



Press Release

17 September 2007

OPSI asks users to contribute to new web channel

The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), part of The National Archives, today launched a new online forum to engage with people interested in the re-use of government information for commercial benefit. OPSI is inviting businesses, academics, public sector information campaigners and others who work with government to contribute to the creation of this new web channel. The channel will allow re-users of public sector information allowing them to request the release of government data that may have economic value.

The creation of the forum is the first step towards developing a web-based channel for the publication of public sector information. Tom Steinberg (of MySociety) and Ed Mayo (the National Consumer Council) recommended, as part of The Power of Information Review, that the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) create a web-based channel to gather and assess requests for publication of public sector information “to improve the government’s responsiveness to demand for public sector information.”

Carol Tullo, Director of the Office of Public Sector Information, said: “The re-use request service will help the Government to identify where publishing its data in more re-usable formats is of value. This is a really exciting opportunity to engage and empower online communities just as Government are seeking to do in other areas of public policy.”

“Our approach is to engage with the re-user community from the outset of this project, which is very much in keeping with the Government’s emphasis on giving more power to people and communities. An online discussion forum, where the community can really help shape the development of a new public service, is an ideal way to engage people with this initiative.”

The discussion forum has been set up on the OPSI website, at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/forums/forums/index.asp> under “Power of Information” to share thoughts and opinions about the development of this news service, and provides a real way for people to contribute their views and ideas on the format of the web channel.

This initiative is one of the recommendations from the June 2007 Power of Information report, http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/reports/power_information/power_information.pdf, commissioned by the Cabinet Office.

The National Archives has now allocated funding to set the web-channel, as announced by Michael Wills, the Minister of State at the Department for Justice.

For further information about this press release, please contact Tim Matthews, press officer at The National Archives, on 020 8392 5277 (tim.matthews@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Notes for editors:

The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), www.opsi.gov.uk, operates from within The National Archives.

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a **government department**; and also an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk

The National Archives is at the heart of information policy – setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensure that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives is also the UK government's official archive, containing 900 years of history from Domesday Book to the present, with records ranging from parchment and paper scrolls through to recently created digital files and archived websites. Increasingly, these records are being put online, making them universally accessible.

The vision of The National Archives is to:

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone