

# Power of Information Task Force

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BY BFN | MAY 1, 2009 · 10:35 AM

## Web Usability Guidance

A [new set of web usability guidance has been published by the Central Office of Information](#) as a follow-up to some work by the Taskforce.

The aim of this is –

To help Web editors and Web content developers incorporate the basics of usability across all public sector websites.

*Richard Allan, Taskforce Chair*

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BY BFN | APRIL 24, 2009 · 9:23 AM

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# Ordnance Survey Proposals

The Ordnance Survey has [now published proposals to make changes to the way it makes its data available in a new Business Strategy](#).

The key aims are described by the OS as:

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Within this framework, it has been agreed with Ministers to focus the business around five key areas. These are:

1. Promote innovation for economic benefit and social engagement
2. Increase the use of Ordnance Survey data
3. Support the sharing of information across the whole of the public sector
4. Increase efficiency to develop a sustainable business for the future
5. Enhance value through the creation of an innovative trading entity

The overall aim of this new business strategy is to provide the best balance between making information more widely available and creating a sustainable future for Ordnance Survey and the wider market.

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The document is open for comment and is already attracting some interesting feedback.

*Richard Allan, Taskforce Chair*

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BY BFN | MARCH 17, 2009 · 10:42 PM

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# Improving Government Websites

The Central Office of Information (COI) has been working with Cabinet Office to respond to audits of the government web estate.

An important part of this is the development of guidance to assess the quality and value of government websites.

They have now [published the guidance and are inviting comments on it until 7th April 2009](#).

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BY BFN | MARCH 10, 2009 · 10:15 PM

## Working Together

The Government today published a [new document called 'Working Together – Public Services on your side'](#) outlining its vision for public sector reform.

This contains the comments below in [the Strategic Government section](#) which refer to the Taskforce report:

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### **Delivering transparency**

A focus on outcomes is only meaningful when it is combined with clear and reliable information on performance. Transparency that delivers accessible and useful information on the performance of services and the outcomes they achieve is at the heart of our strategy for improving public services.

The independent Power of Information Task Force published its report on 2 March. The report contained 25 challenging recommendations to government aimed at improving the use of information in this new world. The Task Force's work has been recognised internationally as providing a cutting-edge vision, with examples of what modern public service delivery might be.

The Government welcomes the task force's vision, accepts its overall messages and will be responding on the detailed recommendations shortly. We are already taking steps to implement this vision and in 2009 we will seek to deliver the following:

**Open information.** To have an effective voice, people need to be able to understand what is going on in their public services. Government will publish information about public services in ways that are easy to find, easy to use, and easy to re-use, and will unlock data, where appropriate, through the work of the Office of Public Sector Information.

**Open innovation.** We will promote innovation in online public services to respond to changing expectations. The Government will seek to build on the early success of [innovate.direct.gov.uk](http://innovate.direct.gov.uk) by building such innovation into the culture of public services and public sector websites.

**Open discussion.** We will promote greater engagement with the public through more interactive online consultation and collaboration. We will also empower professionals to be active on online peer-support networks in their area of work.

**Open feedback.** Most importantly, the public should be able to have a fair say about their services. The Government will publish best practice in engaging with the public in large numbers online, drawing on the experience of the <http://www.showusabetterway.com> competition and the <http://www.londonsummit.gov.uk>, as well as leading private sector examples like <http://www.ideastorm.com>.

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BY BFN | MARCH 4, 2009 · 5:09 PM

## Open Government in Canada

Jennifer Bell of the [Visible Government organisation in Canada](#) has shared some [good slides presenting her view on the open government agenda](#) which are worth reading through.

*Richard Allan, Taskforce Chair*

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BY BFN | MARCH 4, 2009 · 1:01 AM

# Final Report

We have now published the [final version of the Taskforce report](#) and will be circulating this as widely as we can.

The Cabinet Office site where it is published has now been closed for comments but feedback on the report is still welcome here on the blog.

A [netvibes panel has also been created to track the #poit tag](#) though this is not exclusive to our work so please ignore other unrelated content that sneaks in.

The next stage is for the government to give an official response to the report through Cabinet Office Minister Tom Watson MP.

*Richard Allan, Taskforce Chair*

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BY BFN | FEBRUARY 27, 2009 · 7:39 PM

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## Report Update 2

The editing and presentation of the final report has taken longer than originally anticipated so it could not appear this week.

Our aim is to preserve all the beta version text and comments so this can still be read online along with the final report. And we are trying to create good clean document copies in various formats. All this is non-trivial for the small Taskforce team to do but we are nearly there now.

In the meantime, you may be interested in looking at the [UK government's updated open source software policy](#) and the excellent [Netvibes dashboard for discussion about this](#).

*Richard Allan, Taskforce Chair*

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## About the Taskforce

[Ed](#) and [Tom's](#) report set out the social and economic gains that be achieved from better use of the data that government holds, as well as setting out how much further the government has to go to capitalise on these.

The Power of Information Taskforce (member list [here](#)) was established by Cabinet Office Minister Tom Watson MP in March 2008. We will be rising to this challenge over the coming months. We have broken the work down into two strands:

- Exemplars; and
- Enablers.

The exemplars will be small projects demonstrating the Power of Information principles in action broadly in the fields of:

- Criminal Justice;
- Health; and
- Education.

We shall stray out side these areas when interesting opportunities arise.

As these exemplars develop progress will be discussed on the blog. We are aware that we won't have a monopoly on good ideas, so please come and share your thoughts and ideas in the comments. If you're shy please email us at [poi@cabinet-office.gov.uk](mailto:poi@cabinet-office.gov.uk)

We see the enablers as being the structural barriers to innovation that exist at the moment. A good example would be the guidance to civil servants on use of social media. Before this was published on 18th June, then civil servants didn't have a clear interpretation of the civil service code for finding a voice online – so.were impeded from blogging or participating on forums in a professional capacity.

We shall be discussing progress as we make it and sharing our emerging thinking. We are looking for a lively discussion in the comments so please share your thoughts.

Our Terms of Reference are:

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To advise and assist the government on delivering benefit to the public from new developments in digital media and the use of citizen- and state-generated information in the UK, including those identified in the Power of Information Review.

The Taskforce will report to the Minister for Transformational Government at the Cabinet Office but work with public sector bodies where it sees benefit to the citizen or workforce. The Taskforce will operate in an open and transparent manner using modern media.

In the light of early progress since the Government responded to the [Power of Information Review](#) (Cm 7157 and the [Interim Report](#)) the Taskforce will consider the following sub questions:

- How can government further catalyse more beneficial creation and sharing of knowledge, and mutual support, between citizens?
- What more can and should be done to improve the way government and its agencies publish and share non personal information?
- Are there any further notable information opportunities or shortfalls in sectors outside government that those sectors could work to rectify?

The Taskforce will examine information created both by citizens and government and, like the Power of Information Review, is not about individuals' private information, such as medical or credit records.

The full list of members can be found [here](#).

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For further information, please contact the Task Force secretariat by email at [poi@cabinet-office.gov.uk](mailto:poi@cabinet-office.gov.uk).

For press enquiries please contact Alex Marklew on 020 7276 0436.

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[Tom Steinberg](#) ([MySociety](#))

[Tom Loosemore](#) ([OFCOM](#))

Sally Russell ([Netmums](#))

Richard Sargeant ([Google](#))

Alex Allan ([Cabinet Office](#))

Andrew Stott ([Cabinet Office](#))

Natalie Ceeney ([National Archives](#))

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## 3 responses to “*Taskforce Membership*”

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Pingback: [FutureGov » Features » Translating data into delivery: the Power of Information](#)

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Pingback: [LSE Group Blog » Blog Archive » UK Power of Information Taskforce Report pre-released](#)

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### **hugh barnard**

February 6, 2009 at 7:08 am

Whilst this is likely to be -slightly- more relevant than the Carter Report (no great feat), it’s still more maundering by the great and the good about what they’re preparing to inflict on the proles.

The key is in the language ‘delivery’, ‘web 2.0’ ‘mashup’, for example. One can see that these people are in love with themselves, technology and care less about actual substance. Also,, what’s Google doing in there? (although I know that Microsoft invented NHS connecting for health, on the back of an envelope via Neal Holloway!).

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