

ACQUID

How UK Government Agencies Can Better Serve Constituents Through Their Websites

Your organisation is better placed than ever to deliver streamlined, personalised web experiences, and online services for UK citizens.



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INTRODUCTION

The UK Government has pledged to transform digital engagement with its citizens — which will effectively help improve the delivery of public services.

In this eBook, we offer you a closer look at the challenges, benefits, and advice on how you can succeed as you move forward with your own initiatives.



Consider Digital Transformation Efforts that Many UK Government Agencies Are Making

In the private business sector, digital transformation initiatives are undertaken to help reduce costs, boost employee productivity, improve the customer experience, and gain an advantage in an increasingly competitive business environment.

But, the truth is, a digital transformation can be as imperative to the public sector as it is within the enterprise. Agencies and organisations of all kinds strive to replace time-consuming manual processes with digital alternatives.

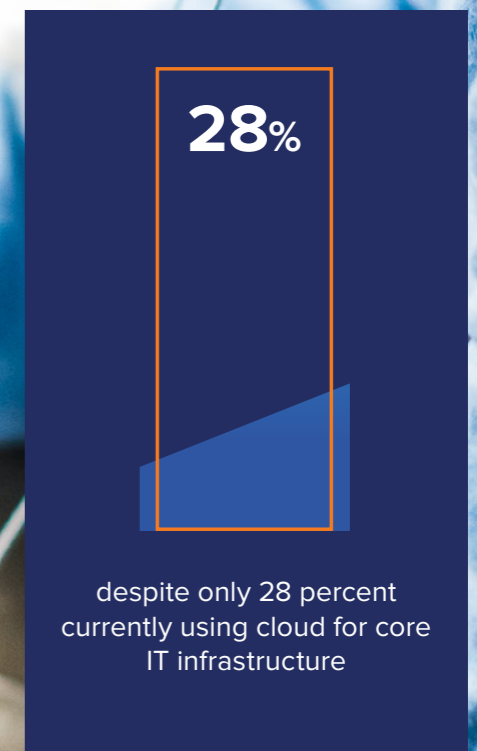
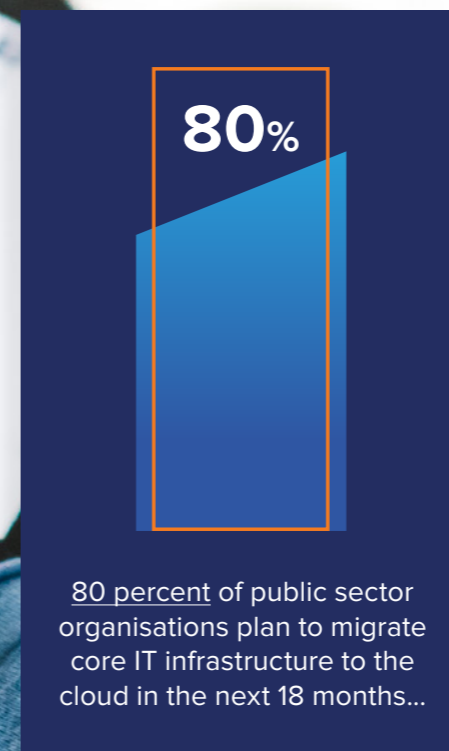
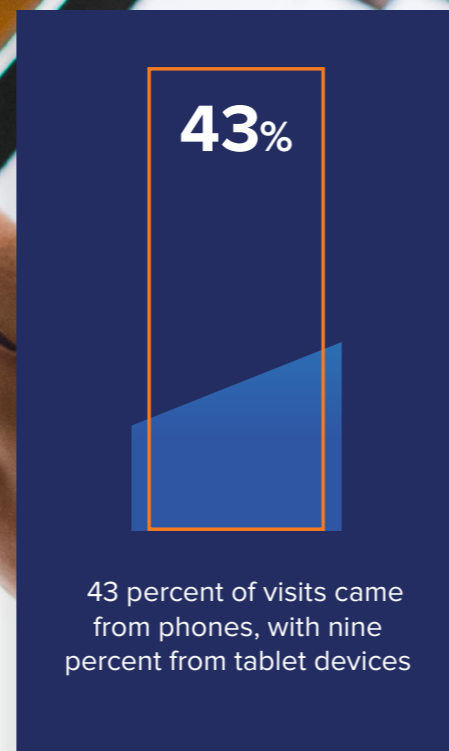
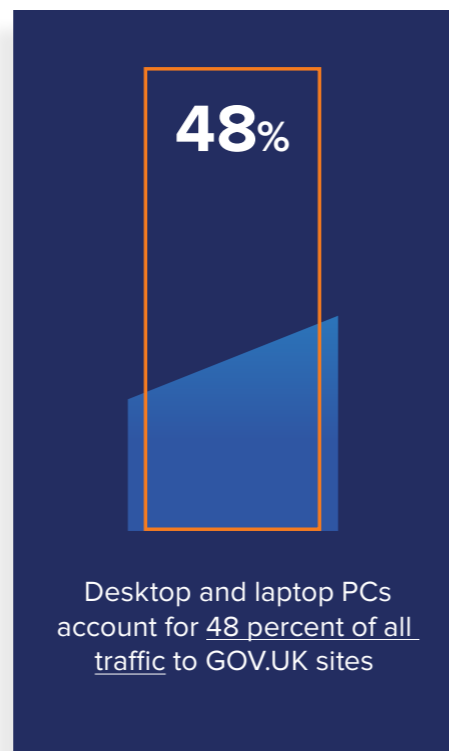
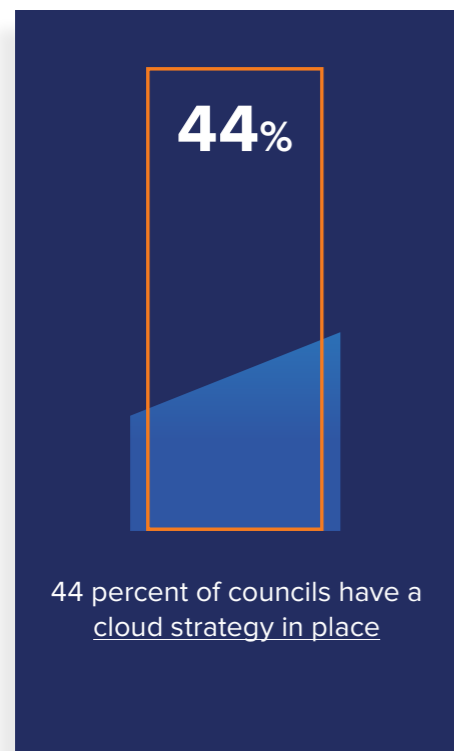
Leaders from both local and central

government agencies acknowledge the need to improve their digital presence and streamline the management of multiple websites. They also recognise that UK citizens are consumers with increasingly high expectations when it comes to their online engagement – irrespective of whether the service is delivered by the private or public sector.

Thanks to services like Netflix, Uber, Dropbox and more, consumers have become accustomed to being able to access the services they need quickly and easily, regardless of what device they're using – and they expect the same thing of all the services within their life.

It's no longer enough for government agencies to build basic websites and browser-based content that frustrates the user and fails to give them what they require. Citizens now demand cross-channel experiences, with content that is contextually-relevant to their needs and delivered to any screen, across any operating system.

With this in mind, public sector IT agencies are looking to overhaul their ageing websites to provide streamlined, personalised, user-centric web experiences, and online services to constituents.



Navigate Around those Digital Speed Bumps

Public sector agencies and departments responsible for affecting this transformation face some significant challenges in delivering a citizen-centric digital experience.

One 2018 survey found more than half of government departments are only seeing slow or partial progress in digitising their processes, hampered by a lack of “skills, expertise, and vision needed to execute robust digital transformation projects.”

Legacy infrastructure is also stagnating progress, the survey indicated, with respondents saying their existing ICT infrastructure hinders the implementation of digital services and automation of processes.

These challenges may be compounded by the uncertainty surrounding Brexit. What the Government’s recent

guidance on transformation describes as the “delivery challenge of leaving the EU” means some digitisation projects are already being scaled back or delayed as government departments struggle to cope with the extra workload.

Data analytics and cybersecurity will see the most investment by government CIOs in 2019

45 percent of government CIOs say they lack the IT and business resources required to execute digital strategies

Half UK governments are looking to digital government to support a combination of transformation and optimization goals

Unfortunately, there are some characteristic elements to the public sector that can also slow the agencies trying to accelerate digitisation. An often-prolonged procurement process, constrained budgets, multiple layers of approval and other factors can conspire to thwart the efforts of IT departments within the public sector.



Apply These Ideas to Overcome Barriers

Successfully changing that culture requires listening to staff, communicating the need for change, and equipping employees with modern technology – and that includes harnessing the power of open collaboration.

“Building agility, efficiency and confidence into public organisations is necessary when programmes are being run to uncertain deadlines and specifications as a result of uncertainty about the terms of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU and the future relationship,” notes a [report from the Institute for Government](#).

The public sector needs to leverage open standards, interoperable technology, shared platforms, and reusable business capabilities to deliver up end-to-end services demanded by their constituents.

“

It is important that public sector organisations understand that cloud technology is not the end result. Rather, it can be one of the enablers of better ways of working and more effective service delivery to achieve better outcomes for citizens.”

— Martin Ferguson, Director of Policy and Research at [Socitm](#)

Put Practical Solutions to Work

There's a good reason that the digital-native services mentioned above have become so successful, which is that their mobile- and cloud-focused operating models are designed to make it as fast and convenient as possible to accomplish the tasks that they need to complete.

They have evolved to recognise that users are principally concerned with outcomes, and that as long as a service delivers the desired outcome, they are not concerned with how they engage with it.

This means agencies should be moving away from fixed or siloed

on-premise systems, and taking full advantage of cloud-based microservices and new decoupled architectures that can provide flexible and differentiated experiences for the visitor.

Digital is a means to differentiate and innovate. Through adapting to deliver modern digital services, government and public sector agencies can ensure that they are able to provide the essential services that their community needs, whenever and wherever they need them.

Embrace a Cloud-based, Open-source Platform

One example of this is Brighton & Hove City Council which, like many other local councils across the UK, realised that an increasing number of its residents today expect to access their local services online.

However, the council's eight-year-old website wasn't up for the task, and the Council needed to reinvent its digital front door to better support the needs of its citizens.

Acquia's Drupal-based architecture now enables the council to manage multiple sites simultaneously and respond to citizen or team requirements rapidly with new features or services.

Migrating to a cloud-based platform also means greater operational cost

savings, increased flexibility and the ability to easily scale when required.

There's a great example of this, if we look further afield. The Australian government saw that its citizens want to access government services online, and so, alongside increasing budget pressures, it decided to adopt a cloud-based approach to delivering information and services. Their team selected Acquia to move more than 60 government agencies from their legacy environments to its new digital platform, govCMS.

The move also saw them adopting an open source platform where a shared infrastructure, code and templates allow for governance and innovation to co-exist.

A major benefit of the open source platform is that the government departments don't have issues associated with licensing requests. The collaborative nature inherent to open source allowed teamwork between agencies that was difficult to achieve with a proprietary solution. For example, the govCMS distribution allows each government agency to repurpose modules from the distributions. This means that they save time, money, and resources because they do not have to start from scratch.

In addition, the universal nature of govCMS means the module can be used across any agency that requires it:

- Completely contextual, dynamic experience
- Agile, frequent updates
- Massively scalable and highly available
- Centralisation led to significant cost savings
- Citizen engagement, self service, and NPS all increased

Another example comes from the U.S.; President Obama's time in office has been distilled into an easy to navigate, rich digital experience through the Obama Presidential Library site, powered by Drupal. Acting as a virtual library, it offers an interactive timeline of Obama's eight years in office, video and photographic history, and links to more info for academic researchers and historians.



CASE STUDY:

The Australian Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE)

The Australian Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) wanted to publish its State of the Environment (SoE) report online as an alternative to the 1,500-page hard copy report it traditionally publishes.

For this the team at the DoEE needed a modern, flexible platform that would accommodate all past and future reports and offer a comparative analysis of each. This involved bringing complex data and insights to life for a variety of stakeholders, while remaining compliant with the Australian Government's digital service standard.

Working with Acquia, the DoEE was able to leverage readily available modules to quickly build the online

SoE report. The flexibility inherent to Drupal also allowed the DoEE to develop new functionality – for example to build interactive graphs that made complex scientific data accessible.

The platform allows readers to compare findings with the previous assessment, search for specific trends, interact with more than 300 maps and graphs, and filter the report's content by theme.



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

CONCLUSION

Central and local government face a unique set of challenges in their pursuit of making public services simpler and easier to access for everybody.

They need to partner with a specialist that can help them navigate their digital transformation journeys – one that has experience of reducing the administrative burden for government agencies and departments, enabling greater collaboration and providing a seamless digital experience for its citizens.

As an approved vendor, Acquia is fully compliant with associated regulation and is committed to serving the UK's government agencies.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. The Government Digital Service (GDS) has committed to help government departments improve their digital services.

2. The Government is looking to overhaul its ageing websites with streamlined, personalised web experiences and online services for citizens.

3. However, government agencies face cultural and societal challenges around their digitisation efforts, including uncertainty caused by Brexit.

4. Website users have high expectations when it comes to consuming online services.

5. Approved vendor Acquia has helped government agencies worldwide deliver ambitious digital experiences at scale.

6. Acquia's Drupal-based architecture enables organisations to manage multiple websites simultaneously and respond to citizen or team requirements rapidly with new features or services.



HOW ACQUIA CAN HELP

Acquia is committed to the UK's public sector. An approved vendor on the government's G-Cloud procurement platform, we offer the infrastructure, people, skill set and support to help solve the digital challenges that central and local government face.

Any digital service must be tailored to each agency's individual requirements, from small parish council to major government department. In addition, new regulations have just come into force where every public sector website and app will need to meet certain accessibility standards to ensure public sector websites and mobile apps are available to all users, especially those with disabilities.

The UK Government has also said that it wants to make the process of digitisation "reusable and shareable instead of reinventing the wheel every time." This means building platforms that others can build upon and providing resources like APIs that others can use – as is the case of Acquia's platform, which is open and built to be API-first, which makes it easy to meet the organisation's specific needs and environment.

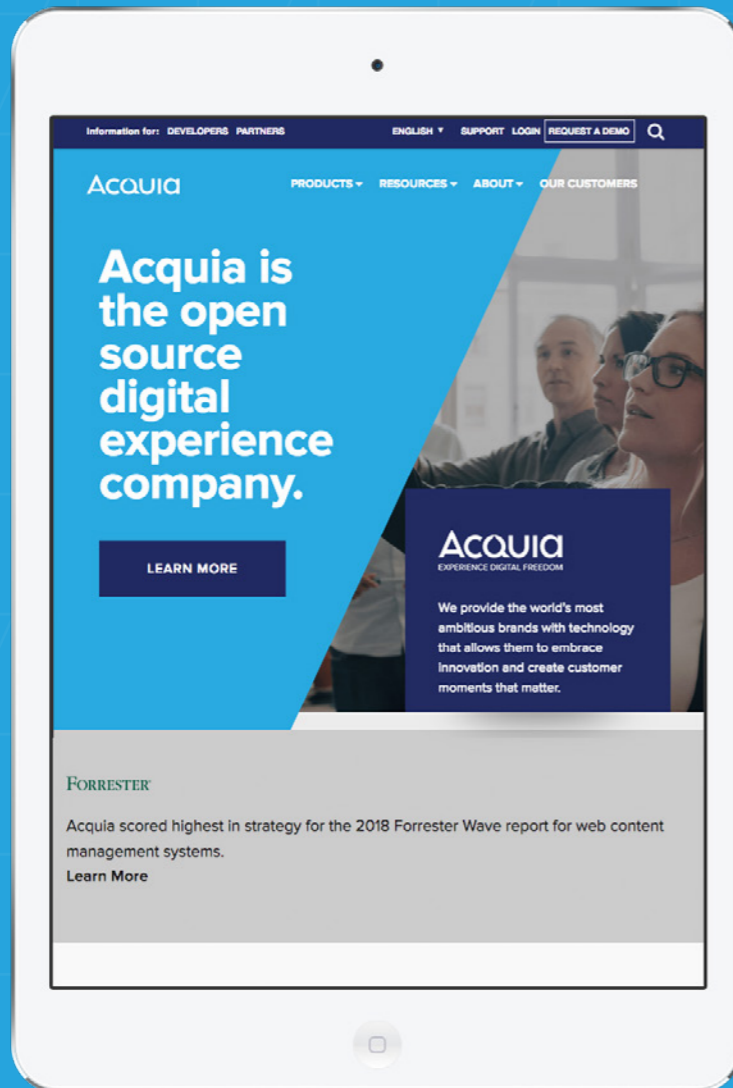
The security, reliability, and agility of Acquia's agile platform enables government departments and agencies to properly align their resources and deliver on their mission.

THE BENEFITS ARE CLEAR:

- **Simple:** Spend less time building, and lower your development and maintenance costs.
- **Scalable:** Grow to meet demand, increase efficiency, secure your data, and streamline your workflows for developers and marketers.
- **Intelligent:** More accurate data and automated insights to personalise customer journeys.

Acquia

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HOW ACQUIA CAN HELP
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