


SHARED SERVICES TEAM

Document Name: Directgov Future proposition and strategy

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Directgov Future Proposition & Strategy

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Created Date 11 October 2007

Last Updated Date 15 January 2007

Version Number V0D02

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1 Change Control

Version History

Version	Date	Changed By	Summary of Change
V0.1	11/10/2007		Document created
V0.2	12/01/2007		Comments and insertions from Proposition and Strategy Team

Approvals

The signatories have formally approved this document and are content that comments have been dealt with accordingly. The signed approval copy is held by the Directgov Programme Management Office.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version
		Chief Executive, Directgov		

Distribution

This document has been distributed to the following individuals.

Name	Title	Date Of Issue	Version

2 About This Document

The May 2007 Directgov Board considered a number of Strategic Principles which encompass the objectives, ethos and purpose of Directgov. These enable the production of clear statements of proposition that will guide Directgov's development planning in the medium and longer term. In July 2007, the Board considered a number of more complex propositional issues that were still not determined. In the main, these related to propositions which have either changed since the inception of Directgov, or which have been reviewed in the light of changing circumstances.

This paper builds on the paper "*Directgov Proposition and Strategy*" issued 03 July 2007 which presented a picture of Directgov's future proposition, compared with the existing. In this paper we present the future proposition, outlining the key areas for change and development and clarifying areas not in scope of the proposition.

As previously, these propositions do not of themselves generate development commitments or set priorities for development activity. Rather these demonstrate that Directgov has a clear, aspirational future direction in each area. Business justification and design issues will be considered in detail as the propositions are carried into implementation.

Finally, as with all strategies this should be a living conceptual document, setting out our vision for the future, at this point in time. We aim to provide direction, knowing that we may well need to change course, to adapt as technology will surely force us to do so.

Below we outline the propositional areas of Directgov, grouped into logical areas and then broken down into more specific definitions. Each propositional area does not stand alone, it is the collective nature of these offerings that delivers the unique proposition that Directgov is and will continue to be.

2.1 Documents referenced

The following documents provide more detail in support of the overall Directgov future proposition and strategy and can be obtained from the Directgov BMU.

070831 Integrated Proposition V1.1

070503 Strategic Principles V0D05

070924 - Directgov Technical Strategy 2008 to 2011 V0D3

The Customer Case for Directgov and the Brand – The Principles we stand for'

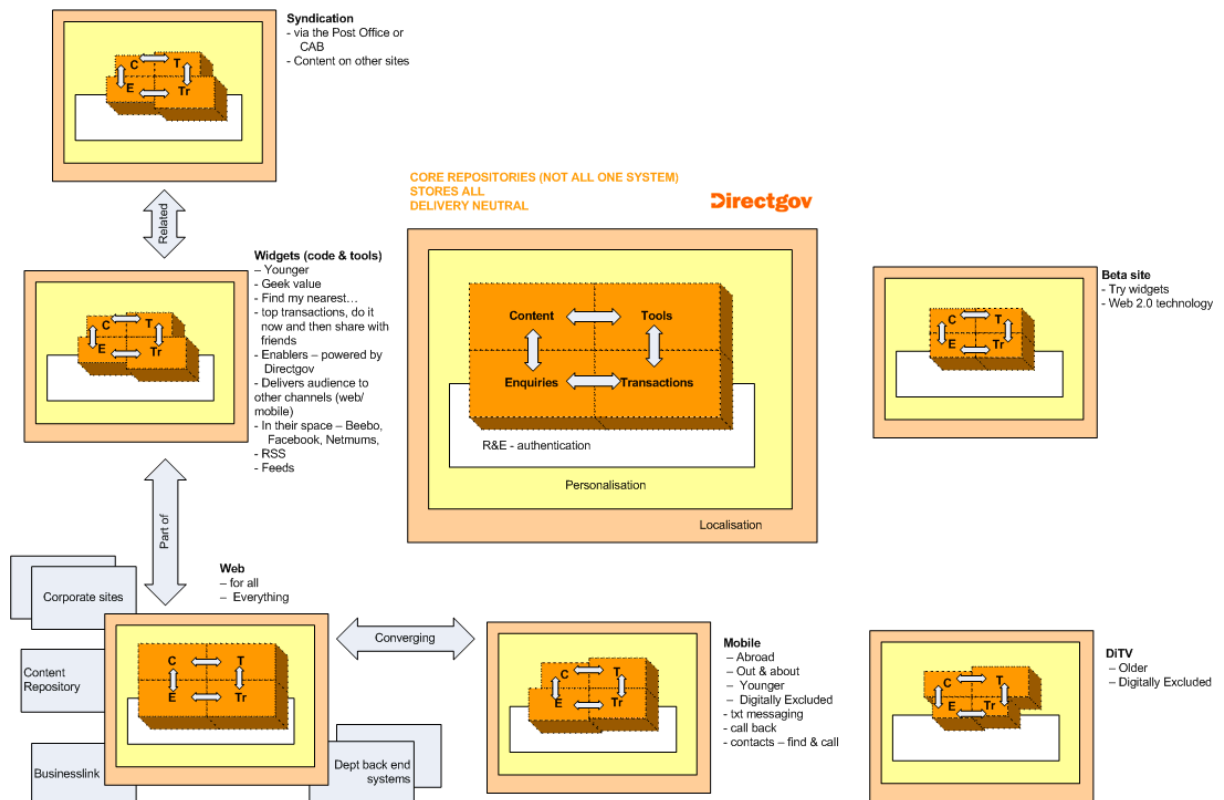
Directgov: Search proposition and roadmap

Directgov Mobile Strategy 150807

Mobile Payments Strategy 011107 v0.2

3 Executive summary

The future vision for Directgov is to think of Directgov as an entity in itself, which then uses the most appropriate channel to deliver its services to meet citizens' needs. The diagram below illustrates this concept; fundamentally Directgov is far more than direct.gov.uk. Directgov should be the digital channel for the citizen, ensuring that Directgov is the place where the citizen interacts with government regardless of delivery device. This means that just as there is web convergence, there should also be the same rules for all mobile devices (not just phones) and digital TV interactive services. The delivery devices should become far more integrated, not at a technology level, but fundamentally at a content, marketing and promotional level. If the same service is available through multiple devices, where appropriate each device should promote/highlight that the service is available through other channels. The delivery of services and content should also be tailored to do what each device does best, and make use of the inbuilt functions each device can offer.



Directgov will not just be a website that everyone is expected to visit. Directgov should be an aggregator of services for the citizen, where the citizen wants to engage with those services, be that via their mobile or through another website or their own aggregated home page. It could act as a broker for those groups who wish to utilise the tools and services that government can offer within their own offerings.

This still meets our goal of public services all in one place, the place is Directgov, the web, the phone and the TV are just ways of a citizen getting to that place – just like we use the train, car or walk, the destination is the same, the mode of transport is a matter of personal or circumstantial choice.

There should be two strands to Directgov's future development, a significant stream of technical development and a new approach using web 2.0 methodologies. The technical approach will most likely be using portal technology to integrate the volume and range of services and transactions that Directgov will need to deliver on behalf of government to the citizen. This development needs to take into account all of the channels through which Directgov can be delivered, as opposed to just the web. It is primarily about integration of services, and delivering complex functionality around personalising the Directgov offering (including localisation and authentication).

Alongside this work, we must develop a more nimble approach to development and enhancement of services, including but not exclusively related to what some people might class the web 2.0 space. It will be smaller scale, we may use a public beta site concept to deliver this type of function initially, where we can experiment and validate concepts without the burden of trying to do it in the live site. This would be supported by an internal development site where we can start to experiment for concepts not ready for public consumption. Examples of this might be use of [RSS](#) technology, creating [widgets](#), using [metadata driven aggregation techniques](#), [AJAX](#) and [JavaScript](#) tools to enhance the delivery

of the Directgov proposition both content and services. Over time, successful concepts would be rebuilt or moved into the live site, after testing and have been proved as a valid addition to the overall proposition.

The benefit of this two strand approach is that we can deliver visual changes and be seen to move forward in a modern and innovative manner, whilst strengthening the underlying framework at a different pace.

Special note for web convergence:

The Directgov proposition as stated here aims to capture all developments that are of interest to a citizen and their experience of receiving services and interacting with government. It does not preclude any future development plans that individual departments may have, in fact if these enhance the overall proposition we would seek to actively embrace them. However, convergence is happening over a number of years, and in that time there will be change – some will speed up convergence, perhaps making a manual task now automated, others will add additional layers of complexity, perhaps in adding additional security layers to authentication. As with all projects, a re-evaluation against the changing proposition will be required if sites are due in the latter half of the convergence process.

Additionally, the proposition seeks to deliver the most appropriate citizen journey through an often complex, bewildering and frequently changing government landscape – in meeting the citizen need and the wider overall government strategy we may not be able to accept all departmental specific requirements, especially if these skew the overall service for either the citizen or the wider government stakeholders. We will work with departments to ensure the best compromise possible to ensure an individual departments needs are met, within the wider Directgov strategy.

4 The nature of Directgov

The fundamental principle behind Directgov remains the design of services around the needs of citizens, rather than the structures of service providers. We will continue to have a mandate to simplify and improve the presentation of services and transactions across multiple delivery channels (predominantly web, mobile and digital TV in the short term), taking into account the increasing experience and expectation of the audience, as it matures digitally.

Whilst the mobile and digital TV channels have to date been significantly smaller and have received less focused attention, the mobile channel holds much for the future direction of Directgov, as browsers become less device specific and mobile devices merge in terms of their capabilities and capacities.

Much of the focus on Directgov to date has been on the website being all and everything, web development in future will be as much about putting Directgov where the citizen is as bringing the citizen to direct.gov.uk. This means taking Directgov out to the citizen, being where they are, be that Facebook, or a specialist parenting site. This is a significant change to the way in which we may deliver Directgov content and transactions and requires departments to go even further than has been done so far in putting their content further from their own comfort zone and control than currently. On their own site they are in complete control, on Directgov, its still government, with Directgov delivering to a third party site, it's a further step, but it is the way that they web is developing and significant opportunities may be lost if we do not move this way soon.

Web convergence is putting significant pressure on Directgov to meet departmental needs, but there is a balance to be had, between each individual department's needs, which may differ from each other and the overall Directgov proposition. Directgov needs a mandate to deliver its proposition, and where it firmly believes that a change is not in the best interest of delivering an overall citizen focussed proposition it must have the right to not move forward in that area, despite a demand from a department policy area. In delivering this message, the role of Directgov is not challenge the area of policy, but the method of delivery of that policy. For example government may wish to encourage citizens back to work, not to take up benefits. Given Directgov's brand values (see below) its role is to define the best way for the citizen to engage with the job search function whilst providing benefit entitlement information. The simplicity of presentation of that combined offer is the skill that Directgov needs to deliver.

Directgov will not be the complete compendium of every detail that a citizen may need at some point during their lifetime. It is primarily driven by the need to deliver all public services in one place. There will be a number of areas of content or service that may sit more strategically within Businesslink or a departmental corporate site, even though there is some citizen interest. Rather than prescribing each and every situation these will be dealt with as these arise through the web convergence programme and will be highlighted as case studies, and FAQ's available alongside the proposition and strategy document.

4.1 The aim and purpose of Directgov

The Directgov offering must be enhanced by its collective and coherent presentation and be greater than that provided separately by legacy delivery models. For almost all citizen-facing content and transactions, Directgov is to be a destination not a portal to their provision. Directgov will aim to be truly multi-digital channel within the next five years, offering a range of services delivering enhanced and added benefit and utilising the varying devices that are appropriate to its proposition.

In customer terms, that means;

Making it easier to answer questions and get things done

This should be the common goal that everyone lives every time they create a citizen touch point. It's about personal enablement – making it easier to deal with government. Citizens are put at the centre of the brand –giving them convenient access and greater control. **What they need. When they need it.**

Complexity that surrounds government is reduced and the process of dealing with government is simplified. Directgov empowers citizens to discover what is available and relevant to them.

Directgov is the Public sector service's digital brand, helping provide trusted convenient access points to government and public services. We are effectively driving uptake and usage of government digital services by creating a new category brand – 'united government services.' A place where government is joined up and citizen centric.

4.2 Directgov ethos and values

Whenever and however people come into contact with us, they expect us to live by these values that underpin the Directgov brand.

There are four key values that define the attitudes and beliefs of the brand. They must shine through in everything that we say and do in the name of Directgov.

Accessible: always a simple, consistent and integrated approach to make citizens lives easy and hassle free.

Enlightening: informing people of the range of opportunities open to them and providing positive experiences for the user.

Progressive: a first for government. Committed to employing the latest technology to enable the user to interact and access services in a completely new way.

Trustworthy: trusted for information and services. Trusted for web security.

4.2.1 Brand Principles

Without the brand's clear direction and the visual glue it provides, transforming the way that government communicates and interacts with the people that it serves will be impossible.

For Directgov to achieve what it has set out to do it needs to live by the following brand principles, as well as support the four brand values. This applies to any government department providing customer information, self-service transaction or campaign e-support via the Directgov service on web, tv or mobile.

1. Make things easier for the citizen – their needs should always be put first. So, everything it does should work for the customer and pass the common sense test
2. Simplicity. It should always reduce the levels of complexity. Promoting functional solutions that always aim to reduce barriers, not create them
3. Public services all in one place. Content/transactions should be surfaced within Directgov rather than act as a directional portal – living the strap line
4. Reflects the concept of joined up government. Every government department treated equally, regardless of size and spend
5. Task orientated. It should inform quickly rather than entertain. It informs rather than engages (the content of Government services is functional not entertaining). People on the site are task orientated and want to get in and out quickly
6. It is a monolithic brand which has no sub brands (this would just add to complexity)
7. It is a common language and style that can talk to everyone.
8. The Directgov brand wheel and values should be the brief for the identity, tone of voice, editorial and product development. This means having democratic and consistent content and guidelines for site design and navigation
9. Departments need to consider the holistic and long term view of customers against one-off communications. See the bigger picture of customer needs across services and lifespan
10. Communications and product strategy should support the positioning statement of comprehensiveness – researched as the most motivating proposition for customers
11. Every attempt is made to ensure the information or services on Directgov are accurate and up-to-date

See '*The Customer Case for Directgov and the Brand – The Principles we stand for*' for examples on this.

4.2.2 Instilling the values and principles

Directgov is a new way of working – it is attempting to do something that has never been attempted in the UK. It is the vision for future government, putting the customer first. Above all, Directgov is 100% different to other government brands because it takes a holistic and long term view of customer needs – recognising that a person needs information and services from government across a whole range of circumstances, and at different times in their lives.

Directgov recognises that whilst someone may have an immediate need to renew their car tax today, they and their family will also need to know about and have easy access to other government services in the future.

We will continue brand inductions to all new starters, including Board members, consultants and technical staff – to help to instil a sense of the brand right from the beginning of working in Directgov. We will also work with HR to get the brand values included in Individual Performance Reports. But to engage hearts and minds, we need to focus on the positive aspects of Directgov – customer benefits; perceived value described in citizen terms and then drive that down into business processes and quality checks.

4.3 How the Directgov brand will evolve

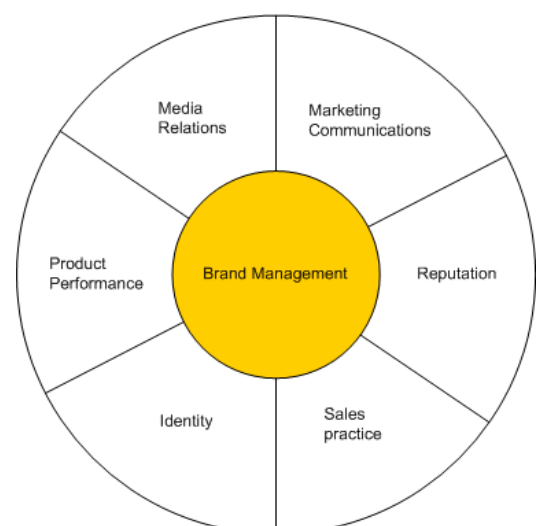
The last four years have been spent building up the brand and its values, promoting these to our audiences and stakeholders, and whilst immediate recognition of the brand is still low, it is growing steadily (currently 33% prompted awareness amongst Internet users). Directgov will continue to work to improve its brand recognition through promotion and delivering its promise by continuing to build an excellent service that meets customer needs and expectations, through whichever channel it is delivered.

4.3.1 Delivering on brand promise

Because a brand is more than just a logo, it is essential that all parts of the business understand the importance of correctly adhering to the brand values and consistently delivering on the brand promise. Consistency is vital to ensure that the customer sees one 'personality' for the brand. This is all the more important in the development stage of Directgov, as more and more people start using the brand. The success of the brand will be largely based on the consistent use by departments across services.

The brand personality will be expressed via a plethora of different customer touch points: in a response to an email query, an article on the web site, a photographic image, in an advertisement, in a SMS, the ease of use of a transaction.

The map to the right shows all the elements within a business that affects consumer perception of the brand:



4.3.2 Consistent visual expression

The visual expression of the Directgov brand needs to be consistent wherever someone comes into contact with the brand. This helps create a sense of recognition, professionalism of service delivery, reassurance and credibility. Done correctly, it can help to build a relationship with the customer.

The visual elements that make up the brand are laid out in the brand guidelines (covering logo, colours, photography, illustration etc) and web design guidelines (applying the generic guidelines to a specific channel). Further work needs to be done to ensure that TV and mobile have clear product design guidelines.

The Directgov orange is one of the core visual elements of the brand. Directgov's brand essence is about making things more accessible, opening things up, and doing things differently in government. Orange, as a warm and positive colour was carefully chosen to reflect this.

There is also an important connection between the brand values and colour. They start to mean something to people (in their minds). This is the combination that helps your audience to distinguish your brand from others with the same colour. For example, Orange is known for technology, friendliness, innovation whilst Directgov is known for being 'helpful, approachable, comprehensive and trusted.' Take the orange away and the brand association would have to rebuilt.

Whilst the original creative both for the website and marketing campaigns express the orange fairly prominently, the new website designs, and refreshed guidelines allow for a more contemporary use of colour – so more colours in photography, illustrations, topic areas, more white space.

4.3.3 The brand proposition

Public services all in one place is a direct response to the customer experience of the lack of transparency surrounding the government offer, not knowing where to go for information, the need to reduce complexity and to help make service provision more convenient for customers.

The brand proposition in the future will continue to be public services all in one place, but accessed by different channels. So, the offer is from Directgov and there are multiple and emerging ways of access Directgov services.

As TV and mobile expand their range of services, we will need to provide simple, flexible brand identity elements that can be used in conjunction with the 'Directgov; Public services all in one place' logotype. For example, the url, a mobile short code equivalent to direct.gov.uk and a shorthand for TV access points:

WEB www.direct.gov.uk **MOBILE** 86238 **TV** SKY VIRGIN

4.3.4 Co-branding

Directgov needs to consider a broader view of public service customer relationships, showing how the Directgov brand can work together with other familiar brands to add clarity and trust about service information provision for all our customers.

This means clear signposting between on and offline service provision and recognizing the fact that customers will step between brands and channels as part of their journey to the

information and services they need. So, the links between them need to be clearly explained.

4.3.4.1 Offline co-branding

The brand team have developed a campaign branded url for use by departmental campaign managers in promoting Directgov as a fulfilment website for their campaigns. This enables us to;

- Promote consistency in how we signpost people towards Directgov
- Support joined up government communications
- Aid user recognition and understanding of Directgov as the call to action online

We will be influencing departmental communication professionals across government to use the campaign branded url on new campaign creative. This is a simple way of leveraging government communications to build recognition for the public sector's digital brand, using relevant context whilst not asking for logo inclusion.

4.3.4.2 Onsite co-branding

Due to Web Convergence and the Government's desire to put all citizen facing content through www.direct.gov.uk, Directgov has developed a co-branding policy to give guidance on the extent to which government brands will feature on Directgov website 'information' pages. This allows government service provider brands to have their logo appear prominently on www.direct.gov.uk on an exception only basis.

The brand equity exception basically ensures we get the right balance between allowing prominent visual presence on content pages for familiar, well recognised and trusted consumer facing public service brands whilst not becoming a magnet for all the logos, brands, campaigns and initiatives in government. The co-branding presence acts as an enabler;

- Adds credibility, reassurance and authority to the content
- Recognises holistic picture between what the user sees online and their experience offline (high street, call centres, literature and forms)
- Goes a step further for the customer – easier access to services
- Enable Directgov to become a major public service interface for government online

A brand equity group with cross-departmental representation of senior brand and communications professionals has been established to ensure a fair review of brand information submitted by departments, against an evaluative framework.

4.3.4 Measuring brand strength

One of the key success measures for Directgov, are the awareness levels of the Directgov service – across Web, TV and Mobile. Indeed, the ultimate aim of Directgov is for someone thinking 'I want to find out about a particular public service, what I am eligible for, or for general information, or to undertake a specific transaction' also spontaneously associates this with Directgov 'oh, and I could go to Directgov for that.'

Prompted knowledge is also important to ensure that people have a correct understanding of the proposition from seeing communications.

Trust in Directgov to deliver against what we promise/our offer will also become increasingly important for Directgov and indirectly government's reputation. As more transactions and

content are presented on Directgov, our ability to deliver the right content, in the right way, in line with our values and principles will be critical in determining how much people will value, and therefore trust us.

5 Directgov's target audiences

Directgov is for all citizens – different channels have the potential to reach different audience segments, but the overall proposition will not be skewed to target hard-to-reach groups. It will utilise a multi-channel approach to harness as much of the audience as it can, including utilising mobile for younger audiences, and digital TV for older audiences. Both of these channels may offer a route to non-PC based audiences in more disadvantaged groups. Directgov will also investigate ways in which it can support projects such as Myguide and UK Online Centres which aim to target socially and digitally excluded audiences.

An opportunity exists (as outlined in 10.1.2. below) to group content relevant to a large number of niche audiences and far more audience groups than we do now. So there could be a Directgov entry point for war veterans, homebuyers, service families etc which highlights content for those audiences. A small number of specific audience groups are addressed below, as these have been raised with particular issues, this list may be added to or amended over time, as more groups emerge

5.1 International/non-UK citizens

If Directgov's audience is to be "all users of UK public services, regardless of citizenship or location" then our proposition should extend to include foreign users of (or those with an interest in) UK government services. This includes visa applicants, students, and prospective migrants however there may be a line to be drawn between Directgov explaining how to get a student or visitor visa and us encouraging overseas students to study in Britain or people to come as tourists. Directgov's role is not to promote Britain as a destination to any overseas non-citizen audience. This extends the boundaries of Directgov and consequently the associated infrastructure, insight, marketing etc. functions.

We will need to take a pragmatic approach to the extent to which these audiences are addressed, which may require a new franchise for these audience needs. This will be addressed as part of the work on information architecture.

5.1.1 Language use within the site

The reach into the international audience area presents the issue of what languages are used on the site. Whilst a UK government site should expect its users to use the national language, for those wishing to become UK citizens, and for many living within the UK, English or Welsh is not spoken and so all content is inaccessible. Having said this, the proposition does not extend to providing content in different languages as a default.

There will probably be *tactical* versions for using other languages on Directgov. A recent example being the use of landing pages in Slovak, Lithuanian and Polish to support a minority language campaign.

To introduce new languages does not necessarily mean translating large sections of content, as for Welsh. Translation is expensive given the range of languages that Directgov would have to address. We should look to work with suppliers of this information and services such

as local authorities who have large communities of speakers of minority languages and third sector services such as CAB. Approaches to take may be:

- A page for a language, pointing users to a starting point for finding more information in their language, outside of Directgov
- Specific content areas being translated, into a small subset of languages, such as information on visas, or the citizenship test

5.2 Intermediaries

In addressing the issue of intermediaries, Directgov's overall proposition remains unchanged: it is focused on citizens (though this interaction can of course be supported or facilitated by intermediaries). Directgov defines an intermediary as a **citizen, business or other agent** who acts **on behalf of, or in support of**, another **citizen, business or other party** in their interaction with a **public service provider**. Intermediaries also provide a **channel for two-way communication** between public service providers and their customers.

To narrow the definition, this paper proposes that Directgov is only concerned with those intermediaries who have citizens as customers and where these citizens cannot readily be regarded as belonging to a particular professional audience. Thus we look to Business Link to provide services both to businesses and those who intermediate on their behalf; and to other channels to focus on professional audiences and those who represent them.

5.2.1 A general approach to intermediaries

The level and nature of intermediary interest in particular public services varies considerably by service. Directgov's strategy has therefore set out that there will be no 'across-the-board' provision for the use of services by intermediaries as would have been accomplished, in the e-channels say, by having consistent positioning within all services of a user interface along the lines of: "Carrying out this service on behalf of someone?"

Therefore within each service it is incumbent on the government service provider to determine how far they wish to tailor the presentation of that service to address the needs of a citizen intermediary audience.

An important general point applies regardless of the type of intermediary: carrying out a service on behalf of someone presents additional complexity (e.g. not only identity verification of the intermediary, but also verification of the intermediary's right to act on behalf of someone else). This complexity means that although an intermediated version of a service may be within Directgov's proposition, it doesn't necessarily follow that fulfilment of that intermediated service will be immediately available through an e-channel, for example.

Illustrative example: An "application for a licence" service asks "are you applying for yourself, or on behalf of someone else?" If the former, the service is delivered through the e-channel. If the latter, then the nature of the licence application service may dictate that the user is signposted to a telephone, postal or other channel to continue. Over time these aspects of intermediation can be converged within the Directgov proposition, as they are themselves citizen-facing public services.

5.2.2 Citizen intermediaries

Power of attorney holders	[representing other citizens]
Parents	[on behalf of children]

Relatives/friends	[on behalf of relatives/friends]
Carers	[on behalf of those they care for]
Advocates	[representing the interests of others]

Directgov's proposition addresses all citizen needs for information and services, therefore all citizen intermediaries fall within the Directgov audience scope, subject to the proviso above that services will determine for themselves to what extent they need to tailor user journeys to reflect the option of intermediation.

Illustrative example: An application for grant funding for a learner is regularly carried out both by learners themselves and by parents on their behalf. If the service provider determines this latter requirement to be significant, they can modify the user interface for the service to reflect the option of "applying on behalf of someone..."

Illustrative example: The process of applying to be a magistrate is based on application in person. Therefore user journeys are not designed with an option "if you are interested in finding out about/applying for this service on behalf of someone..."

5.2.3 Private sector intermediaries

Solicitors	[dealing on behalf of their clients]
Financial advisors	[ditto]
Accountants	[ditto]
Consumer representatives	[representing the interests of consumers]
Landlords	[in relation to local authority council tax matters]
Retailers	[as a channel for citizen payment for services]
Post Office	[as a channel for public service delivery]
Other e-channels (e.g. MSN)	[as a channel for content or transactions]

A number of citizen-facing services are delivered through private sector intermediary channels. It would be entirely conceivable for the advice and guidance in support of these intermediated services to be presented alongside the related advice and guidance to the citizen dealing directly with government.

But where would this leave the provision of service from the perspective of the private sector intermediary? Would it be confusing if part of the body of information required by accountants (say, in relation to income tax) was presented in a citizen channel and part (say, corporation tax) within a business channel? The intermediary would perceive a 'split' in their relationship with government.

The strategy proposes that it is more desirable to group all such intermediary support as "services to business" and to provide it through the business channel. Therefore the default position is for private sector intermediary needs to be served by Business Link. However, this position need not be explicit on Directgov. To avoid confusion, Directgov will not make reference to private sector intermediaries (or their needs), with a tacit understanding that these will be served by Business Link.

One type of private sector intermediary that does have direct relevance to Directgov's proposition is the e-channel. This refers to channels other than Directgov than can play an intermediating role in the sense that they indirectly convey informational content to a citizen audience. Examples include popular information and service portals and social networking utilities.

5.2.4 Public sector intermediaries

Front-line departmental staff	[all channels, delivering services to citizens]
“One Stop Shop” staff	[on behalf of face-to-face customers]
Professionals (e.g. health)	[to all citizens]
Local authority staff (and their delivery partners E.g. housing associations)	[ditto]
Courts	[ditto]
Elected representatives	[on behalf of, and in support to, their electorate]

The needs of these intermediaries are the needs of government’s back office, and as such fall outside the citizen-focused proposition of Directgov. Although they may use Directgov to provide a “citizen view” of their services, their specific needs will be served by their own, departmental systems. Directgov will not therefore make separate provision addressing public sector staff that may be using Directgov to support citizens in their use of informational content or services.

Directgov also provides value to these intermediaries in giving citizens a view across government in an easily assimilated form. It is often easier to find things using a search engine such as Google than to go direct to a site or carry out an intranet search.

The case of ‘facilitated e-channels’ needs to be considered. This involves staff (either public sector, public sector-contracted, or private sector with a commercial incentive) working alongside e-channels to support, deliver to, or promote services to, citizens. This represents a change in Directgov’s channel structure, and as such currently lies outside the scope of the Directgov proposition. To introduce such channels would require a revisiting of Directgov’s overall purpose, and establishment of a properly structured programme to establish feasibility, define scope, and bring into being such services, most probably as part of any work on Directgov’s role in the face to face channels.

5.2.5 Third sector intermediaries

Generalist organisations (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau)	
Specialist organisations (e.g. Shelter, MIND)	
Trade unions	
Consumer representatives	[representing the interests of consumers]

In general, third sector intermediary needs are treated in the same way as public sector intermediary needs: they are to be by the intermediary rather than Directgov explicitly. However, Directgov will consider special partnering relationships in the case of a few generalist intermediaries, notably CAB, where channels may work collaboratively to complement propositions and to make the best use (e.g. through syndication) of content that can be equally and readily surfaced in a number of channels.

5.3 Devolved administrations strategy

There are complex issues of audience, scope, relevance in relation to the Devolved Administrations. Additionally, there is potential to damage the Directgov brand through gaps or inappropriate presentation of content. We cannot say that Directgov offers a truly UK government experience when it clearly does not address these differences.

Solutions will continue to be developed on an administration by administration basis, in whatever guise this takes consistent branding will continue to apply. We have been discussing with DAs the best way to surface content related to those services which are the responsibility of the DAs. At a minimum, this should include deep linking to one another’s

articles where differences do apply, although a lack of perfect 1-1 matches will continue to make this less than ideal. Other potential solutions are:

- Investigate developing a module or a search filter to allow people to find content directly relevant to them
- Syndicate the national content to the devolved administration, taking the relevant national content and allowing them to add the local and applicable content directly.
- Include Devolved administration within the wider scope Directgov searches, if it is appropriately tagged, allowing that content to be found alongside national content

These options give a devolved administration citizen a more complete view of the relevant information.

It has not been possible to take any work with the DA's forward as quickly as we would have liked due to resource constraints in the DAs. We are, however, running a pilot with NI Direct (Northern Ireland) on employee content and discussing registration and enrolment using the Government Gateway with them and hope to be able to take forward a full cross-linking programme of work towards the end of 2008 when NI Direct launches.

5.4 Communities

Communities are about more than just volunteering – and are delivered by many organisations other than local authority sites (and frequently combine public/private and other sector services). Directgov does not have a specific proposition to address communities directly, but will apply other more general tests such as “what is the public service available here and how that is being described” to determine their inclusion. If the ‘digital community’ offer is clear enough it will stand in its own right as a public service of government; if it doesn't, then it doesn't belong in Directgov.

5.5 Young people

In developing a proposition for young people, Directgov needs to be mindful of other work taking place in this area, but also to understand how the audience itself consumes information. In 2007/8 both the Young People's franchise and the COI are carrying out research work into the audience, and what is appropriate. Directgov will use this research to enable it to determine whether a full Young Peoples offering is appropriate, or whether the greater flexibility within the site refresh in 2008 will allow a significant enough distinction to work for young people.

Meantime, the use of other channels should be actively explored, the Ofcom report into media literacy among children in 2006 showed that two-thirds of 8-15 year olds own a mobile phone, with a sharp increase in ownership at 10 (40%) and 11 (78%). Whilst they mainly use their phone for texting, they will share material with friends. In such a case, there should be consideration of the types of application suitable for mobile delivery which could be targeted at this group via this channel. Additionally, the use of other mobile devices such as gaming consoles should be investigated.

5.6 Third sector

Options for engaging with the Third sector are covered in section 5.2.5 above. A starting point for the third sector will be to engage with those third sector organisations that we list in our useful contacts sections.

5.7 Common audiences with Businesslink and NHS

6 Engagement with our audiences

As Directgov grows it will need to move from a static content rich site with services integrated in an ad hoc and fairly individual manner to a more highly integrated, dynamic customer focussed offering. At the heart of this change will be how Directgov can interact with its audiences, and the consistency with which it does so.

Within a couple of years so called digital natives (users who have grown up with the internet as part of their lives) will become adult citizens, entering the workforce, voting, contributing to society as a whole, etc. Their expectations of a good user experience will differ from those of us who can remember the days before there was a computer inside everything and will drive the way in which Directgov has to engage with an ever increasing diversity of skills and expectations from its audience.

There are some fundamental changes to the overall proposition in this area, driven by the audience expectations which will have significant impact on Directgov and how it integrates the services it delivers, these are driven by the requirements to “personalise” the way in which a user experiences Directgov, either through tailoring to their specific needs, or specific location. But balanced against that will be the need to continue to meet the needs of all of our audience, regardless of their web skills and to try and encompass the digitally excluded.

6.1 Personalising the Directgov experience

The Directgov proposition must always offer access to the core informational content without barriers – content must be available without having to register or login to the site and without divulging any personal information, other than the storage of a basic cookie/JavaScript tracking for Speedtrap that is running now.

This is the core non-personalised site, much akin to that of the site as it stands now, users will be able to view content, and carry out limited interactive tasks. As much of the more complex interactivity will require some knowledge of an individual’s circumstance, it is at this point where the service will become personalised in some way.

The fundamental driver for offering any form of tailored experience of Directgov should be the same as the core overall Directgov proposition “choice and simplicity”.

Personalisation can take many forms and care must be taken in assuming what type of personalisation Directgov will offer. No significant changes in the levels of personalisation will be added without having a strong case for offering those services driven out of detailed customer insight work. The driving force behind what Directgov can do will be determined by the approach taken to the collection and ownership and sharing of personal information, to fully personalise services Directgov would need to have a much larger stake in the ownership of individual data than it has currently. Some of this work on identity assurance will take place under Directgov’s involvement in the Tell Us Once programme.

The Directgov Technical Strategy 2008 – 2011 covers the technical aspects of this part of the proposition in significant detail, as much of this offering will be dependent upon the technology chosen and the implementation timeframe, alongside the ability to integrate specific transactions from within the web convergence programme.

6.2 Personalisation

Personalisation offers the potential to make a fundamental change in user experience and to transform and enhance the nature of services which can be provided to the individual. A personalised relationship can be used in a number of ways, including:

- delivery of specific interactive services (as determined by departments)
- return of more relevant and tailored content based on interaction with metadata
- building a profile/history for subsequent refinement of services around the individual

The need for implementing this within the proposition is being driven by:

- A growing public expectation of tailored services offering relevant experience to their immediate needs
- Increasing familiarity and comfort with the use of online identities
- The need to deliver more transactions of varying levels of authentication and complexity
- The opportunity to add greater value to user journeys (including driving cross-sell)
- Ability to use both 'active' and 'passive' user interaction to create personalised attributes
- Convergence of inherently personalised services, e.g. MyDWP and Tell Us Once

6.2.1 Recognising an individual (authentication)

Directgov will support Government departments that need to provide online access to services that maintain records about individual's personal circumstances. To make these services available online, these departments will need to verify authority to transact by checking claims to an identity and role. Directgov strategy is to encourage all departments to adopt the Government Gateway services as a standardised approach, while contributing fully to improving these services through the Government Gateway Product Steering Group. Our aim is to create a known and familiar approach for something that may be seen as a necessary inconvenience. To achieve this Directgov has worked with Cabinet Office's EDT to create an interface to Government Gateway services. The interface provides a standard way to:

- register a Government Gateway identity,
- choose the type of credential (e.g. password or certificate),
- link (or 'enrol') department specific identities (e.g. self-assessment taxpayer), by providing credentials required by the department and going through an activation process),
- review and manage linked ('enrolled') identities and
- sign on to a trusted session, and if required use that sign-on to access different services with different service providers.

As part of its proposition to provide trusted and convenient services, Directgov plans to further explore options that will offer citizens wider choice and the ability to use identifiers and credentials that they use in other contexts. Directgov will work with Service Transformation projects and cross-government partners, including Tell Us Once, EDT, CSIA, IPS, businesslink.gov and CDT. In particular Directgov wishes to offer 'level 2' identity claim authentication checks. Level 2 is needed to allow access to a range of services where the fraud risk is currently too high to permit it being made available online. An example is an enquiry about benefit awards.

Directgov is also looking at ways to let people store and control personal information. If citizens choose to store personal information online, it will need to be well protected. Furthermore, citizens may not only wish to hold their own information, but also to manage information about other people that they represent, for example if they are a 'carer'. Such information would then be used to inform departments and agencies about changes to circumstances, meeting the needs of 'Tell Us Once'.

In Tell Us Once, citizens will not only need to provide their identity, but also assure departments that the circumstance information they provide is trustworthy. This requirement for assurance may involve a trusted intermediary function. Again, working with Service Transformation partners, Directgov is reviewing ways to offer citizens a choice of personal information service provider.

The information a person may choose to hold could include:

- Roles with authority to act in relation to self or others (probate, representative, informer)
- Relationships that carry authority (parent, guardian)
- Circumstances and status (qualifications, earnings, benefit awards)
- Active cases where circumstances are being changed and the implications addressed.
- Personal information for contact (name, address, telephone, email)
- Financial transactions (future liabilities and entitlements, past payments in and out)
- Messages and forms
- Communication channel preferences for personalisation
- Credentials and credential service providers (as discussed above)
- Linked departmental identifiers (as discussed above)

In the 2009 – 2011 timeframe Directgov will provide a unified user interface to allow citizens who wish to manage their own affairs to maintain this type of information as a 'citizen account'.

A 'citizen account' need not be a single record held with a single provider. Circumstance information could be held separately from personal data to allow anonymous interaction. An anonymous identity gives convenience because it requires simple, low level of authentication.

Directgov will adopt emerging open standards to implement these aspects of our proposition.

6.2.2 Tailoring content and services

A key part of offering tailored services will be the use of email, SMS, MMS and other more personalised technologies in delivering these services, as opposed to creating personal Directgov pages.

There are two ways in which Directgov can tailor its offering to the individual, using metadata, the most likely method in the short term or personal profile data gathered by tracking tools and analysing personal data.

Metadata driven model

By creating a Directgov taxonomy (a way of categorising all content and services offered on Directgov by multiple topics, audiences and other keywords) we can use the underlying technology to organise and group content in a way that is relevant to the individual at the point at which they access the content. For example, by tagging any content from any section with the word "homeowners" we could deliver a complete offering for that market segment which cuts across franchises, without having to create a franchise team to deliver it.

There would be many routes into a metadata-driven aggregator page, for example, the page shown below could be accessed from a See Also...link on the page about stamp duty.

The screenshot shows the Directgov website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Site A-Z, Accessibility, Cymraeg, Help, and Mobile. A search bar is prominently displayed with the text 'Search Directgov' and 'Enter search words here'. Below the search bar, there are several category links: Education and learning, Home and community, Money, tax and benefits, Travel and transport, Crime, justice and the law, Motoring, Employment, Health and well-being, Environment and greener living, and Rights and responsibilities. The date 'Monday, 3 September 2007' is shown on the right.

The main content area is titled 'Everything on Directgov for homeowners'. It features several service tiles:

- Calculate your Carbon Footprint:** Includes an 'ACT ON CO2' icon and text: 'Use our online carbon calculator to measure your carbon footprint'.
- Home Information Packs:** Includes an image of a house and text: 'Now compulsory for houses with 4 or more bedrooms. Find out more'.
- Energy ratings:** Includes an energy efficiency icon and text: 'Find out what the energy ratings on electrical products mean'.
- Recycling:** Includes a recycling icon and text: 'Useful tips on recycling around the home'.

To the right of these tiles is a 'Top links in this section:' list:

- Buying, selling and renting a home
- Home ownership schemes
- Planning permission
- Street cleaning, litter and illegal dumping
- Parking and road safety
- Council Tax
- Animal welfare and advice
- Getting rid of mice and rats

Below the top links is a section 'Show all content in this section, arranged:' with options for 'By content type', 'By topic', and 'By title'. This is followed by categorized lists:

- Home and community:** New support for homeowners to get green grants, Home ownership schemes, Property value and valuations, Planning permission, Doing repair work yourself, Letting your home.
- Money, tax and benefits:** Mortgages, Tax on buying property - Stamp Duty, Tax on selling property - Capital Gains Tax, Tax relief when selling your home.
- Environment and Greener living:** How to have a greener home, Saving energy in your home, Saving water in your home, Greener DIY.

The right sidebar contains:

- Other sections:** Parents, Disabled people, Over 50s, Britons living abroad, Caring for someone, Young People.
- Do it online:** Pay the London congestion charge, Find information on traffic and road congestion across the UK, Check UK weather.
- Useful contacts:** Department for Transport (DfT), Transport for London (TfL).
- What do you think?:** A survey question 'Is the new site easier to use?' with 'Yes', 'No', and 'submit >>' options.

The footer contains links for 'Directgov 2007', 'About us', 'Linking to Directgov', 'Terms and Conditions', and 'Your Privacy'.

(Please ignore any colour trailing or models; this is purely a mock up)

We can use metadata to display related content and services, driving up opportunities for cross-sell and channel shift. Business rules can be built up from customer insight and policy drivers.

User data driven model

The user data driven model is more complex and more controversial, it would require Directgov to be able to aggregate personal data collected via the Government Gateway and other tracking mechanisms (such as metrics packages and other databases of customer data, for example local authority information) and then to use that data to deliver content and services that are directly related to an individuals personal circumstances.

Our approach to the user data driven model will be based on the understanding that users will readily give up personal data if they believe there is a personal benefit for them, note the number of people who allow local government in London to track their travel movements for the convenience of an Oyster card. The divulgence of personal information to Directgov should be on a needs basis – the more information given, the better and more relevant the service should be for the individual. In starting to consider how we use personalisation in aggregating services every detail we have must be valuable and used in the service we offer. Why would someone give an NHS number when taxing a car?

An example of user driven personalisation would be that when a user logs on to complete their SA tax return they are informed that they have less than 6 months to run on their passport, their tax disc is due for replacement in October and they currently receive working families' tax credit and a disability living allowance. The system may also assume based on knowledge of the disability living allowance, and the fact they own a car, that they might wish to apply for a blue badge parking permit, and using their location take them to the appropriate local council. It could also remind them their library books are due, there are roadworks due to start in the next street in 3 weeks, and there is a consultation on a new motorway link road being built four miles away.

The most significant issue with offering services personalised in such an individual manner is the public perception of government knowing a significant amount about an individual. The take up of these services may be low if it is perceived that the risk of an individual's status could be adversely affected and this outweighs the benefits gained from having a single username and password. Any work in this area will also be impacted by programmes such as Tell Us Once and work on ID cards.

This propositional element is being considered as part of engagement with Government gateway, and Tell Us Once, however it will not become a deliverable for at least 2 years, unless there are significant consumer pressures to deliver this.

6.3 Localisation

The ability to offer an individual services tailored to their specific location at a given time offers the ability to increase the dynamic nature of Directgov without the inherent political issues of personalisation. This opportunity is further enhanced by significant shifts in the mobile technology area:

- the growing use of the web on mobile platforms
- the predicted shift in web usage to mobile devices over the next 5 years
- ever decreasing surfing charges on mobiles specifically when using mobiles abroad
- the convergence of mobile platforms including gaming consoles, phones, MP3 players, PDA's and laptops
- The increased availability of WiFi and mobile broadband (current predictions are that mobile broadband will dominate the connectivity market within four years¹).

6.3.1 Localisation opportunities

Implementation of mobile handset location technology will enable smarter delivery of localised services, delivering information based on the users' specific physical location (for example flooding information/updates) as well as enhancing the current find my local on mobile (local NHS services - doctors, dentists, opticians, pharmacies, hospitals, A & E departments and walk in medical centres; legal advice via Community Legal Service Direct, local authorities, UK online centres and Quality Coast Award winning beaches from ENCAMS)

Development of services via mobile for those people abroad as improvements in service provision across international boundaries made (mainly in roaming charges)– i.e. short code for accessing information on a lost passport, consular issues, legal rights and health.

Utilising multiple delivery channel and integration

- book an appointment via a service on the web, TV or mobile, get the directions emailed or sent to a mobile phone

¹ Informa Telecoms and Media, August 2007

- Setting up a service via the web to utilise on a phone – traffic alerts, before you go abroad, journey planner, travel alerts on UK public transport to/from the airport before you return etc.
- Exploitation of personal profile information to tailor services based on a range of location attributes (from home location, to area of interest, to roaming position).

6.3.2 Semantic web technology

The semantic web is often described as web 3.0, takes the web to another level, where by augmenting Web pages with data targeted at computers and by adding documents solely for computers allows us to integrate data with content to deliver a far richer experience. The following section from Tim Berners-Lee's paper² on the semantic web outlines the theory.

"The Semantic Web will bring structure to the meaningful content of Web pages, creating an environment where software agents roaming from page to page can readily carry out sophisticated tasks for users. Such an agent coming to a medical clinic's Web page will know not just that the page has keywords such as "treatment, medicine, physical, therapy" (as might be encoded today) but also that Dr. Hartman *works* at this *clinic* on *Mondays, Wednesdays* and *Fridays* and that the script takes a *date range* in *yyyy-mm-dd* format and returns *appointment times*. And it will "know" all this without needing artificial intelligence on the scale of 2001's Hal or Star Wars's C-3PO. Instead these semantics were encoded into the Web page when the clinic's office manager (who never took Comp Sci 101) massaged it into shape using off-the-shelf software for writing Semantic Web pages along with resources listed on the Physical Therapy Association's site "

Much of the rich data in government is published and available for re-use by others, but it is often trapped by poor data structures, legacy data formats and fragmented databases. Semantic web technology can offer us the ability to integrate an share these distributed data sources. A pilot project with the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI)³ involving several parts of government and the public sector and aimed to show government how it can adopt this technology for the dissemination, sharing and use of its data.

Much of this work is relevant to Directgov in the aggregation of services and data from varying departments to produce enhanced service offerings for the citizen and should be investigated further.

6.3.3 Mapping and spatial data

Directgov has the strategic ambition of providing a coherent 'map-based' information interface for public services. This is likely to be deliverable only as a result of a changed technical strategy for spatial data: rather than the surfacing of mapping services hosted elsewhere, Directgov will move towards the presentation of spatial data through its own mapping capability within web and mobile channels.

6.3.4 Surfacing of web services with an inherent local dimension (e.g. local events, local travel reports).

Directgov's proposition will **not** extend to services which are already provided by others (e.g. Local Authorities) unless this can be done easily, with very low or no cost, and without confusing users.

² <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=00048144-10D2-1C70-84A9809EC588EF21>

³ <http://eprints.ecs.soton.ac.uk/14429/1/iswc07-c.pdf>

6.3.5 Local authority enhancements

Directgov will take over responsibility for the Local Directgov locator application in 2008, which can be used as part of a wider localisation programme we will coordinate with CLG. Further enhancements will be investigated alongside the Local Directgov programme including:

- Extension of Local Directgov deep-linking approach to provide additional datasets (pilots currently being explored by CLG, together with mapped presentation).
- Local Authority data sets – health profiles, performance tables,
- Licensing of LA datasets? Aggregation and syndication – powered by Directgov?
- Local to the user on the web – widgets in other apps, RSS feeds, petitions in Facebook, etc,

Examples of development might be a widget which tells a user what's happening in their area – flood alerts, with links to EA, consultation on a new asylum centre up the road, major planning application for housing estate, announcing a by-election for a new MP, etc. This would be delivered to an individual as an RSS feed or a widget they could embed in their email, or in a feedburner, or iGoogle, etc.

7 Integration of services and transactions

7.1 Transactions

Selecting the right option for the integration of a transaction into a customer-facing channel involves a number of choices. These choices can be combined to create a very large number of potential solution permutations. However, in order to plan pragmatically for the integration of services it is desirable to have a clearly-specified, small number of solutions available. A draft proposition is being developed in the paper *Solutions Description 0.4* which first sets out the areas of choice, with commentary on their characteristics, and then proposes a smaller number of likely combined options which will be promoted to service owners integrating their transactions into businesslink.gov.uk and Directgov.

It is important to understand that degrees of independence exist between the choices that are made: for instance a decision to surface a transaction as a portlet does not necessarily say anything by itself about the extent to which the transaction's design follows common standards of design and usability: this decision also needs to be stated explicitly.

The choices that can be made fall into five main areas: Hosting, Style and appearance of transaction, Style and appearance of 'wrapping', Who applies the 'wrapping?', and Technical method of integration.

7.2 Secure Messaging

It is unlikely that government will have a need for secure messaging with a citizen outside of the provision and capability within the individual service that a user is carrying out. As such, Directgov will utilise the Government Gateway capability for secure messaging for any department wishing to use such functionality.

7.3 Online Forms

Departments may want to interact with citizens using e-forms. E-forms encapsulate business logic, process logic, presentation logic and data, and offer a convenient and efficient way to interact using a messaging design paradigm. Directgov plans to provide a

consistent approach to handling messages as part of the 'citizen account' and will work with Channel Domain Team e-forms group to propose standards, which will be described in the Transaction Strategy.

8 Integration of new technology and user participation

The phrase Web 2.0 means many things to many people. It is simply that the role of the individual in the provision of content or a service has changed significantly. The user drives how, when and where they want to experience what is on offer, and will use a variety of means to do that. Additionally the users are contributing to and feeding-back on the content.

For many Web 2.0 means blogs, wikis, and forums, these are just a selection of the tools people use to define their interaction with others via digital channels. The user behaviour that is driving the demand for Web 2.0 services can be seen in:

- The maturity of online relationships between users/providers and user/user
- Significant growth in expertise of users and the impact of digital native users as they reach adulthood and demand the same level of interaction as they experience in gaming and social sites across their entire interaction
- User perceptions of the value of a service based on experience of other consumer focussed sites
- Phillis Review of Government Communications recommendations
- The Power of Information: tapping into the value inherent in broader definitions of interaction
- Uptake of and familiarity with Web 2.0 tools and technologies (such as AJAX and JavaScript) on web and mobile.
- Enhancement and availability of web 2.0 technologies on mobile platforms
- Impact of WiFi technologies and the merging of technology platforms (i.e. PC's and TV's, mobile phones and other handheld devices, eventually mobile and desktops)
- An increasing political emphasis on feedback and consultation

Whilst there are many of these Web 2.0 tools in the private sector and some within government sites, many of these may remain in the domain of the corporate website, rather than Directgov. The Directgov proposition will continue to be shaped to include a range of citizen/user interaction features without opening the proposition to delivering fad technology, or becoming embroiled in political commentary as a by-product of the ability to engage.

We will achieve this through the following propositional activities:

8.1 Development of a beta site

Directgov will create its own beta site where we can develop and test new ideas for content aggregation and delivery without impacting the live site, or having to continually build separate prototypes for each element.

The beta site will be managed separately from the existing infrastructure, but will be used as a means of developing new functionality for the live site. Once a service has been established as an enhancement to the current proposition, the functionality will be built within the live site as a robust and scalable offering.

The beta site will have a different name and visual identity to that of the live site, to ensure there is no confusion with the main site. It will not be heavily promoted, but will be accessible to the public, and will be available via a link on the main Directgov site.

Initial developments planned for this beta site approach are:

- Creation of an alternative user focussed IA
- Flexible metadata driven content aggregation
- Development of widgets and tools, such as a Directgov search box
- Trialling of new software/content such as video or polls etc
- Use of JavaScript and AJAX for content delivery

8.2 Being where the citizen is

Create a range of Directgov Do it online bookmark pages on social bookmarking sites, including digg.com, del.icio.us, reddit.com, newsvine.com. These bookmarks will contain links to the most searched for and heavily used services and content areas of the site, presented in order of user based priority.

We can include the ability to add to links to sites such as del.icio.us, although users who have these tools know how to add URL's to their sites, often with the bookmarking mechanism as part of their browser toolbar.

Creation of RSS/ATOM feeds for Directgov content, which users can include in their feedburners, and email systems. RSS feeds will initially be of areas of content that can change or are updated regularly, for example news, and contacts. However, we should also consider RSS/ATOM feeds for content as we develop new content areas.

Look to exploit social media and other networks as opposed to build them directly. For example, any video or imagery used as part of a campaign site should be loaded onto youtube.com, Flickr, etc as part of the overall campaign delivery, linking back to the campaign site itself to drive traffic to the site.

Opportunities are campaigns or particular content messages may lend themselves to delivery as part of MSN Instant Messenger, an example of this in practice is the Frank bot, who is a virtual friend on messenger to talk to about drug related problems, as if they were a real person.



8.3 Changes to code and page delivery techniques

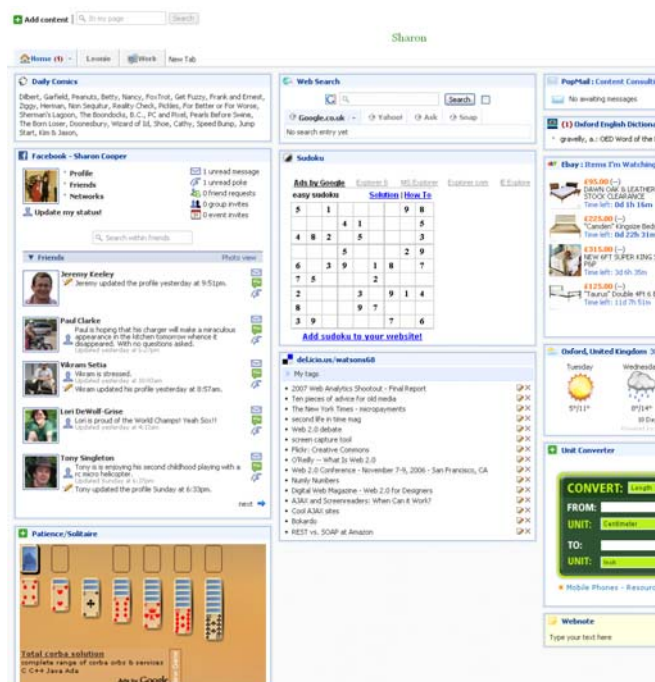
Directgov will look to actively enhance the delivery of its proposition across all channels by utilising newer techniques such as AJAX and JavaScript, which are a fundamental part of most Web 2.0 styled offerings. The use of these types of page coding would allow us to deliver far more content on the home page, whilst reducing the clutter, but there are issues with the levels of accessibility that can be supported whilst using these techniques. Good examples of AJAX and JavaScript in use are the BBC, Times Online and National Rail Enquiries.

In addition, we will investigate the use of RSS and ATOM technologies, SMS, MMS, data mashing for more remote interactions where other sites or users take content and/or tools/widgets and include them within their site. The ability to exploit these types of content delivery will depend entirely on the ability to deliver content in this way and for content owners to feel comfortable about the validity of content once delivered.

8.4 Development of widgets

“Widgets” are pieces of code that others can integrate into their site. Types of widgets that Directgov should actively investigate are:

- RSS feeds which another site or an individual can use to download content into their own RSS reader page (Netvibes, Google, etc). These involve creating an XML feed of all of parts of the site which users then “subscribe to”.
- The creation of mini tools that emulate functionality within the main site and drive traffic to it, or to other parts of government, for example a “give up smoking” savings calculator or a “join a petition” function which could be surfaced in places such as Facebook or an RSS reader or a vehicle enquiry interface which could be embedded in Yahoo Cars or What Car? These could be used as part of campaigns as well as functions in their own right



8.5 Development of user feedback/input mechanisms

The Directgov proposition is not to offer a general “right of conversation” with government/policymakers. Specific departments must address this through their own corporate websites, for example a “chat with a minister, or a forum around a new piece of policy or online consultation. For the short-term the proposition will be relatively reactive in that it will not actively seek to deliver development in terms of citizen led government through these tools.

Appropriate integration of user feedback tools within Directgov will be in relation to the provision of public services. So for example a forum on self assessment tax returns or a one-to-one chat provision related to choosing the right university course.

Directgov already has access to the capability to deliver a range of user feedback mechanisms through the Club infrastructure, but will only integrate these where there is a business benefit to a franchise area, and the cost implications of such a benefit are understood.

Development of these capabilities will be driven by individual departmental needs; we can build generic capability, but will only make this available in the appropriate places when required by a converging sites approved business case for developing such functions. For services that already exist, there may well be financial and time benefits to integrating the existing services, rather than trying to rebuild these on a separate platform.

The following functions can be developed and offered through Directgov where appropriate and with care taken so that an area of the site or page is not overloaded and cluttered with a plethora of interactions:

8.5.1 Polls

Polls related to specific issues raised in content or services within Directgov are part of the proposition, for example a rate this service. Polls give the perception of engagement with a user. The use of polls within the site must be managed to ensure that the number of polls running on the site at any one time does not detract from the overall usability of Directgov and that all polls are managed through an editorial QA process – polls are content in themselves.

8.5.2 Quizzes, calculators, surveys and competitions

Directgov already has the capability to run in site surveys, pop-up surveys and has the technical capability to deliver quizzes and other form of Q and A functions across web, TV and mobile channels. These would be implemented as required by an individual franchise or departmental business case. The content that would be presented through these mechanisms would need to pass through the standard editorial and QA processes, and there would need to be scheduling across the whole of Directgov to ensure that the site was not overwhelmed with this type of function at any one time.

8.5.3 Forums and blogs

Online forums related to specific services provided via Directgov, and are likely to be self-help in nature and must be fully moderated as outlined in 8.5.8 below.

Blogs are very much an individual's perspective on a particular issue or topic, rather than a corporate social engagement, although our USA equivalent has been deploying GovGab (<http://blog.usa.gov/roller/>). Directgov can support blogs for specific content areas or services, for example a blog on how to gather all the information on going to university, however content would be provided via the franchise and the blog must be fully moderated. Developing a more corporate type of blog would require further investigation before committing to develop it.

8.5.4 Online chat

Online chat as a "one-to-many" delivery (e.g. discuss options for student finance with an education expert) can be delivered as an ad-hoc service if directly related to the provision of a service, tool or transaction within Directgov, very much aligned to the blogs and forums above. Online chat within Directgov will not enable a citizen to citizen discussion.

One-to-one online chat as a general capability is expensive and many departments should consider the use of email or telephone support before considering the provision of chat facilities. In terms of the function and help it will offer, it is far more aligned with the provision of call centre functions than as a form of content delivery and should be considered from a Directgov proposition as a part of the customer service/call centre strategy.

8.5.5 Call back functions

There is no immediate known demand for call back functions.

8.5.6 Email alerts

Given much of Directgov's content is not time sensitive, and changes are widely communicated via other means such as the national media, email alerts do not form a major part of the Directgov proposition in the short term, and will not be a part of it until there is clear strategic direction on what customer data Directgov will maintain, what Directgov's approach to registration and single sign on is and where within a transaction Directgov involvement begins and ends. This approach to the proposition may change if Directgov

content were to alter in nature so that the timely delivery of notification of change in content that was critical to a user.

In the short term the ability to receive updates on content could be delivered in an anonymous way via RSS/ATOM feeds. At such time where a customer account concept is fully developed for Directgov, this can be reassessed. Email alerts that are associated with the delivery of a service or transaction fall outside of the current Directgov proposition, as these are part of the service delivery function.

8.5.7 Feedback comment and wikis

The following functions may be offered, but there are considerably more complex resource and technical issues to be considered before setting up:

- Comment feedback on individual articles, for example rate this page or article, or add a comment directly to the page. There are technical complexities to the immediate provision of this type of function as it requires a change to the security permissions within Stellent. If we decide to implement this function then comments/feedback/ratings from users must be visible to other users, not just internally, and this may be unacceptable in terms of the engagement of the public in core informational content and in the resources required to moderate such feedback and input
- Wikis for the management of discussion with an audience in policy generation are a fundamental part of a corporate site. Wiki's as a technology platform can be created for Directgov, however there is significant consideration that needs to be given to the creation of such tools which enable the aggregation of citizen generated content directly with that of a policy team. A wiki, as exists currently, in a public facing site such as Directgov would have content created from within Directgov directly editable by a citizen, unless controls were put in place. Such controls defeat the object of wikis. There would need to be sophisticated levels of management in terms of resource and technology to manage this effectively.

8.5.8 Moderation and response to user input

Any functionality developed with Directgov as outlined above would be moderated by the department or franchise running that topic. If a third party moderation company were engaged to provide the generic support across the whole of Directgov, e.g. removing spam, staff within individual departments would still be required to respond to specific comments or issues raised within each area and for them to respond within a short timeframe, appropriate to the functionality.

In providing functions such as those outlined above, there must be commitment from those utilising the tools to respond to the feedback generated via these mechanisms, a poll which overwhelming rates a service or content as poor and then drives no change in that provision will seek to alienate users from providing feedback or from the content/service itself.

As a proposition, Directgov cannot support these mechanisms when they become out of date or no longer moderated.

9 Existing and new delivery channels

Directgov is already a full multi-channel offering, its website is available at direct.gov.uk, it has a digital TV channel (available on Virgin and Sky), a mobile service that can be accessed from any internet enabled mobile phone on all networks and mobile portal services of four of the main network carriers in the UK, the exception being Orange.

The Directgov proposition can be grown and enhanced in two ways, adding new devices to existing channel types, expanding the type of delivery via a particular channel. There may be opportunities in future to add new channels to the proposition.

What is relatively clear is that for the short – medium term there is little value in trying to build one common content repository for all delivery channels. The channels themselves are still, at present too far apart technically, and until manufacturers, industry standards and best practice bring these closer together, there would be little financial gain, and potentially more work involved in trying to create a one size fits all content store.

What is critical in the short term is that we are clearer and cleverer about signposting the availability of all channels and promoting them. For example, on our contacts pages, a promo box could highlight the “find my nearest” mobile service, which not only finds a range of services based on a location, but also provides the phone number ready to be called. If any service is available across multiple channels we must find a way of highlighting this to users of all services. For example the current job search on the web does not highlight the same service is available via digital TV.

9.1 Technology enhancements to direct.gov.uk

The full technology strategy for Directgov is in the process of being revised, the most recent version is available as a separate document, entitled 070924 - Directgov Technical Strategy 2008 to 2011 V0D3. This document will be completed as the overall business direction is established through the development of this proposition document. It will be supported by enterprise architecture work establishing what Directgov will need to support its business ongoing.

All technical proposals relating to Directgov and Businesslink are reviewed by the CTOC Channels team. The Channels team would review proposals and recommend a way forward. The Directgov and Businesslink Boards would then review all such proposals in the knowledge that these had been ratified by the Channels team. In some cases, for good business reasons, the Boards may choose not to take a different approach to that recommended but this would be taken with full understanding of the implications.

In summary the major changes and developments are likely to be in the following areas:

- Improvements to aXis infrastructure to remove current production bottlenecks and speed up development
- Investigative work on whether there is a business case for a portal implementation for Directgov and as part of that a review of current champion assets within government and the MyDWP portal infrastructure
- Developments to support current and future transactional integration
- Infrastructure to support development of social computing functions if required by the business units
- Multimedia players, including a review of standard players and internal bespoke government built ones
- Review of overall security requirements for Directgov ongoing to support the growth of the proposition and the future reliance on Directgov by wider government
- The integration potential of the web, mobile and TV channels, including a review of current and future devices that will be used to access the channels
- Initiation of requirements for the CMS in future, (aXis contract expires in early 2011) aligned to the work on portal investigation and ongoing alignment with Businesslink
- Development of identity authentication, enhancements to Government Gateway in partnership with EDT

9.2 Enhancements to mobile service

9.2.1 Use of short code technology

SMS campaigns can be integrated into the mobile service providing a destination for SMS short codes. A current example of a mobile short code campaign is shown:

Users text BEACH to 62233. A confirmation message is sent followed by a service message (link) to the relevant pages on the Directgov mobile site, made up of either existing or co-branded content. Users can then search for an award winning beach in a particular area.



9.2.2 Rich media

The lifecycle of the average mobile device is around two years with most users upgrading their handset after this period. Within the next couple of years, all new handsets are likely to feature 3g/HSDPA (high speed data packet access), built-in GPS (satellite tracking) capability and wireless internet access. Directgov mobile strategy takes account of such developments.

Handset recognition technology will future-proof Directgov's mobile interface, allowing the service to keep pace with different devices and technologies as these come onto the market. It also keeps the service accessible to older handsets whilst optimising the user experience for those with newer devices.

Rich media downloads can be stored on users' handsets offering the potential to exploit the current successful trend in viral marketing

9.2.2.1 Java Downloads

Future content will see the use of Java applications available to download from the service. This will create more interactivity by introducing games and calculators. Examples include the mock theory driving test, an alcohol units calculator and a calculator showing financial savings from quitting smoking. Once downloaded these applications have great viral potential and can be shared between handsets via Bluetooth.

9.2.2.2 Video

Directgov will soon be able to distribute video via its mobile service. Short video clips 30 – 60 seconds in length can be either streamed or downloaded and sent between users using Bluetooth. Content would include 'how to guides' such as information on how to apply for benefits, live budget streaming and campaign videos.

9.2.3 Content on the move

Usability research carried out for Directgov by Cimex Media in March 2007 confirmed that users of the Directgov mobile service are particularly interested in content that is useful when they are out and about, including local searches and emergency information.

Location-based search content is provided, where the user enters a postcode and relevant local services are provided. Postcode finder and automatic handset location detection facilities are in development. The postcode finder will allow the user to enter address information when the postcode is not known and the handset location detection will, when

requested, use a mobile phone network to tell the user where they are. (NB This functionality is not currently supported by 3 or Virgin Mobile.

In order to enhance accessibility all location-based search results give address details, linked telephone contacts and the option to display the results visually on a map.

Users can currently search for:

- 18 local NHS services including doctors, dentists, opticians, pharmacies, hospitals, A & E departments and walk in medical centres;
- legal advice via Community Legal Service Direct
- local authorities
- UK online centres
- Quality Coast Award winning beaches from ENCAMS

In addition to location-based searches, the service includes near time travel alerts and train timetables from Transport Direct. This is key content for users on the move, with 'train' and 'train times' the most common Directgov keywords users search for on Google and Yahoo mobile.

9.2.4 Mobile payment solution

Usage of Directgov mobile is growing month on month and will be exploiting mobile marketing channels like short codes and paid search. As the audience grows, so does the potential for offering cash transactions.

The Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA), which represents global mobile phone operators, has announced a framework for a global standard in mobile phone payments. As fixed-line converges with mobile telephony, this will create the secure infrastructure required for a secure global standard mobile payment system. In addition, as devices include more sophisticated browser technology, security and encryption levels will be at least as robust as PC browsers.

The two areas of most relevance to government are mini payments (£2 to £10) and macro payments (£10+). A more detailed strategy paper on mobile payments is available entitled: *Directgov Mobile Payments Strategy*

9.2.4.1 Mini payments

Prime examples of mini payment transactions are the Highway Code and the various Driving Standard Agency learning to drive books and DVDs. The Highway Code recently launched on the main Directgov website and the increased exposure has led to an increase in sales.

The Highway Code costs £2.50 through the TSO online bookshop, other low costs guides include "Know Your Traffic Signs" at £4.99. The TSO offers a distribution network.

The most appropriate payment method for these transactions would be the "PayForIt" scheme. A PayForIt supplier would integrate the payment system into the Directgov mobile service, linked to the TSO distribution network.

The service could be marketed via a simple short code campaign:

1. User texts "HIGHWAY" (or other keyword) to a short code number
2. User receives a text back with a WAP push message to the appropriate page on Directgov mobile

3. User decides to purchase and clicks on the "Buy now" button
4. Payment is verified
5. Order details sent to distributor and dispatched by mail
6. Payment appears on user's mobile phone bill or deducted from pre-pay credit.

The service can also be marketed via paid search. Potentially Directgov could exploit the Google Checkout service as it already runs a paid search campaign on Google Mobile.

The major audience for the Highway Code is young learner drivers and the mobile service would extend the availability of this product into this hard to reach group. Many mobile internet users do not have primary access to a PC.

Evaluation criteria could include:

- Sales compared with number of users
- Number of WAP push messages delivered
- Click through rate on search campaign

9.2.4.2 Macro Payments

The Directgov website already links to a number of macro transactions, the most obvious being car tax and driving test bookings.

The theory test costs £28.50 and the practical test £48.50 or £58. There is an existing secure payment service that handles these transactions. Payment for car tax online is handled via another secure payment engine.

Adapting these existing payment engines to work on mobile is technically straightforward. Devices with browsers that support the appropriate levels of encryption could complete these transactions without any changes to the system. However, it would be necessary to make some changes to the customer journey to make these transactions suitable for mobile devices and possibly add extra security levels, like a PIN.

A business case for each of these pilots will be developed and presented during 2008.

9.3 Enhancements to the digital TV service

9.3.1 Video on Demand with Virgin Media

Directgov is investigating taking part in a Video on Demand trial broadcasting Local/Educational/Community content. The trial is being considered for Q1 2008/09. Content will be sourced from within government and will be linked to the Directgov TV site.

9.3.2 Red Button Campaign

Directgov should aim to work with all COI and all government departments and franchises to provide a destination for red button campaigns on Sky. Red button triggers can link directly to the Directgov splash page, removing the need to purchase expensive bandwidth from Sky for each TV ad campaign. The splash page will then act as a launch point to the campaign pages within the Directgov TV service.

9.3.3 Miniweb

Directgov is in the early stages of development plans for a service delivered via Miniweb, a 'spin off' of Sky Interactive offering a new and cost-effective way for interactive services to

be distributed on Sky. Miniweb are working with TV broadcast channels, initially shopping channels, to provide direct links from the broadcast channel to Miniweb using 'TV Keys' in much the same way as red button and are also working with Freeview set top box manufacturers and digital TV manufacturers to develop broadband enabled Freeview boxes delivering Miniweb.

9.3.4 Freeview

Directgov is not currently available via the Freeview platform due to lack of bandwidth availability and the prohibitive cost of such bandwidth. It is therefore essential that Directgov has a presence on Freeview in the future. Directgov will continue to work with other public sector TV channels, Teachers TV, NHS Direct and Community Channel, to find a way to gain affordable bandwidth, including ongoing discussions with the BBC, and working up a business case for bidding for Directgov bandwidth post analogue switchover

9.4 New channel development

Directgov is multi-channel; and must have the agility to identify and develop new channels within a coherent overall proposition. As the overall Directgov roadmap develops, all channels will need to be seen as complementary, with broader alignment of services available across them. Additional channels will be developed according to a systematic approach, with coherence of user journeys and quality of proposition. A 'new channel development' strategy is required; setting out how channels will be identified, justified, piloted, structured as development projects in their own right, and aligned with Directgov's overall multi-channel proposition.

Potential channels already identified but not yet developed include:

9.4.1 WiFi, broadband streaming and mobile devices

Whilst not strictly new channels, as part of our overall multi-channel approach we will continue to review developments in different devices and the methods in which they access digital content. Many PCs and mobile handsets now support streaming TV. As well as accessing the internet via GPRS or UMTS (3G), many phone handsets support WiFi and the next generation will support WiMAX. Coupled with these new phones are a host of new wireless-enabled devices coming to the market, including portable gaming consoles, MP3 players and internet tablets.

By 2011, there will be 1 billion broadband subscriptions worldwide, the majority of which will be mobile rather than fixed line systems. Mobile broadband will represent close to half the total mobile service revenues by 2012⁴.

This convergence of devices, and content delivery mechanisms will impact on our current slightly separate strategies for these channels.

9.4.2 IPTV (internet Protocol Television)

IPTV is growing strongly in Europe, and will see significant increases in revenues over the next three years as broadcast and communications suppliers' battle for market share. IPTV includes triple play (voice, data/broadband, and video) or quadruple play (including internet). The competition is for the one delivery channel into the home, and if all TV is on the computer, access to the rest of the internet may open significantly.

⁴ Informa Media & Telecoms, August 2007

The options for IPTV will become clearer over the next 12-18 months as development take place in the media industries. IPTV will eventually overtake our separate mobile, web and TV strategies.

9.4.3 Face to face

The concept of a face to face channel, perhaps the presentation of branded existing channel, will be investigated as part of the work on the Tell Us Once programme; where face to face will be an important part of the development programme. Further enhancements or opportunities for Directgov in face to face delivery are:

9.4.3.1 Supported access via intermediaries

Services delivered via an intermediary, but access via Directgov, for example using a local LearnDirect office, library or a Local Council, where users experience a Directgov service, albeit supported by people within these offices.

9.4.3.2 Myguide (simplified browser interface)

The use of Myguide for Directgov offers the potential to present Directgov to a harder to reach audience. The use of a simplified internet browser as part of a guided introduction to the Internet, delivered via UKOnline centres but presenting Directgov as one of the destinations to go to via that interface. Directgov is a member of the Myguide steering committee and works actively with Myguide in marketing and promotion.

9.4.4 Syndication

New emerging forces in terms of e-channel communities of interest, including peer-to-peer and citizen-generated content and the constant maturity of user population in terms of expectation that services will be taken to them, rather than traditional user journeys needed. Directgov needs to consider both outward and inbound linking, including content, which will offer the benefit of increasing the reach and depth of Directgov's proposition, whilst also raising issues of brand association and coherence.

Ultimately, Directgov content must be surfaced on other sites in such a way that it can give the user the salient fact, or the direct link to what they want to do, and then take them back to Directgov to do that transaction or to find out more information.

Outbound syndication

There is a growing demand for Directgov content, especially by commercial organisations such as AOL, MSN and Yahoo! These organisations require content partners to have syndication capability to ensure that the content can be updated without the need for manual intervention. Syndication capability will allow Directgov to deliver content to a broader audience quickly, efficiently and without editorial risk.

We will look at a greater use of outbound syndication, with:

- Minimal need for manual process in managing and publishing syndicated content. Directgov will need to set overall strategic direction, but the choice of what content is syndicated where will ultimately rest with content owners
- preservation of the integrity of customer journeys
- clear policy on appropriate use of syndication to be agreed by franchise with central team
- Issues of currency and accuracy of content, can only be achieved in volume with the ability to syndicate via XML and with contractual guarantees about the preservation of the structure of the content in its final presentation

In the short term, more use can be made of RSS, ATOM and other technologies for delivering content, i.e. a news feed from Directgov, or a press release source. RSS on new consultations being added to the index, or a page changing which another site has taken content from, rather than building a full syndication system within aXis.

Inbound syndication to be considered as a means of publishing within work on future publishing model.

Mobile syndication

Directgov are working with NHS Choices to put their content on Directgov mobile. Rather than create a new mobile services of their own, NHS Choices have chosen to make their content available on mobile via Directgov under a specific NHS Choices branded section. There are currently 18 local searches, including Dr, Dentist, Pharmacy, Optician and BMI and Quit Smoking calculators. Further calculators and quizzes will be added over the coming months along with video streaming and downloads of health content. A health A-Z is also being explored.

9.4.5 Raw data delivery

As Directgov grows through convergence it naturally becomes the one source where others will come to gain access to content, consumed via Directgov, but also potentially for access to the raw underlying data for others to exploit via mashups, etc.

The strategic value of the information assets delivered within and through Directgov needs to be considered in the light of the study into the market for government information assets recommended by The Power of Information report. It would be possible for Directgov and Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) to work together to deliver a marketplace for these assets and their reuse. A store of government information and how to access it as a citizen would be part of the Directgov proposition, with Directgov the destination for picking up this content and OPSI the regulator.

Directgov could enable this, as a deliverer of mashed up services it could also be the main point of contact and data host, but also the brand that appears on the data supplied – “powered by Directgov”

Using technology such as semantic web technology allows the large scale integration and sharing of distributed data sources, including those in legacy data formats.

9.4.6 Virtual interactive environments

Development of a Directgov presence in any one of a number of existing and emerging virtual environments such as Second Life is not a high priority, although some experimentation should be undertaken. As many of the services delivered by Directgov relate directly to real world experiences, it may not be possible to tax a car in Second Life, unless we attempt to tax the virtual world!

10 Delivering content to the audience

Users looking for something regardless of delivery channel or device fall into two distinct categories, those who search and those who browse. The Directgov proposition must cater for those different user types across all channels (including web, mobile and digital TV).

10.1 Search

Search plays a crucial role in all channels in the initial customer experience, usability and navigation. Search can be 'tuned' to deliver a variety of objectives. The quality of the search experience has a powerful relationship to perception of brand and customer value. This extends beyond the user's experience of site search (are results relevant, do they give a good 'scent of information'?) to how people find Directgov information on web search engines such as Google. Search may get a user to us; they may then rely initially on browsing to find what they are looking for if not immediately visible.

A users' expectation of search is driven by their use of the top sophisticated search engines such as Google, and any search strategy needs to reflect how to meet such expectations of findability directly on the site, and how to interact with search providers to improve our visibility to individuals before they even reach us. A significant proportion of visitors arrive at Directgov from a search engine, they are already in a search frame of mind, they will land deep within the site, rather than at the home page.

Convergence will ultimately lead to a significantly larger site than we have at present. With wider and deeper content to navigate the ability to deliver information architecture to show all content within a defined set of boundaries will be stretched and search will become the main way to deliver access to the full breadth and depth of the Directgov offering.

Search has strong links to the [localisation capability](#), as outlined above especially on mobile channel, where the ability to be able to search for something related to where you are is embedded within the device capability.

A more detailed description of the search proposition can be found in "Directgov: Search proposition and roadmap", however the key areas of search (scopes) that Directgov will offer are:

- Directgov
- Local Directgov and finding tools - recognising when the answer is provided by one of these services and point users towards them (rather than indexing these databases)
- Directgov extended search - a "walled garden" of customer-facing content that is not currently on Directgov itself. This might include partner sites such as Devolved Administrations as well citizen facing agreed exceptions - parts of NHS Choices etc
- All government search (that meets the needs of citizens rather than other specialist stakeholders, likely to be delivered as part of the pan-government search project)

Importantly, the search experience will be enhanced by use of metadata applied to content. So, for example, a user will be able to filter the results by a range of 'facets' that reflect their context and needs (e.g. by topic, audience, content type or country)

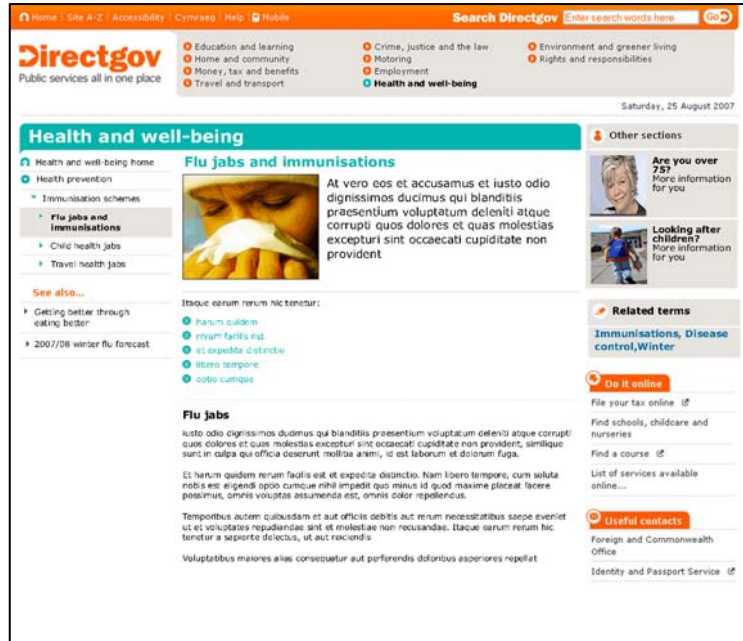
10.1.1 Short term enhancements

Early enhancements of the proposition include extending the current Directgov site search function to:

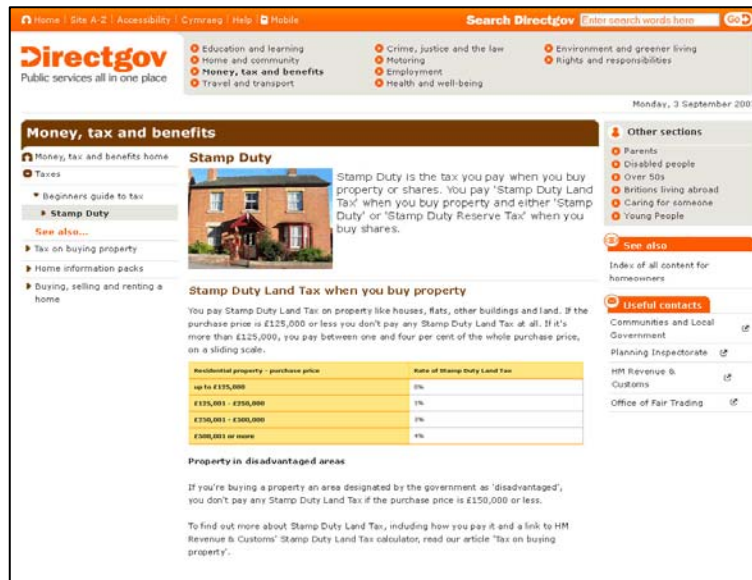
- Searching pre-determined external sites (e.g. off platform campaigns) and displaying them within the Directgov search results
- "Did you mean" check – similar to Google in correcting for misspellings in search terms
- More sophisticated search results page
- Extended (second-line) search option across all government content: "Search government", this is related to the wider pan government search proposition below
- Extended search to be capable of retrieving multimedia content.

10.1.2 Metadata driven search approach

Application of relevant metadata can provide a significant improvement in findability of content within Directgov. In addition to driving the filtering opportunities in search results, metadata can pull together aggregator pages for specific groupings of information for micro-audiences or sub-topics, as the screen shots below demonstrate. These could be automatically compiled but would be reviewed and enhanced by editors before publication.



An embedded search using metadata categorising an audience grouping



An embedded search using metadata categorising a subject based grouping

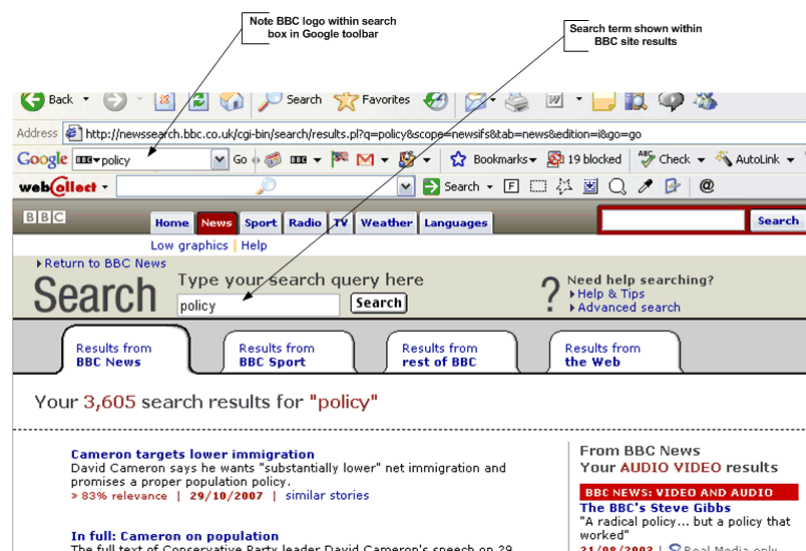
An opportunity arising out of tagging the site for audiences is that we will be able to group together content relevant to a large number of niche audiences. So there could be a Directgov entry point for war veterans, homebuyers, service families etc which highlights content for those audiences (and far more audiences that we address now)

10.1.3 Search engine marketing (SEM)

Directgov/Businesslink/NHS should take the lead in developing search engine marketing across their respective channels. Departments should not have a need for any SEM that route to corporate sites. All citizen facing campaigns should be routed through Directgov processes even if these are off platform. If this route is followed there should not be a conflict between departments and Directgov competing for the same search engine keywords. There's a real opportunity to use SEM not just to drive traffic and promote campaigns but to help orientate users to the 'right' information - i.e. the definitive government answer

10.1.4 Search from other sites

- Directgov toolbar – newer browsers allow a user to define multiple search engines within the browser search box, or via the Google toolbar. This approach improves the user journey, its one less click, but relies on the user knowing the brand to choose to define that search within the toolbar. Directgov could have its own search type, so that users could add this to the toolbar and search Directgov directly from their browser. (example here shows how the BBC search engine works)
- Search boxes embedded in other sites. As part of the overall syndication strategy, Directgov aims to distribute its search functionality (including enhanced results) on other websites including other public sector bodies and commercial organisations.
- Pan government search – Directgov should be a major destination in the search results generated as part of any departmental use of a pan government search on a corporate site.



10.2 Information architecture

A good web information architecture will allow the majority of users to find their way around a site with relative ease. It is a critical element of any browse functionality. Web convergence brings with it two issues, a growth in content, although not the full extent of the pages of pre-existing sites, and a range of topics not currently catered for within the current IA. The proposition must address how this develops to preserve completeness and coherence.

A change in UI, e.g. if the current hierarchical categorisation were replaced/enhanced by elements of search-based interaction, would fundamentally change the user experience and hence the basic Directgov proposition.

The current IA may not ultimately be scalable in the face of convergence – facing increasingly complex challenges of taxonomy and priority as its range of services extends; alternative approaches (perhaps using a component of search-based UI) may be required.

For the short/medium term the IA for mobile and DiTV IA will follow the web based IA, but will be simpler and structured appropriately for the specific devices as required. In most

instances this means that tools and services are surfaced far higher within the IA than on the web.

10.3 News and emergency communication

Directgov has a combination of robust infrastructure, large citizen audience and high levels of trust which gives it a unique position in delivering news about public services, and emergency information.

10.3.1 News

Research and live experience show there is an active citizen demand for news about public services on Directgov. It has three main news activities as part of its proposition.

- Relaying developments in public services, highlighting the changes for those who may not be aware and helping to keep citizens updated on developments affecting them
- Highlighting public services and information which may be particularly topical or particularly relevant for a variety of reasons. Promotion of site content in tune with topical or seasonal events aiding cross sell, keeping the site current, and helping build trust that relevant information will be there when needed
- Reporting activities of government relevant for public services and delivered from the citizen perspective e.g. the launch of a campaign relating to a public service, Budget coverage

Directgov's proposition excludes:

- News of a political nature
- News about departmental, or ministerial activity per se
- General news items which may be interesting, but are not related to public services
- News about what a departmental or government unit has been doing to develop public services

Directgov is not a news channel in the sense of BBC or CNN.

All sections of Directgov's website have the facility to highlight news as above. Individual franchises are expected to use the facility as they decide to ensure maximum citizen benefit from highlighting relevant public service information in a timely and attractive fashion.

Directgov's digital television service will not have a news function, as broadcasting regulations prevent us providing a televised news service.

Directgov's mobile telephony services will investigate a news service appropriate for the channel. This is likely to include specific service updates, alerts, and breaking news where these relate to citizens using public services. It will also deliver campaign material.

10.3.2 Emergency information

Public safety and emergency information will be carried by Directgov across all its channels as appropriate to ensure citizens are given reliable, accurate, timely advice in times of crisis, preventative reassurance and guidance in the run up to potential emergencies, and guidance in the aftermath of emergencies.

Emergencies will vary in their scale, scope and impact. Directgov will carry emergency information on national and international emergencies. In line with increasing localisation, it will carry information where available on public service emergencies affecting individual communities. The degree of promotion and coverage will vary, both in response to Directgov's ability to obtain accurate verifiable information at a local level, and to the numbers of people affected.

Where a major national emergency is involved, Directgov will work with the Civil Contingencies Secretariat to relay reliable and authorised information from the heart of government emergency response teams. Where the emergency is more localised, Directgov will carry emergency information where a reputable official source can be found, and where that information is clearly for the citizen.

Emergency information will involve the immediate information advising people what to do in the event of a crisis. It will also extend into the aftermath of that crisis and general public safety information which will be made permanently available e.g. flooding advice, fire safety. This will then be highlighted where it becomes particularly relevant e.g. general flooding advice will be highlighted when a particular flood risk or emergency arises. This will meet the need to keep citizens informed, build trust, and meet citizen expectation that Directgov is the place to turn to for public service information during and outside of crises.

Directgov will continue to provide a 24 x 7 emergency response mechanism for government. This will be provided primarily by the central team, but emergency information provision will also include franchise teams where specific information may be relevant for their citizen group e.g. school attendance advice for parents in the aftermath of a bomb attack.

10.4 Campaigns

A separate campaigns process and strategy document is available. In addition to this document the following propositional areas will be investigated:

10.4.1 Advertising and promotions (Ad serving)

Many websites today carry third party advertising, and for many commercial sites which sell information, an "advertising pays" model is becoming more prevalent. For example, both Wall Street Journal and the NY Times have announced plans to remove registration and subscription barriers and to move to a freely available advertisement based revenue model. Additionally, one of the largest medical publishers in the world, Elsevier has announced a major cancer website aimed at professionals with a fully advertising pays business model, which given rules on advertising drugs to doctors and patients, is not a simple model to pursue.

Directgov can utilise the same underlying ad serving technologies to enhance its ability to deliver promotions and campaign messages for all government departments, enhancing the campaign offering from Directgov, and potentially allowing us to carry creative developed for use as part of wider campaigns outside of the government estate. For example, there are LearnDirect ads appearing on Yahoo, these could also be surfaced on Directgov and any pan government search offering at no additional cost.

Ads on Directgov may take a more text based appearance, and consideration of placement will be essential to overcome "banner blindness" where images and anything that looks like an ad are largely ignored.

10.4.2 Cross channel/device promotional opportunities

Directgov will shortly have the ability to deliver promotional messages across mobile and digital TV devices as well as the website. Our development plans include the ability to offer the following services:

- The use of red button technology within digital TV, the campaign will feature on the Directgov splash screen and from there the viewer can be taken to the campaign pages that can be created on the digital TV service. There is no additional cost to Directgov for offering this on top of its normal TV running costs, but there is a charge made by the service providers for using the red button service, which would need to be considered
- The development of mobile short codes for Directgov, which can be utilised for campaign and content delivery.
- The use of Youtube.com and Flickr to deliver campaign material. Any campaign which features animation or video material suitable for loading onto a social media site should have the video loaded, with a powered by Directgov and a link back to the campaign or content area of Directgov.

10.5 Dealing with detailed and complex content

The Directgov brand defines our approach to the level of detail and tone with which we express and convey information of relevance to the citizen. Its aim is broad and of sufficient detail to provide the majority of answers to most questions. Inevitably users will want more information at a point within their interaction with Directgov and an appropriate method of ensuring they can access the level of detail required is needed to address the increased volume of content that will be available through convergence and the delivery of corporate websites.

If there is too much detail in Directgov, this will lead to confused and complex management of a mass of information (and place additional demand on hosting infrastructure). If not enough, it will lead to frequent disruptive journeys to other places (such as corporate sites for supporting detail on complex legal information, policy or process). If the approach is inconsistent across services and franchises, it could damage the overall brand and confuse users.

10.5.1 What constitutes corporate content

The corporate website guidelines issued by COI, and available via the web convergence team and the Directgov BMU give very clear guidance of what content should be held within a corporate site, clearly stating "Communications and information on corporate websites should be restricted to those where people wish to look at that organisation - who it is, what it does, how it does it, with what resources, whether or not it is delivering to targets – and to choose to interact with it for the purposes of policy formation or operations"

None of this content should be converged onto Directgov, it may however be referenced with links from the appropriate content areas. An edited list of content areas for corporate sites is repeated here for ease of reference:

- Organisational descriptions of sector, including roles, for delivery partners and advisory bodies, including NDPB's, Executive Agencies and Advisory Bodies
- Organisational information, including Who's Who and Press contacts
- Annual reports
- Organisation policies including e.g. environmental, equal opportunity and diversity.

- Compilations of statistics, statistical releases/bulletins and reports
- Forecasts
- Research briefs and summaries and reports on research (including social, scientific and technical research)
- Reports of Commissions/ Committees of Inquiry, together with any submissions, minutes of evidence or working papers and government responses
- Expert reviews of particular issues (e.g. Stern report, Barker report) and government responses
- Reports monitoring performance of official bodies
- Publications
- Briefing papers
- Directorate Policy briefings
- Evaluation and progress reports on programmes, projects, and interventions
- Consultation papers and drafts issued for comment and supporting documentation
- Policy statements and planning papers (including strategic, business and operational plans and framework documents)
- Departmental and Agency annual reports and accounts
- Freedom of Information procedures and releases
- Regulatory and guidance material including circulars, standards, specifications, Codes of Practice, good/best practice guides, advice notes aimed at professionals and advice arising from surveys
- Online magazines/journals. May contain news items, feature articles, reports on research and news about policy/legislation and its potential impact.
- Supplier standards
- Procurements and e-procurement (beyond centralised services)
- Purchasing systems (e.g. organisation's books and reports)
- Departmental vacancies
- Press notices
- Speeches (including audio files and podcasting)
- Consultations and e-consultations
- Published notices of policy-related documents

10.5.2 Large documents/manuals

Directgov should not host directly very large and/or technical documents (which will predominantly be held in PDF format). The only exceptions may be forms (specifically clickable PDF types), such as the Disability Living Allowance form which is large and every page essential to be preserved in the format laid out in the PDF. Every attempt should be made to create these forms online before accepting that PDF is the only delivery mechanism.

Any content presented in this format through web convergence should be broken down into more manageable chunks and presented in an accessible (web page) format, examples might include:

- Standard web page content, removing material not specifically relevant or consumable by the core Directgov audience
- Decision tree functionality could be used to structure and navigate the content, presenting sections of content based on user decisions
- The Club has a multi-page document type which is used by DH for presenting large documents, there is potential for this to be utilised if necessary

10.6 Types of content appropriate for Directgov

Any content mentioned in section 10.5.1 above is core content for a corporate site, and should not be included in Directgov, although there may be some overlap, for example a

corporate site may include departmental contacts and Directgov will provide an overarching contact directory, which will include a far wider range of citizen related contacts.

10.6.1 Articles

Most Directgov articles will comprise of words and pictures to illustrate the text appropriately. Additionally audio, video and animation (including Flash) can be utilised, see 10.6.5 below.

10.6.2 Leaflets and printed forms

This content should be included in or converted to articles in the most part, unless there is a business imperative to keep it in a PDF format (preserving a legal format such as direct debit). Leaflet content can be converted into other content types such as a decision tree, if complex options are given within the leaflet.

Forms should be presented as web forms wherever possible, unless there is a specific need to present a form as a PDF. Directgov will be delivering a generic forms capability as part of its proposition and this should be considered when deciding how to present a form.

10.6.3 Consultations

Consultation activity will be hosted on corporate sites as part of policy-making, although it could be represented as an extension to “public services” it is first and foremost consulting the public in the formation of policy and therefore not a public service. The Directgov proposition will not offer a consultation hosting service, but will maintain an index of citizen-facing consultations on Directgov.

The validity and accuracy of this index will be reliant upon all departments hosting consultations notifying Directgov so that links to the consultation can be provided from this central index. Therefore our proposition will **not** present the consultation index as being exhaustive, given this external dependence on notification.

It will be the responsibility of franchises and content owners to ensure that appropriate and relevant consultations are linked/referred to from the relevant pages.

Additional areas of propositional development around the consultations index could be the creation of an RSS feed of the index, which individuals interested in consultations, could embed within their RSS readers to alert them to new consultations or the extension of the service through localisation, either within Directgov or embedded in a widget type of function. The extension of the consultation index to mobile and digital TV platforms offers a route to consultations, either via an index, or through a campaign type of function alerting users to the availability of a consultation.

10.6.4 PDFs

Directgov will make use of PDF material with the following provisos

- No large documents (100+ pages) will be stored, unless a clear business case and value add for Directgov can be ascertained
- The content of the PDF will have been made available in an accessible format (e.g. a text summary of the content of the PDF within the article, and the PDF being available in Acrobat v7.0 or above)
- PDFs may be used for delivering content where the context and layout of the content must be preserved – for example a form, but only if an online form is not deliverable

10.6.5 Multimedia and Flash

Directgov will host any appropriate non-text content, as long as:

- It provides a quantifiable benefit for the citizen through its inclusion (for example, simplifies the explanation of a complex process, such as going to court)
- The content is also made available in an accessible format, e.g. accessible Flash, or through the provision of alternative versions/features such as captions, text transcripts, and auditory descriptions in accordance with the WCAG AA guidelines
- If the material requires a reader or plug-in that is not accessible, an accessible alternative version of that material must be provided
- Standard agreed formats for delivery of these assets are used. Directgov currently supports a number of players/plugin-ins
- Navigational elements such as pause/play/close buttons are consistent and in line with industry best practice

Work is being carried out on the Directgov platform to enable it to host multimedia from within the site

10.6.6 Useful Contacts directory

There is clear evidence from customer research and usage metrics that users come to Directgov to find contact details of government departments and public service organisations across the UK. In addition to the Useful Contacts themselves, there are a set of listing pages that display categorised links.

The current 1600 Contacts consist of public sector, charity and voluntary organisations across the whole UK. The scope of Useful Contacts will be reviewed and a decision will be required whether to offer a comprehensive service of all Central Government, Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies, or just to focus on the major organisations plus those that are citizen focused. Should, Directgov, for example, list the *Pig Production Development Committee* and *Standing Dental Advisory Committee*?

Coverage will remain UK wide. In addition, all principal local councils will be listed and a range of NGO and charity organisations that were originally submitted by franchises. There is a need to re-engage the franchises to review 'their' existing Useful Contacts and identify any potential new ones of interest to their target audience.

Local or regional services

In scope at present are the HQ contact details of organisations, apart from a small range of exceptions whose business is closely tied to Directgov, for example DVLA.

There are clear links to the localisation proposition and potential opportunities to expand the range of contacts to a wider and deeper range of contacts, for example local and regional offices of organisations or 'find my nearest' Scope office.

There are close links with Local Directgov, and it is likely that in future the local council Contacts will be replaced by pages served via Local Directgov. If Local Directgov is enhanced with other datasets, then these could also be surfaced.

There are clear opportunities for appropriate Contacts to be surfaced via Directgov's mobile channel where localisation is obviously relevant.

Inclusion criteria

Some or all of the Useful Contact's service should be citizen facing or be of interest to the public (which might justify a comprehensive set of public sector organisations). The organisation should be contactable by one or more traditional methods of communication (visit/write/telephone) or via an enquiry centre. A website is not a Useful Contact, it is a link.

Channel shift

Users come to Directgov with the expectation of getting contact information. We should fulfil this but also encourage channel shift:

- Point to relevant call centres/ email helpdesks
- Add value by pointing to online information on the site or by encouraging channel shift to electronic methods of fulfilment. For example, DVLA contacts remind users that they can find much information within Directgov and also complete a range of services online.

An improved experience for citizens in their dealings with government

- Provision of contact details is consistent with Directgov's high level proposition
- With web convergence Directgov will increasingly be *the* place expect to find government information
- A reference point - keeping on top of changes to the Machinery of Government
- Supports and compliments the Guide to Government section, currently being revised by Central Editorial Team
- A unique information resource: no other public sector service offers the scope and detail of contact information held on Directgov
- An enhanced display of contacts to include more information and, in the future links to maps and transport information etc.

10.6.7 Site index and A-Zs

Directgov currently has three A-Z indexes; the Site index, the A-Z of local councils and the A-Z of central government.

The A-Zs are valuable secondary navigation tools that complement search and browsing routes by offering different routes into content. As the site gets larger, these have increasing value. Benefits include:

- Increased usability, by providing an overview of Directgov in an easily scannable form
- "Known-item finding" - users can access content directly without having to get to grips with Directgov's navigational hierarchy
- A bottom-up view that promotes deeper information by surfacing keywords and important contacts
- Facilitates external search engines to deeply index Directgov
- Discovery - can encourage users to explore other interesting information (cross-sell)

For clarification, Directgov has a site index in an A-Z form – giving direct access to specific information, rather than a site map, which would give a high level view of the site's structure.

The A-Zs will continue to be supported and enhanced:

Site index

Inputs from web convergence, editors, search metrics and helpdesk inform the expansion and fine tuning of the Site index. Functional improvements will support improved display and the ability to refer users to related terms.

A-Z of Local Councils

Lists all principal local councils throughout the UK and is a popular function. Links currently go to the Useful Contact entry for each local council. In the future links will point to content generated by Local Directgov.

A-Z of Central Government

The A-Z of central government is popular with users who come to Directgov for contact information. Links point to the Useful Contact entry for the organisation concerned. The scope of this A-Z is Central Government Departments, Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies. Whilst all major organisations are included, the inclusion of smaller organisations is focused on citizen need and business needs.

Future A-Zs

Candidates for additional A-Z listings include:

- Forms and leaflets - web convergence may require that Directgov hosts or links to an increasing number of these
- Online services and tools, including Local Directgov services
- Consultations index

10.7 Non-duplication of services

Directgov's broadening proposition brings the risk of introducing additional services which are already done well elsewhere. Examples might include local authority services or those provided by the third sector. Directgov will not extend its product range to include services already provided elsewhere, provided that this does not conflict with TG convergence principles for the government web estate.

Directgov will seek to ensure that the convergence principles of Transformational Government are as equally applied to other digital devices as to the web. So that there is not a proliferation of content and services delivered via digital TV or mobile devices at the same time as convergence on the web.

In the case of local authority and third sector services, Directgov's proposition extends to the presentation of these where these enhance citizen journeys; however the primary vehicle for the former will be linking via Local Directgov or an enhanced version of this, and via external links for the latter.

11 Standards

Directgov aims to adhere to all relevant government standards. It aims to be an exemplar for government's offer to the citizen, for the digital channel. Appropriate standards need to be used in the areas of accessibility, language, technology, and data sharing amongst others, enabling Directgov to truly demonstrate that it is a modern digital channel, comparable to the best private sector offerings. It should be noted that Directgov adherence to some standards may be lower or less stringent than within specific departments, but that this will reflect the wider best practice or the ability to meet cross-departmental needs.

Directgov expects that any service that is delivered via or integrated within Directgov and appears to be a part of the Directgov service (i.e. carries any element of Directgov branding and association) to meet the same standards levels as outlined below. If it does not,

Directgov will expect work to be carried out in order to meet those requirements (many of which are government standards). If a service or any element to be integrated into Directgov does not meet our level of standards it may not carry Directgov branding, or will be expected to clearly state where the standard levels are lower.

11.1 Maintenance of quality standards

The reputation of brand and integrity of proposition rests on the maintenance of quality. The convergence of material onto Directgov must not lower the quality standards it currently maintains.

Dependent on outcome of publishing model review, it is recommended that content principles are revisited, and the approach to the resolution of queries/conflicts over content also re-examined.

11.2 Accessibility

Accessibility is a complex area in which we are still building a more sophisticated understanding of what access for all really means, balancing the need for delivering services and content to as wide an audience as possible, whilst not restricting the use of the majority of users in meeting those accessible needs.

Directgov will continue to take an inclusive approach to accessibility, although we will continue to meet the standards required for WCAG 'AA' standard as currently defined for the website, accessibility needs to be far wider than meeting one standard.

We need to consider the ease of use across all aspects of Directgov, and where alternative means of delivery are essential, for example the use of British Sign Language.

We will not rule out the use of scripting but instead would promote the use of alternatives for e.g. browsers with scripting disabled. This will by necessity impact a number of areas of delivery. It will mean a restriction in the types of software it can integrate and use to deploy various user functions. For example, there will be restrictions in the type of Flash, the use of AJAX and JavaScript may be reduced and certain types of web 2.0 technologies may not be possible.

Our site is currently speech enabled using Browsealoud and works on common screen reader software such as JAWS. We keep to a minimum widely used but partly inaccessible technology such as Flash or PDF, and we ensure that the way pages are coded allow them to be manipulated by users with assistive technologies without disintegrating completely. We will continue to further develop the page code to allow this to continue.

11.2.1 Accessibility of transactions and services surfaced in Directgov

All of the transaction integration options we are proposing share the common characteristic that someone else's functionality is being surfaced in the Directgov channel(s).

In dealing with transactional services we need to look at who is responsible for the service, and who is accountable for it. Responsibility (the obligation to act) lies with the owner of the transaction [the department]; accountability (who is ultimately answerable for the choice of action taken) lies with Directgov. In practice this allows us to specify the minimum level of acceptable WCAG compliance as the responsibility of transaction owners converging to Directgov - but also give us the flexibility to be accountable as a channel for any decisions

made to waive, or phase over time, compliance so that we can integrate as many transactions as possible.

Any service that is required to be integrated into Directgov, and carry Directgov branding must be able to attain the same accessibility standards as Directgov. In meeting the *Delivering Inclusive Websites* guidance, as the responsible owner for a transaction, the owning department will take on all expenditure related to transactions' AA-compliance

As Directgov cannot physically enforce AA on any government partner that doesn't want to meet that standard that is their risk. Pragmatically we may have to have a period of adjustment for transactions to come up to AA standard. For any department whose transactions are not AA compliant, or will not be at the point of convergence, these will need to be looked at on a case by case basis, but before any waiver can be granted there must be an agreed and defined timetable for the service to come up to the required government wide standard.

11.2.2 Ongoing review of accessibility

We will investigate the benefits of setting up an ongoing regular official accessibility audit of the site, which reports on all aspects of accessibility, as opposed to our current retention of accessibility experts who advise on a more ad-hoc basis. As the WCAG guidelines for best practice in accessibility are set to change in 2008, we will need to run a programme of change to ensure that our site meets these new guidelines, which are currently still in consultation. Additionally we will need to consider the impact of the Equality 2025's initiative whose main aim is to carry out the promise to disabled people that they will have a direct voice into government – to help design policies and services that disabled people need. This may have more of an impact on the services delivered via Directgov than the content we hold.

Directgov will continue to provide content and services through its other channels, digital TV and mobile, both of which can offer services to some less able bodied users in a more accessible manner than via the web. We will continue to review the accessibility guidelines for these delivery channels, as we develop them, there are currently no plans to bring these to the same standard as the website, this is technical very difficult at present.

11.3 Usability

Directgov aims to maintain the highest standards of usability. It must be able to determine how best a user may wish to interact with the information and services provided within and through Directgov and to work with departments to ensure the highest levels of usability are maintained. The high standards may require individual departments to work closely together or in ways they are not used to in order to meet Directgov's usability needs. Directgov will not bend to meet each individual department's usability needs if these are lower or substantially different from industry best practice or common methods of usage across the consumer facing sites, such as Directgov.

11.4 Data sharing/User data

Data sharing is primarily a concern for departments. However Directgov and EDT are jointly leading a Workstream with Tell Us Once to explore the feasibility of allowing citizens to store data in a citizen account so that it can be shared, with consent, with departments under the control of the citizen or a representative.

11.5 Integration/SLA's

As Directgov becomes the access channel for departmental transactions, departments may demand increased service levels to be provided by Directgov. Directgov will seek to meet these demands within the constraints of its operating budget.

11.6 Convergence of standards

Although there is not much to develop short term, longer term we need to have a watching brief on devices and delivery technologies, as these merge there will be an impact on what the leading standards become. For example, Opera and Safari are more heavily used in the mobile device world, but are minor players in the PC market.

12 Customer Support

12.1 Customer service strategy

The majority of support to Directgov users will be provided as part of specific services. However, a residual support activity relating to general issues of service, accessibility etc. will be required. Its quality will have a profound bearing on perception of quality and brand.

12.1.1 Customer service strategy for 2007/8

For the short term the Directgov customer service offering will comprise the following attributes as offered currently:

Customer service offering in relation to content on direct.gov.uk

Help pages, including guidance on accessibility

Contact pages:

Feedback form:

Ready access to software tools such as Adobe Acrobat Reader and Microsoft Office suite viewers

For transactions delivered in Directgov branding the help and contact information will be clearly differentiated from the more generic Directgov help

During 2008 we will upgrade our contact and feedback forms to be more intuitive and enable users to direct feedback more appropriately.

12.1.2 Customer service strategy beyond 2009

During 2008 further work will be undertaken on a customer service strategy related to an enhanced Directgov service proposition. Until such time as Directgov itself delivers a service in its own name, the strategy will always be to provide limited contact points, but direct users straight to the service provider of the particular service they are using.

It is more than likely that the Tell Us Once programme delivered through Directgov will carry the Directgov brand as the service provider. Therefore Directgov will utilise that project to help formulate and drive a more multi-channel customer support strategy, which will address the following non-exhaustive list of options:

- Enhanced contacts service via the web and other digital channels
- Greater use of call me/call back buttons on the web and the red button on digital TV
- A Directgov call centre – using part of another government centre rather than setting up a separate offering, as well as the option for an in-house small scale customer service team

- The use of the Directgov brand within all existing call centres (i.e. the brand is used when answering the phone regardless of which department or service provides that call centre)
- The involvement of Directgov in being a delivery mechanism of a single government number, along the lines of 101
- Exploration of the role of the Directgov brand in a face to face contact approach

As services converge onto Directgov, and services are delivered in such a way where a user may be authenticated for a range of services provided by a range of departments, Directgov will also need to assess the liabilities that this places on Directgov in relation to financial or security considerations – this may include the presentation of Government Gateway within the user journey.

Should Directgov implement any type of social software such as chat rooms or forums, which will require extensive moderation (both from a dealing with specific content issues and the more mundane spam removal and other tasks) the Directgov approach will be to pass moderation to the individual department utilising the chat room, or to employ a company that offers a moderation service. The cost of which would need to be either allocated back to individual service owners, or absorbed within Directgov running costs. In using this service we may be able to utilise the service currently used by NHS Choices.

The impact of the business model changes and the role of content owners will need to be drawn into the customer service strategy if this devolves the ownership of content to the franchises, and then customer contact on specific content issues may well be devolved also.

12.1.3 Customer service strategy for supporting mobile and digital TV services

For the short term this is essentially the same as for the web. Help pages are provided along with feedback forms and contacts.

13 Glossary

(adapted from whatis.com entries)

AJAX	Ajax (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML) is a method of building interactive web applications. Ajax allows content on Web pages to update immediately when a user performs an action, without having to wait for the whole page to reload. Ajax applications do not require installation of a plug-in, but work directly with a Web browser. Google Maps is one well-known application that uses Ajax.
ATOM	Atom is an XML-based file format used to syndicate content. Atom was designed to be a universal publishing standard for blogs and other Web sites where content is updated frequently. Users visiting a Web site with an Atom feed can discover a file described as "atom.xml" in the URL that can be copied and pasted into an aggregator to subscribe to the feed.
JavaScript	JavaScript is used in Web site development to do such things as, automatically change a formatted date on a Web page, cause a linked-to page to appear in a popup window or cause text or a graphic image to change during a mouse rollover
RSS	RSS is an XML-based vocabulary that specifies a means of describing news or other Web

content that is available for "feeding" (distribution or syndication) from an online publisher to Web users. RSS is an abbreviation for describing one of three different standards, which include - RDF Site Summary (RSS .9 and 1.0), Rich Site Summary (RSS 0.91 and 1.0) and Really Simple Syndication (RSS 2.0). Atom (XML) is an alternative, open-source specification that provides similar functionality.

widgets

Essentially, widgets are miniature applications that allow the user to perform common tasks easily and access information quickly