

Citizens expect to make enquiries, submit forms and request information online, and with the arrival of interactive technologies like wikis and blogs, these expectations go even further.

Enabling the super site

ON JANUARY 14TH THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT on Transformational Government announced the closure of 551 government websites. Most of the information, which still requires a home, will be housed in a 'Super Site', potentially www.direct.gov.uk or www.businesslink.gov.uk.

This is a bold decision. Online presence is not about the quantity of websites, but about the quality of the content on sites, so it makes sense that consolidation will help reduce costs, IT personnel and information duplication.

However, the main aim for Transformational Government is to improve the customer experience. The three rules of websites still apply to the mega site – delivery of accurate, relevant, timely

information. Will visitors really be able to find what they are looking for?

To meet these expectations, the public sector needs to reduce costs by consolidating to a single platform, but also look to the future. They must produce citizen targeted, rapidly-deployed, project-style sites, managed by a local team.

Also, non-technical staff must be able to publish information, so IT can administrate the back-end. Crucially, citizens and businesses must be reached using new technologies at no extra cost.

The Department for Transport (DfT) currently serves information to the public through 30 websites. With campaign, community and other agency websites to support, managing, creating

and sharing content across numerous websites became challenging and costly.

Neil Campbell, head of e-Communications at the DfT commented that "we have a variety of online sites containing thousands of pages of information which were managed by a hugely devolved and skill-varied staff. We had been looking for a way to tie our existing online strategy together within a single environment but at the same time give ourselves a good basis from which we can grow in years to come. With a strong, proven background, sleek interface and extensive experience in the UK Public Sector, Morello from Mediasurface was the best solution to fit our requirements."

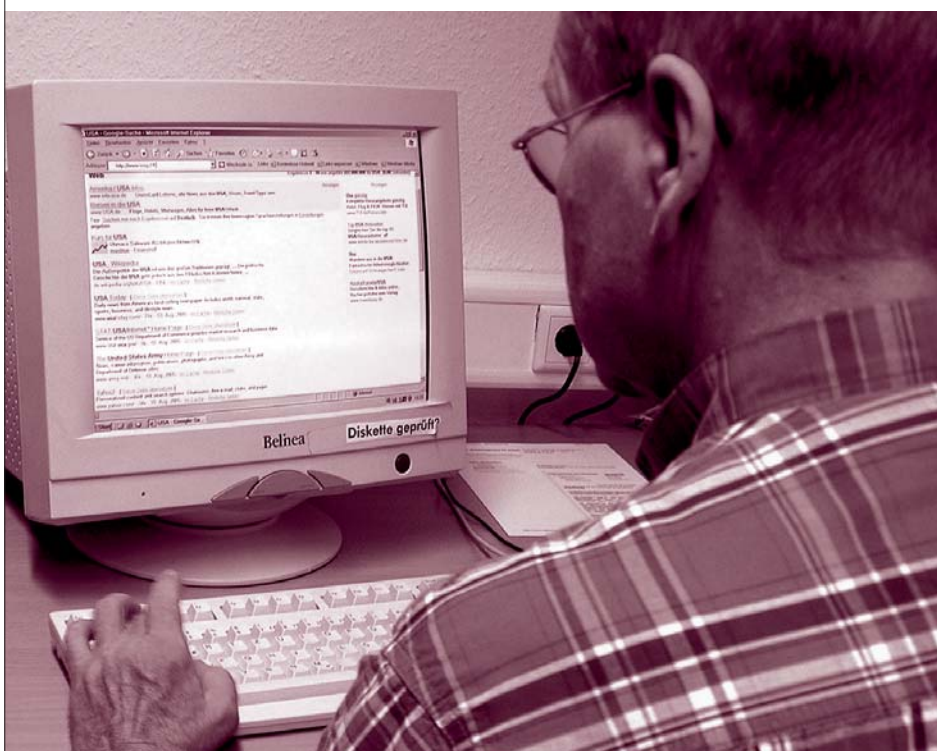
In line with the department's commitment to shared services, Department for Transport are rationalizing the platform which underpins all online communications, saving money, but also improving the efficiency and accuracy of data in the public domain. Non-skilled staff publish information to individually branded websites or digital devices within the controls set by the centralised IT team. At DfT, information is shared across websites, appearing numerous times, but is only stored and managed once. In addition, common applications, infrastructure services, support facilities and examples of 'best practice' will be shared between the sites.

The Department for Transport hope that this experience will provide a framework which can be used by other government agencies to ensure successful delivery.

This particular case gives an idea of the kind of efficiency savings which can be seen from a single implementation. Any government organisation could have one central information store, with its own procedures, processes, metadata etc, but publish onto multiple different websites with individual styles, design and even devices without needing additional IT resources or costs.

Mediasurface currently works with Department for Transport (DfT), Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Department for Education and Skills (DFES), The Home Office, The Welsh National Assembly, The Environment Agency, The Food Standards Agency, The General Teaching Council, Ofcom, University for Industry and the Office of Fair Trading. ■

"With a strong, proven background, sleek interface and extensive experience in the UK Public Sector, Morello from Mediasurface was the best solution to fit our requirements"



Mediasurface Europe Limited

t: 01635 262000

f: 01635 262001

m: 07779 156 648 W:

w: www.mediasurface.com