

Public Sector News

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The Open Government Licence; the No. 10 website; and the true cost savings of going digital

Open Government Licence

The continuing push to make public sector data and information more readily available and encourage its re-use has led to development of the Open Government Licence.

The National Archives has made this easy to use licence available and is encouraging public sector bodies to use it. The licence allows for copying, publishing, distributing and transmitting information, adapting information and exploiting it commercially.

The only requirements are that users must acknowledge the source and that they do not suggest the information has any official status or that the Information Provider endorses the product or its producer. The reuse must not mislead or misrepresent the information, and care must be taken not to breach the requirements of the Data Protection Act or the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003. Details of the licence can be found at:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence

The No. 10 website

Other moves to make information available include the publication of expenditure by Department. Suitable for the insomniac the spreadsheets of figures probably provide some useful information but you would need to know what you are looking for and certainly present a challenge for journalists trying to find a juicy story of extravagant life styles.

The No.10 website carries this information under the tab labelled 'Transparency.'

The site is an interesting one, and here you will also find organization charts and business plans along with details of employees, job titles, salary scales actual salaries.

www.number10.gov.uk

Digital by default

The Government's Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox, has recommended a 'radical revolution' in the delivery of government services through the Internet; the report has been welcomed by the Government. The aim would be to move services to online delivery to the point where digital delivery is the default option. The savings that can be achieved through this channel shift are estimated by Martha Lane Fox as more than £1.3bn for a 30% shift or £2.2bn, if 50% of contacts are conducted online.

These arguments are not new, with SOCITM having published comparable figures for the unit cost of providing local authority services over the phone, face to face or via the Web for a number of years. Their latest figures are:

- Face to face £8.23 per visit
- Phone £3.21 per call
- Web 0.39p per visitors

Source: SOCITM *Insight* (December 2009)

SOCITM also operates an online survey, which asks users when they don't find the information they require to contact the local authority. The results of this survey can help authorities measure channel preferences and calculate possible savings from ensuring information is available online.

Of course, this is all dependent on access to the skills and the technology and we still have groups of people without this access. Francis Maude has said that digitally disadvantaged will not be excluded.

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