



E-Government A Best Practice Perspective

Prepared by

The European Centre for Total Quality Management

Statement of purpose

Public services today face unprecedented challenges. More is being asked of public sector leaders than ever before. There are strong demands from both the public and politicians for improved public services the world over. This report aims to improve understanding in the public sector of how it can plan, deliver, and manage an e-government initiative for the 21st century. This is attempted via demonstrating leading thinking and best practices in e-government applications.

The report does not attempt to define a "one size fits all" template for modern public sector e-strategies. The complexities of the issues, the inter-relationships between different aspects of organisational performance and the extent to which different sectors have different issues to deal with do not lend themselves to such an approach. In this context, the report aims to promote e-government best practice in the public sector by presenting case studies of leading institutions. It will be for individual sectors and for those close to service delivery, to determine for themselves the details of implementation.

Report Research Methodology

The Methodology for developing and documenting this report was based on a rigorous research process (as shown below). An attempt was made to gather as much info as practically possible about each study and every care was taken to investigate its validity. The information obtained has all been edited to fit the format of this report. The copyright and intellectual property for this information remains with source organisations and may not be used or reproduced without prior permission.

The Research Process

1. Information collection

- Literature Surveys of publicly available data and material
- Existing studies of e-government
- Benchmarking visits and Personal interviews

2. Information Analysis

- Study evidence
- Document methodologies and approaches adopted
- Investigate Critical Success factors
- Investigate Challenges
- Study results achieved were available
- Conclude lessons learnt were applicable

3. Case Study Documentation

- Application and implementation
- Models, CSFs, and results achieved
- Demonstrated best practice

Report Structure

Part I – E-Government

1. Introduction
2. What is E-Government
3. How will e-government improve the quality of government?

Part II - Best Practice Case Studies on E-Government Initiatives

- On the path to E-Government - UK Council 'pathfinders' projects in the UK
- E-public service advances at Houston, Texas, USA - E-signatures
- E-government at New Zealand Public Sector - Challenges and Issues to take into account
- E-government Benefits - What the UK Government has achieved so far
- UK E-government Structure - Making it happen Roles and responsibilities
- UK Department for Education e-business strategy - Delivering Information Age Service, Organisation & Partnership

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Part I

E-Government

1. Introduction

“e-Government will change the way that citizens interact with Government - forever. Getting the very best out of new technology means that we must innovate – not just automate. And that means innovation within Government as well as between Government and citizen. We’ve got to walk the talk.” *e-Envoy Andrew Pinder, UK Cabinet Office*

Government, in general, faces unique challenges moving to the Web, but the challenge is much greater if it doesn't make that move. It is not just an issue of reducing cost, but to provide better customer service, build deeper relationships with citizens and rebuild the public's confidence in government.

Leading governments the world-over are looking to package services in a tailored, customer focused fashion, often in partnership with the private sector, so that the citizen or businessperson is offered real benefits by transacting online, and as a consequence comes back to use more and more online services.

Good information age services will blur boundaries between layers of Government, departments, sectors and nations. In order to stay ahead of the game, governments must plan now for the long term changing role of Government.

People are aware of the possibility and benefits of excellent service, and they expect it in all their dealings with business. They are less tolerant of poor service in one sector when they have experienced good service in another. The challenge for the public sector is that the same growing expectations will be applied to government services. The public sector must innovate and invest in new business models to meet this demand. The possibility of more accessible government services should mean that they become more convenient, easier and cheaper to use. Personalisation of services should make it possible to be more inclusive in providing services in more languages and in ways which are accessible to those who have a disability or are less mobile.

2. What is e-government?

A worldwide revolution in information and communications technologies is occurring. The Internet and Personal Computers are fundamentally changing our lives – affecting the way we work, learn and interact. E-government is a way for governments to use the new technologies to provide people with more convenient access to government information and services, to improve the quality of the services and to provide greater opportunities to participate in our democratic institutions and processes.

3. How will e-government improve the quality of government?

E-government will improve government in four important ways.

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1. It will be easier for people to have their say in government.

For example, consider a situation where a Ministry proposes to make changes to the way it provides a particular service. It could outline the proposed policy changes on its Internet site and seek comment from people who have something to say about those services, and the proposed new policy. The feedback could then be used to refine that policy.

2. People will get better services from government organisations.

For example, instead of joining a queue to register a motor car, the owner will be able to do it from his or her home and at any time of the day on any day of the week. This will be of particular benefit to those people who do not live in the main centres of population. This will improve flexibility, speed and access to government services, and it has another potential benefit – lowering the cost of government.

3. People will receive more integrated services because different government organisations will be able to communicate more effectively with each other.

For example, as a result of an accident, a person may need to talk to several different government organisations outlining their personal circumstances and needs to each organisation. If the three organisations have the ability to share information and integrate their services, the person need only go through that process once instead of three times.

4. People will be better informed because they can get up-to-date and comprehensive information about government laws, regulations, policies and services.

For example, if a person wants to transport an oversize load of materials by truck or trailer from one side of town to the other, he or she has to get a hold of the appropriate road safety regulations, which are available only in a printed form. Making that kind of information available on the Internet will improve peoples' ability to go about their leisure or work-time activities safely and within the law.

The specific benefits of new technology are seen in the commercial sector in the development of new delivery channels for services to citizens and businesses, typically using the Internet. But service delivery is only one aspect of the strategy. E-business methods are relevant to a much wider range of government activity encompassing transactions with citizens, businesses, suppliers and with other public sector bodies (see Table 1).

Making this happen will be a major task. There are serious issues of business process change, skills shortages and the existing information infrastructure to confront. The public sector will need to work closely with private sector partners in developing business models, establishing infrastructure and in delivering services to end users.

The second and third parts of this report provide detailed case studies of leading e-government initiatives and showcase various applied and proven best practices.

Table 1 e-Government benefits

Public sector transaction with	Examples	Benefits
Citizens	Information Culture Health Education Benefits transactions Taxation	Wider choice of channels, convenience, lower transaction costs, more personal service, greater awareness of services and policies, greater democratic participation and openness
Business	Support programmes Advice and guidance and Regulation	Quicker, faster interactions, reducing transaction costs the regulatory burden
Suppliers	e-procurement	Reduced transaction costs, better inventory management, shared data environments
Other public sector bodies	Communication between departments and agencies and between central and local government Policy making	Greater accuracy and efficiency, reduced transaction costs. Better use of the knowledge base. More nimble, flexible working arrangements

Part II

Best Practice Case Studies on E-Government Initiatives

On the path to E-Government UK Council 'pathfinders' projects in the UK

More than one hundred local councils in the UK took part in 25 'pathfinder' projects - to develop better, more accessible local services by harnessing the benefits of new technology, Local Government Minister Beverley Hughes announced.

"It is vital that local government takes advantage of the e-revolution to provide modern services in a way that are accessible to local people". "Each pathfinder is a partnership of councils, other public service agencies, local communities and the private sector working together at the cutting edge."

Examples of the work that pathfinders will carry out include:

- Services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week where there is demand to access services such as paying bills, booking leisure services
- Piloting digital television to access services such as on-line reporting of faulty street lamps and pot holes in the road
- Improved Internet access
- Smart cards used for public transport passes and to pay for school meals
- Providing one stop services in remote rural areas

Short Description of Selected Projects

Council	Region	Description
Brent	London	CRM - Electronic one Stop Shop aims to develop a fully electronic citizen contact environment. Implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which will handle all aspects of interaction between the Council and citizens.
Camden	London	UK Online/Gateway - APLAWS will provide personalised access to council services through the use of internet technology. Through dynamic site management and syndication of information personal portal will enable users to receive all of the information they require, irrespective of type/level of Government.
Newham	London	Payment/Procurement - E-procurement to enable purchase orders to be sent electronically, invoices received electronically, supplier catalogues on line, track orders and interface into back office accounting systems.
Sunderland	North East	UK Online/Gateway - Personalised Public Access Gateway - concept of an integrated multi-channel access gateway for personalised customer service.
Southampton	South East	Smartcards - SCC plan to expand the SmartCities project boundaries, extend the range of public services accessible through smartcards, test public key infrastructure (PKI) for use with smartcards, and strengthen and widen partnerships

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Cornwall	South West	Smartcards - To enable citizens to transact business electronically. A countywide initiative based on smart-card technology. Developing local e-clusters that enhance the citizen's engagement with their local authority and enable and encourage social inclusion in a remote, rural community.
Salford	North West	CRM - Re-engineering the Business of Service - enable acceleration of e-Government, enable wider access to tested solutions to the change program, integrating multi-agency e-services at the local level (salford.net) and public service e-commerce program (public tendering/procurement)
Suffolk County Council	Eastern	Digital TV - Aim of the bid is to develop specific channels for service delivery identifying the inter-actions best suited to e-transformation. The project seeks to develop Digital TV and On Street interactive kiosks.
Norfolk	Eastern	UK Online/Gateway - Norfolk plan to manage secure exchange of information between local authorities and other public sector bodies and central government - take advantage of the Government Gateway to develop secure transactions and facilitate electronic procurement.
Sedgemoor	South West	Front/Back Office - Preparing the back office to place the Council in the role of a Virtual Service Provider in order to support electronic transactions to enable joined-up and citizen focused service delivery over a range of potential channels
Kingston Upon Hull	Yorkshire & Humberside	Front/Back Office - Extend the foundation database to incorporate Social Services clients. Provide an inter directorate and inter agency view of that client, thereby enabling new ways of working and providing a holistic view.
Shepway	South East	Front/Back Office - Change of address project - investigate legal implications of the processes for total automation, investigate interoperability with other agencies (import/export of notifications), define a standard for a Names Database and establish a Geographical Information System (GIS).

**E-public service advances at Houston, Texas, USA
E-signatures**

Integrating the Internet into the public sector will increase efficiency, effectiveness and customer service for constituents, according to testimony given at the e-Texas e-Government Task Force Public Hearing in Houston. Successful integration will also reduce the gap between people and government.

The Internet leads to three areas of advantages for the public and private sector, according to Texas Government. Those three areas are:

1. Velocity,
2. Shrinking the gap between distance and time, and
3. Bringing constituents closer to government services

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Creating efficiencies by allowing customers to conduct government business online, cuts down on the time it takes to complete a task. The easier the access to government services, the better the experience to the customer.

Brent Israelsen, iLumin Chief Executive Officer, said implementing enforceable electronic transactions using digital signatures is changing the way government does business.

"We are at the level of purchasing books, flowers and CDs over the Internet, the higher level to reach for is purchasing cars, houses and corporations," "Digital signatures will allow this commerce." We already have interactive databases, but we still look to paper for official documents because, partly, the need for signatures. Digital signatures that are automated, auditable, enforceable and secure will allow complex transactions to be done electronically.

In Utah, where Israelsen is implementing the use of digital signatures in government,

- The courts are able to e-file documents,
- The Secretary of State's office is able to conduct business with corporations,
- Human resources accepts forms from employees, and
- The procurement process is being streamlined by filing contracts online.

E-government at New Zealand Public Sector Challenges and Issues to take into account

E-government presents New Zealand with some tremendous opportunities to move forward in the 21st century with higher quality, cost-effective, government services and a better relationship between New Zealanders and their government.

Already, there are examples of e-government in New Zealand. They range from the New Zealand Government Online website (<http://www.govt.nz>), to being able to register a new company on the Internet (<http://www.companies.govt.nz>) or to getting comprehensive statistical information about New Zealand from Statistics New Zealand's website (<http://www.stats.govt.nz>).

The task for the Government is to build on these individual initiatives and develop them into a comprehensive plan for achieving the benefits of e-government more widely on behalf of all New Zealanders. But, left to develop by itself, it has the potential to create new divisions in society between those who have the skills and tools to use the new technologies to participate in our democracy and those who do not. The Government is not prepared to allow this to happen.

What are the important issues the Government needs to take into account in developing ways of using information and communications technologies?

- *Opportunities can be lost because no government organisation takes the leading responsibility to oversee and coordinate development of e-government for the benefit of citizens.*

The Government has already allocated this important task to the State Services Commission (SSC). The SSC is creating and resourcing a unit with specific responsibility for e-government.

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- *People may be quickly divided into two groups – those who have the skills and tools to use the new technologies and those who do not.*

The purpose of e-government is to bring people together – not to push them apart. The Government must plan e-government in such a way that:

- conventional means of access to government are maintained for those people who need them;
 - community access to the Internet is available for those people who, for any reason, can not access it from their homes; and
 - educational and public information programmes are used to help New Zealanders, young and old, in using the new technologies.
- *There are concerns that Governments can know too much about people and could use that information inappropriately.*

To guard against this risk, the Government intends to:

- review, and strengthen where necessary, all legislation designed to protect peoples' privacy; and
 - provide safeguards around the sharing of people's personal information among Government agencies.
- *Governments can become impersonal*

The Government's vision – New Zealanders will be able use telephones, personal computers and the Internet to gain access to government information and services and participate in our democracy – provides a focus on people. Planned adoption of e-government will improve peoples' ability to participate in government, and will improve the state sector's ability to provide affective and efficient services. But it is still only a means to an end. The end is improving the lives of all New Zealanders through good government supported by effective and efficient organisations staffed by people devoted to serving the public.

- *People are disappointed because governments promise much and deliver little.*

The Government's approach to implementing e-government in the interests of improved participation and services will be well planned. There will be no overnight and dramatic developments, but rather a more staged approach with developments building on those that have gone before.

E-government Benefits What the UK Government has achieved so far

Government has not stood still in response to this revolution. Public sector organisations have used earlier generations of technology to automate very high volume transactions including tax dealings with business and to automate internal processes. New services are being introduced. Personal tax dealings will be available on the Internet later in 2000. Projects underway in the Office of National Statistics and Public Record Office will create statistical, civil registration and archiving systems for the Information Age. The Ministry of

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Defence is planning to launch the Defence e-commerce Service (DECS) in support of better procurement and stock control in the defence sector. NHS Direct On-line shows how citizens can be provided with information to supplement an existing channel. Initiatives are in place for on-line job matching and a more integrated approach to benefits claims. Local authorities have developed electronic one-stop shops to bring together information and services. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made travel advice available on the Internet and Companies House sells companies information using e-commerce technology. Within government, the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) connects all major departments and can provide central government users with e-mail and Internet access.

Public sector bodies have begun the work of managing government's information more effectively. HMSO is creating the Information Asset Register, a database listing the government's information resources which will be accessible via www.inforoute.hms.gov.uk. The National Land Information Service (NLIS) project is creating a land information system which will be a key enabler for transactions involving property, notably electronic conveyancing.

Benefits for citizens

Developments in technology and the rapid fall in the price of communications and computing have transformed many people's lives. New services have been established, and existing ones are provided in new ways. At their best, these services deliver the benefits of:

- better access, with services available where and when there is a demand
- delivery through a range of media, over the counter, via call centre and online
- segmentation of the market, with services tailored to suit the needs of groups within the market
- responsiveness to feedback about the content and quality of services
- grouping of services around life episodes or common events
- comprehensive analysis of data about patterns of usage
- involvement of users in service redesign and improvement.

Benefits for businesses

New technology has transformed the way businesses can operate. The Government's commitment to ensure that the UK becomes the best place in the world to do business online is set out in its response to the report of the Performance and Innovation Unit, e-commerce@its.best.uk. One of the key ways in which businesses have applied e-commerce techniques is in managing their relationships with customers and suppliers. Public sector bodies must do the same if they are to derive the same benefits in terms of reduced costs and better procurement. The effect of the public sector as a whole doing this will itself be a significant contribution to advancing e-commerce. The Office of Government Commerce will lead on the adoption of e-procurement within government.

The public sector does not only interact with businesses as a customer and supplier. It is responsible for a wide range of regulatory and support functions. The Government is committed to reducing the impact of regulation on businesses. Businesses will rightly expect the public sector to make the processes involved in company startup, business expansion,

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continuing regulation and compliance and the closing of a business easier and more accessible.

Benefits for the public sector

New working methods offer potential benefits for the internal business of government too. These include gains in efficiency and effectiveness from better use and management of information, whether in support of policy making or the administration of programmes. Intranet technologies offer the possibility of establishing knowledge bases and cross-departmental working. Extranet connections between organisations, for example between departments, the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) which they sponsor and deliverers of services to users, will enable business to be carried out more quickly and cheaply.

UK E-government Structure - Making it happen Roles and responsibilities

This case outlines the roles and responsibilities for key players and stakeholders. Implementation of the e-government strategy will require innovative leadership throughout the public sector. There is a need for strong central direction, but which recognises regional and local diversity.

The e-Envoy

This strategy is owned by the e-Envoy on behalf of Ministers. He is responsible for the direction and implementation of the overall programme. His specific responsibilities are to

- lead the application of e-business thinking in government
- support the Chief Secretary of the Treasury and the e-Minister in a cross-cutting review in the 2000 spending review on the knowledge economy, which will consider the funding of electronic government
- jointly chair the cross-cutting review in the 2000 spending review on the knowledge economy, which will consider funding for electronic government
- identify new opportunities for cross-cutting initiatives and how they should be carried forward
- provide strategic prioritisation of further work on infrastructure and policy issues
- accelerate and co-ordinate work to get services online
- monitor the implementation of the strategy and report on progress to Ministers.

Information Age Government Champions (IAGC)

The Information Age Government Champions are 36 senior officials and local government representatives from across government and were established in 1999. They were closely involved in the formulation of this strategy.

The IAGC's role will be to

- support the e-Envoy in implementing and developing the strategy
- help in winning and sustaining commitment to the programme across the public sector
- assist the e-Envoy in identifying cross-cutting initiatives
- champion the delivery of departmental and sectoral e-business strategies [7]
- sustain a network for sharing knowledge and experience in e-government programmes.

Central IT Unit (CITU)

CITU is the unit in the Cabinet Office which is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the strategy.

CITU will

- develop and monitor implementation of framework policies, standards and guidelines, ensuring that such policies and standards are adhered to
- support departments in their development of e-business strategies
- develop shared infrastructure and applications in collaboration with lead departments
- promote common policies on the management of information including privacy
- develop cross-cutting services on the GSI
- develop extranet links with the wider public sector
- coordinate action on skills for Information Age Government.

The Office of Government Commerce (OGC)

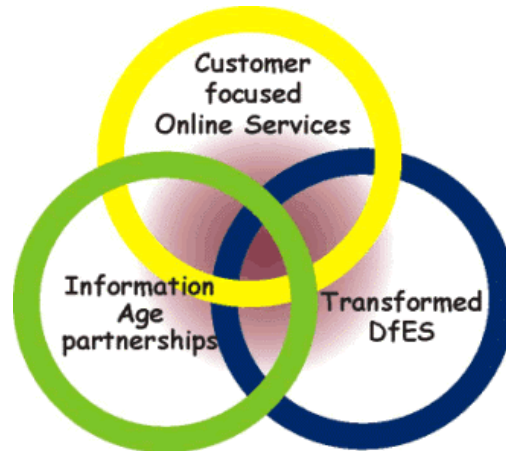
The OGC will formulate procurement policies and strategies and will have a role in strategic sourcing decisions, especially those with cross-government implications. CITU will work with the OGC, building on the recommendations of the review of major IT projects, to develop appropriate approaches to sourcing Information Age Government services and systems, taking into account the issues involved in delivering joined-up services. These arrangements will be available also to the devolved administrations, who are responsible for their own procurement decisions.

Central government departments, agencies and NDPBs

Public sector organisations will be responsible for developing and delivering e-business strategies that will set out plans for

- developing e-business models
- converging with standards and framework policies
- providing services which are accessible via the government and other portals
- electronic service delivery and internal process transformation
- implementing the recommendations from the review of major IT projects
- developing IT skills and awareness.

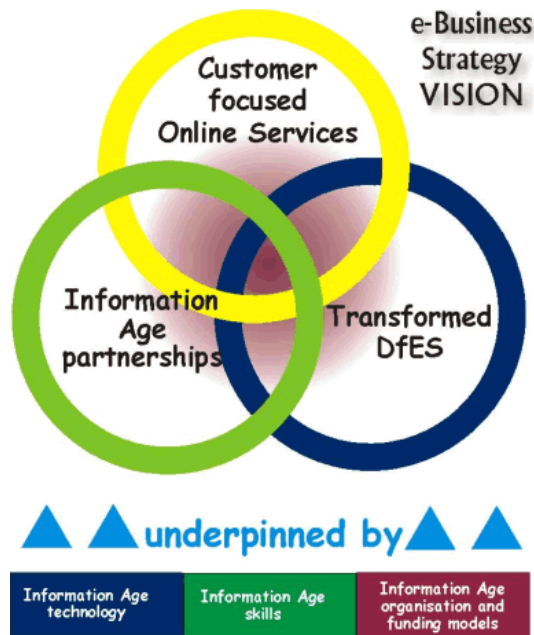
UK Department for Education - e-business strategy
Delivering Information Age Service, Organisation & Partnership



STRATEGIC OVERVIEW ¹

- This is the outline electronic business strategy for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).
- It explains how DfES will contribute to the Government's goal of making all information and services capable of delivery online by 2005, and how DfES will use technology to transform their internal processes and the way DfES work with partners. The strategy is, however, more about delivery and business change than about technology, and most of all about customers – whether they are external customers, members of the DfES or their partners. Future services may be Internet-powered but they will be customer-driven.
- In a fast-moving environment the strategy will seek to anticipate future changes rather than be based solely on the current situation. A key assumption is that future users of government services will be more demanding and discerning, and will not be willing to accept disjointed service delivery by government. Another key assumption is that, for improvements to be sustainable, the organisation itself must be transformed and not just its current set of offerings.

¹ © DfES :Text edited from original DfES documentation, refers in its entirety to DfES and remains their intellectual property.



The Strategy in brief....

DfES are making rapid progress in delivering information and services online and will make it easier for key customer groups to find and use them by...

...completing the work of delivering all information and services online

- All services will be delivered online no later than 2005 in order to meet the Prime Minister's target for full e-government.
- But the primary purpose of e-government is not just to deliver services electronically, it is also to help make services more customer-focused. DfES have already restructured the information and services on their websites around the needs of those who use them, and will continue to use feedback to improve them. Use of the main website has continued to increase rapidly, with hits almost doubling in the past year to 19m a month.

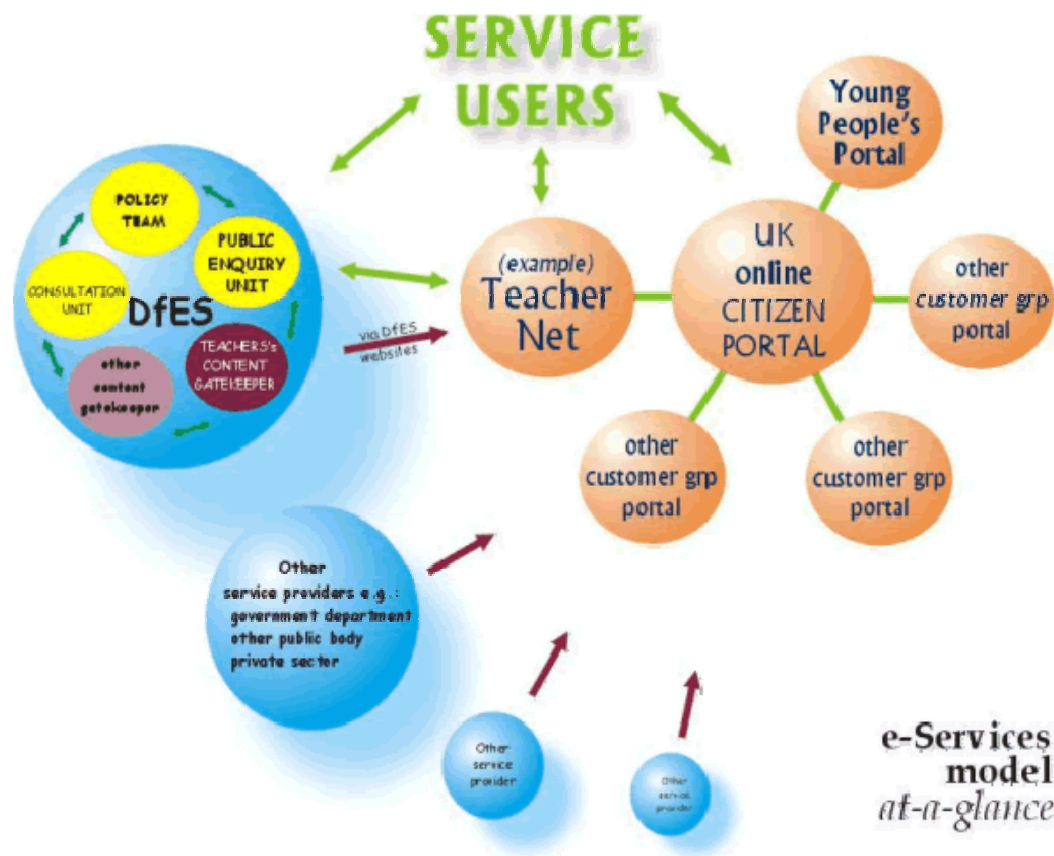
.... providing access through a network of customer-focused portals

- DfES will help develop a set of Internet portals (see diagram below): each one an electronic 'one-stop-shop' for a key customer group, giving access to information and services not just from the DfES but from many organisations – public and private sector.
- To ensure that the Department's contribution of content to these portals is effective, DfES have appointed an internal 'gatekeeper' for each portal. They will co-ordinate the range of information and services produced by DfES for each customer group. And the department will seek to develop more sophisticated and customised information services.

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- These portals for the whole of government will provide a flexible infrastructure for the delivery of a future stream of government services and initiatives, however the structure of government itself may change.
- The range of information and services delivered through each portal will vary according to the customer group. Some, for example, may provide simple signposting and links to other web sites. Other, more sophisticated portals will allow the user to have greater interaction through search engines and transactional services.
- Some services will be unique to just one customer group but others will be useful to two or more groups and therefore will be made accessible through all relevant portals. A key responsibility for each portal will be to arrange customer research and feedback.
- DfES have made rapid progress towards a first set of portals. The initial Teachers' Portal (<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/>) has been well-received and continues to be developed using teacher research and feedback. Worktrain (<http://www.worktrain.gov.uk/>), the initial portal for jobseekers and career-changers, has been set up also, and a portal for Young People will form an integral part of the new ConneXions Service.

A c-Change in Service Delivery: Customer-focused & driven



... improving the content they deliver ...

- For example, core learning services are increasingly becoming capable of electronic delivery. This is already the case in tertiary education, for example, the e-Universities project and Learndirect's (<http://www.learndirect.co.uk/>) growing portfolio of online learning products. And the National Grid for Learning (<http://www.ngfl.gov.uk>) , Europe's largest educational portal, provides, for example, online educational material for 7-11 year olds via the Grid Club (<http://www.gridclub.com>).
- There are already pilots for online material for some subjects at Key Stage 3 and for GCSE, and now DfES are consulting on how best to provide online support across the curriculum <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/curriculumonline/index.shtml>. This initiative, Curriculum Online, will be developed in liaison with Culture Online and the Public Records Office, both of which will be able to provide valuable support material.

.... linking them to the overarching UK online portal

- All the portals, the Department's own online information and services, and those of its partners in the public sector, will be linked to UK online (<http://www.ukonline.gov.uk/>) – the overarching portal that provides centralised access to all government information and services.
- Ukonline.gov.uk also provides a facility for people who want to access groups of services that relate to a life episode such as: having a baby; going away; dealing with crime; moving home; bereavement; or learning to drive. DfES will make contributions to most of these and has had a key role (with other departments and the devolved administrations) in the development of others: 'looking for a job' is now available and 'starting school' and 'your choices at 16+' are under development.

.... and increasing the number of people with access to them

- The Government wants online information to be available to everyone and is forming a national network of UK online access centres to help make this possible. The centres will be especially useful to those without IT facilities at home or at work, or without the skills and confidence to use them. DfES will provide a significant proportion of this network. Our UK online Centres will provide training in the use of ICT facilities as DfES will give access to government and other online services. Over 1,600 of these have already been agreed and applications for a further 700 are currently being assessed.
- Other access initiatives include our Wired Up Communities pilots to provide access to ICT for those in disadvantaged areas, and supporting the e-Learning Foundation, which will help provide children from low-income families with portable computers and Internet access to learning materials.
- Internet kiosks located in shops, cafes, post offices and other places used by the public will also play an important role in opening up access. A number of commercial kiosk providers are already providing access to ChildcareLink (<http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk/>) through their kiosks, and DfES hope to make similar arrangements for other services and commercial providers.

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- Improved online services must also benefit people who do not access them directly. DfES will encourage existing and new providers of public services and intermediaries to use these online facilities on behalf of their clients through advice centres, contact centres and helplines; for example, Learndirect (0800 100 900) and ChildcareLink (08000 96 02 96) already provide telephone enquiry services, and a similar ConneXions service for young people, ConneXions Direct, will be piloted later this year.
- DfES will also adapt our online services to deal with new technologies - such as digital TV and mobile phones - as more people use them to access the Internet.

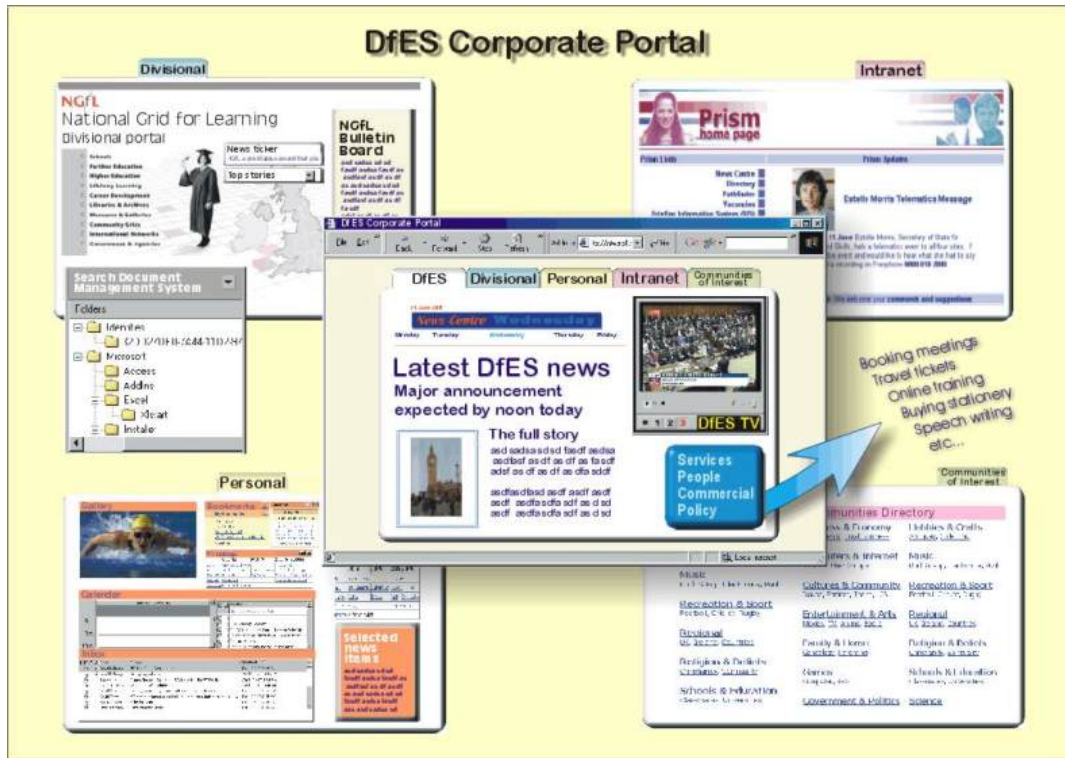
The Department will use up-to-date ICT facilities to communicate more effectively with the public and to modernise policy-making

.... in managing online information, services and enquiries from the public

- DfES are overhauling the way in which DfES deal with a wide range of online, written and telephone enquiries so that they can be dealt with more quickly and accurately. A central unit will deal with many enquiries using information from our Intranet and prepared answers to frequently asked questions. And DfES will seek to make more of these answers available online.
- DfES are now connected to the Knowledge Network, an ambitious government-wide project to bring together policy information in a central database, and make it available to all departments on the Government Secure Intranet for enquiry handling and briefing.
- DfES will reorganise our statistical databases and improve their coverage with the aim of making information about the effect of our policies available to partners and the public.

Corporate Portal

The corporate portal would provide a flexible framework offering staff customised access, for individuals and for work groups, to overarching corporate information, and drawing on information and services in areas such as policy making, HR issues, etc.



Part III

E-Government Best Practice Catalogues

Best Practices Catalogue

E-Government Initiatives in the UK

Source: © UK Cabinet Office

Best Practice	Practice Details
Collaboration on data, analysis and interpretation	The City of Edinburgh has embarked upon a datashare project to develop a process of city planning within a multi-agency and cross-sectoral environment and facilitate the incorporation of new techniques into local government practice.
Web site seeks feedback on service standards	Cambridge City Council Sports Development Team has developed a section on its Web site that gives clear information to users about the service standards they can expect, but also gives them the opportunity to give feedback on the standards and target setting.
Members Online Project	Members at Bracknell Forest are able to conduct their business with both the Council and their constituents as if they were working from the Council offices. Their 'technology package' enables them to work 'anywhere, anytime'.
Technology to address individual needs	Calthorpe Special School has introduced a whole school assessment and recording system using a computer based product to allow the school to address the individual needs, record progress and set future targets for every pupil
Open and accessible Web site	A leading provider of Retirement Housing, Hanover Housing Group, has launched a new Web site, which takes a lead in Web site design, by being specifically designed to be open and easily accessible to an older age group.
Invest to save initiative	The East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Building and Related Services has invested in hand held computers for property surveyors and improved its services while reducing expenditure in the longer term.

Best Practice	Practice Details
One Stop Shop	The One Stop Shop in Brent has developed an improved and expanded customer tracking and information database to provide officers at the front line with easier access to Council and community information enabling them to provide a better service to users.
Video information in reception	East Cambridgeshire District Council has installed a video playing facility in the new reception area to give users and potential users information on benefits available.
Helping disabled people with benefit claims	The Deaf Services Bureau of Kent County Council has created a special post and developed an IT programme to provide support to people whose first language is sign language to claim the benefits to which they are entitled.
Cyber Friends - a virtual volunteering project	As part of its increasing commitment to equality of opportunity, extension of E-Fire services and increasing the role of volunteerism in the Fire Service, Merseyside Fire Service has initiated the concept of the 'Cyber' "Friends of the Fire Service".
Computerised customer surveys	The Suffolk District of Employment Services has introduced a computerised customer survey system (an Opinion-meter) in order to ascertain and track user satisfaction and views about the service

Best Practices Catalogue

Practical Tips for a Successful Public Sector Web site

Source: Edited from Guidelines from UK Cabinet Office

The following guidelines were developed by sources in the UK government and published as a resource is for everyone involved in creating public sector Web sites in the UK and worldwide.

Best Practice	Practice Details
THINK BEFORE YOU LEAP, THEN THINK AGAIN.	Spend plenty of time planning the structure of your Web site before you start writing pages. Work out a structure which is 'scalable' - in other words, you can expand the site without altering its basic structure - simple, and logical. If you are outsourcing the design of the site, make sure you work these issues through before you present the designer with a specification - do not just go with whatever pet designs they happen to have, which may be aimed at making them look impressive but not necessarily at providing the public with a trouble-free browsing experience.
USER FOCUS - NOT ORGANISATIONAL FOCUS.	Bear in mind exactly who the different types of people will be using the site, what their main purposes are and what types of information they will find the most useful. Then structure the site around them. For example, for a hospital site, you could divide from the home page into areas for patients, GPs, hospital employees, journalists, interested browsers from overseas, job seekers and so on. It is NOT generally advisable to group information in sections corresponding merely to the different sections or departments in your organisation - such a 'corporate focus' is of little use to members of the public who should not be expected to know how your organisation is structured in order to find information of use to them.
JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT.	Likewise, the average user of your site cannot be expected to know - or care - about the different public sector bodies that provide different public services in his or her locality. Ideally, therefore, all public service sites should provide relatively seamless links to relevant sites run by other public service bodies. For example, if someone moves into an area, and wants to use the local council's Web site to find out the address of the Citizen's Advice Bureau, the phone number of a doctor, and some information on local schools, it does not matter that three different organisations run these services:

links to all three should be found in the same service index on the council's Web site, or in a section headed something like 'community information'.

EASE OF NAVIGATION IS PARAMOUNT.

Develop a site with a clear structure, sign-posted so that users know exactly where they are within the site - what 'level' they are on - and what other services are available to them.

SEARCH ENGINES.

There are lots of site search engines you can install, all with slightly different qualities. The most important attribute of a site search facility is that it is very reliable, and appears quickly when you click on the search button. After that, it should present results in an easy-to-understand way. It is good to offer as many search options as possible - for example, searching in particular sections of the site, or among certain types of document only, or if you have a large site index, to search in the index or directory.

FAST-BREAKING NEWS.

It is a good idea to have a What's New section to let people know of the latest developments on your site: it makes a good place for people to start browsing. But if you do have a section like this, make sure it is kept up to date! Make someone responsible for adding a new item at least every Week, if not daily, linked in to a part of the Web site that you would like people to see.

EXPIRY OR REVIEW DATES.

Leading on from the Fast-Breaking News concept, it is important to set expiry or review dates on pages, especially with date-specific information - not necessarily to be visible to site users, but so your Web team will automatically update a certain page on a certain day. A major source of user disappointment in a site is seeing obviously out-of-date information, like an "up-coming event" that happened last Week. Whether the expiry or review is automatic (software-driven) or manual (from diary entries) is not important. See also 'Change the site as often as you can', below.

DON'T OVERDO THE PICTURES OR THE BACKGROUND

Don't use large graphics or photographs (unless they are essential to the purpose of the page, for example attraction photographs on a tourism site): they take much longer for a reader's computer to download, and so slow down the browsing process.

CHANGE THE SITE AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN.

Renew the look of your site periodically, even if it is a small change to the home page message to make it more topical, and a change of background colour. If nothing else this will ensure you keep the site under constant review, and may

lead to more important changes. Every year or two you should also completely redesign the site, to incorporate structural improvements and new ideas and to take advantage of new technologies.

**LIMIT YOUR
RESPONSIBILITY.**

It is a good idea for your site to carry a clear disclaimer on every page warning that no responsibility can be taken for the accuracy of information provided, and no responsibility can be taken for the content of external sites to which you link. Disclaimers could also state that the content of your site is regulated by the law in your own nation. You are recommended to take legal advice on the precise wording. But in any case try to ensure your information is accurate and legal - it is just as Well not to rely on your disclaimer!

COPYRIGHT

Likewise, your site should carry a link to a clear copyright notice on the home page, and ideally on every other page as Well. The notice must be more detailed than a simple 'Copyright MyOrganisation 2000' - it should detail precise ownership of any photographs used, and the terms under which any text or copy on the site may be re-used, with contact details for further queries.

To draw up such a notice, you will clearly need to check that you know who owns the copyright to all the photographs and articles used on your site - do not invite people to freely use images or text on your site if you do not own the full copyright yourself!

**TAKE GREAT CARE OVER
DATA SECURITY.**

It is a good idea to keep computers which can access the internet physically separate from any internal networks until a staff connection protocol has been drawn up, and firewall security software is in place.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Make sure there are clear ways that users can provide feedback on the site and their needs, and encourage them to send it in. You cannot have too much feedback or criticism, because it alerts you to problems and enables you to address them. If e-mail feedback is low, use traditional methods such as questionnaires or telephone canvassing to gauge user satisfaction with services and gather suggestions for possible improvements.

An email address for feedback on the Web site should be provided on your home page, and in all your main menus.

**MAKE THE MOST OF
INTERNET RESOURCES.**

Usenet newsgroups, search engines and Web directories can be invaluable in locating useful free resources to help you create and maintain an attractive site, using shareware and clip-art and other design archives. Specify as many key words as you can when using search engines to ensure you

locate exactly what you need.

**LIAISE WITH ALL
SECTIONS OF YOUR
ORGANISATION.**

Make sure all senior managers are aware of current services on your Web site, and the strategy for adding services in the future. All managers should bear the internet in any service or strategy work of their own.

Ensure a good flow of information to your site from all parts of your organisation, by identifying Web representatives in every part of the organisation.

It is also important that all managers ensure that key documents are planned with hypertext presentation in mind. Guidance on all these issues should be circulated from the top level at the centre to managers and workers at all levels of the organisation.

Part IV

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