

# Publishing

## A guide for government organisations

**OGI**

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## **Introduction**

The National Archives has produced this guidance to help those working on official government publications. In particular, we hope this information will benefit those who are new to publishing.

The aim is to promote a better understanding of standard publishing industry processes and practices that affect a document's availability, accessibility, status and provenance at publication and afterwards.

## **The role of The National Archives**

The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, an official operating within The National Archives, is responsible under a Letters Patent from Her Majesty The Queen for managing copyright on behalf of the Crown. The Letters Patent also confer upon the Controller the title of Queen's Printer. The Queen's Printer is responsible for setting the standards and overseeing the publication of certain government documents. These publications are:

- legislation
- statutory notices
- parliamentary papers, including Command and House of Commons Papers

The National Archives has produced specific guidance on the production of parliamentary papers (for example annual reports and accounts, 'green' and 'white papers' or independent reviews).

## **What is publishing?**

Publishing means making information available to the public. In the past this was mainly done through the dissemination of printed copies of documents. Now there are many more options: web, print, DVD and e-publications, to name a few.

Apart from ensuring value for money, the challenge is to choose publication channels that support a publication's status and provenance, as well as ensuring that the publication reaches the right audience.

## **Publishing industry processes and practices**

Many government publications are important from a policy and historic perspective, whether or not they reflect current policy or practice. Because of this certain publications, including those published through contracts managed by The National Archives, are published according to the standard processes and practices used by the book publishing industry:

- [standards for web and print publishing](#)
- [International Standard Book Numbers](#)
- [bibliographic data](#)
- [statutory legal deposit](#)
- [customer ordering services](#)
- [copyright](#)

These processes support the classification and recording of the publications' underlying status and provenance, ensuring availability to citizens and businesses, including identification by the book trade and library community, at publication and for the long term public record.

## **What to do if you are considering publishing options**

If you are an official involved in publishing a government document that is not being published through The National Archives' or other government publishing contracts, you are probably already considering publication options.

Publication options impact on a document's availability to different types of users, including those in the future. Consider whether users will place a long term value on the document, for example for use in legal proceedings, even though the document itself may be superseded as government policies and guidelines change. If so, ensure that there is a process through which interested parties can efficiently obtain a copy of the publication. In many cases a web version will be sufficient; in others, users may require a print copy, for example to use in court or because the publication is very large and the web version impractical. How would such requests be fulfilled? Would compliance with statutory legal deposit be sufficient?

You should contact your organisation's publishing, communications, legal and/or procurement teams at an early stage for advice. In addition, you can contact The National Archives for publishing and copyright advice. We can be contacted by email

[official.publishing@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:official.publishing@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk) or by phone 020 8392 5218.

An example of a government publishing contract is The National Archives' contract for legislation. This contract can be found and viewed on the [Contracts Finder website](#).

**If your document is a 'green' or 'white' paper, it probably meets the criteria for being published as a Command Paper<sup>1</sup>.**

If you need additional advice, please contact The National Archives at the earliest opportunity for further guidance and support.

## **Publishing processes and practices**

### **Standards for web and print publishing**

You should check before the budgeting stage what these standards are, because they involve costs.

**Web publication:** government requirements, including those for accessible PDFs, are available on the [Digital Standards pages](#) of the Cabinet Office website. In addition, a publishing contractor may have additional requirements, such as file naming conventions, to ensure that a document can be clearly recognised within its systems.

**Print publication:** these specifications are provided to the printer, or other supplier, to ensure that print copies are produced as required. They include print file specifications, quantity, schedule, format (A4 portrait, for example), colour, paper weight and quality, binding style and delivery instructions.

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<sup>1</sup>see [nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/producing-official-publications/parliamentary-papers-guidance/command-paper-requirements/](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/producing-official-publications/parliamentary-papers-guidance/command-paper-requirements/)

## **International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs)**

It is good practice to allocate an ISBN to each publication produced by a government organisation, regardless of format.

ISBNs are unique thirteen digit codes that are allocated to published works (but not to ephemeral items such as leaflets, posters, newsletters, press notices and so on). ISBNs are not limited to books that are published in print form. The ISBN is unique to an individual edition of a work and will be used by those in the library or the book trade to identify the document. Where a work is published in different formats (print, online, e-book and so on) a different ISBN is required for each format. Any translations will also be given a separate number.

It is the publisher's responsibility to allocate ISBNs. Therefore government publications produced through the contracts managed by The National Archives will all be allocated ISBNs by the publishing contractor. However, if your organisation is the publisher (for corporate documents, for example) it is responsible for allocating its own ISBNs to these publications.

Most countries have their own ISBN agency; in the UK this is Nielsen. Further information can be found at [www.isbn.nielsenbook.co.uk](http://www.isbn.nielsenbook.co.uk). If your organisation needs ISBNs, you can buy a batch from Nielsen. However, you then need to supply bibliographic data to Nielsen in return.

## **Bibliographic data**

The bibliographic record for a published document may include: the title, author, date of publication, publisher, page extent, format, ISBN, cover price and subject. It is important for the integrity of the public record that there is a comprehensive source of bibliographic data for all United Kingdom official government publications, including web-only publications, and that this information is disseminated through recognised publishing industry channels.

ISBNs and other bibliographic information uniquely identify a publication in a particular format. Publishers supply this data to Nielsen at, or before publication, and Nielsen disseminates it so that subscribers, commonly the book trade, libraries and re-users, can obtain copies of publications for their customers as soon as possible.

An ISBN enables users to find a publication without knowing who the publisher is. In addition, this unique identifier is particularly useful:

- when more than one organisation has been involved in the publication
- when responsibilities have moved from the originating government organisation to another body
- for publications in a series, for example, Command and House of Commons Papers
- to identify publications that only exist in a digital format, having gone out of print
- to identify the authoritative version of web-only publications

The library of the UK Parliament has a particular requirement to be able to trace all government publications.

In addition, bibliographic information can be added as metadata in the digital copies of publications which helps to support the re-use of the data included within the publication. An established metadata standard such as [Dublin Core](#) should be used where possible. Metadata can increase a publication's accessibility and enables it to be located on the web. Government web teams can provide guidance on this.

The responsibility for generating bibliographic information lies with the publisher (which can be the originating government organisation). Specifications for bibliographic services are therefore included in The National Archives' publishing contracts.

The United Kingdom Official Publications Database (UKOP) offers a central catalogue of official government publications in the United Kingdom. The database is provided by a private sector company independently of government. Further information can be found at [www.ukop.co.uk/](http://www.ukop.co.uk/).

## **Statutory legal deposit**

It is the publisher's responsibility to comply with legal deposit. This applies to all publishers, including government organisations that publish their own material.

The [Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003](#) requires that a copy of all works published in print in the United Kingdom is given to the British Library within a month of publication and copies are made available on demand to the other legal deposit libraries specified in the Act. The legal deposit libraries are:

- The British Library

- The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
- The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- The Bodleian Library, Oxford
- The University Library, Cambridge
- The Library of Trinity College, Dublin

The Library of Queen's University, Belfast, is not a Legal Deposit Library under the terms of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act. However, it is treated as an official deposit library for Northern Ireland official publications.

Copies of the publications produced through The National Archives publishing contracts are submitted to legal deposit libraries by the contractor.

At present there is no requirement for publishers to deposit non-print publications (for example web-only PDFs) with legal deposit libraries, although the Legal Deposit Libraries Act allows for such regulations to be introduced. Regulations applying to non-print publications are expected to commence in 2013.

Before the introduction of the new regulations, publishers, including government organisations, are strongly encouraged to deposit digital copies of their work voluntarily with the British Library for long term preservation.

Failure to deposit digital copies of publications with the British Library may result in publications being lost as websites close and technologies and formats change.

For further information regarding print and non-print legal deposit and the libraries see:

- British Library [www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/legaldep](http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/legaldep)
- Agency for the Legal Deposit Libraries [www.legaldeposit.org.uk](http://www.legaldeposit.org.uk)

## **Customer ordering services**

Publishing companies provide ordering services so customers can obtain their own copies of publications in the available formats.

The National Archives' publishing contracts allow customers to order print copies. It is possible to place standing orders and subscriptions based on the content of the publication, the originating government organisation and by publication type. Standing order customers receive their copies within a day or two of publication. Our contracts also allow customers to order print on demand copies by email, post, phone and internet after publication.

Some companies also 'push' digital copies of pre-ordered government publications to their customers on a subscription basis. Government libraries often use such services.

## Copyright

You need to establish the copyright ownership for each publication from a very early stage. You also need to provide this information where the reader can easily find it.

Copyright applies to works of an original literary, artistic or dramatic nature. The first owner of copyright will usually be the author of the work or the author's employer. In the case of works created by civil servants and government ministers in the course of their duties, the first owner of copyright in the work will be the [Crown](#).

[Crown copyright](#) is administered on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen by the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, an official within The National Archives. Central government departments do not own copyright in their own right.

## Commissioning arrangements

If a publication's authors are not civil servants, you need to check whether copyright has been acquired for the Crown from the legal owner by means of a contract.

Government organisations often commission independent experts or authors to produce reports or research. As ownership of the copyright would rest with the person who wrote the report, or their employer, organisations must consider whether to claim the copyright on behalf of the Crown by means of one or more suitable clauses within the commissioning contract.

Please note that, if copyright is not assigned to the Crown, this could result in other organisations, including the commissioning organisation itself, not being able to use and re-use

the material without seeking the permission of the original author, which can be difficult and time-consuming.

If an organisation does decide to allow the copyright in the commissioned work to rest with the author, it should at least acquire a licence to publish and use the material or ensure that the material is published through an open licence.

### **Copyright statements in published material**

Government organisations must include a statement to indicate copyright ownership of documents they produce. These statements must also include details of the year in which the material was first published. This applies to all documents, regardless of how they are published.

Copyright statements can also indicate the terms under which the content of a publication can be re-used by others. Most Crown and Crown-owned copyright material can be re-used freely under the [Open Government Licence](#) (OGL). The OGL does not permit the re-use of any third party material, so it is important for government organisations to acknowledge the copyright owner of any non-Crown material, for example photos or data. Ideally, third party copyright material should be also be published through an open licence.

The National Archives has produced a number of copyright and re-use statements for use by government organisations in their publications. These statements are mandatory for use in Command, House of Commons and un-numbered Act Papers. There are also best practice copyright statements for non-Crown organisations which own their own copyright.

### **Copyright in typographical arrangement**

Please note that the layout of a document (the typographical arrangement) also qualifies for copyright protection. The first owner of copyright in the typographical arrangement is the publisher, so for a non-Crown publisher, typically a contractor, the contracting government organisation should ensure that this copyright is assigned to the Crown, otherwise users wishing to photocopy a document would need to obtain a separate permission for use of the layout.

## Accessible publications

Government organisations may need to produce certain publications in languages other than English. In the case of a publication that affects people in Wales, you may need to produce a Welsh-language version.

Government organisations are bound by the requirements of the [Equalities Act 2010](#) to ensure that their services and products, including publications, are accessible to disabled people. Accessibility is even more important if a document contains policy proposals that may affect the services delivered to disabled people.

All PDFs published on government websites need to meet accessibility requirements. This includes PDFs of Command and House of Commons Papers. Details of the standards required of government PDFs can be found on the [Cabinet Office website](#).

It is best practice also to publish online versions of these papers in Rich Text Format (RTF), which can be read by all types of screen reading software. Some older versions of screen reading software have difficulties in reading PDFs clearly, including accessible PDFs.

Government organisations should also consider alternative methods for disseminating information to people with disabilities, such as:

- Easy Read versions of publications [odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/iod/easy-read-guidance.pdf](http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/iod/easy-read-guidance.pdf)
- large print
- Braille (The National Archives publishing contracts provide for Braille versions of documents to be produced as required, contact the publishing contractor for further information)
- videos using British Sign Language (see [digitalstandards.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/online-video-guidelines/](http://digitalstandards.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/online-video-guidelines/) for guidance on producing online videos)
- audio versions of documents, for example cassette/CD/MP3

The Office for Disability Issues ([www.odi.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.odi.dwp.gov.uk)) has produced guidance for public sector organisations about producing accessible publications.

Further sources of information:

Publishing: A guide for government departments

Royal National Institute for Blind People [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Welsh Language Commissioner

<http://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.org/english/Pages/Home.aspx>