

Freedom of Information request 928/2013

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Information request

I am requesting information regarding the budgeting and development of smartphone apps by the DWP.

I wish to receive original documents produced by staff at the DWP wherever possible for these projects.

This should include the budgets assigned to these projects, the companies which were contracted to develop them, the specifications for these apps, the decision to scrap/phase out the use of DWP smartphone apps once they're developed, and the DWP's marketing strategy for its smartphone apps.

I would also like any original reports or other documents documents for market research regarding these apps, as well as usage numbers/statistics for any apps the DWP has published.

DWP response

DWP has developed three smartphone apps: for Jobcentre Plus, to support Universal Jobmatch, and one as part of the campaign launching pensions automatic enrolment.

Jobsearch App

The first Jobcentre Plus Smartphone app was launched in March 2009 and was delivered by Cimex and Directgov on behalf of the DWP. The information you requested is not held by this department; you will need to contact Cabinet Office about the budgeting, development, specifications and any original documents relating to the Jobsearch app.

However, I can tell you that this original app used the Jobs & Skills API to access vacancy data. By the time the original app was decommissioned (Nov 2012, as part of the migration to Universal Jobmatch), the app was seeing around 1 million requests for information per week (a combined total of job searches and jobs viewed). Over the course of its lifespan, it had been downloaded 850,000 times (the majority being iPhone downloads).

Universal Jobmatch App

Monster Worldwide Limited were contracted to develop the Universal Jobmatch app as part of the overall requirement for the Universal Jobmatch service. There was no specific budget for the UJ app as it was part of the

overall requirement. No market research was conducted for the app, and there was no specific marketing strategy for the app. Implementation of the app is currently under review.

The app requirement was for a like-for-like replacement of the former Jobcentre Plus Jobs & Skills app. The following extracts from the Service Requirements refer:

TLMS SCHEDULE 2.1 AUTHORITY REQUIREMENTS

10.62 The Contractor shall ensure that the Services allow jobseekers to conduct a job search through the following routes:

10.62.3 using smartphone Apps;

AND;

32.6 The Contractor acknowledges that the existing Job search service self service supports and provides an "XML brokering Service XBS" through the Application programme Interface (API), the current users of which are:

32.6.3 Cimex Smartphone app – available on both iPhone and Android platforms (the jobsearch application) accesses J & S data through the API. The Contractor shall ensure that the Services replace the existing Apps and throughout the Contract Period enable the jobsearch applications to view relevant TLMS information by providing equivalent or improved functionality and provides an equivalent or improved functionality and interoperability comparable with the existing service.

The full contract and schedule can be found at <https://online.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/Common/View%20Notice.aspx?site=1000&lang=en¬iceid=739032&fs=true>

Automatic enrolment/workplace pensions app

The development of an automatic enrolment/workplace pensions app was part of a partnership marketing proposal from 'The Sun' newspaper and 'O2' (now 'Weve'), which was put together by M4C (our media buyer).

The Sun and O2 were appointed to deliver the partnership after a brief was put out to the market inviting competitive bids which were then assessed. For this reason exact details of costs are commercially sensitive and I will not be able to disclose them.

In applying a Section 43 exemption the department has balanced the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in

disclosing the information. Section 43 of the FoI Act relates to the commercial interests of both the Department and our suppliers. On this occasion I consider that there is no overarching public interest argument in favour of releasing this information. Release of the information could inhibit or limit the ability of the Department to obtain value for money when undertaking a similar scheme in the future, by publicising the amount that the Department has previously been willing to pay. The public interest is best served by maintaining the ability of the Department to obtain the best possible commercial terms.

However we can say that as part of the wider proposal, the app and traffic-driving texts had a notional cost below what we would expect had we procured them in isolation of the much broader media partnership.

Our existing audience segmentation was used to determine the suitability of an app as a channel to reach our key audiences.

Future plans to promote the app are under development as part of our planning for further bursts of the campaign.