



- Cabinet Office (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>)

See more information about this Policy paper (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy>)

Policy paper

Government Digital Strategy: December 2013

Updated 10 December 2013

Foreword by Francis Maude, MP

In just over 2 decades the internet has become a huge part of our everyday lives. Today 82% of adults in the UK are online. Completing transactions online has become second nature, with more and more of us going online for shopping, banking, information and entertainment. Why? Because online services tend to be quicker, more convenient and cheaper to use.

But until now government services have stood out by their failure to keep up with the digital age. While many sectors now deliver their services online as a matter of course, our use of digital public services lags far behind that of the private sector. For example while 74% of people use the internet for car insurance, only 51% renew car tax online.

Government has got to do better. This Digital Efficiency Report suggests that transactions online can already be 20 times cheaper than by phone, 30 times cheaper than postal and as much as 50 times cheaper than face-to-face.

By going digital by default, the government could save between £1.7 and £1.8 billion each year.

But this isn't just about saving money - the public increasingly expects to access services quickly and conveniently, at times and in ways that suit them. We will not leave anyone behind but we will use digital technology to drive better services and lower costs.

We will also need to embed digital skills into our organisational DNA, developing a culture that puts people's needs first so we plan and design our services around what users need to get done, not around the ways government want them to do it.

This Government Digital Strategy is just the start of a process that will transform how we provide services. Departments will be publishing their own digital strategies later this year, setting out how they will improve their services and reduce costs. New technology also means that for the first time individuals, entrepreneurs and businesses can now access and exploit public data in a way that increases accountability, drives choice and spurs innovation. Government will continue to be on the forefront of the open data revolution - putting more and more data in the public domain that will underpin new social and economic growth.

Until now government has been slow to realise the benefits of the digital age. In the future our services will be fit for the 21st Century - agile, flexible and digital by default.

Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office

Executive summary

This strategy sets out how the government will become digital by default. It fulfils the commitment we made in the Civil Service Reform plan (<http://my.civilservice.gov.uk/reform/>).

By digital by default, we mean digital services that are so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them will choose to do so whilst those who can't are not excluded.

We estimate that moving services from offline to digital channels will save between £1.7 and £1.8 billion a year.

Government is improving the way it provides information by moving to a single website, GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/>). Transactional services now present the biggest opportunity to save people time and save the government money.

People will only choose to use government services digitally if they are far more straightforward and convenient. The vast majority (82%) of the UK population is online but most people rarely use online government services.

The government provides more than 650 transactional services. There is only a handful of these services where a significant majority of people who could use the online option do. Many have a digital option, but few people use it. Half of these don't offer a digital option at all.

We will:

Improve departmental digital leadership

Departmental executive boards will include an active digital leader. Transactional services handling over 100,000 transactions each year will be redesigned, operated and improved by a skilled, experienced and empowered service manager.

Develop digital capability throughout the civil service

All departments will ensure that they have the right levels of digital capability in-house, including specialist skills. Cabinet Office will support improved digital capability across departments.

Redesign transactional services to meet a new Digital by Default Service Standard

All departments will undertake end-to-end service redesign of all transactional services with over 100,000 transactions each year. All new or redesigned transactional services going live after April 2014 will meet a new Digital by Default Service Standard (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/digital-by-default>).

There are 7 departments which between them handle the majority of central government transactions.

These are:

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Department for Transport (DFT)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Home Office

Each of these departments will agree 3 significant exemplar service transformations with Cabinet Office. These were identified and published in departmental digital strategies in December 2012, alongside delivery plans. Departments started to redesign these exemplar services in April 2013 and will implement them by March 2015.

Complete the transition to GOV.UK

Corporate publishing activities of all 24 ministerial departments will move onto GOV.UK by March 2013, with agency and arm's length bodies' online publishing to follow by July 2014.

Increase the number of people who use digital services

Departments will raise awareness of their digital services so more people know about and use them, and look at ways to use incentives to encourage digital adoption.

Provide consistent services for people who have rarely or never been online

It is important we do not leave anyone behind in this move to a digital by default approach. Departments will recognise and understand the needs of people who can't use digital services. We will provide appropriate support for these people to use digital services and other ways to access services for people who need them.

Broaden the range of those tendering to supply digital services including more small and medium sized enterprises

Cabinet Office will offer leaner and more lightweight tendering processes, as close to the best practice in industry as our regulatory requirements allow.

Build common technology platforms for digital by default services

Cabinet Office will lead in the definition and delivery of a new suite of common technology platforms, to underpin the new generation of digital by default services.

Remove unnecessary legislative barriers

Cabinet Office will work with departments to amend legislation that unnecessarily prevents us from developing straightforward, convenient digital services.

Base service decisions on accurate and timely management information

Departments will supply a consistent set of management information, as defined by Cabinet Office, for their transactional services.

Improve the way that the government makes policy and communicates with people

Departments will encourage policy teams to use a wider range of digital tools to communicate with and consult people, both within the UK and overseas.

Collaborate with partners across public, private and voluntary sectors to help more people go online

Departments will build digital inclusion into all relevant policies and programmes, and collaborate with private and third sector organisations to remove barriers to internet use, whether caused through lack of skills, motivation, access or trust.

Help third party organisations create new services and better information access for their own users by opening up government data and transactions

Departments will undertake cross-government discovery work with GDS to understand user needs for services delivered outside GOV.UK, and what APIs and open standards might be required to support them; and GDS will undertake development work on GOV.UK to make all information held on it easily reusable.

This strategy is just the beginning. We recognise that the changes required will be far from easy. Our existing processes and ways of working can get in the way, and many will need to change.

In December 2012, each department published their own departmental digital strategy explaining what actions they would take to contribute to this strategy. These actions provide a framework for continuing improvements in their services.

Cabinet Office will operate an annual review process to track departments' progress against the actions in this strategy.

The strategy does not cover local government services or the NHS. It also does not deal with the expansion of the broadband network which is being led by Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

Watch a British Sign Language version of this summary (<http://bit.ly/I55Gob>).

Introduction

This strategy contains 16 actions the government will take to become digital by default. Digital by default means digital services which are so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use digital services will choose to do so, while those who can't are not excluded.

This follows the Civil Service Reform plan (<http://my.civilservice.gov.uk/reform/>) by developing services that:

- allow straightforward access to information and services in times and in ways that are convenient to the users rather than the providers
- are more efficient and cost-effective to develop and run

If we successfully transform our services so they are digital by default, we can earn a reputation for offering high-quality, responsive, convenient and up-to-date services.

We made this commitment in response to the review of government online, 'Directgov 2010 and Beyond: Revolution not Evolution' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/directgov-2010-and-beyond-revolution-not-evolution-a-report-by-martha-lane-fox>), carried out by Martha Lane Fox as UK Digital Champion in 2010.

In his foreword to the Civil Service Reform plan, Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude said:

“ Central government where possible must become a digital organisation. These days the best service organisations deliver online everything that can be delivered online. This cuts their costs dramatically and allows access to information and services at times and in ways convenient to the users rather than the providers.”

The Government Digital Service (<http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>) will implement this strategy, supported by the digital leaders' network of senior civil servants, the Digital Advisory Board (<http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/2012/04/25/introducing-the-digital-advisory-board/>) and the Government Communication Network (<https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/>).

Each government department prepared and published its own departmental digital strategy. These documents explained how departments will make their services digital by default in ways that work for their users. These strategies were initially published by the end of 2012, in time to influence departments' 2013/14 planning process. They will set the framework for service transformation over the lifetime of the next spending review.

Watch Tim O'Reilly, the founder and CEO of O'Reilly Media, talk about the importance of focusing on user needs and how the Government Digital Strategy is “inspiring” because of its focus on user centred design:

What the strategy is about

This strategy is mainly about the services provided by central government departments and associated agencies and arm's length bodies. Some matters covered by the strategy are devolved and reference should be made to the devolved administrations for more details as to how this strategy affect their areas.

However, in order to provide public services digitally by default, all public bodies will need to work together. Most public services are provided by local organisations such as local councils and the NHS. People often use a range of services, not just one at a time. Most people and businesses don't differentiate between different levels and types of public services; they just want a good service.

To help other organisations improve their digital services, we will:

- make the digital assets (standards, designs and code) generated as a result of this strategy widely available
- share central government plans with local authorities and other public bodies
- work with local councils and their representative and professional bodies to help them to make improvements

The actions in this strategy are mainly about transactional services such as applications, tax, licensing and payments. The strategy explains how the civil service will develop new skills and approaches to complement its existing expertise. It also includes actions to improve the way the government makes policy and communicates with people.

This strategy is about users of services within the UK. Users overseas will be covered in appropriate departmental strategies.

DCMS is already leading on providing superfast broadband (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/transforming-uk-broadband>) to at least 90% of premises in the UK and providing universal access to standard broadband with a speed of at least 2Mbps.

The benefits of digital by default

Digital by default services are more efficient and more convenient for users. Our initial testing (<http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/2012/01/13/quantitative-testing-beta.gov/>) comparing GOV.UK to the previous Directgov and Businesslink.gov.uk sites shows a more positive rating on both ease of use (93% compared with 75% before) and speed (80 seconds as opposed to 120 seconds to undertake comparable transactions).

Government will save money if demand for higher cost channels decreases. A 2012 SOCITM study (<http://www.socitm.net/press/article/213/two-thirds-of-customer-contacts-with-local-authorities-are-now-online-says-new-research-from-socitm>) across 120 local councils estimated that the cost of contact for face to face transactions averages £8.62, for phone £2.83, but for web only 15 pence. The Digital Efficiency Report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-efficiency-report>) found that the average cost of a central government digital transaction can be almost 20 times lower than the cost of telephone and 50 times lower than face to face (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-efficiency-report/digital-efficiency-report#introduction>).

In 2010 HMRC estimated that around 35% of calls to its contact centres were avoidable (<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/hm-revenue-and-customs-handling-telephone-enquiries/>) at an National Audit Office estimated cost of £75 million a year. Changes have since been made to processes, letters and forms that have reduced the total number of calls and the proportion of avoidable calls to around 26% of the total.

On the basis of historical savings achieved by existing digital services, we estimate that £1.7 to £1.8 billion of total annual savings could be made by shifting the transactional services offered by central government departments from offline to digital channels. Of this, £1.1 to £1.3 billion will be saved directly by the government, with the rest passed on to service users through lower prices. These figures do not include the potential costs of a transition to digital, but also do not include the additional savings that could be gained from fundamental service redesign or back-end technology changes.

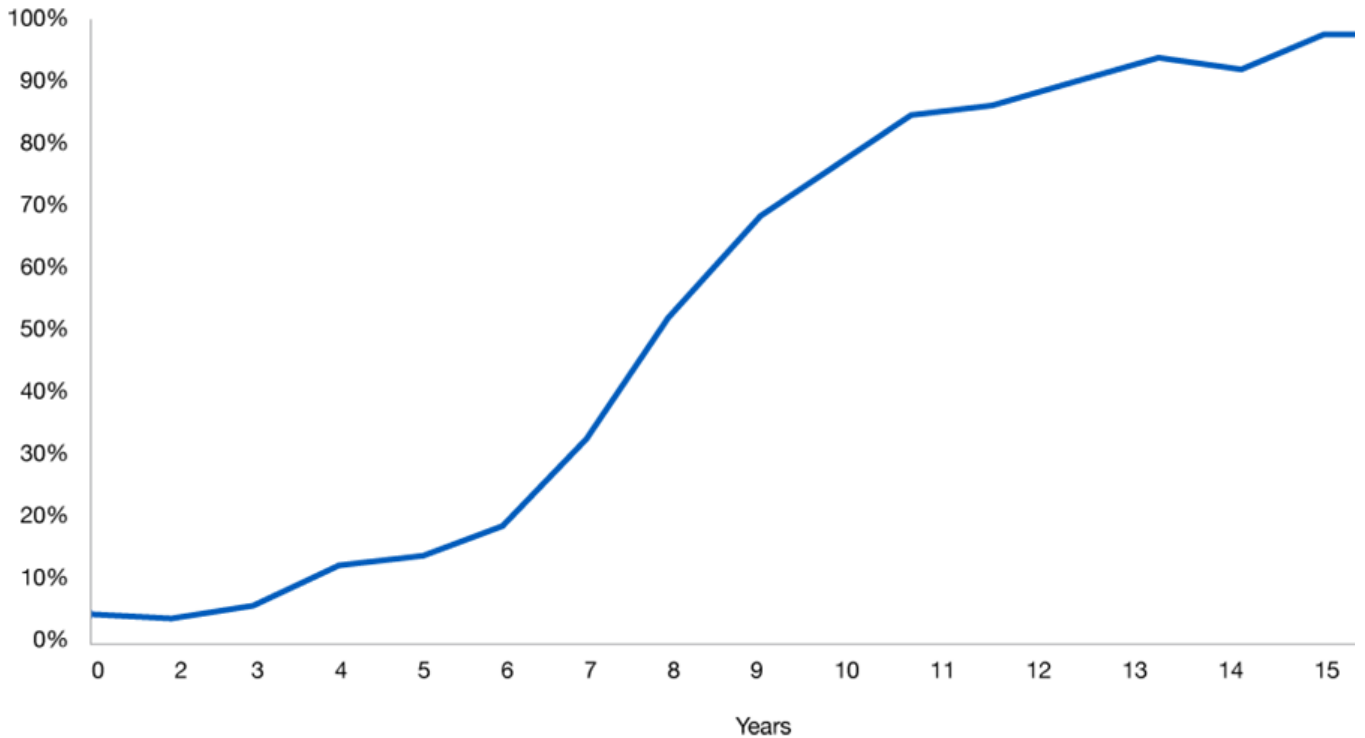


Figure 1: Digital take up curve, averaged across case study data

Evidence from the Digital Efficiency Report case studies (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-efficiency-report/digital-efficiency-report#annex-1-list-of-case-studies>) demonstrates public services exhibiting a typical technology adoption S-curve. For services at around 20% digital take-up, there is the opportunity to rapidly increase adoption to 80% within 3 to 5 years. This will be further increased where digitisation is accelerated by a process of fundamental service redesign based on user needs.

Digitising transactional services will save people and businesses time and money; by making transactions faster, reducing the number of failed transactions and simplifying the end-to-end process. Our estimates suggest that an hour spent interacting with government costs the average citizen £14.70 (<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/cost-of-time.pdf>). If just half an hour were saved by digitising every transaction currently completed offline, the total savings to the economy could therefore be around £1.8 billion (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-efficiency-report/digital-efficiency-report#estimates-of-total-annual-savings>). Furthermore, many public services are run by agencies that recover their costs directly through user charges, so reducing costs provides the potential for savings to be passed on to users.

The potential for more people to use government digital services

People who are already online

82% of the UK population are currently online and there is a clear opportunity for government to deliver services digitally to them. Although 77% of adults in the UK use the internet daily, many of them have never had any online interaction with government.

Change between chart and table

Online (access the internet regularly or occasionally) 82%

Offline (access the internet regularly or occasionally) 18%

Online (access the internet regularly or occasionally)

82%
Offline (access the internet regularly or occasionally)
18%

Figure 2: UK adult population by internet use. Source: Cabinet Office, Digital Landscape Survey, August 2012

A growing proportion of people are willing and able to use more complex digital services

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-landscape-research/digital-landscape-research#uk-digital-landscape>) that involve a high level of trust such as shopping and online banking. An Oxford Internet Institute survey (OxIS) (<http://oxis.oxi.ox.ac.uk/>) from 2011 shows that the proportion of internet users who shop online grew from 74% in 2005 to 86% in 2011; online banking usage grew from 45% in 2005 to 60% in 2011; and internet users who pay bills online grew from 39% in 2005 to 57% in 2011.

The popularity of online channels is recognised across the private sector, demonstrated by the fact that internet advertising's share of total UK advertising spend has risen to 33% (<http://www.zenithoptimedia.com/zenithoptimedia-releases-new-ad-forecasts-global-advertising-continues-to-grow-despite-eurozone-fears/>), well ahead of any other country, as UK advertisers respond to their customers' attention shifting online.

Furthermore, digital services are rapidly gaining strong reputations and loyalty from users. A 2012 YouGov poll (<http://yougov.co.uk/news/2012/07/11/best-amazon-google-bbc-iplayer/>) saw Amazon, Google and iPlayer become the highest-rated brands in the UK, overtaking more traditional companies such as John Lewis and Marks & Spencer.

The people who use digital services do so for reasons of speed and convenience (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-landscape-research/digital-landscape-research#who-is-online-and-who-is-offline>). The most frequent reasons people gave for choosing to use digital transactions were: it saved me a lot of time (85%), the site was clear and easy to use (62%) and I could do it outside office hours (61%).

54% of UK adults have used a government service/information online, but most of those have used only a small number of services and many have just used one. Moreover, according to 2011 OxIS research (<http://oxis.oxi.ox.ac.uk/>), the number of people using online government services has steadily increased from 39% in 2005 to 57% in 2011, but since 2007 this reach has plateaued.

Change between chart and table

Online and have used a government transaction online	46%
Online and have accessed government information online	8%
Online and have not used government information or transactions online	28%
Offline and willing to get online	6%
Offline and unwilling to get online	12%
Online and have used a government transaction online	46%
Online and have accessed government information online	8%
Online and have not used government information or transactions online	28%
Offline and willing to get online	6%
Offline and unwilling to get online	12%

Figure 3: Breakdown of UK population by use of government digital services and internet use.

Helping more people to use online services

Not everyone is online. Through our digital inclusion and assisted digital programmes, we will help more people to use online services.

Those in higher socio-economic groups (ABCs) are more likely to be online (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-landscape-research/digital-landscape-research#who-is-online-and-who-is-offline>), with 92% regularly or occasionally accessing the internet. 28% of disabled people are not online (rarely access/have never used the internet) and older people are more likely to be offline than other age groups (however 59% of people aged over 65 are online). Geography doesn't appear to have too great an influence on whether people access the internet or not, as people are offline in urban, suburban and rural areas.

A third of the people who are offline (ie 6% of the UK population) said they are interested in using the internet, suggesting that the number of people who are online may increase over time.

People who use mobile devices to get online

Digital services must adapt seamlessly to meet the needs of mobile internet users. The new digital service standard will include a requirement to design digital services that are usable on mobile devices as well as desktop and laptop computers.

In recent years there have been large advances in the portability and range of internet enabled devices. This has changed the way users access the internet (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-landscape-research/digital-landscape-research#who-is-online-and-who-is-offline>). The most popular devices used to access the internet are laptops and desktops (73% and 59% respectively), but mobile phone ownership is now widespread (86% of UK adults have a mobile phone). 56% of UK adults own a mobile that is internet-enabled, and their use to access the internet is growing.

The London 2012 Olympic Games provides a recent example of this trend towards mobile use (<http://www.slideshare.net/balf/london-2012com-olympic-games-digital-round-up-13-august-2012>), with over 60% of all visitors to the Games' website coming from mobile phones.

OxIS research (<http://oxis.oii.ox.ac.uk/>) shows that ownership of internet-enabled phones continues to grow among all income groups. This will increase the number of people who can access the internet. There is little correlation between the use of mobiles for the internet and annual income, with 35% of mobile internet users earning above £30,000 and 39% earning below £12,500. With 69% of current non-internet users owning a mobile, there is scope to increase access to internet-based information and services through this route.

Based on banking industry experience, this mobile web usage tends to be focused on simple straightforward transactions, notably progress tracking. This offers the potential to shift a high volume of this type of transaction across to digital self-service, resulting in savings from reduced use of more expensive telephony channels.

What we have already done

Government's online information services are closer to becoming users' preferred (default) option than its transactional services.

Government online publishing is in the process of being transformed by the GOV.UK programme, a radical simplification of government web publishing started in 2011 in response to Martha Lane Fox's review (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/directgov-2010-and-beyond-revolution-not-evolution-a-report-by-martha-lane-fox>). The GOV.UK website (which replaced the previous Directgov and Businesslink.gov.uk sites in October 2012 in providing government information for citizens and businesses) has already demonstrated that it is simpler, clearer and faster for users.

Government already uses digital channels for most of its communications, marketing and engagement. Most departments and many agencies have developed expertise in using social media and other third-party digital properties such as YouTube to communicate with people and businesses, rather than paying for other channels. The Red Tape Challenge (<http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index/>) and e-petitions (<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/>) are 2 examples of this approach.

Government has also made some progress in providing convenient, well-used and well regarded transactional digital services. For example, digital is the preferred channel for most users of Companies House, with an 89% online take-up of annual returns search and filing (http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/261356/channel_strategy_cases.pdf) achieved in just 5 years, and for HMRC's Self Assessment tax service where a record 80% of returns were filed online in 2011/12 (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20131002123445/http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/business-plan-2012.pdf>).

Progress is also being made in making government information and transactions more widely and conveniently available through third parties. Over 2 thirds of the 7.65 million Self Assessment transactions received online by HMRC are submitted via third-party software and service providers (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20131002123445/http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/business-plan-2012.pdf>). Over 1,500 such third-party commercial providers are accredited to use HMRC's third party integration suite (APIs).

In 2012 around 30% of digital filings to Companies House were made via its software filing service which offers an API for the transmission of data from commercial software packages. The clients of over 80 software providers use this service.

Developing digital transactions

Transactional services are the primary focus of this strategy. This is because developing transactional services offers the greatest scope to improve efficiency and the customer experience. A focus on developing these makes an important contribution to the government's Open Public Services agenda (http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/HMG_OpenPublicServices_web.pdf), supporting increased personalisation and choice within public services. And despite the progress outlined above, they are also the area where there is the most work to be done to improve the digital offer and increase user take-up.

There is a huge volume of transactions with government (<https://www.gov.uk/performance/transactions-explorer>). There were around 1 billion individual transactions a year with central government departments in 2011/12. This number rises to nearer 1.5 billion when other governmental organisations such as local government are taken into account.

These transactions are not evenly spread across departments, with just 7 responsible for around 90% of the central government transactions. These are HMRC, DFT, DWP, BIS, Defra, MOJ and the Home Office.

Whilst the majority of transactions are between government and individuals, there are also a significant number of transactions between government and business. This includes some which are very complex and high value (for example farming payments). In these cases, the use of specialist 3rd-party intermediary organisations is common. The process improvements recommended in this strategy will support these arrangements.

What is preventing people from using digital transactions?

Most government transactions fall far short of the standard of the best. Unlike successful digital services in the private sector, government's online services are not necessarily better or more convenient than other channels, meaning they will not be users' first choice to transact with us.

For example, in some circumstances it is quicker to apply for some services by phone than by using the existing online service. In 2011, around 150 million calls a year coming into government were self-reported as avoidable (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contact-centre-benchmarking-data-freedom-of-information-release>). Such failure is frustrating and time-consuming for users but it is also costly for government. If users have to revert back to other channels, then meeting this additional 'failure demand' is an unnecessary additional cost.

There are several causes of these failures. Many government services rely on digitised versions of pre-digital business processes, layered on top of legacy IT systems, some of which are over 30 years old. They were not designed with a digital service in mind, being built to replicate paper forms and processes rather than taking advantage of opportunities to pre-populate or respond to users' selections. They have outdated back-end systems which prevent effective data sharing, and/or they have long-term contracts locked into expensive vendors making changes to services costly and slow.

Each service has often been designed individually, rather than developing a consistent approach to user experience across the government digital estate. Hence the user experience of government transactions is inconsistent and unnecessarily confusing, particularly to less confident users.

Leading private sector digital businesses have learned that familiarity drives usage, and usage drives familiarity. This lack of a consistent, high-quality user experience is a critical issue holding back performance and adoption of our digital services.

Despite evidence of growing use of mobile devices as the route into digital channels, only a handful of government digital services cater fully for the needs of mobile internet users. Very few government digital services are flexible or agile enough to keep up with the rapid changes in user behaviour typified by the growth of the mobile sector. If existing lengthy procurement processes and inflexible development models continue, they will be similarly poorly placed to adapt at any pace to future changes in how people prefer to use the internet.

The Civil Service Reform plan (<http://my.civilservice.gov.uk/reform/>) acknowledges that we need to develop the right capability and skills to design, communicate and deliver the high-quality digital services we require. This digital strategy aligns with the Civil Service Capabilities plan; both will be woven into departments' own strategic planning, including their new Improvement Plans.

There has been an over-reliance on a handful of large systems integrators, referred to by the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) as an 'oligopoly' (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-administration-select-committee/news/report-on-Government-it-published/>). As a result, the civil service does not have the necessary depth of understanding and ownership of our digital channels to act as an "intelligent client". This makes services less efficient and less effective for users.

There are also weaknesses in the consistency, timeliness, accuracy and scope of management information to measure performance and costs between different services and channels. This means we may miss opportunities to target areas of waste, identify improvement opportunities or measure the benefits of change.

Assisted digital

We recognise that not everyone who uses government services is online, and that not everyone will be able to use digital services independently. The government has to ensure fair access to services for those who are entitled to them. To design services that work for users, we need to understand who can use digital services, who can't, and what else we need to provide for people who aren't online.

What we provide for people who aren't online will depend on the service and the needs of the user. Many people who are offline will keep using the services in non-digital ways, such as face to face, by phone and through intermediaries. In some cases, people may be offered help to use the digital channel.

We call this 'assisted digital'. This is an integral part of providing digital by default services. Departments will consider how they will provide this assistance at the same time as they are digitally transforming their services. Government Digital Service worked with departments to develop a cross-government approach (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-approach-to-assisted-digital>) to this issue. This is to ensure those users who need this help receive a consistent service across the multiple services they use.

Persuading those who are online to use government digital services

We want those who are able to use our digital services to do so. For those who can and do use digital services already, the actions outlined in this strategy will result in a better user experience and a wider range of high quality digital services.

To persuade people to use government digital services, we need to improve the quality of the services to make them clearly preferable to the alternatives.

We also need to make people aware of the services that are available. A number of techniques can be used to raise awareness and encourage people to use digital channels. Departments will consider which methods are most appropriate to the context of their service, and the needs of their service users.

Departments will learn from the expertise of organisations who have successfully undertaken 'channel shift' to digital services.

What about things that can't be done online?

Not every step of every interaction with government can, or should, be entirely digitised – a practical driving test can't be taken online. But even services that inherently involve face to face contact can be redesigned - digitally - around the needs of users.

For example, while over 90% of practical driving tests are booked online, driving examiners still fill in and file paper forms to confirm who has passed their test, adding cost and delay for users that a truly end-to-end digital service could remove. Driving Standards Agency is aiming to trial the introduction of mobile devices so that examiners don't have to fill in paper forms. They will be able to pass on test information to the next stages of the process more swiftly and efficiently.

Over time, the success of better designed digital services will allow government to reduce the scale and profile of less convenient, less effective and less cost-efficient contact methods (telephony, face to face, post).

Redesigning services around the needs of users

The most important part of this strategy is the need to redesign government services to respond to user needs.

We can learn lessons from other organisations which are succeeding in digital transformation such as high street banks or the BBC:

- basing service design on user needs is essential to ensure quality and reduce the cost of failure waste
- modern, flexible, common technology platforms are needed for frequently iterated, consistent user-focused services
- policy and delivery are best tightly integrated into one co-located team during any redesign of a digital service
- specialist technical architecture, development, design and analytics skills are essential, alongside new senior leadership roles, including that of a fully accountable and empowered service manager
- once services are redesigned to meet user needs, they need to be communicated and marketed effectively, by targeting appropriate messages to identified user groups through a range of trusted channels and intermediaries

How the civil service needs to develop

Measured against the European Digital Capability Framework set out below, departments are currently at varying levels of digital maturity.

- 5 Digital is at the heart of policy and strategy. Services are digital by default. Digital culture is strong: agile, user-centred, innovative, responsive.
- 4 Senior management have made significant progress in delivering the vision and plan, implementing new capability and trialling it successfully by re-engineering a range of services to be digital by default.
- 3 Senior management in place with a remit to set targets, develop over-arching vision and plan, and develop necessary capability and culture. Digital is seen as a key transformation and advocacy is strong at key parts of the organisation.
- 2 Some digital services, but often of limited quality. Digital teams in place but tend to be siloed in business units or service/programme teams and have limited budget and remit. Senior (board level) digital management not in place.
- 1 No awareness of digital capability, no resources allocated, no digital strategy, plan or metrics, no understanding of best practice, no digital services.

Figure 4: European Digital Capability Framework

By taking the principles and actions set out we will make progress in all departments towards the highest levels of strong, agile, responsive and, above all, user-centred digital service provision.

Actions

This strategy has 16 actions.

Departments published their own digital strategies in December 2012 setting out how they and their agencies and arm's length bodies will apply these principles to transform their own services to make them digital by default.

Action 1: Departmental and transactional agency boards will include an active digital leader

Case study

Martha Lane Fox, Antonia Romero (MOJ) and Ian Trenholm (Defra) talk about the impact of high-level digital leadership. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-1-active-board-level-leadership/action-1-case-study-active-board-level-leadership--2>)

- departments will have in place engaged, active, board-level leadership of service transformation
- digital leaders will lead on development and delivery of departmental digital strategies

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-1>).

Action 2: Services handling over 100,000 transactions each year will be re-designed, operated and improved by a skilled, experienced and empowered service manager

Case study

Roo Reynolds (GDS), Nikki Marsh (DWP) and Carolyn Williams (DVLA) talk about redesigning services the digital way. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-2-redesigning-services/action-2-case-study-redesigning-services-2>)

- service managers will be in place for new and redesigned transactions from April 2013
- departments will ensure all transactional services have clearly identified service managers by March 2015

Government Digital Service will:

- offer extensive training and support to help new service managers
- help departments to recruit service managers

Private sector organisations that have been at the forefront of delivering digital transformation have repeatedly indicated the importance of leadership at all levels to their success. It is therefore important that we ensure that suitably skilled and empowered leadership is in place within departments and agencies to lead service transformation.

Digital leaders will provide active senior leadership for departmental digital strategies and activities and provide expertise and challenge to their boards. Cabinet Office will help boards to identify digital leaders with suitable experience and skills (role specification in Annex 4 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy/government-digital-strategy#annex-4-description-of-a-digital-leaders-role>)). These will usually be members of the departmental executive (or management) board. In a number of departments, these are already in place.

In agencies and arm's length bodies that deliver significant transactional services, similar active board-level leadership is critical to achieving successful service transformation.

Outside government, organisations in the public and private sector are learning that empowered, experienced and highly skilled managers (often called product managers in the commercial world) are necessary to deliver high-quality digital services.

Government will adopt the same model, and ensure each of its transactional digital services handling over 100,000 transactions each year is developed, operated and continually improved by an experienced, skilled and empowered service manager. These are not technical IT posts, nor are they confined to running a website. Instead, they are individuals who work full-time to develop and deliver all the changes necessary to provide effective digital services. With a handful of exceptions, this is a new role within government. These service managers will:

- be experienced leaders, with an in-depth understanding of their service (built on continuity of involvement over a period of years) and equipped to represent their service and its users' needs at all levels within the organisation; for high-profile services these will be at senior civil servant level
- be accountable for the quality and usage of their service, and able to iterate the service based on user feedback at least every month
- be able to lead effectively on the change management and process re-engineering required to implement successful services
- have the digital literacy to engage with technical staff and suppliers to define the best system and platform configurations to achieve business/user objectives
- encourage the maximum possible take-up of their digital service by effective marketing, and specify/manage the requirements for assisted digital activity to supplement this
- oversee service redesign and subsequent operational delivery; supporting and ensuring the necessary project and approval processes are followed, monitoring and reporting on progress in line with the Digital by Default Service Standard, identifying and mitigating risks, and be empowered to deliver on all aspects
- actively participate in networking with other service managers inside and outside government, and share good practice and learning

Cabinet Office will help departments to recruit suitably skilled individuals. Newly appointed service managers will be supported by Cabinet Office through a specialist training programme run by the Government Digital Service. This will include the hands-on process of designing and prototyping a digital service.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-2>).

Action 3: All departments will ensure that they have appropriate digital capability in-house, including specialist skills

Case study

Roger Oldham (MOJ), Sue Unerman (MediaCom) and staff from the Government Digital Service talk about the importance of digital capabilities. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-3-in-house-digital-capability/action-3-case-study-in-house-digital-capability--2>).

- departments will have sufficient specialist capability to assess and manage their portfolio of digital services
- plans to improve departments' digital capability will be included in departmental digital strategies and business planning processes

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-3>).

Action 4: Cabinet Office will support improved digital capability across departments

Case study

Alice Newton talks about developing projects for Number 10 and beyond in the Technology in Business Fast Stream. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-4-digital-capability-across-departments/action-4-case-study-digital-capability-across-departments--2>)

- service managers will be offered an extensive programme of training and support (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/the-team/induction-and-development.html>), run by Government Digital Service from summer 2013
- senior officials across all departments will be offered training to highlight the strategic opportunities offered by digital from summer 2013
- the revised Graduate Fast Stream programme (<http://faststream.civilservice.gov.uk/>) will look for placement opportunities with a digital delivery service
- digital skills development across all grades will be a priority in the Civil Service Capabilities plan published in April 2013, supported by Civil Service Learning (<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/networks/hr/civil-service-learning>)

Government Digital Service will:

- increase support to departments' transactional service redesign projects
- help departments to improve their digital capability, including providing guidance on request about effective approaches to recruiting digital specialists
- develop extensive bespoke training and support for service managers
- work with Civil Service Learning to develop digital awareness training for civil servants

All departments should ensure that they have appropriate in-house specialist digital capability, including the management of their portfolio of digital services. This capability will vary in size and skill-sets depending on the balance of information and services the department is responsible for. It will typically include specialist digital skills in digital service design, development, analytics, digital strategy, online publishing and product management. Departments with lower volumes of transactions could share specialist digital resources.

Government Digital Service has a team which works with departments on transformational service redesign projects. This support will continue, and be extended. Annex 2 describes the support that is available.

To complement this internal development, approaches to recruitment will need to be adapted to attract staff with appropriate skills from outside government. Departments will also provide opportunities for existing staff to develop the required digital skills.

Specialist training and support for senior civil servants

Government Digital Service will help Civil Service Learning to develop training for senior civil servants to raise their awareness of the opportunities offered by digital to improve a wide range of policy outcomes.

Fast Stream and Future Leaders

Digital skills and leadership will be incorporated into the new government-wide approach to active corporate management of current and future leadership from FastStream through to future Permanent Secretaries (set out in the Civil Service Reform plan (<http://my.civilservice.gov.uk/reform/>)).

Where possible Fast Stream entrants should spend one of their 6 month placements during their first 2 years in a digital role. The new Future Leaders Scheme will aim to give middle managers operational management experience in a digitally delivered service area as part of overall career planning.

The wider civil service

General digital training activity across the wider civil service will be included in the government's capability building programme, led by Civil Service Learning. Departments will ensure appropriate levels of digital skills are part of core competencies, performance and objective-setting frameworks at all levels.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-4>).

Action 5: All departments will redesign services handling over 100,000 transactions each year

For the 7 transactional departments (HMRC, DFT, DWP, BIS, Defra, MOJ and the Home Office) plus Cabinet Office:

- 3 significant 'exemplar' services will be agreed with Cabinet Office and identified in departmental digital strategies in December 2012, alongside delivery plans
- redesign will start by April 2013 and the service must be implemented by March 2015
- following this and using the learning from the exemplars, departments will redesign all services handling over 100,000 transactions each year, unless an exemption has been agreed

For the remaining departments:

- departments will redesign all services handling over 100,000 transactions each year, unless an exemption has been agreed.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-5>).

Action 6: From April 2014, all new or redesigned transactional services will meet the Digital by Default Service Standard

Case study

Phil Pavitt talks about HMRC's efforts to update and modernise its services. Read more

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-6-encouraging-third-parties-to-develop-services-on-top-of-our-apis/action-6-case-study-encouraging-third-parties-to-develop-services-on-top-of-our-apis--2>)

Government Digital Service will:

- publish the Digital by Default Service Standard (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/digital-by-default>), which will describe the performance metrics and capabilities that services must achieve; the service standard criteria are published at Annex 3
- provide a programme of support, guidance and tools (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual>) that help service teams meet the standard throughout the development and life of the service
- agree with departments the deadlines for when digital services are to be redesigned
- increase the scale of its transformation team to support more transactional service redesign projects

- help departments to share what they learn from exemplar projects

Government digital services are inconsistent and often do not meet the standards that users expect. To ensure that users receive a consistently high-quality digital experience from government, Cabinet Office developed a service standard for all digital services. No new or redesigned service will go live unless they meet this standard.

The full standard (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/digital-by-default>) was published by the Cabinet Office in April 2013.

The majority of the benefits will be achieved by the 7 transactional departments. Therefore we will focus on redesigning their services as a first priority, with 3 'exemplar' services in each of these departments receiving end to end redesign by March 2015, plus one from Cabinet Office.

Service redesign and prototyping work for these exemplar services started April 2013 or earlier. For each service identified for redevelopment, a proposed delivery plan will be prepared, showing how the department will resource the project including meeting the challenges in senior digital leadership, appointing a suitably skilled service manager to lead from the inception of the redesign process and undertaking service design and project and product management. Any funding required will be found by departments from within existing budgets, re-prioritised where necessary.

Departments will share the learning from the transformation of these exemplar services to increase digital capability across the civil service.

All departments will redesign all their transactional services that handle over 100,000 transactions each year for completion by the end of the next spending review period. In November 2012 there were 152 transactions that met this threshold (<https://www.gov.uk/performance/transactions-explorer>). In exceptional circumstances departments may seek an exemption from this requirement; for example where a business case for digital by default service design does not demonstrate good value for money. Any put forward would be agreed at a cross-government level.

Departments will identify which services they transform first, for agreement with Cabinet Office. Annex 3 identifies a number of criteria which departments should consider when selecting which services to redesign to ensure the greatest benefit to users and savings to government.

Cabinet Office will measure progress annually and publish the results.

Departments with direct responsibility for fewer than 1 million transactions each year will transfer their information on to GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/>), but their departmental digital strategies will include clear plans for the future transformation of their services to digital by default.

Progress against transformation of the exemplar services is published on our Service Transformation Dashboard (<https://www.gov.uk/transformation>).

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-6>).

Action 7: Corporate publishing activities of all 24 central government departments will move onto GOV.UK by March 2013, with agency and arm's length bodies' online publishing to follow by July 2014

- resources for the transition to GOV.UK will be included in departmental digital strategies

Government Digital Service will:

- help departments to transfer online publishing to GOV.UK
- continue to operate and improve the GOV.UK online publishing platform at no cost to departments, agencies or arms length bodies

In October 2012, government took the first step towards enabling access to all departments', agencies' and arms length bodies' digital information and transactional services to citizens and businesses using one web address. GOV.UK has replaced Directgov and Businesslink.gov.uk as a single domain for government on the web.

GOV.UK has demonstrated how these methodologies can deliver high quality digital products that meet user needs, and are more efficient for government. In large scale user testing (<http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/2012/01/13/quantitative-testing-beta.gov/>), 93% of users rated GOV.UK as very/quite easy to use versus 75% for Directgov. Similarly, when looking for information, respondents using GOV.UK took an average of 80 seconds, as opposed to 120 seconds on Directgov.

Between November 2012 and March 2013, the corporate publishing activities of 24 ministerial departments will move onto GOV.UK. By March 2014, the information publishing aspects of all department, agency and arms length bodies websites (other than those granted a specific business-based exemption) will transfer to GOV.UK. We had originally intended to transfer the information publishing aspects of all department, agency and arm's length bodies websites (other than those granted a specific business-based exemption) to GOV.UK by March 2014. This was delayed because of difficulties in resourcing, which meant we didn't have enough people to do all the work. However, we have now resolved these and will complete transition by July 2014. Similarly, we are aiming to move HMRC (a non-ministerial department) across to GOV.UK by summer 2014.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-7>).

Action 8: Departments will raise awareness of their digital services so that more people know about them and use them

- departments will set out plans to encourage channel shift in departmental digital strategies, and these will be reviewed annually
- departments will publish plans that clearly identify the savings they expect to make as a result of increased use of digital services

Government Digital Service will:

- share examples of success across departments

In order to maximise the benefits from transformed digital services, departments must work to accelerate their take-up, shifting users able to access the internet away from non-digital channels. Departmental digital strategies will include clear plans for encouraging the move from offline to digital channels, through awareness raising, involvement of front-line staff and appropriate use of incentives.

Departments will re-assess the effectiveness of their promotional activities to maximise the awareness of new and existing digital services, and encourage those who could use them to trial them. This does not have to involve expensive marketing campaigns. It will build on service experience and expertise in behavioural insight and behaviour change in the public and private sectors to raise the profile of digital services, and encourage users to use them.

A key element of the channel shift approach will involve existing front-line staff (both face to face and telephony). They should be made proficient in the use of digital services and encouraged, trained and equipped to support people in trialling and using the services themselves (for example by having the same front end access to a service system as the user, making explanation and support more straightforward). As digital take-up increases, the role of front-line staff may evolve.

As well as ensuring users are aware of digital channels, the transition to digital as the channel of choice can be facilitated by use of incentives. A number of techniques have been trialled, such as passing on lower costs where fees are based on cost recovery, as Companies House did for company registrations; allowing later deadlines for online process completion, as used in HMRC's personal tax assessment transactions; or by entries into prize draws for online users, as offered by DVLA. Departments will be encouraged to trial a range of positive incentives to encourage digital adoption.

The Government Digital Service will work with service managers to collate and share experience and tools developed through initial transformation projects, as well as drawing in appropriate expertise from the commercial sector to share experience and techniques for facilitating channel shift.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-8>).

Action 9: There will be a cross-government approach to assisted digital. This means that people who have rarely or never been online will be able to access services offline, and we will provide additional ways for them to use the digital services

Marketa Mach, CEO of Go ON UK, talks about their work making sure that no-one is left behind by the growth of digital services. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/background-on-action-9-a-cross-government-approach-to-assisted-digital/action-9-case-study-assisted-digital--2>)

This means that people who have rarely or never been online will be able to access services offline, and we will provide additional ways for them to use the digital services

- departments will explain in their digital strategies how they will ensure that digital services include a consistent service for people who have rarely or never been online

Government Digital Service will:

- work with departments to implement a cross-government approach to assisted digital (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-approach-to-assisted-digital>), published in December 2012
- work with organisations representing people who can't use digital services to develop the cross-government approach

The government has to provide public services to everyone who is entitled to them. 18% of adults have rarely or never been online (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-landscape-research/digital-landscape-research#uk-digital-landscape>). Digital by default means that digital self-service is the default option for people who can use it, not the only option.

To ensure that people who are offline can access digital by default services, we will offer them ways to access services offline, and we will provide additional ways for them to use the digital services. These services must be designed to meet user needs. We call this 'assisted digital'.

We need to make sure that government takes a consistent approach to providing services for people who have rarely or never been online. This will be better for users and more efficient for government.

The approach includes a range of possible ways to provide services for people who are rarely or never online, depending on what the user needs are and how complex the service is. For example, for simpler transactions with a small proportion of users who don't use online services, services may use contact centres to provide another way to access the service. For more complex transactions and a high proportion of people who are not online, services may use a mix of face to face, phone and paper support. Face to face support may involve having people helping users to do their transaction on terminals, or a user being able to give their details to a person who will enter it into the digital service on their behalf.

Front-line staff have a vital role to play. They will signpost other ways for people who are not online to access services. Private or voluntary and community sector organisations will also be involved.

The Government Digital Service, departments and stakeholders including Age UK, Post Office, Online Centres Foundation, Citizens Advice, Go ON UK, Society of Chief Librarians, Digital Unite, Communications Consumer Panel, Carers UK, UCanDoIT, Shelter, Shaw Trust and Lasa worked together on the cross-government approach to assisted digital which was published in December 2012. Within government, we also worked with Arts Council England and BDUK.

The government published its approach (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-approach-to-assisted-digital/government-approach-to-assisted-digital>) in December 2012. Departmental digital strategies also reflect these plans.

Assisted digital is not about generally encouraging more people to go online, or increasing people's skills to use digital services. This work is covered by Action 15 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy/government-digital-strategy#action-15-collaborate-with-partners-across-public-private-and-voluntary-sectors-to-help-people-go-online>) on digital inclusion, where we are collaborating with Go ON UK in their work to help make the UK the most digitally capable nation in the world.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-9>).

Action 10: Cabinet Office will offer leaner and more lightweight tendering processes, as close to the best practice in industry as our regulatory requirements allow

Case study

Tim Brooks (BMJ Group) and Denise McDonagh (Home Office) talk about how SMEs can revolutionise digital delivery. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-10-offering-leaner-and-more-lightweight-tendering/action-10-case-study-offering-leaner-and-more-lightweight-tendering--2>)

It will:

- work with departments as part of its strategic supplier management function to maintain a forward looking pipeline of digital work, updated quarterly - this will enable businesses to invest in capability and resources appropriately
- use the existing spend controls process to encourage better pre-market engagement, shaping specifications to take advantage where appropriate of the market's latest offerings and innovations
- encourage suppliers who are new to government to undertake any bidder training needed to lower the effective barrier to entry for new vendors, as part of the existing commitment to ensure 25% of departmental external spend is with small and medium sized enterprises

Government Digital Service will continue to:

- offer training and awareness-raising to departmental procurement leads in support of new procurement arrangements

In 2009, the public sector spent around 1% of GDP on IT

(http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/317444/ict_strategy4.pdf). Departments currently rely on a few, large systems integrators to supply their digital requirements. They can lack the in-house expertise to act as a challenging and informed client, and this has resulted in expensive and inflexible long-term contracts which do not support delivery of services likely to meet the forthcoming digital service standard.

However, the UK has a burgeoning digital technology sector with a wide range of highly skilled and innovative companies, including small and medium sized enterprises who are often unable to access the government procurement market due to high barriers to entry and complex, expensive and often frustrating processes.

The need to redesign services to be digital by default is an opportunity to secure greater value for government, by changing how we commission our services, developing in-house capabilities and reducing our reliance on a few large systems integrators. Cabinet Office has built on existing procurement reform to develop new commissioning arrangements for digital projects (<http://gps.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/contracts/rm1043>), to encourage a wider range of bidders, including small and medium sized enterprises.

This will be accompanied by training and awareness raising for departmental procurement leads on the requirements for the new approach. To achieve this shift, there is a recognition that work will not inevitably go to the cheapest bidder, but that more flexible contracts with suppliers will be explored and assessed with a view to what longer-term value they will bring to government by providing agile and scalable solutions that meet user needs.

A number of new techniques may be introduced to the commissioning process to enable departments to gain a deeper understanding of the capabilities of prospective suppliers. These include collaborative procurement techniques where face to face time is maximised with prospective suppliers and scenarios are used to understand supplier capabilities and approaches. Another technique is the use of prototyping, where 'model' systems will be constructed for prospective suppliers to prove their integration capabilities and technical prowess of their staff. Both of these methods will be supported by fair and objective scoring.

The ICT strategy (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office/series/ict-strategy-resources>) stressed the need for government to procure its technical infrastructure - its servers, internet hosting, etc - as commodity services. The framework (<http://gcloud.civilservice.gov.uk/>) is an example of this shift, with over 300 suppliers offering cloud-based solutions on a pay-as-you-use basis, with a maximum 12 months contract. The learning from the development of the framework will be fed into other digital procurement and commissioning reform.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-10>).

Action 11: Cabinet Office will lead in the definition and delivery of a new suite of common technology platforms which will underpin the new generation of digital services

Case study

Tim O'Reilly and John Sheridan talk the benefits of opening up government data using APIs. Read more

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-11-build-government-as-a-platform/action-11-case-study-build-government-as-a-platform--2>)

- the Office of the Chief Technology Officer will explain the benefits of a platform approach to departments and then incorporate as appropriate in a refreshed IT strategy

Government Digital Service will:

- extend the range of platforms it supports beyond digital publishing (for GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/>)) to data insight, identity assurance and further common platform components
- help to define, develop and provide shared technology platforms to support digital by default services

Cabinet Office will lead in the definition and delivery of a range of common cross-government technology platforms, in consultation with departments to ensure they meet business needs. These will underpin the new generation of digital services. Departments will be expected to use these for new and redesigned services, unless a specific case for exemption is agreed.

We know that our users often find it hard to register for our online services, so it is vital that we offer a more straightforward, secure way to allow our users to identify themselves online while preserving their privacy. The Identity Assurance programme in the Cabinet Office will continue to develop a framework to enable federated identity assurance to be adopted across government services in due course. All our work in this area is guided by the identity and privacy principles (<http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/2012/04/24/identity-and-privacy-principles/>) drawn up by our Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group.

The Government Digital Service has also developed a data insight platform that will combine a range of data including analytics, web operations and financial information. Using clear visualisations, it will provide high level performance reports for leaders and more detailed data for service managers.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-11>).

Action 12: Cabinet Office will continue to work with departments to remove legislative barriers which unnecessarily prevent the development of straightforward and convenient digital services

- departments will identify existing legislative barriers in their departmental digital strategies

Government Digital Service will:

- offer specialist digital expertise to interpret existing legislation

In a few areas, laws made before the digital age can severely constrain the development of simple, convenient digital services. For example, HMRC have to provide tax coding notifications on paper rather than by electronic channels. Cabinet Office will work with departments to identify these potential barriers and ways to remove them. This could mean either reviewing current restrictive interpretations of laws passed before digital methods existed or, in some cases, by considering whether legislation needs to be changed. The Red Tape Challenge (<http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>) is examining some 6,500 substantive regulations and identifying at least 3,000 to scrap or overhaul. This includes finding ways to reduce burdens for businesses, taxpayers and individuals by moving to digital methods.

Policy and legal experts will work closely with digital specialists and those who are responsible for designing services to find a solution to any problems identified. We will hold these discussions early in each design process and continue them throughout development (some may also emerge during implementation and operational stages). We will share the solutions widely across departments to help with consistency and smoother joint working.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-12>).

Action 13: Departments will supply a consistent set of management information (as defined by Cabinet Office) for their transactional services

Case study

Richard Sargeant talks about how his team have helped to define performance information at the Government Digital Service. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-13-management-information/action-13-case-study-management-information--2>).

- departments will begin reporting against defined data-sets from April 2013
- digital by default services will include automated collection of management information

Government Digital Service will:

- share a list of required data sets with departments by December 2012
- help departments to define, collect, store and present performance data

Service managers and decision-makers need high quality, consistent management information to make sound decisions and help them monitor and improve performance. Some services collect and assess detailed performance data but most digital services still do not have good enough management information.

Cabinet Office will establish a consistent set of management information measures which departments will use, meaning they can effectively compare performance across time and against similar services. Collection of this information will be built into every new or redesigned digital service.

Reliable management information makes it possible for good performers to be identified and given recognition. Service performance will not only be bench-marked against historical performance, but also standards recognised as best practice.

Service performance will be measured through a clear and consistent set of indicators. These will include:

- cost per transaction: this measures whether a service is using a cost-effective set of delivery channels and whether users are choosing to use more or less expensive channels to complete their transaction
- user satisfaction: this enables service managers to identify potential weaknesses in a service and areas to focus improvement efforts
- transaction completion rates: this may highlight possible process flaws or ambiguities in the service although abandonment measures have to be designed and monitored with an understanding of each transaction stage (for example, identifying where users drop out as a result of establishing that they are ineligible for a service in the course of an application)
- take-up levels: this illustrates how rapidly users are adopting new digital channels and where additional or different marketing may be useful

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-13>).

Action 14: Policy teams will use digital tools and techniques to engage with and consult the public

Case study

Stephen Hale and Rachel Neaman talk about developing policy with the help of social media and digital consultation at the Department of Health. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-14-using-digital-tools-to-engage-the-public/action-14-case-study-using-digital-tools-to-engage-the-public--2>)

- departments will incorporate plans in their departmental digital strategies to listen to and understand conversations in social media, use the insight gained to inform the policy-making process and to collaborate more effectively with partners

Government Digital Service will:

- continue to offer support, training and guidance to departments
- produce a range of case studies highlighting successful techniques and the digital tools to enable them, to help policy teams to engage and consult more effectively
- keep the civil service social media guidance up to date

Transactional services and information are the primary focus of our digital by default approach, but digital also provides ways to improve the broader policy making process, through better engagement and consultation. It has the potential to transform democratic participation in the policy process, and improve the design of policy itself. The Civil Service Reform plan (<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform>) states "Open policy making will become the default" and we will use digital to achieve that outcome.

We have already developed better skills in listening and responding to public feedback through digital channels. In May 2012, social media guidelines were issued to civil servants based on 6 principles – that government should:

- communicate with citizens in the places they already are
- use social media to consult and engage
- use social media to be more transparent and accountable
- be part of the conversation with all the benefits that brings
- understand that government can't do everything alone
- expect civil servants to adhere to the Civil Service Code (<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values>) (online as well as offline)

Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude said:

“ When civil servants, policy makers and service delivery units alike, open themselves to dialogue with the public they can glean a much better understanding of the real needs and concerns of citizens. They can keep up to date with the latest thinking as well as being a listening post and avenue for real time reassurance and information”.

Civil servants are exploring the opportunities social media offers, whether by entering into dialogue, consulting and engaging, improving their policy making or simply listening to people's concerns. For example, Department of Health made a draft Bill openly available for comment online using social media in July 2012. This increased openness and made it straightforward for people to comment on individual clauses or topics before the Bill was introduced to Parliament. This ran alongside other offline stakeholder engagement. The Red Tape Challenge website 'crowd sources' views from business, organisations and the public on which regulations should be improved, kept 'as is' or scrapped. These comments have directly influenced the decisions to scrap or overhaul (<https://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/progress-to-date>) over 1,100 regulations (of the 2,300 examined by November 2012).

Departments will train and develop policy teams to understand and use a wider range of digital methods and channels. They will use these to engage and consult with the public on a daily basis around areas of policy development, up to and including formal consultations. Cabinet Office will also provide training to policy teams on the potential of digital by default approaches as they draw up policy proposals.

We are developing a range of case studies on successful use of digital policy-making tools and techniques (<http://openpolicy.demsoc.org/start-here/using-the-matrix/>), supported by guidance to civil servants on effective online consultation techniques and approaches.

Read how departments are responding to this action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy-action-14>).

Action 15: Collaborate with partners across public, private and voluntary sectors to help people go online

The government announced a new action on digital inclusion as part of the one year on refresh of the Government Digital Strategy. Anna-Maren Ashford, Deputy Director for Partnerships and Digital Inclusion and Michael Windmill, Head of Policy for Digital Inclusion, discuss why the new action has been introduced. Read more (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/background-on-action-15-why-digital-inclusion-matters/action-15-why-digital-inclusion-matters>)

Departments will:

- appoint a senior digital inclusion lead accountable to their departmental digital leader where it has been agreed with Government Digital Service (GDS) that this is relevant to their business
- agree the resourcing they will provide to the cross-government digital inclusion team based in GDS, which will collaborate with partners across public, private and voluntary sectors
- build digital inclusion into policy making and use government digital and assisted digital services to help people go online

GDS will:

- publish a set of digital inclusion principles by early 2014
- work with departments and partners to agree our approach to digital inclusion and publish a digital inclusion strategy in spring 2014

- collaborate with government and cross-sector partners to establish and support programmes that help those who are digitally excluded
- evaluate, monitor and share what works

The government cannot tackle digital exclusion alone. Our approach to assisted digital (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy/government-digital-strategy#action-9-there-will-be-a-cross-government-approach-to-assisted-digital-this-means-that-people-who-have-rarely-or-never-been-online-will-be-able-to-access-services-offline-and-we-will-provide-additional-ways-for-them-to-use-the-digital-services>) will provide 1 way for departments to help people go online, but accessing government services is far from the only motivation.

Digital inclusion is about having the right access, skills, motivation and trust to confidently go online. The challenge is not confined to individuals; digital exclusion can apply to some businesses or voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

Empowering people to go online can help tackle wider social issues, support economic growth and close equality gaps. To do this we will collaborate and build better, stronger, more sustainable partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors. We will do this together with Go On UK (<http://www.go-on.co.uk/>) who will provide 1 of the links between government and non-government partners.

Departments and devolved administrations have already appointed a senior digital inclusion lead where relevant to their business. They will embed ways of helping people go online into programmes and policy making and help remove the barriers that people face. This will include building digital inclusion into digital and assisted digital services.

We will publish a government digital inclusion strategy in Spring 2014 setting out the joint actions we will take with cross-sector partners.

Action 16: Help third party organisations create new services and better information access for their own users by opening up government data and transactions

Departments will work with Government Digital Service (GDS) during 2014 on cross-government discovery work to understand user needs and the approaches and standards required to support them.

By March 2015, GDS will:

- undertake development work on GOV.UK to make all information held on it easily reusable
- work to achieve Open Data Institute certification
- identify tools to simplify the publication of common government data formats

In her 2010 report to Francis Maude (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/directgov-2010-and-beyond-revolution-not-evolution-a-report-by-martha-lane-fox>) on what needed to be done by the government to move to digital by default, Baroness Lane-Fox emphasised the need to move to a 'service culture', putting the needs of citizens ahead of those of departments. She said this increase in focus on end users should include opening up government transactions so they can be delivered easily by commercial and not-for-profit organisations, and putting information wherever people are on the web, by syndicating content.

Our Digital by Default Service Standard already guides services towards offering high-quality application programme interfaces (APIs), allowing departments to integrate services, and make these available to third parties. Some of our services already use them, and are featured elsewhere in the Strategy; for example, HMRC's APIs that enabled accountants and software providers to integrate filing tax details and company accounts (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-6-encouraging-third-parties-to-develop-services-on-top-of-our-apis/action-6-case-study-encouraging-third-parties-to-develop-services-on-top-of-our-apis-2>) and the National Archives database of legislation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/case-study-on-action-11-build-government-as-a-platform/action-11-case-study-build-government-as-a-platform-2>). However, we need to move beyond this to make this approach a core part of our digital service transformation thinking and processes from the very beginning.

If we do this, there are many potential benefits to government and users alike:

- the HMRC example mentioned above means that businesses only have to file information once for use for both tax and company accounting purposes, which is more convenient, saving them time and duplication of effort
- DVLA are working on providing simpler, clearer, faster services to the insurance industry to allow them to verify the information provided during insurance sign-up. This reduces risk for the industry and provides drivers with more accurately calculated

insurance

- we can get information more easily and naturally to people, in places they are likely to be more receptive to it, rather than having to persuade them to visit a government website; the FCO travel advice pages on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>) offer an API, enabling this information to be made available through travel company and general advice sites
- comparing various sources of data that government holds can help increase their accuracy - we only do this with stringent privacy provisions in place; in building the new Individual Electoral Registration service, using APIs allows data comparison between nearly 400 electoral registers and DWP records which provides increased confidence to electoral registration officers on each registration and should increase public trust in the integrity of the electoral system

As a first step, we'll develop GOV.UK to make all information held on it easily reusable, seek Open Data Institute certification (<http://theodi.org/news/new-certificates-launched-help-everyone-discover-understand-and-use-open-data>) for the site, and find ways to make the publication of common data formats simpler and easier, linked with the work being undertaken through the Open Standards Board (<http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/2013/09/27/first-open-standards-selected/>).

In the meantime, we will undertake further work with users during 2014 to understand what will be especially valuable to make available to them in this way. We'll also explore any concerns they have about issues such as privacy or trustworthiness of services claiming to be provided in partnership with government, so we take account of these in designing our future approaches.

Depending on the outcomes, we'll then look to select a few services to work with to build prototypes and pilot API use. That way we'll better understand the challenges and opportunities that this approach offers, can share this learning with people transforming digital services, and potentially identify useful common standards and formats for elements of APIs for use across government.

Once we have the insights we need, we'll provide clear advice and guidance through the Government Service Design Manual (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual>) and clarify and strengthen what we expect new and redesigned services to have done in this area to achieve Digital by Default Service Standard (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/digital-by-default>) accreditation.

Annex 1: Glossary

Glossary

Agile

An approach where projects and products progress and develop in incremental iterations. The product works from a very early stage, so improvement can be made based on real user feedback and testing.

API

An application programming interface (or API) is a way of making information available to other developers for use in tools and services. APIs allow developers to use information quickly and easily, and help to ensure that they can access data in the most efficient way available.

Digital

By 'digital', we mean internet-enabled; such as desktop, laptop, tablet, mobile or digital devices not yet invented.

Executive board

An 'executive board' will typically be a sub-committee of the departmental ministerial board and may also be referred to as 'management board' or 'executive committee'. Departments will ensure that there is engaged leadership at sufficiently senior level to make service transformation possible.

Information services

Information services cover the publishing of information to help citizens and businesses in their engagement with government. For example, in August 2012, one of the most visited informational pages on Directgov listed the dates of forthcoming public holidays.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Small and medium sized enterprises (or SMEs) are defined by the European Commission as enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €43 million.

Systems Integrator

A systems integrator (or SI) is an individual or business that builds computing systems for clients by combining hardware and software products from multiple vendors and ensuring that those subsystems function together.

Transactional services

Transactional services include interactions with the government, from booking driving tests and filing tax returns to setting up a company and applying for a public house licence: everything which involves sharing information, requesting services, buying goods, asking for permission, or paying money.

Annex 2: Service transformation

Government Digital Service transformation team

The transformation team works with departments, agencies, non-departmental public bodies and arms length bodies on their digital transformation projects. It helps establish what departments do, who departments do it for, legacy challenges, in-house digital capability and savings opportunities from channel shift and technology replacement. It supports them using either a co-delivery or consultancy model.

The main objective is to provide user-focused, cost effective and maintainable digital services.

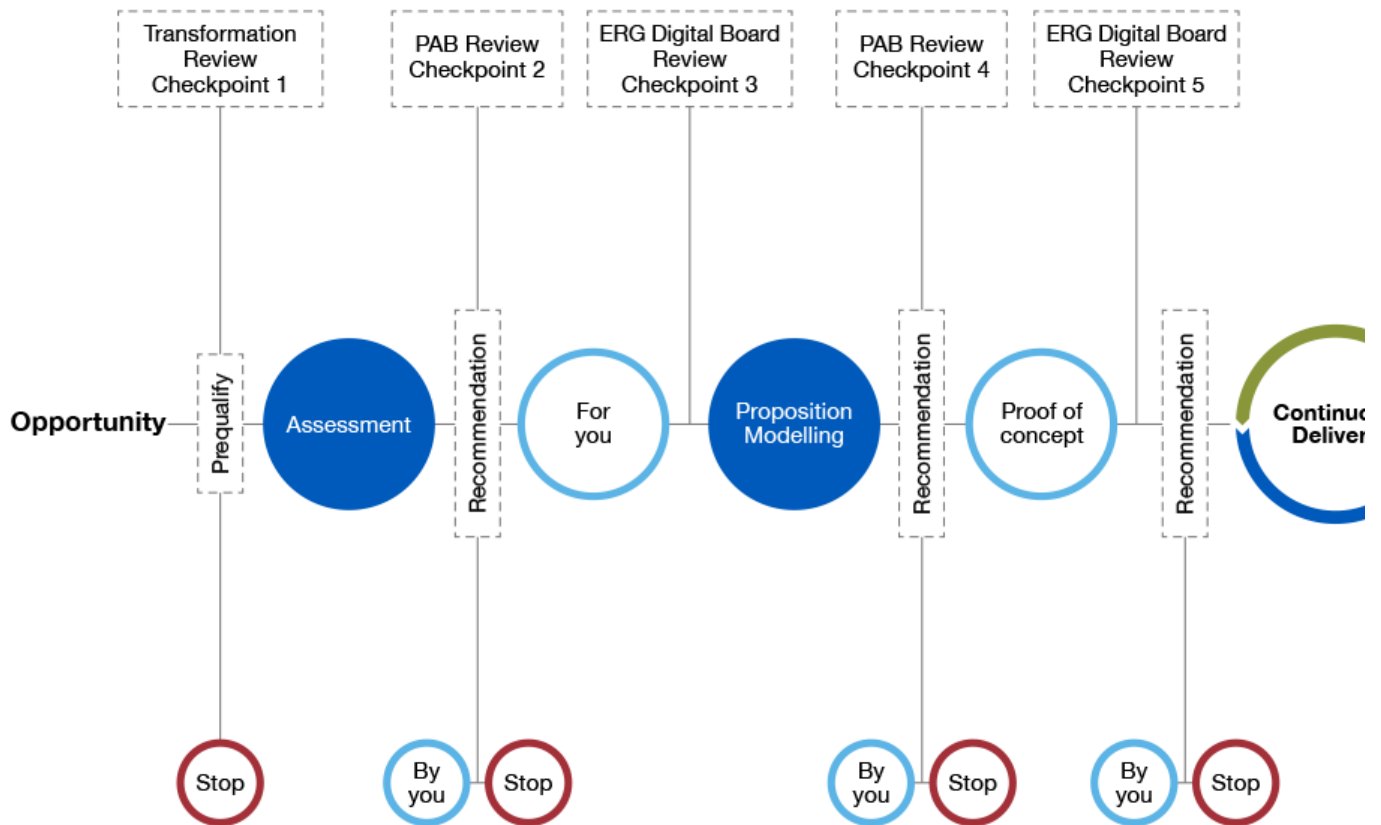
Deliverables

- implementation of controls and governance for digital transformation projects
- assessment and approval of departmental digital projects
- detailed feasibility and direction-setting
- building and supporting departments digital capability
- establishing a new government supplier chain for digital services using small and medium sized enterprises
- managing delivery and benefits realisation

Governance and controls

- Government Digital Service operates a set of controls for Cabinet Office to control spend on digital projects and initiatives
- these are managed in conjunction with departments through the Digital Leader Network
- propositions are formally submitted to and reviewed by the transformation team, with collaboration from the submitting department
- 2 formal boards control the approval of recommended approaches, spend control exercise and Efficiency and Reform Group wider approval with IT Reform Group and Commercial Models Team
- all propositions must deliver user value and financial savings

Transformation programme governance



Assessment criteria

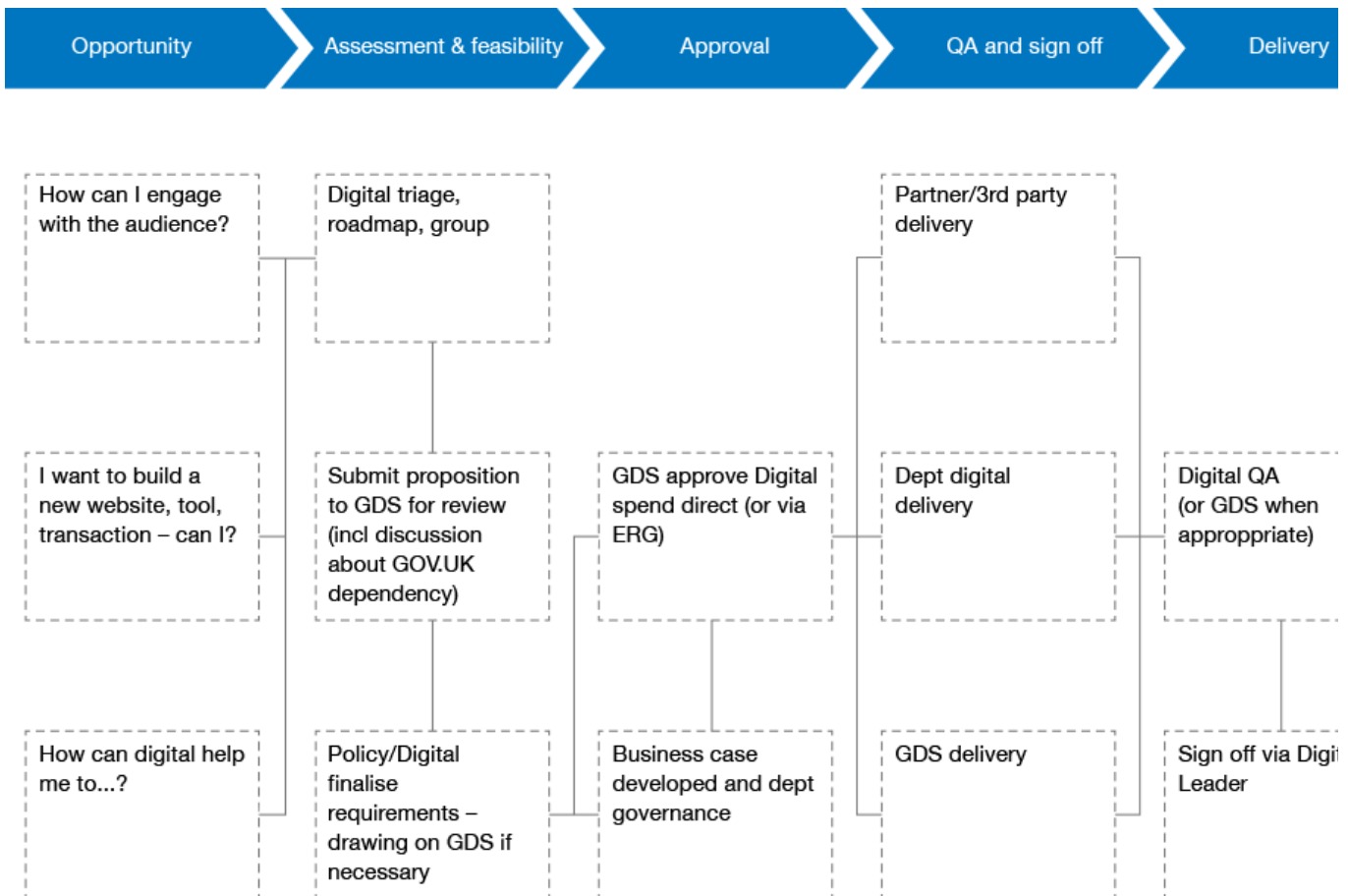
Departmental propositions are assessed at different stages of the process but a common theme runs throughout:

- what is the department trying to do?
- who are they doing it for?
- what is the investment and savings opportunity?
- what constraints do we face (people/process/technology)?
- how will we measure success?
- what factors are critical to success?

Given the above, a recommendation is put forward.

Departments are encouraged to use the same assessment criteria during their own service proposition (portfolio) management process.

An example of an existing departmental proposition management process is given below.



Annex 3: Guidance on how to identify departmental priorities

Departments will be responsible for how they plan the redesign of their services.

Departmental decisions on priorities for determining the order that services come forward for end-to-end redesign will therefore vary according to circumstances and opportunities, but prioritisation could be based on any of the following:

- high volume, high impact processes where improvements will benefit a lot of users rapidly
- quick wins, where there is opportunity to do a short sharp piece of work to transform a service (or important aspects of it)
- services where a high proportion of potential users are already online, providing opportunities to achieve high digital take-up rapidly
- breaks in contract provision, where a change offers an opportunity for a re-appraisal of what is delivered and how
- a service currently perceived as problematic or 'failing', where a transformational redesign will reduce user frustration or operational inefficiencies resulting in savings
- 'greenfield' opportunities to introduce new digital services
- opportunities or inter-dependencies within or between departments to provide more holistic and connected services to users (digital leaders and Government Digital Service will actively look for such opportunities as plans are drawn up)

Annex 4: Description of a digital leader's role

A new digital leaders' network was established in early 2012 to drive forward the digital agenda across government. The network is run by the Government Digital Service and is made up of a departmental digital leader from each main government department, plus digital leaders from each of the devolved administrations. A draft job description was reviewed at the digital leaders' meeting on 27 March 2012. It was amended following the meeting to include a specific job description to reflect the slightly different role of the devolved administration members.

Digital leader profile

- Board/executive team member
- Director General/Executive Director level
- Experience of leading large scale transformation programs inside/outside government
- Digitally aware and willing to learn from internal and external leaders

Digital leader role (excluding devolved administration representatives)

- to act as the single point of contact for the department's strategic interactions with Government Digital Service - including co-ordinating digital activity for departmental agencies, arms length bodies and non-departmental public bodies
- to co-ordinate, direct and lead those involved in the digital agenda across the department
- to promote and encourage take-up of digital by default within the department, with stakeholders and customers, using the Digital Advisory Board for support where appropriate
- to actively participate in the development of the government digital strategy in support of Government Digital Service
- to co-create the departmental digital strategy to provide the strategic context for the department's digital activities, in line with the wider government digital strategy - within this context, to agree a digital roadmap setting out the department's digital service plans over the Spending Review period, and to:
 - ensure the departmental digital strategy and roadmap are embedded in the department's business planning process
 - work with Government Digital Service to develop appropriate benchmarks and indicators to demonstrate the changing outcomes 'on the ground' through delivery of the departmental digital strategy and roadmap
 - ensure the department has the necessary skilled and knowledgeable staff required to deliver the departmental digital strategy and roadmap
 - oversee delivery of the departmental digital strategy and roadmap; supporting and ensuring the necessary project approval processes are followed, monitoring and reporting on progress, identifying and mitigating risks, etc
- to actively participate in digital leaders' network meetings, sharing good practice and learning. This group will also provide the strategic governance mechanism for the new GOV.UK single domain

Digital leader role - devolved administration representatives

- to act as the lead point of contact for the devolved administration's strategic interactions with Government Digital Service. This also includes seeking to ensure that devolved administration delivery partners and the wider public sector in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales are aligned to devolved administrations' approach to the UK government's digital agenda
- to co-ordinate and provide a leadership role to those involved in the digital agenda across Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales
- to promote and encourage take-up of the devolved administrations' approach to the UK government's digital agenda, with stakeholders and customers
- to actively participate in the development of the UK government digital strategy in support of Government Digital Service

- to provide information on the devolved administrations' digital activities to support the development of the UK government digital strategy, and also to:
 - work with the digital leaders' network to ensure that departmental digital strategies reflect the needs and requirements of Scotland/Northern Ireland/Wales (including the Welsh language)
 - work with Government Digital Service to develop appropriate benchmarks and indicators to demonstrate the changing outcomes 'on the ground' achieved through delivery of the UK government digital strategy
- to actively participate in UK digital leaders' network meetings, sharing good practice and learning; this group will also provide the strategic governance mechanism for the new GOV.UK single domain

Contents