



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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27 March 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0173-15

Thank you for your email of 18 February 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

The top 10 most visited websites in the department for the following years: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

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

Information which can be disclosed is attached. The information we are able to release consists of:

- A list of twenty most viewed domains covering a period of three months from 29 April 2013 – 1 August 2013
- A list of the ten most viewed domains covering a period of six months from 1 July 2014 – 31 December 2014
- A list of the ten most viewed domain covering the period from 1 January 2015 – 11 March 2015

These aggregated lists include the domains of advertisements and social media sites, which appear as content within frames of other websites viewed by staff. This means a user may visit a particular website, but also generate a number of “views” for other sites not intentionally selected. The volume of viewed content does not equate to the number of times staff have visited a website. This is an unavoidable limitation relating to how websites are constructed.

The FCO provides access to the Internet to help staff to do their jobs. Reasonable personal use is permitted, with the provision that it does not interfere with performance of duties. Business access is not separated from personal access, and staff must adhere to the FCO

policy on acceptable use. FCO staff have access to social media tools for public diplomacy work. Social media is an important platform for the FCO's digital presence and an integral part of modern diplomacy. They allow staff to monitor events, formulate more informed policy, identify and build relationships with key influencers and increase our reach beyond more traditional channels, allowing, for example, to provide up-dated travel advice in real time and to respond to questions from the public.

The FCO has systems in place to monitor all Internet usage on official systems. However some of the information you have requested cannot be disclosed. The data we are able to provide is limited and does not cover your specified time period. The data does not cover all Information Communications Technology (ICT) systems used by staff for broadband access, for example, only centrally monitored systems are included. Only those records capturing the last eight months of web browsing activity, and data previously released in 2013 in response to other FOI requests, is readily available. Data is normally archived after a six month period, at which point it becomes costly to retrieve.

We estimate that the cost of complying fully with your request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government the appropriate limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Knowledge & Technology Directorate



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