



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

**Engagement and Communications
Department**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

07 October 2013

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUESTS REF: 0826-13 and 0827-13

Thank you for your emails of 9 September asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

How much money have you spent on social media training since May 2010? Who received this training? What kind of training did they receive? Who conducted the training?

and

How much money have you spent on Twitter training since May 2010? Who received this training? What kind of training did they receive? Who conducted the training?

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested and can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

The FCO uses social media to help promote UK objectives around the world. We support British nationals, providing answers to travel queries and using social media in crisis situations to identify British nationals in need of help. We promote British trade and tourism, for example through supporting the "GREAT" Britain campaign. We promote British objectives and values, for example explaining our policy in Syria or building up support to end sexual violence in conflict situations. We also use it to build our understanding of the political situation and key influencers in the countries in which we operate, as well as more openly engaging on and explaining our foreign policy.

The FCO has provided a number of training courses that include a social media element (including Twitter) since May 2010. That has included training in:

- Using social media in a crisis situation e.g. the attack on the Kenya shopping mall, Japan earthquake and tsunami to:
 - track and assist British nationals
 - advise British nationals of latest travel advice and security information

- alert British nationals to threats
- quickly find and share latest advice from local authorities
- monitor closely fast changing situations on the ground
- Use social media including @FCOtravel to support British nationals including:
 - promoting travel advice updates
 - answering consular questions from British nationals to reduce the time spent dealing with queries on the phone
- Using social media for open governance and transparency in line with the government's open data white paper and government transparency commitments
- Communicating the FCO's policies and priorities through social media to the media, foreign governments, the public and civil society
- Explaining to and engaging with the public in the UK and overseas on the FCO's work
- Using social media to improve the understanding of public and civil society opinion on foreign policy issues leading to more informed foreign policy making

The total cost of such training, since May 2010, is £92,574. Unfortunately, it is not possible to break this down further to show how much was spent specifically on Twitter training.

The training was aimed at FCO staff in the following roles:

- Consular staff in London and overseas
- Press and Communications Officers in London and overseas
- FCO web editors and digital staff in London and overseas
- Senior management in London and overseas
- Staff in policy roles in London and overseas

The training has been delivered by the following providers:

Whiteoaks
 NixonMcInnes
 West Lemorann SL
 DEMSOC

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

I hope you are satisfied with this reply. However, if you wish to make a complaint or if you would like a review of our decision, please write to the FOI and DPA Team, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room K4.10-13, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: foi-dpa.imd@fco.gov.uk. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may then apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Global Hub Manager
Engagement and Communications Department



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.