Public Sector News

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Statute Law Database

www.statutelaw.gov.uk/

The major news from the public sector is the launch of the UK Statute Law Database. Long awaited, this little gem finally appeared on 20th December, and gives free public access to all current UK primary legislation. The Statute Law Database is the official revised version of the statute book for the UK in electronic form. "The statute book" covers all the primary legislation of a public general nature in force at the present time.

This is the first time that consolidated legislation has been made freely available online. The database allows you to see very easily how legislation has been updated by subsequent Acts. If, for instance, you are using the Highways Act 1980, you can see at a glance which clauses have been changed, as all changes are shown in blue.

The legislation is annotated to show amendments, modifications that don't alter the text, extent information, commencement information, subordinate legislation, marginal citations and editorial information. The database includes secondary legislation from 1991, but this is not updated.

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges

The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and the Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works (MCDHW) are large loose-leaf publications issued by the Highways Agency. For some time now they have been available in three formats – paper, CD-Rom and online. However, there have been problems with the way in which updates are managed, and consistency problems between the three versions. My group, ALGIS, and a representative of CSS, the County Surveyor's Society have had regular meetings with the Highways Agency and TSO, who publish the beast. We have looked at ways of improving the way the paper copies work, notification of updates, consistency issues and pricing.

The website is at http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk and Volume 0 of MCDHW has just been added. Volumes 1 and 2 are already there, as is the whole of the DMRB. If you would like to comment on these publications and the way they are produced and distributed, there is an e mail discussion group which you can join. Drop me an e-mail, and I will ensure you are added to the forum.

The National Archives

In early December a new homepage was launched for the National Archives(TNA). It is designed to give easier access to the services and information available from TNA. The homepage includes a section on 'professional information management', and it is here you will find links to the Office of Public Sector Information, now that it has merged with TNA. Their website is still at http://www.opsi.gov.uk.

The Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary should now be in use on all local authority websites. This is a requirement of Communities and Local Government, previously known as the Department for Communities and Local Government. UKEIG awarded the Tony Kent Strix award to the Taxonomist behind the scheme, Stella Dextre Clarke, for her work in developing the original Government Category List and then the IPSV.

Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists) which represents information professionals providing information services to local

authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. ALGIS welcomes anyone with an interest in public sector information who feels they would benefit from being part of a community working in the same area. For more information go to http://www.algis.org.uk.