The United Kingdom Report on the Re-use of Public Sector Information

2010

unlocking PSI potential
## Contents

- Introduction ........................................ 3
- Part 1: UK responsibilities and the legal framework 4
- Part 2: PSI and the UK information landscape ....... 6
- Part 3: Governance and supervision regulation ...... 11
- Part 4: Increasing awareness .......................... 14
- Part 5: Using technical solutions ...................... 16
- Part 6: The international perspective ................. 17
- Part 7: Looking forward .............................. 19
- Timeline ............................................... 20
- Annex: Progress on 2009 actions ..................... 23
Introduction

The world of information does not stand still. In the UK, information is at the heart of the UK government’s transparency agenda¹ and there is a real sense of momentum and progress in the world of public sector information (PSI). In this report we show how that energy is being harnessed and how the agenda is being taken forward. This report sets out the key initiatives and landmarks that have shaped the way in which the UK has promoted the re-use of PSI spanning the period between June 2009 and December 2010. The timeline (at pages 19–21) highlights some of the key activity during this period.

The effective use of PSI, especially during a period of austerity, is increasingly viewed as a key driver for stimulating economic growth and promoting social engagement. The challenge for the public sector is to remove the barriers that stand in the way of re-use. However, it is not just about the removal of obstacles, it is about ensuring that processes are in place that encourage and facilitate proactive re-use.

The UK continues to promote the re-use of PSI and continues to innovate in order to simplify the process of re-use. However, much remains to be done and there is every indication that the pace of innovation and change in the field of PSI will continue.

¹ cabinetoffice.gov.uk/transparency
Part 1: UK responsibilities and the legal framework

1.1 Central policy responsibility for the management of Crown copyright and Crown database rights and compliance with the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 (the PSI Regulations)\(^2\) sits within The National Archives.

1.2 The National Archives plays a crucial role across the UK in developing standards of information management and policy across the public sector, promoting best practice and developing practical solutions. In recent years there has been an increasing recognition that PSI delivers benefits for the knowledge economy and reinforces the relationship between the public sector and the people that it serves.

1.3 Increasingly, the challenge for the UK has been to deliver a cohesive and compelling PSI vision for the benefit of citizens, business and the public sector. The National Archives’ key objectives in support of this agenda are:

- to deliver the policy lead on the re-use of PSI across the UK
- to lead and transform information management across the public sector
- the removal of barriers to re-use
- to promote awareness that the value of PSI is not defined by national boundaries
- to regulate and promote high standards of information trading across the public sector to license, advise on and manage the re-use of Crown copyright material
- to develop innovative technology solutions and models that deliver emerging information policy
- to support transparency and deliver tools and solutions that help users and re-users to locate and use PSI
- to operate on an international stage, sharing best practice developed in other jurisdictions
- to ensure that there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect personal information.

1.4 The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), part of The National Archives, has a statutory responsibility under the PSI Regulations to investigate complaints and assist in their resolution. This disputes resolution service is closely allied to The National Archives role in setting standards for information management and re-use and to ensure fair and non-discriminatory practices across the public sector.

Crown copyright and Crown database rights

1.5 Crown copyright covers information and copyright protected material produced by government ministers and officials. Crown database right covers databases owned by the Crown. The government information and data covered by these rights comprise a rich and diverse information source. The central responsibility for the management of Crown copyright, and also the associated rights in Crown databases, rests with the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office and the Queen’s Printer for Scotland, an official at The National Archives. These responsibilities mean that The National Archives is well placed to lead and develop best practice for PSI re-use policy. This includes developing effective licensing solutions, policy guidelines and raising awareness of PSI activity across the public sector.

Re-use legislation

1.6 The National Archives operates, implements and advises on the PSI Regulations, which transposed the European directive on the re-use of public sector information 2003 (2003/98/EC).\(^3\) The PSI Regulations establish a number of high-level principles and standards for public sector organisations to make the information they produce available for re-use. PSI and the implementation of the directive in member states of the European Union is an area of robust focus for the European Commission. Given The National Archives’ central policy lead on PSI, it engages with the European Commission and member states on key PSI issues and initiatives.


Part 2: PSI and the UK information landscape

2.1 Information and data produced by the government and the public sector represents the single largest and most diverse source of information in the UK. It has been estimated that between 15 and 25% of information products and services are based on information produced or held by the public sector. PSI encompasses a wide range of information, including national and local legislation, statistics, local planning, transport, education, local services and tourist information.

2.2 Access to PSI underpins the whole process of democratic engagement and renewal. Citizens need information to contribute to a democratic society. PSI is therefore at the heart of the relationship between the public sector and the people. A range of initiatives enables the re-use of PSI to open up new forms of democratic engagement.

2.3 The benefits of promoting economic activity and social engagement through the removal of barriers and by harnessing technological advances are encapsulated in the UK government’s transparency agenda.

The transparency agenda and the Transparency Board

2.4 The transparency agenda was announced by Prime Minister David Cameron in May 2010. He set out the purpose of the new agenda as follows:

‘Greater transparency across Government is at the heart of our shared commitment to enable the public to hold politicians and public bodies to account; to reduce the deficit and deliver better value for money in public spending; and to realise significant economic benefits by enabling businesses and non-profit organisations to build innovative applications and websites using public data.’

David Cameron, 29 May 2010

2.5 In June 2010 a team of experts were invited to form a Transparency Board. The aim of the Transparency Board is to drive forward the government’s transparency agenda, making it a core part of all government business. In addition, it is responsible for establishing public data principles across the public sector and making datasets available for potential development and re-use.

2.6 The Transparency Board is chaired by Francis Maude, the Minister for the Cabinet Office. The other members of the Transparency Board are Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the world wide web, Professor Nigel Shadbolt from Southampton University, an expert on open data, Tom Steinberg, founder of mySociety (mysociety.org), Andrew Stott, former Director of Digital Engagement at the Cabinet Office, and Dr Rufus Pollock from Cambridge University, an economist who was one of the founders of the Open Knowledge Foundation.

Public data principles

2.7 The Transparency Board published a set of transparency principles. These are:

- public data policy and practice will be clearly driven by the public and businesses who want and use the data, including what data is released when and in what form
- public data will be published in reusable, machine-readable form
- public data will be released under the same open licence that enables free re-use, including commercial re-use

---

• public data will be available and easy to find through a single easy to use online access point (data.gov.uk)
• public data will be published using open standards, and following relevant recommendations of the World Wide Web Consortium (w3.org)
• public data underlying the government’s own websites will be published in re-usable form for others to use
• public data will be released as quickly as possible after its collection and in as fine detail as possible
• public data will be freely available to use in any lawful way – public bodies should actively encourage the re-use of their public data and should maintain and publish inventories of their data.

2.8 A key strand of the government’s transparency agenda is data.gov.uk. It is a central point of access for government-held non-personal data. It enables developers to use public sector datasets and make new and innovative information products and services. Data.gov.uk now incorporates the Unlocking Service (unlockingservice.data.gov.uk), which was originally launched in 2008. This service is designed to gather and assess requests to re-use information. It provides a place where people can bring any issues they might have with finding and re-using PSI. The system is very simple – the user requests the information they would like and explains how it would be re-used if the request was met. The Unlocking Service then contacts the information holder to see what can be done about making the information available for re-use.

2.9 Frances Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chair of the Transparency Board, said of data.gov.uk that:

‘By freeing up public sector datasets for others to re-use, inventive people will be able to build innovative applications and websites which will bring significant economic benefit.’

At the time of publication of this report nearly 6,000 datasets had been made available via data.gov.uk.

The UK Government Licensing Framework

2.10 The UK Government pioneered online licensing with the launch of the Click-Use Licence in 2001. This licensing model was highly successful, with more than 20,000 licences issued. This initiative had the effect of opening up PSI re-use to a global audience. To support the release of datasets under data.gov.uk and the UK government’s transparency agenda it was felt that licensing should be taken to a new level of openness and transparency.

2.11 The UK Government Licensing Framework provides a policy and legal overview for licensing of PSI, both in central government and the wider public sector. The framework has been created to meet the needs of:

• the public, including community groups and social organisations
• the information re-user community, both in the public and private sector
• the public data developer community.

2.12 The UK was able to draw on the work of public sector colleagues in Australia and New Zealand. Both countries have launched policies designed to open up government and make PSI more readily available for re-use. They did this through the adoption of Creative Commons model licences. The UK, however, decided to develop a new licence – the Open Government Licence. The main reason for this was that none of the existing Creative Commons licences extended to the licensing of works protected by the database right.5

2.13 The Open Government Licence is at the heart of the UK Government Licensing Framework. The challenge in developing the Open Government Licence was to create a licence that would:

• be interoperable with other internationally recognised models such as Creative Commons and Open Data Commons (opendatacommons.org)
• cover copyright and database right
• be more enabling by avoiding the need for re-users to register and apply for a licence
• be machine readable
• be simple and legally robust

---

5 Databases enjoy separate protection in Europe
be sufficiently flexible so that it could be adopted across the public sector, such as by local government and health bodies.

2.14 The UK Government Licensing Framework, incorporating the Open Government Licence, was launched on 30 September 2010. It has been welcomed by those within government and in the re-use community as an important innovation. The comments below give a flavour of the positive response that welcomed the delivery of the UK Government Licensing Framework and the Open Government Licence.

‘The National Archives isn’t simply a repository of our nation’s history, its task is to bring information to life, make it accessible and enable its re-use. This innovative licence gives everyone the opportunity to create products and services which benefit society.’

Lord McNally, Minister for The National Archives and Public Sector Information

‘The Open Government Licence [is] one element of the UK’s position at the forefront of the worldwide open data revolution. It’s great to see a simple and straightforward licence for people to re-use government data in any way they want. It will enable inventive people to build innovative new applications and websites which help people in their everyday lives.’

Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the world wide web and member of the Transparency Board

‘The UK government went about drafting their new licence in the right way – by consulting many people in the open licensing community and gathering input from experts – the resulting licence is an excellent example of how to go about this process.’

Jordan Hatcher of the Open Knowledge Foundation

Location data and INSPIRE

2.15 The INSPIRE directive requires that a spatial data infrastructure across Europe should be developed. This will involve devising a means of identifying, classifying, storing and sharing geographic and location information across the public sector. The initial drive for creating an infrastructure was environmental, recognising that location data was integral when dealing with flooding, coastal erosion, storms and pollution. The two sets of regulations to implement the directive for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and for Scotland respectively (SI 2009/3157 and SSI 2009/440), came into force on 31 December 2009.

2.16 The UK Location Programme, which operates through the Location Council, leads on the implementation of initiatives that will ensure compliance with the directive. Location data will be made available through data.gov.uk and will be shared, used and re-used under the UK Government Licensing Framework.

Ordnance Survey datasets

2.17 Mapping data produced by Ordnance Survey underpins a wide range of PSI applications. For this reason the activities of Ordnance Survey and the re-use of the mapping data that it produces have been the subject of a detailed review. A number of government initiatives have flowed from this review process.

New business strategy for Ordnance Survey

2.18 A new business strategy for Ordnance Survey was announced in April 2009 as part of the Trading Funds Assessment and the Budget Report 2009. It confirmed that, as a government trading fund, Ordnance Survey would continue to be self-funded and generate revenue by licensing the data it produces. However, it was also recognised that there was a need to make it easier for customers and re-users to access its data and services. The strategy balanced the need to maintain the highest quality standards with the need to stimulate innovation in

---

6 Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe
7 location.defra.gov.uk/category/location-council
2.19 As part of this process, a number of initiatives were developed with a view to maximising the re-use of Ordnance Survey data. These included:

- extending the Ordnance Survey OpenSpace mapping services
- extending the use of the mapping service for non-commercial purposes
- releasing more content, for example, data relating to official boundaries
- creating an Ordnance Survey innovation network that encourages the development of products based on Ordnance Survey mapping data
- facilitating the development of products based on Ordnance Survey mapping data, including for commercial purposes.

2.20 In November 2009, it was announced that certain Ordnance Survey datasets would be freely available. The Department for Communities and Local Government consultation document, *Policy options for geographic information from Ordnance Survey*, was then released.

2.21 Following the consultation, in April 2010 Ordnance Survey released, free of charge, a range of its key mapping datasets and products via Ordnance Survey OpenData.

2.22 In order to encourage access and re-use, it was agreed in December 2010 that Ordnance Survey should adopt the Open Government Licence as a means of licensing these datasets. The datasets subsequently became available under the Open Government Licence in January 2011.

2.24 The overriding aim of the Public Sector Mapping Agreement was to deliver significant efficiency savings and improvements in public service delivery for the benefit of UK citizens and businesses. It would lead to greater cooperation between the public sector and users of PSI, resulting in more innovative uses of geographic data.

2.25 Under the agreement, geographic information provided by Ordnance Survey, including high-specification Ordnance Survey MasterMap products, would be free at the point of use for public sector bodies, and subject to no limits on re-use when used for core public task activities. The agreement will come into effect on 1 April 2011.

2.26 The National Archives continues to work closely with Ordnance Survey as it implements changes to its licensing and pricing regimes. In particular, The National Archives is working with Ordnance Survey and other key stakeholders to develop strategies around:

- the terms of the Public Sector Mapping Agreement, which will cover government and public sector use of Ordnance Survey mapping data
- work on defining Ordnance Survey’s public task
- derived data
- licensing models
- competition issues
- charging.

Ordnance Survey will still maintain a charging mechanism to cover the cost of the highest-specification products and services.
Local government

2.27 Local government information and data are a source of particular value and interest for the re-user community. There have been encouraging signs of increasing local government engagement with the PSI agenda. For instance, more than 50 local authorities currently allow the information they produce to be made available for re-use under the Open Government Licence. This trend gained momentum following the launch of data.gov.uk and the establishment of the Local Government Data Panel in December 2009. The Panel is chaired by Professor Nigel Shadbolt and aims to work closely with key organisations to highlight the importance of releasing public data and its benefits to the public. It also advises on the continuing development of data.gov.uk.

2.28 The key aims of the panel are to promote the case for making local public data more freely available for re-use, to encourage agreed standards for greater information and data sharing by local strategic partnerships, and to ensure that data is linked effectively across government, councils and local bodies. The initial focus of the group has been on the data flows between central and local government, developing standard formats for local data so it can be linked to other data and ideas for drawing out best practice examples from the many local authorities already using public data.

The Panel has also considered the following issues:

- identifying those local authorities already leading the way on open data
- assisting local authorities to work through technical and policy issues relating to making data available
- holding a forum with developers to better understand what data is required and how they can work with the local sector to obtain the data
- development of best practice and standards for local government data.

Local government case studies and examples

2.29 A notable example is the London Datastore, launched in January 2010, to make data held by the Greater London Authority available for re-use. In some cases the data was already available on the Greater London Authority website (london.gov.uk) and other websites, and it includes some Crown copyright material. However, some new datasets were made available for the first time as part of this initiative and the intention is to continue adding new data for re-use. General terms and conditions apply to the re-use of data released on the website as well as specific licence conditions for each dataset. The data can be retrieved in various ways – by searching for a topic, by browsing an alphabetical list, or by looking under one of eight headings: business and economy, crime and community safety, demographics, employment and skills, health, housing, planning and transparency.

2.30 In March 2010, the Audit Commission published a discussion document entitled The truth is out there: transparency in an information age. The report highlighted the benefits of increased transparency and emphasised how PSI could enrich people’s lives, from a democratic perspective as well as in the delivery of public services. The report also identified a number of case studies from across local government showing how the publication of information was delivering some tangible benefits to local communities.

10 data.london.gov.uk
11 www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/20100305thetruthisoutthere.pdf
Part 3: Governance and supervision regulation

Governance and supervision regulation

3.1 The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), part of The National Archives, regulates the information trading activities of government trading funds and other public sector information holders using two key tools: the Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS) and the disputes resolution service. As regulator, The National Archives has responsibility for setting and assessing standards for public sector organisations. OPSI ensures that public sector organisations involved in information trading encourage the re-use of the information they produce and reach a standard of fairness and transparency.

3.2 The enhanced IFTS principles and framework were reinforced in April 2009. Recent activity has built on this and includes:

- a new policy and criteria for exceptions to marginal cost pricing\(^{12}\)
- embedding the revised IFTS principles and performance management framework
- supervision of the implementation of the Ordnance Survey licensing and pricing review
- investigation of a formal complaint brought under the PSI Regulations.

Information Fair Trader Scheme

3.3 The Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS) is an evidence-based audit process that regulates the information trading activities of government trading funds and certain other parts of government. It operates within government policy frameworks and takes into account the tension between the trading fund remit to self-fund and the drive to free up the UK’s PSI for innovative new services.

3.4 The IFTS principles are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximisation</td>
<td>An obligation to allow others to re-use information unless there are strong policy reasons not to (e.g. personal data and copyright ownership issues).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Simplicity of processes, policies and licences, including putting processes in place that allow sub-licensing and use in derived data products.(^{13})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Transparency of licence terms and conditions, and charging information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Public sector information holders should not use their market power to compete unfairly. All customers should be treated the same for the same types of re-use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>A robust complaints process should be put in place to reconsider licensing decisions. OPSI (part of The National Archives) can investigate the public sector information holders’ licensing decisions if they appear to be wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Public sector information holders should explore new methods of presenting information to help re-users innovate and develop information products and services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

12 In economics, and in the context of information, marginal cost pricing means the cost of producing an additional copy of a document or dataset. In most cases the marginal cost will be negligible or nil

13 Data that was originally supplied in one form but that has been converted to another form or merged with other data to form a new information product
3.5 Public sector information holders are required to be proactive in allowing the information they hold to be used and re-used. There is now an obligation on most parts of government to allow re-use unless there are valid reasons not to.

3.6 The IFTS published guidance was revised and reissued. Additional elements which have strengthened IFTS have been introduced to make it more robust. These measures include:

- a revised strategy\(^\text{14}\) that sets out the direction IFTS should go in and strengthens the scheme
- talking to re-users and user groups to gain further perspective on IFTS members’ performance
- introducing a performance framework\(^\text{15}\) within the verification report to highlight good and weak practice and track performance
- more robust checks on the separation between public task and activities involving the re-use of information
- regular appraisals and discussions to check on progress and to ensure that public sector organisations have produced clear and transparent statements of their public task responsibilities.

3.7 The National Archives has opened up communications with re-users of PSI by introducing an RSS feed,\(^\text{16}\) designed to carry short, factual pieces of information. The aim is to encourage feedback on IFTS members’ performance, but also to keep re-users up to date with developments in PSI.

**IFTS verifications**

3.8 Since June 2009 full IFTS verification reports\(^\text{17}\) have been produced for the following organisations: Ministry of Defence, Environment Agency, Fire Service College, the Met Office, British Geological Survey and the Office of Government Commerce.

**IFTS Online**

3.9 IFTS Online was developed to assist public sector organisations in meeting their responsibilities as holders of re-usable information. Applicants are assessed based on publicly available information together with self-assessment questionnaires, in order to provide assurance and recommendations to the organisation.

3.10 IFTS Online was designed to be of use to information holders of all sizes, as an alternative to the full IFTS process. During the period of this report a number of new organisations at both national and local level have joined the scheme. Examples include the Government Art Collection, Historic Scotland and Redditch Borough Council. At the time of publication over 50 public sector organisations had completed the self assessment process and became members of IFTS Online.\(^\text{18}\)

**Complaints and mediation**

3.11 The National Archives offers an independent and impartial mediation service and has a number of Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution-accredited mediators who assist with disputes arising from the re-use of PSI, IFTS and Crown copyright disputes relating to rights or licensing issues. Complaints can be submitted to OPSI, part of The National Archives, under the PSI Regulations or IFTS. Most complaints or potential complaints concern licensing conditions and equity of treatment.

3.12 One wide-ranging complaint that was investigated this year was brought by a commercial publisher against the Office of Government Commerce under the PSI Regulations. This covered issues such as the concept of public task, Crown copyright policy and the equitable management

---

14 The IFTS strategy can be found at: [nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts.htm](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts.htm)
16 To subscribe to the RSS feed, go to: [nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts/re-users-rss-feed.htm](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts/re-users-rss-feed.htm)
17 The verification reports are available at: [nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts/members.htm](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts/members.htm)
18 [nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts/ifts-online.htm](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/ifts/ifts-online.htm)
of a group of core and derived publications. Some aspects of the complaint were found to be outside the scope of the PSI Regulations, such as use of trademarks. After examining the issue in detail to establish the parameters of the complaint, The National Archives made a number of recommendations and is now working to address the concerns raised in the complaint investigation.  

**Working with regulatory partners**

3.13 The National Archives continues to cooperate closely with its regulatory partners, the Office of Fair Trading and the Information Commissioner’s Office. One complainant was advised that the complaint concerned access and should therefore be referred to the Information Commissioner’s Office. The National Archives and the Office of Fair Trading jointly supervised the implementation of the Ordnance Survey licensing and pricing review, part of the revised Ordnance Survey business strategy. This entailed setting key measures and targets to test the effectiveness of the review, and meeting regularly to discuss and check progress. The National Archives is currently working with its partners to redraft the *Memorandum of understanding with the Office of Fair Trading* to reflect closer cooperation.
Part 4: Increasing awareness

4.1 A major challenge is to ensure that public sector organisations are aware of the legal and policy obligations connected with PSI. It is equally important that they are aware of some of the best practice already in existence and that they learn from this. The National Archives therefore contributes to a number of panels and groups to ensure that PSI retains its high profile.

The Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information

4.2 The Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information (APPSI) contributes actively to the PSI agenda. APPSI’s role is to advise ministers and The National Archives about changes and opportunities in the information industry, so that the licensing of Crown copyright and PSI is aligned with current and emerging developments, and to review and consider complaints under the PSI Regulations.

4.3 APPSI continues to play a central influencing role in developing policy on PSI, contributing to various initiatives and consultations, including a response to the European Commission’s online PSI directive consultation.\(^{21}\) It continues to raise knowledge and awareness of the re-use of PSI at conferences and seminars.

Licensing Forum

4.4 The National Archives coordinates the Licensing Forum, where information and licensing practitioners across government gather to discuss the latest policy developments in PSI and outline new initiatives in order to share knowledge and best practice. To give a flavour of the work of the Licensing Forum these are some of the topics that have been discussed over the past year:

- the development and launch of data.gov.uk
- web access to mapping through Ordnance Survey OpenSpace
- the Ordnance Survey consultation on free re-use of data
- analysis of customer base and usage trends at Companies House (the official government register of UK companies)
- experiences of the infringement process
- move to non-transactional licensing for most government information
- the new IFTS strategy and performance management framework
- design of systematic licensing policies at the Environment Agency
- information assurance and access at Land Registry.

Minutes of the meetings are published.\(^{22}\)

PSI in Action: Transforming the Information Landscape

4.5 In November 2009, The National Archives and Civil Service World hosted a highly successful conference in London called PSI in Action: Transforming the Information Landscape. Key stakeholders from across both the public and private sectors attended. A wide range of topics were discussed during the event and a number of key themes emerged. These were:

- the importance of information in promoting democratic engagement, particularly at local level

\(^{21}\) [appsi.gov.uk/content/binary/APPSI-PSI-Directive-Consultation-Response-2010.pdf](appsi.gov.uk/content/binary/APPSI-PSI-Directive-Consultation-Response-2010.pdf)

\(^{22}\) [nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/policies/licensing-forum.htm](nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/policies/licensing-forum.htm)
• the way in which technology changes the way we receive and process information
• information from an international perspective and how best practice can be shared across national boundaries
• the need for co-production between those who hold information and those who have solutions for developing information
• the need for simple and streamlined solutions that encourage re-use of information
• to explain how web based technology can be harnessed to find information and make it available.

Since the conference, The National Archives has continued to keep in regular contact with those engaged in shaping what is happening in the PSI arena.

Communities of Practice

4.6 The National Archives participates in the Improvement and Development Agency’s award-winning Communities of Practice website. A community of practice provides a space for public servants to discuss themes of interest. The National Archives facilitates one such forum: Unlocking the Potential of Your Information Assets, which is dedicated to re-use issues. Membership has doubled since June 2009 to approximately 90 members, drawing in participants from across central and local government and across the wider information community. The National Archives also contributes to discussions across the communities of practice network.

European Forum of Official Gazettes

4.7 The United Kingdom took over the Chair for the seventh European Forum of Official Gazettes held at the Westminster Conference Centre in London in September 2009, welcoming more than 70 delegates from official publishing organisations across the European Union and its candidate countries, including the Global Legal Information Network. The Forum proved a good example of how the UK is leading the international debate on official and legislation publishing.

4.8 The objectives of the forum are to exchange ideas and information on publication processes, technology and best practices between official publishers. This gave The National Archives the opportunity to illustrate the innovations taken forward in the creation of the Official Gazettes and legislation in the UK, as well as oversee an agenda of engaging presentations and discussions.
Part 5: Using technical solutions

5.1 Harnessing the benefits of technology through web-based solutions is a vital ingredient in the PSI agenda. The UK has been in the vanguard in developing the linked data and semantic web technologies that are at the heart of publishing data.

5.2 In July 2010 The National Archives launched legislation.gov.uk with all the content available under the terms of the Open Government Licence. The new service involved creating a single legislation database covering legislation for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The website brings together the original, or as enacted versions of legislation with revised versions showing how legislation has evolved over time. Legislation.gov.uk is one of the first UK government websites to prioritise giving access to all the underlying data for re-use, through a special interface, called an application programming interface (API). A number of websites are now re-using legislation through this API to create new, value added, commercial applications and products. The National Archives is working with re-users who, with easy access to the data, are now engaged in helping to improve the quality of the information held, helping The National Archives to create more up-to-date versions of legislation. Re-use has become an integral part of The National Archives strategy for managing this significant and important database.

Linked data

5.3 Linked data is the best practice for exposing, sharing and connecting pieces of data, information and knowledge using the web. The National Archives is leading a collaborative project involving some of the world’s best experts to ensure that information from different sources can be quickly and easily combined. As government consists of distributed agencies and units, it is ideal to use the web to aggregate different sources of related data, rather than combing a multitude of databases behind the scenes. For example, some of the most useful data about schools is the combination of information from the Department for Education and Ofsted which can be found on data.gov.uk.

5.4 By linking and publishing data and information through consistent and open standards, discrete information sources and repositories (data silos) can be identified, accessed and re-used more easily.

5.5 The National Archives has a long term strategic interest in the semantic web and linked data technologies. This interest is driven by:

- its policy responsibilities to promote the re-use of PSI
- its publishing responsibilities (for legislation, official documents, the Gazettes), which have evolved over the last decade from delivering primarily printed products, to providing primarily online services.

5.6 The National Archives has shaped guidance through the World Wide Web Consortium about how governments should best publish information, in particular data, on the web.

Open PSI

5.7 Open PSI was a Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)-funded rapid innovation project for collaboration between the University of Southampton and The National Archives. The aims were to trial a new form of community-provisioned information service that uses linked data standards. The project sought to provide a place where people could find UK government linked data and to create an environment for engagement.

5.8 The project delivered a baseline environment where the research community could obtain government information and engage with both publishers and a new form of information intermediaries, the data mashers.

---

26 data.gov.uk/linked-data

Part 6: The international perspective

6.1 There is a strong international dimension to the PSI agenda. In the age of the internet, national boundaries are irrelevant in terms of information. Governments across the world recognise the value of PSI to the economy and in their engagement with the citizens they serve. They have accordingly taken steps to launch initiatives to maximise its availability and re-use.

6.2 The European Directive on the re-use of PSI in 2003 was a landmark in promoting the wider benefits of information produced by the public sector and its availability for re-use in Europe. Although the pace of change has varied across member states, most are taking steps to encourage re-use. In this section we provide a brief overview of some of the significant international developments in the field of PSI.

Consultation on the European directive on the re-use of PSI

6.3 The European Commission published a public consultation on the European directive on the re-use of PSI in September 2010 to assess the effects of the directive and the areas in which there was scope for improvement. The results of the consultation will help to inform the future programme of work on PSI across Europe.

The Visby and Malmö declarations

6.4 Two important political declarations took place during the year under the Swedish presidency in support of the European PSI policy agenda: the Visby\(^\text{28}\) and Malmö\(^\text{29}\) declarations approved by European Ministers responsible for eGovernment policy. Both declarations recognise the economic potential arising from the re-use of PSI.

The European eGovernment Action Plan

6.5 On 15 December 2010, the European Commission published The European eGovernment Action Plan 2011–2015: Harnessing ICT to promote smart, sustainable & innovative Government,\(^\text{30}\) stating that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Member states will agree on a common set of PSI re-use indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>The Commission will conduct a study to assess to what extent open data catalogues and/or PSI portals (e.g. data.gov.uk) have been developed and implemented by member states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–12</td>
<td>The Commission will review the European directive on the re-use of PSI, as indicated in the Digital Agenda for Europe, and will consider the possibility of an extended strategy for European PSI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–13</td>
<td>The Commission will facilitate exchanges of good practice and awareness-raising activities and will adopt its own internal PSI re-use strategy based on a review of the PSI public consultation responses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PSI Group

6.6 The PSI Group, an expert group for the exchange of good practices and initiatives supporting PSI re-use, meets on an annual basis and consists of representatives of 27 member states. Private sector organisations and PSI experts also regularly attend the meetings. The agenda for future work on PSI reflecting the responses to the public consultation will be taken forward via...

---

28 In Visby, participants adopted the Visby declaration, Creating an impact for an eUnion: epsiplatform.eu/news/news/visby_agenda_a_new_eu_ict_policy
29 www.epsiplus.net/news/news/psi_on_the_malmoe_agenda
the PSI Group. The National Archives contributes to these meetings as well as the pan-European meetings hosted by member states and in so doing helps to shape emerging European initiatives. The National Archives also contributes to the work of the European PSI Platform project.\(^{31}\)

The National Archives continues to monitor PSI developments across the world. There is an increasing range of initiatives. Among the most significant events during the period covered by this report are the following:

**Australia**

6.7 The Australian government set up its Government 2.0 Taskforce in June 2009 to advise the Australian government on PSI issues. The taskforce published its final report, *Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0*,\(^{32}\) in December 2009, including the following key points:

- Government 2.0 would offer an unprecedented opportunity to achieve more open, accountable, responsive and efficient government
- leadership, and policy and governance changes are needed to shift public sector culture and practice to make government information more accessible and usable
- the federal government should make a declaration of open government at the highest level, including a statement that PSI is a national resource and that releasing as much of it on as permissive terms as possible will maximise its economic and social value to Australians and reinforce its contribution to a healthy democracy.

This resulted in the Australian government making a declaration of open government.

**Spain**

6.11 During the last year, the Spanish government has raised awareness of PSI through the Aporta Project. The *Aporta Guidebook*\(^{35}\) provides guidance on the legal framework and the options available to public bodies when opening their information to re-use. Spain has also developed a regional equivalent of data.gov.uk using linked data.

**United States of America**

6.12 In the United States, the White House issued the Open Government Directive in December 2009. The directive made it a requirement that each department or agency make its information available online in open format, which could be retrieved, downloaded, indexed and searched by commonly used web search applications. Agencies were encouraged proactively to use modern technology to disseminate useful information, rather than to wait for specific requests under the Freedom of Information Act (USA) 1966.

6.13 In April 2010, every federal department published an Open Government Plan – which set out plans for making operations and data more transparent, and expanding opportunities for citizen participation, collaboration and oversight.

31 [www.epsiplus.net/topic_reports](http://www.epsiplus.net/topic_reports)
33 [e.govt.nz/policy/nzgoal](http://e.govt.nz/policy/nzgoal), published 27 August 2009
35 The guidebook (in Spanish) is available at: [aporta.es/web/guest/guia_reutilizacion](http://aporta.es/web/guest/guia_reutilizacion)
Part 7: Looking forward

7.1 In PSI terms the last year has been a momentous one. The potential economic benefits of encouraging re-use have long been acknowledged but increasingly we are seeing PSI becoming an intrinsic part of the democratic process. This is particularly the case in the UK where PSI is seen as an important element in the government’s transparency agenda. Now, perhaps more than ever before, there is a real sense of momentum and energy in realising the benefits that can be achieved through promoting the re-use of PSI. Significantly, we are seeing these benefits being played out across the world. The challenge is to capture this momentum and take PSI to the next level. The National Archives is at the heart of this process and we see our aims as being to:

- extend the scope and take-up of the UK Government Licensing Framework across the public sector
- contribute to the government’s transparency agenda by promoting PSI best practice
- demonstrate practical linked data initiatives that facilitate the re-use of PSI
- engage with key stakeholders across the public sector to free up further information for re-use
- ensure alignment with other information initiatives such as INSPIRE and through the government strategy for managing knowledge and information, to deliver a coherent and joined-up approach to information management and practice
- continue to build on the strong regulatory and standards framework that increases compliance and extends best practice across the public sector
- shape the PSI agenda at European level, working with the European Commission and other member states
- increase the usability of datasets available via data.gov.uk through the provision of effective metadata
- provide clarity on the vocabulary of re-use, notably by developing working definitions of terms such as ‘public task’
- continue to track best practice overseas and learn from some of the initiatives being developed abroad
- continue to engage and support devolved administrations on PSI initiatives.
**United Kingdom**

- **June**: Publication of *Digital Britain*
- **July**: Publication of APPSI's *Annual Report 2008–09*; Launch of *Openly Local*; Publication of *The Way Ahead: A Strategy for Copyright in the Digital Age*
- **October**: Publication of *Exploiting Government’s Information Assets for the Public Good* by APPSI; Publication of *© The Way Ahead: A Strategy for Copyright in the Digital Age*; Launch of *Openly Local*; Announcement of public access to Ordnance Survey data
- **November**: Publication of *Digital Britain Implementation Update*
- **December**: OPSI ceases licensing re-use of Crown copyright content involving payments

**International**

- **August**: Release of draft *NZGOAL framework* for testing and public comment in New Zealand
- **September**: Launch of *data.australia.gov.au*; European Forum of Official Gazettes held in London
- **October**: City of New York releases open datasets; PSI in Action conference held in London; PSI mashup competition held in Australia
- **November**: Launch of *data.govt.nz*; Meeting on PSI Economic Indicators held in Luxembourg; PSI in Action conference held in London; Malmö declaration on eGovernment
- **December**: Open Government Directive issued in the USA; Publication of *Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0* final report by the Government 2.0 Taskforce in Australia

**Timeline**

- **Winter 2009–10**
  - **November**: Meeting on PSI Economic Indicators held in Luxembourg; Malmö declaration on eGovernment; First European PSI Platform meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden
  - **December**: Open Government Directive issued in the USA; Publication of *Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0* final report by the Government 2.0 Taskforce in Australia
United Kingdom

May cont. Publication of INSPIRE in the UK report by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Publication of The Economics of Copyright and Digitisation report by SABIP

Prime Minister David Cameron’s letter to government departments on opening up data

Formation of Transparency Board announced

June Details of senior civil servant salaries released

First meeting of the Transparency Board and the publication of Public Data Principles

July Publication of APPSI’s Annual Report 2009–10

Launch of legislation.gov.uk

September Launch of the Open Government Licence

October Structure charts of government departments released

November Government spending data released on transparency, number10.gov.uk

December Seventh APPSI seminar held

Meeting of the Licensing Forum held

All content from OPSI website migrated onto The National Archives’ website and legislation.gov.uk

Summer 2010

May cont. Launch of Digital Agenda for Europe

Launch of innovation strategy by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

June Cadastre PSI conference held in Madrid, Spain

Realising the Value of Public Sector Information workshop held in Madrid

University and Cyberspace: Reshaping Knowledge Institutions for the Networked Age conference held by COMMUNIA in Turin, Italy

August Launch of NZGOAL

Publication of European Commission final report on economic indicators

September Launch of the public consultation on the European directive on the re-use of PSI by the European Commission

Publication of results of Exclusive Agreements study

Winter 2010

November Open Government Data Camp held in London

Consultation on the European directive on the re-use of PSI closed

December Launch of foreignassistance.gov by US government

International
Annex: Progress on 2009 actions

**Action 1: Building on recent developments, reinforce and maintain momentum in UK public sector organisations.**

Maintained close liaison with key stakeholders across both the private and public sectors. Nearly 6,000 datasets have been made available via data.gov.uk and take-up of the Open Government Licence by local authorities and other public sector bodies has been very encouraging.

**Action 2: Using the outcomes of the current reviews and assessments, reframe the UK guidance and best practice in response to evolving policies and customer needs.**

The publication of transparency principles on public data policy and the launch of the UK Government Licensing Framework and data.gov.uk reinforce the importance of developing new policies and strategies that are responsive to customer needs.

**Action 3: Continue to use established tools to enable information re-users to have confidence and clarity in the definitions and different approaches to trading activity across the public sector.**

Strong engagement with the re-user community in testing new initiatives. PerSpectlves\(^{36}\) has been used to test views on new licensing models and charging criteria.

**Action 4: Reinforce the risk to the business and services of public sector organisations and encourage exemplars to champion good information management practice by directed guidance and targeted support.**

Ensured effective governance and best practice through regulatory framework, the Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS) and Information Management Assessments (IMAs).

**Action 5: Clarity around licensing re-use of data that has aggregated third party copyright material within it will be produced in revised guidance.**

Greater clarity of copyright and third party ownership issues achieved through the development of the UK Government Licensing Framework.

**Action 6: Communication and alerts to all public sector organisations will be renewed with tracking of progress on The National Archives’ site.**

Communication and testing of ideas via PerSpectlves and RSS feeds on public sector information. Re-use issues continue to be debated at various fora including the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information (APPSI), the Licensing Forum and workshops for public sector organisations.

---

\(^{36}\) The PerSpectlves blog, managed by The National Archives, provides a forum for exchanging information and news on PSI issues: perspectives.nationalarchives.gov.uk
Action 7: A single copyright web page with one reference for the copyright and licensing conditions across government will be explored to deliver coherence and consistency.

The Open Government Licence is used to license the use and re-use of most government information and data. Increasingly being used by the wider public sector.

Action 8: The National Archives will continue to work within current resources harnessing technology and pooling resources and expertise to deliver the improvements needed, alive to the demands and expectations that this agenda places on the organisations to deliver the UK goals.

Promotion of information management and the development of innovative solutions using linked data initiatives.