT)	19/22	£1,240,391	£635,564	£1,875,955
Health (DH)	29/36	£18,054,572	£3,475,499	£21,530,071
Work and Pensions (DWP)	19/20	£1,220,715	£1,236,397	£2,457,112
Foreign and Commonwealth (FCO)	8/16	£8,384,809	£4,449,916	£12,834,725
Treasury (HMT inc HMRC)	4/19	£567,982	£5,135,538	£5,703,520

Home Office (HO)	3/27	£14,000	£-	£14,000
Defence (MOD)	27/30	£769,452	£683,872	£1,453,324
Justice (MOJ)	3/26	£54,000	£55,000	£109,000
The National Archives (TNA)	3/3	£1,546,788	£787,306	£2,334,094
UK Statistics Authority (UKSA - incl ONS)	5/5	£9,632,553	£3,092,354	£12,724,907
Miscellaneous (inc Regulators)	4/36	£1,800	£8,400	£10,200
Totals	314/508	£75,260,103	£35,839,603	£111,099,715

For more detail on costs per website, please see Annex B1, B2 & B4 (CSV, MS Excel & ODS Formats).

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 2.7 billion (2,705,624,431). 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 B1, B2 & B4 (CSV, MS Excel & ODS Formats).

- The majority (58%) of users “Got everything”, or “most of” what they wanted when visiting .gov websites.
- The majority (57%) of users were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their experience.
- The majority (57%) of users rated gov.uk websites “ease of use” as “very good” or “good”.
- The majority (53%) of users rated gov.uk websites “design” as “very good” or “good”.
- The majority (59%) of users rated gov.uk websites “editorial quality” as “very good” or “good”.
- The majority (56%) of users rated the “content accuracy” of gov.uk websites as “very good” or “good”.

- Only 51% of users when asked how easy it was to find information said this experience was “very good” or “good”.
- Only 42% 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 B1, B2 & B4 (CSV, MS Excel & ODS Formats).

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;

WCAG double- A conformance measured using automated testing;

Of the sites that responded;

- 63% are WCAG single- A compliant
- 61% are WCAG double- A compliant

More detail on accessibility scores, per website, per department, is provided in Annex B1, B2 & B4 (CSV, MS Excel & .ODS Formats).