

Businesslink.gov.uk

Annual Review 2009-10

To customers: for you and your business ☐

Businesslink.gov.uk is the government's digital portal for businesses, giving you guidance and support for your business needs and your online dealings with government.

To government: an effective channel to business ☐

Businesslink.gov.uk provides a range of online services, allowing businesses to interact with government, whenever and however they need.

Our Vision

By 2011 businesslink.gov.uk will be the preferred web portal for any business seeking authoritative advice from government. It will provide simple and efficient ways for businesses to transact with government. Its success in meeting business needs will inspire those using the portal to spread the word about its value.

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The Programme Board

Taskeen Ali Head of Strategy and Performance Branch, HM Treasury	Mary McAllan Deputy Director, The Scottish Government
David Armstrong Head of eCommunications & Digital Media, DECC	Tim Moss Director of Corporate Strategy, Companies House
Simon Ashley Head of Interactive Development, Environment Agency	Matthew Nicholas Director of External Relations and Communications, Jobcentre Plus
Stephen Banyard Director, Business Customer Unit and SRO for the Business.gov Programme, HMRC	Jayne Nickalls Chief Executive, Directgov
Vivien Bodnar Director of Transformation Licensing Logics and Sponsorships, DfT	Mike Norgrove Director of Excise, Customs, Stamps and Money, HMRC
Mike Carr Executive Director of Business Services, East Midlands Development Agency	Bill Pollard Deputy Director, Business.gov Programme, HMRC
Carl Creswell Director of Guidance and Enforcement, BIS	Bill Reay Head of eCommunications, Home Office
Melanie Dawes Director General, Business Tax, HMRC	Benjamin Robb Interim Head of Directgov and Businesslink.gov.uk Team, MoJ
Clive Fleming Head of Strategic Interventions, HSE	Philip Rycroft Director General, BIS
Professor Russel Griggs Non-executive Director, Future Route	Tim Soane Director, Regulatory Innovation, BIS
Clare Harbord Director of Communications, MoJ	Andrew Stott Director of Digital Engagement, Cabinet Office
John Harrison Head of CCD On-line, HMRC	Neil Thornton Director Waste and Resource; and Delivery Transformation, Defra
Adam Jackson Director, Enterprise, BIS	Nigel Williams Director, Business.gov Programme, HMRC
Sharon Linnard Director of Operations and Invest Wales, Welsh Assembly Government	

A message from the directors

During the last year, businesslink.gov.uk attracted an average of over 50,000 visits a day.

The site continues to be a key source of knowledge and guidance for businesses of all sizes, with many businesses telling us that our services have been vital. In 2009-10 the website received more than 19 million visits, up 28% from 2008-09. During this time our customer satisfaction has remained above 90%, higher than that of many private sector websites.

This is no small achievement for a site that has doubled in size each year for the last two years. Businesses have continued to tell us that by using the site they have saved significant amounts of time and money (equating to savings of £298 million) and that it has helped in delivering additional sales and profits (equating to £500 million).¹

This Annual Review is designed to help you see how we provide businesses and government with a highly valued digital service.

Last year, we continued to add key new information, services and transactional facilities to the site. These ranged from a useful guide on starting a business at home and the addition of our financial support tool, to the successful launch of key HMRC transactions such as VAT online, Jobcentre Plus content and our Point of Single Contact, UK Welcomes, which makes it easier for EU businesses to set up or expand their services within the UK. We also provided specific business information and support to help reduce the impact of potential threats to business operations, including the swine flu pandemic.

Access to new technologies has transformed the way that people gather information, interact and access services. With the UK business community's needs and expectations evolving all the time, it is important that we keep pace. DotGovLabs, an R&D innovations programme set up with Directgov, NHS Choices and the Regional Development Agencies, has provided us with some valuable outputs as well as insights into how we might operate in the future in this vital area.

Work has already started on some important deliverables to be achieved in the year ahead.

In 2010 -11, we will finish our three-year programme to bring the content and services for businesses from 95% of government websites onto businesslink.gov.uk. This will provide businesses with an even more interconnected service, offering government information, support and guidance from one location.

2010-11 will also see key new additions to the service, such as advertising tender opportunities from government to many more businesses, particularly small and medium sized businesses who traditionally have had limited opportunity to bid for contracts in the government space.

We hope this review provides you with some insight into our progress, and we invite you to provide any feedback or questions to annual.review@businesslink.gsi.gov.uk.

Stephen Banyard
Director, Business Customer Unit, HM Revenue & Customs and Senior Responsible Officer, Business.gov Programme

David Dinsdale
Programme Director, Businesslink.gov.uk

¹ Businesslink.gov.uk Customer Impact Assessment, March 2010. Databuild. Figures based on grossed total responses from sample to reflect UK businesses.

Overview

Businesslink.gov.uk is government’s website for businesses of all sizes. It helps people to succeed in business by providing access to clear, simple and authoritative information, transactions and support. For many businesses it is also the first port of call for accessing wider Business Link services and business support.



This cross-government site is delivered under the Business.gov Programme, managed by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) since 2007 and developed in partnership with experts within government, as well as with a range of relevant business-support organisations.

Businesslink.gov.uk has been providing information, guidance and support to businesses since its conception in 2004 as the online channel for the Business Link service. Following Sir David Varney's Service Transformation Review in 2006, the remit for businesslink.gov.uk broadened when he recommended that Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk 'become the primary information and transactional channels for citizens and businesses' (respectively).

We are currently moving all business-related content from 95% of relevant government websites onto businesslink.gov.uk, a process we call convergence that will be complete by March 2011 – resulting in a single, online government resource for businesses of all sizes.

Businesslink.gov.uk simplifies the worlds of business and government to create a service tailored to the needs of business. To do this, we divide the website into easy-to-understand themes. This is a popular approach and our user-satisfaction scores are among the best in the public and private sectors. We regularly speak to thousands of businesses who tell us that they are satisfied with our service and recommend us to others.

But we always want to do better. Putting our business customers at the heart of the service is key to the Business.gov Programme.

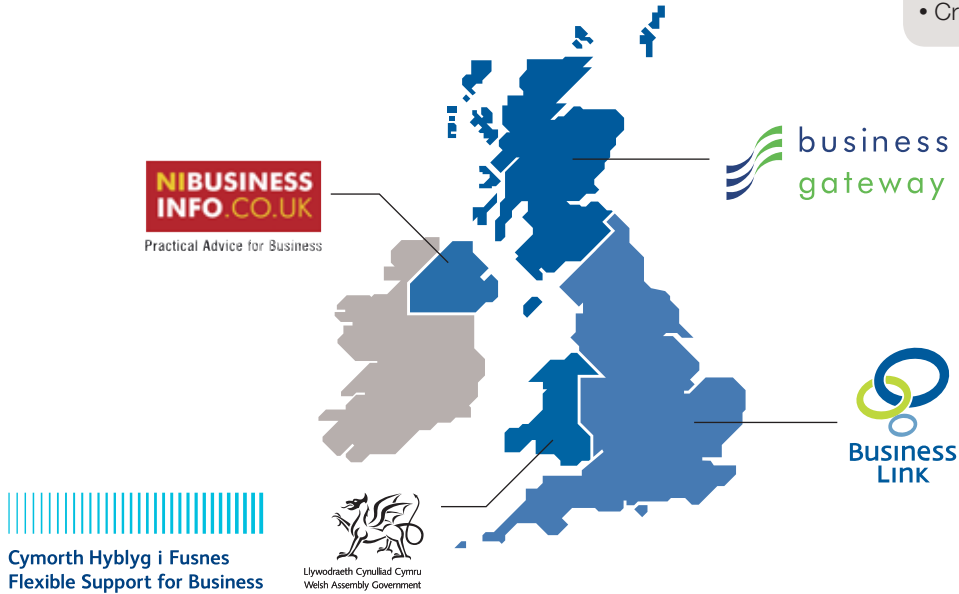
Since the service was launched it has been overseen by a cross-government Programme Board, and last year we added to this with the establishment of 'Theme Boards', that ensure a customer focus on the development of each of the business-related themes on the site. They are made up of subject specialists across government and a range of members from relevant business-support organisations. Working together this way helps ensure customers' needs remain the priority.

The Business Link service
Alongside businesslink.gov.uk, Business Link has delivered business support through both a network of advisers and its telephone helpline (0845 600 9 006). These are managed by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in the nine English regions.

At a local level, Business Link provides a range of business advice through face-to-face meetings with advisers, and topical events and workshops appropriate to the life stages and different needs of businesses.

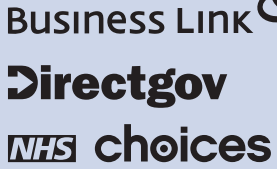
Businesslink.gov.uk works in close partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), RDAs, their Business Link providers in the English regions and the Devolved Administrations (NIBusinessinfo.co.uk, Northern Ireland; Flexible Support for Business, Wales; and Business Gateway, Scotland).

We provide the website infrastructure and site content for the Business Link providers and Devolved Administrations, enabling them to create and publish locally specific content and services.



Joint supersite working

Businesslink.gov.uk also works very closely with government's other two main digital channels – Directgov for citizens and NHS Choices for health – sharing best practice and innovations to help ensure our services best meet the needs of business, citizens and patients.



Administration and finance

The total funding for the businesslink.gov.uk Programme for the year to 31 March, 2010 was £35 million.

Our work falls into two main areas:

- Core**
 - Customer proposition
 - User support (formerly known as customer support)
 - Live services
 - Marketing
 - Leadership and premises
 - Government proposition (engaging with stakeholder departments and agencies)
- Projects**
 - Convergence
 - Convergence capability (delivery of technical projects to enhance the businesslink.gov.uk service)
 - Strategic projects
 - Cross-programme resource

The year in brief

Over 90% of our customers rated businesslink.gov.uk as good, very good or excellent. More than 80% said they would recommend the website to others and over 85% said we offered a comprehensive service.¹

April 2009

DotGovLabs – a shared research and development programme backed by businesslink.gov.uk, Directgov, NHS Choices and the Regional Development Agencies, was established. This programme was funded by a combined innovation budget and aimed to improve the public’s experience of government websites by sharing innovative practices and ideas in the online space.

Swine flu support – businesslink.gov.uk partnered with the Department of Health, Cabinet Office and Directgov to develop a cross-government initiative to inform and advise businesses, citizens and patients across the UK, providing them with the latest authoritative news and advice on swine flu.

May 2009

Taking on a new employee tool – highly commended in the Guardian’s Government Computing (GC) Awards for providing an outstanding improvement in service delivery for businesses on businesslink.gov.uk.

June 2009

Talentmap™ launched – designed to provide UK employers with an easy-to-use framework for finding information regarding education, employment and skill systems.

August 2009

Business segmentation – we carried out a large-scale research programme to better understand our customers and provide them with the best digital services. As a result we developed a segmentation model for the whole UK business population, with supporting business typologies and personas.

November 2009

13 HMRC transaction groups and supporting guides – these mean that our users can now file a number of key transactions online from businesslink.gov.uk, including HMRC’s ‘big four’ transactions; VAT, Corporation Tax, PAYE, and Self Assessment.

Van Best Practice programme launched – developed in conjunction with the Department for Transport, this programme allows businesses to share information to help reduce fuel costs and emissions to improve efficiency of van usage.

December 2009

Point of Single Contact – launched in line with the European Services Directive on 28 December. Its aim is to cut red tape and allow all businesses, both foreign and local, to identify the legal requirements to operate anywhere in the UK.

Cloud computing – we extended our use of cloud computing to serve content and provide resilience to our delivery of the Pre-Budget Report.

February 2010

YouTube channel – businesslink.gov.uk launched its branded YouTube channel on 8 February – the first step along our planned syndication route to make businesslink.gov.uk content more widely available to our customers.

Welsh Flexible Support for Business – launched on 15 February, extending localised business support to the Welsh business community.

Farming sector – we launched a new area of the site designed specifically for farmers and their agents, providing information on complying with regulations and best practice guidance.

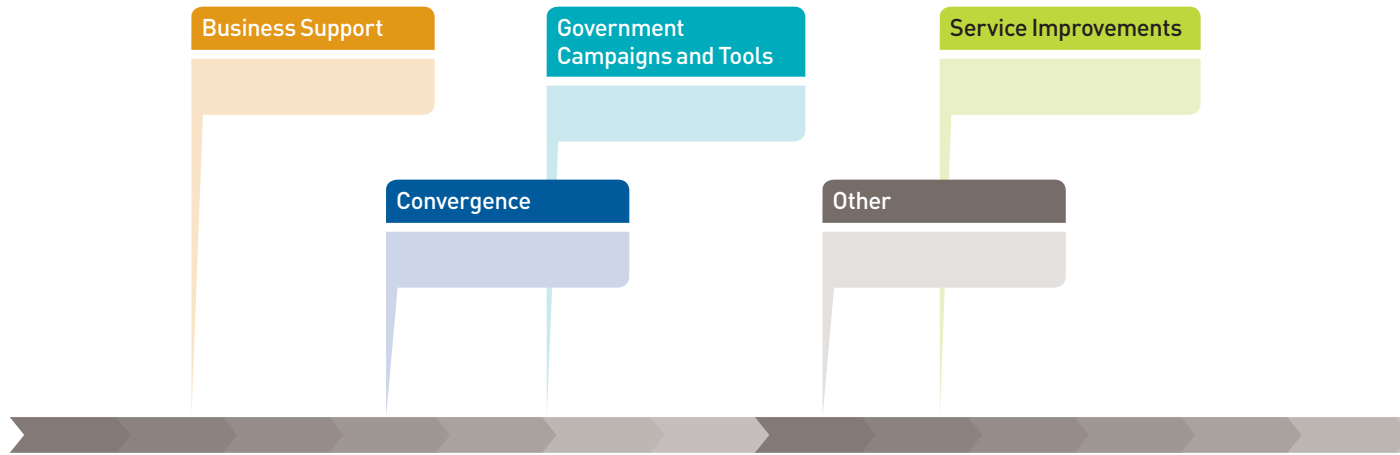
March 2010

New sectors launched – providing businesses with even more sector-specific content in the areas of: *Construction, Manufacturing, Food and Drink and Private Security and Surveillance*.

Jobcentre Plus website closed – all users are now redirected to either businesslink.gov.uk or Directgov. This was a major milestone in delivering the web convergence programme and providing significant cost savings to government.

Timeline key

The following timeline of major achievements is designed to help bring our year’s work to life.



Throughout the 2009 -10 financial year the businesslink.gov.uk Programme has focused on four key areas of work – with significant cross over between them. Over the next pages you will see our delivery achievements colour coded against these key areas.

Delivering business support

The last year has seen UK business face significant challenges, including the economic landscape and access to credit, the threat of swine flu and adverse weather conditions. Businesslink.gov.uk is committed to providing up-to-date and timely support for the many issues businesses face.

Government campaigns and tools

Through close working with our partners across government, we aim to provide online support and fulfilment for departmental marketing campaigns. We are also committed to developing tools to enable the delivery of more efficient and effective business services.

Improving the service we deliver

Further developing and improving the service to make it even easier for businesses to navigate and access the information, support and guidance they need – including research and innovation.

Making government digital business content and services accessible via businesslink.gov.uk (referred to as ‘convergence’)

Sir David Varney (2006) recommended that Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk ‘become the primary information and transactional channels for citizens and businesses’ (respectively). By March 2011, business-facing content and transactions from 95% of government websites will be available from businesslink.gov.uk. We have now completed over 60% of the three-year convergence programme as set out for the Comprehensive Spending Review 07 period.

Other

This area focuses on activity, achievements and feedback during the course of the year.

How have we performed?

Area	Key Performance Indicator	Achieved 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Achieved 2009-10 ^{1,3}
Ensuring businesslink.gov.uk is current and comprehensive and is attracting relevant business users ²	Visits to the website	14.8 million	19 million	Over 19.4 million
	Number of tools successfully used	5 million	5.5 million	Over 5.7 million
	Number of repeat visits to the website	5 million	6.9 million	Over 7 million
	Number of new registrations	104,000	109,000	Over 111,000
Ensuring business satisfaction	Customer satisfaction	92%	88% ⁴	93%
Delivering economic benefits to business ⁵	Saving businesses money (time or avoiding cost)	£317 million	£370 million	£298 million
	Improving business performance	£379 million	£590 million	£500 million
Ensuring partner satisfaction	Stakeholder and partner satisfaction	65%	65%	59% ⁶
Planned site maintenance	Proportion of content items reviewed	96%	95%	99%
Ensuring site availability and resilience	% availability	100%	99.5%	100%
Convergence of government’s business content	Delivery of web units (or sections of websites)	135	123	133

See next page for performance footnotes

Performance footnotes
¹ Businesslink.gov.uk Customer Impact Assessment, March 2010. Databuild. Figures based on grossed total responses from sample to reflect UK businesses. ² Please note 2009-10 targets were amended in-year from the previously published target, with the consent of our Programme Board, in recognition of errors in the original forecasting model. ³ Omniture Site Catalyst. ⁴ No less than 88%. ⁵ We anticipate that increasing our marketing penetration in 2010-11 will deliver increases in economic benefits to business. ⁶ Method through which partner satisfaction was measured changed from 2008-09 to 2009-10. Although 59% rated satisfaction of the service as good or excellent, 90% of partners said they were satisfied overall.

April 09

Total visits 1.4m Increase from 2008 51%

Service Improvement

DotGovLabs research and development programme launched

Government Campaign

Continuation of HMRC 'Tax Help' and BIS 'Employing People' campaign

Government Tool

Businesslink.gov.uk launched a campaign planner to inform regional Business Link providers, Devolved Administrations and stakeholders about government campaigns targeting businesses

Business Support

Common Commencement Date

Convergence

Addition of new section for farmers

Business Support

Online marketing guides added

Business Support

Swine flu response – cross-government initiative to inform and advise business



Convergence

Transport Direct Journey Planner and travel information now available through businesslink.gov.uk

Government Tool

Devolved Publishing training gained accreditation

Convergence

Stamp Duty Land Tax guides launched

DotGovLabs

We established DotGovLabs, a shared research and development programme backed by businesslink.gov.uk, Directgov, NHS Choices and the Regional Development Agencies, to share innovative experiences and ideas in the online space, as well as make the most of existing and future partnerships and relationships.



Recommendations from the Power of Information Taskforce Report (Cabinet Office, 2009) added impetus to DotGovLabs in its recommendation that businesslink.gov.uk, Directgov and NHS Choices should create a combined innovation pot focussed on improving the public's experience of government websites.

During the past year we've launched twelve projects, including:

Government hackday – a two-day event to enable developers to use our data to see what applications they could create with it.

Widgets – to explore what content and applications best lend themselves to widget creation, and how we can ensure they are packaged and distributed in a manner to maximise partner update and promotion. For this research we created a sample 'DotGovLabs Redundancy Widget'.

Avatar – an avatar is intended to provide a cost-effective channel for answering user queries and to simplify access to the same, accurate and in depth information to reduce "avoidable contact". This project therefore explored the opportunities for government and our customers, in providing useful and humanised guidance, advice and support, cost-effectively through the use of a virtual assistant.

Games – to research the games market and opportunities it could present to the three supersites. For example, how the three websites can use the principles and techniques from games, such as narrative and reward, to increase the appeal of our sites whilst delivering an appropriate service.

Lifestages – to assess how the three supersites could work more closely together on certain themes which overlap the three services, such as pregnancy, to see what benefits this could provide for our customers.

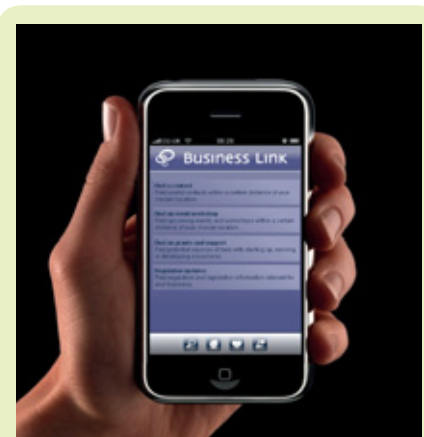
Wikis – to explore whether user-generated content or input into our sites could support an improved service.

Online advisers – to understand whether government and publicly funded services can provide useful guidance, advice or support to users cost-effectively through the use of online advisers.

Further details on all the projects are available – please email us at annual.review@businesslink.gsi.gov.uk if you would like to receive more information.



Businesslink.gov.uk avatar assistant



Conceptual businesslink.gov.uk application created at the hackday

Swine flu

With cases of swine flu increasing in April 2009, businesslink.gov.uk joined with the Department of Health, Cabinet Office and Directgov to develop a cross-government initiative to inform and advise business, citizens and patients across the UK.

The digital campaign represented a new way of working for government communication on major health issues. The service enabled people to receive practical help, including access to antivirals, without infecting the wider community.

Successful coordination of search term strategies meant HM Government was the number one destination for official swine flu information and the three supersites received over 15 million visits to these pages. It was our intention to provide UK citizens and businesses with a clear and effective cross-government public education and advice campaign to allow them to make informed choices without exposing themselves to the risk of catching the virus.

Devolved Publishing training gained accreditation

Our Devolved Publishing training gained official accreditation through the National School of Government. Since then 60 individuals have attended the training, enabling government departments to successfully publish quality content directly onto businesslink.gov.uk.

The *Transport and Logistics* theme was the first to use a 100% devolved publishing model. A Theme Publishing team has been established with representatives from the Department for Transport and its executive agencies that maintain and enhance their own content on businesslink.gov.uk.

Online marketing

Online marketing provides a cost-effective way to reach customers. In April, we launched four new guides to provide businesses with information including: search marketing, Web 2.0 technology and online networking.

Stamp Duty Land Tax

Our *Taxes, Returns & Payroll* theme delivered 23 new guides in April, including information about Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) rates and thresholds, how to pay it, as well as reliefs and exemptions.

The new content also contained an introduction to Stamp Duty Reserve Tax and a guide explaining Stamp Duty – the result of continued successful working between businesslink.gov.uk and HMRC.

Common Commencement Date

The Common Commencement Dates (CCDs) are two days a year when all new legislative amendments and business regulations are introduced.

Our aim is to help businesses plan for any new measures and comply more effectively, thereby helping reduce costs. The businesslink.gov.uk/ccd page provides businesses with an early snapshot of the regulations expected to come into force for the next CCD.

Feedback in April

"I just want to say I have found so much useful information on this site. Everything I needed to know in fact and it was SO easy to find. Thank you, it makes such a refreshing change!" – Customer feedback

"In a downturn every penny counts and we don't want small businesses spending on advice the Government provides free. I urge small businesses to familiarise themselves with the Business Link online resources." – Tricia Phillip, *The Daily Mirror*

Transport Direct Journey Planner

The Transport Direct Journey Planner and travel information service provides a comprehensive tool for all businesslink.gov.uk customers.

May 09

Total visits 1.3m Increase from 2008 46%

Convergence

Envirowise convergence

Event

Businesslink.gov.uk joined Directgov and NHS Choices to exhibit at Cabinet Office's Tower 09 'Putting Citizens and Businesses in Control' event

Business Support

New guides added to *Exploit Your Ideas*, *Finance and Grants*, and *Grow Your Business* themes

Service Improvement

Customer Impact Assessment

Award

'National employee organiser' tool (now called the 'Taking on a new employee' tool) – highly commended at the GC Awards
We were recognised by the Government Computing Awards for providing an outstanding improvement in service delivery for businesses on businesslink.gov.uk

Government Campaign

Cross-government 'Real Help for Businesses' campaign updated with business tips

Service Improvement

Video case studies launched



Yearly Overview: Customer Impact Assessment¹

This year we again spoke to more than 12,000 businesses to measure what they think of our service, how useful they find it and what benefits they gain through using it.

Our customer satisfaction continues to remain over 90%, higher than for many private sector websites, despite the fact that the site has more than doubled in size each year, for the past two years, with the addition of new content.

More than 80% of businesslink.gov.uk users said they would recommend the service and 20% of those aware of businesslink.gov.uk first heard of the service from a recommendation themselves. In the year to March 2010 alone, approximately 1.9 million businesses had the site recommended to them.

The businesses that received the most benefits from the site:

- Knew they had a particular issue and used businesslink.gov.uk to resolve that issue
- Used businesslink.gov.uk in conjunction with other sources of support
- Are registered businesslink.gov.uk users who use tools and transactions

Businesses also continue to tell us they are satisfied with our service and find it easy to use:

Overall satisfaction	93%
Ease of use	94%
Likelihood to use the service again	88%
Comprehensiveness of the service	87%
Likelihood to recommend	81%

Significantly, businesses told us they saved time and money and increased their sales and profits as a result of using businesslink.gov.uk.

Year to:	May 2009	November 2009	March 2010
Value of time savings	£139m	£96m	£121.5m
Money savings	£181m	£120m	£176.5m
Additional turnover	£413m	£327m	£319m
Additional profit	£62m	£81m	£181m
Total	£795m	£624m	£798m

Envirowise content converged onto *Environment & Efficiency* theme

Envirowise offers free, independent advice to businesses, to help them save money and resources. Content moved to businesslink.gov.uk included four guides: 'Water and sewerage rates'; 'How to prevent water pollution'; 'How to provide sustainable goods' and; 'How to set up an environmental management system'.

Other content converged onto the *Environment & Efficiency* section of the site included 41 new guides to extend existing help areas, seven self-help diagnostic tools, 23 written case studies and an extra eight video case studies, to provide customers with a more engaging way to learn from other businesses.

"Delighted to be involved in the project from the beginning" – Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) colleague.

New business support products launched:

Growth through innovation – we expanded the design section within the *Exploit Your Ideas* theme for businesses who are exploring options for growing through new innovations.

Support during the economic climate – the *Finance and Grants* theme launched a new guide to help businesses during the current economic climate, as well as one about investment appraisal techniques. This advises businesses about evaluating potential investments they might be considering.

Remaining competitive – *Grow Your Business* theme launched new guides designed to help businesses develop through spotting market opportunities and competing in markets dominated by big brands. We also launched a new, interactive tool designed to accompany our risk management and business continuity content. Organisations can use it to assess risks to their business.

The principle of mutual recognition – BIS worked with businesslink.gov.uk to produce a guide to explain the principle of mutual recognition – to make it easier for exporters in the UK to market and sell their goods in other EU member states and vice versa. In essence, this is the UK's Product Contact Point, which EU Member states must provide to make it easier for other member states to market and sell their goods in other countries.

Video case studies

New video case studies launched at www.businesslink.gov.uk/video. An even more engaging way for people to discover how owners and managers conquered real-life challenges and managed opportunities in their business. Up until this point, all the case studies on the site were text-based.

Invest in your resource efficiency: Top ten tips for reducing waste and saving energy

A top ten tips page was added as part of the cross-government 'Real Help for Business' campaign – to help companies do their bit and save money too.

Real help for businesses now

Feedback in May

"Why is the iPod like businesslink.gov.uk? Both are developed by putting the needs of the customer first, both are huge success stories and both create added value. By putting business first, businesslink.gov.uk has become one of the most highly used and customer satisfied sites in government."
– Andrew Summers, Chair of Companies House, Tower 09

"The government-backed website businesslink.gov.uk is packed with advice and links to other websites making it a great starting point for all budding entrepreneurs.

Alongside information on grants... there's detailed information on every aspect of operating alone from audits to VAT, and everything in between."
– Miles Brignall, *The Guardian*

"Your employment contract wizard... is excellent, easy to use, up to date; great!"
– Customer feedback

¹ Businesslink.gov.uk Customer Impact Assessment, May 2009, November 2009 and March 2010. Databuild. Figures based on grossed total responses from sample to reflect UK businesses.

June 09

Total visits

1.3m

Increase from 2008

34%

Business Support

Vehicle Certification Agency 'Van CO2 and Fuel Consumption' service launched on businesslink.gov.uk

Event

Businesslink.gov.uk and Directgov attended HMRC's internal stakeholder event to continue to inform our stakeholders of our new role in delivering public services

Convergence

Self Assessment guides launched

Business Support

Bgateway.com becomes the official Scottish government online channel for business

July 09

Total visits

1.3m

Increase from 2008

39%

Event

Guardian Activate Summit

Business Support

UK Talentmap™ launched

Event

Civil Service Live

Event

Building the Perfect Council Website

Government Tool

Adviser Tool Kit created

Government Campaign

BIS 'Know Your Consumers' Rights' campaign launched

Learning and Skills Council (LSC) 'Train to Gain' campaign launched

Yearly Overview: Media coverage

Throughout the year we issued more than 30 press releases to national media, highlighting business information and support available through businesslink.gov.uk and the wider Business Link service.

Press releases help support and promote new areas of the site, key government

announcements and communications, as well as topical issues that impact on business.

Business Link received over 1,500 pieces of national media coverage and more than 700 of these contained references to the businesslink.gov.uk website.

	Total number articles*	Total OTS**	Total AVE***
Apr-June 2009	315	235,555,013	£355,274
July-Sept 2009	331	242,979,810	£607,678
Oct-Dec 2009	466	212,478,488	£316,312
Jan-March 2010	487	246,224,668	£607,764

* Articles placed in national media – includes trade titles, print and online news sources, and national newspapers/magazines. Excludes blogs.

** OTS = Opportunities to See. This is the cumulative readership/viewership for featured media outlets.

*** AVE = Advertising Equivalent Value. This is a costing equal to the advertising cost within the equivalent media outlet at that day and time.

Vehicle Certification Agency 'Van CO2 and Fuel Consumption' service

The 'Van CO2 and Fuel Consumption' service is a brand new service supported by a database of commercial vehicle emission and fuel consumption data. It was officially launched at the Annual Conference of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership.

Self Assessment guides

Nine guides launched to provide guidance on: 'Using the Self Assessment Online service'; 'What to do if you can't pay your tax bill'; 'Enquiries into tax returns' and; 'Information on tax return corrections and refunds'.

Single business support site for Scotland

HIEbusiness.co.uk, the business site for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, closed at the end of June. All the site's visitors are now redirected to bgateway.com, now the official Scottish government online channel for business.

Feedback in June

"I just wanted to congratulate you on a brilliant website. It is a mine of information which I can see is going to be invaluable to me as I am just starting to research the option of starting my own business. Thank you to everyone involved!"
– Customer feedback

Talentmap™

Early July saw the launch of the UK Talentmap™. Employers are constantly looking at ways in which they can create competitive advantage and improve the performance of their business – one method of achieving this is by developing the talent and skills of their staff.



Talentmap™ is designed to provide UK employers with an easy-to-use framework within which they can find information on education, employment and skill systems. It is split into five thematic areas featuring information, case studies and links to relevant external resources, and can be accessed through the *Employment & Skills* section of the businesslink.gov.uk site.

Guardian Activate Summit

A one-day event focusing on leaders working across all sectors who are addressing the world's most pressing issues with technology and the internet. Businesslink.gov.uk hosted an interactive workshop on the future of digital public services at the summit entitled 'Politics, Economics, Technology and Society – Building a better future through the internet'.

Continuous improvement

As our aim is to become the number one way businesses interact with government online, we're always trying to improve our service. Technology releases occur approximately five times a year and allow us to make software and structural upgrades to our content management system (CMS), as well as to the website businesses use.

July's technology release involved a major maintenance update to the businesslink.gov.uk servers, including improvements to the Disaster Recovery System. These ensured even better resilience and new CMS functionality to allow us to improve local sites even more.

Civil Service Live

Alongside many departments, businesslink.gov.uk, Directgov and NHS Choices jointly sponsored Civil Service Live 09 to raise awareness of joint working initiatives and our shared vision for government's digital services.

'By 2011, all content from identified government websites will be converged to businesslink.gov.uk, Directgov or NHS Choices. Through working together we are joining up services for both citizens and government.'

By raising awareness of this vision across the Civil Service we aim to offer more user-focused public services for citizens and businesses.

Feedback in July

"Here are my top tips for start ups: ...website research – Business Link is a brilliant source." – BBC Dragon, Theo Paphitis, *The Sun*

Adviser Tool Kit

Our new Adviser Tool Kit is created to provide Business Link advisers and call centre staff with the information they need to direct clients towards online business diagnostic tools – some of which mean no further contact with an adviser is necessary. They can also help people prepare for a meeting with an adviser by diagnosing their specific business issues.

The Adviser Tool Kit comprises four key items: a power point presentation; a selection of videos; a user journey tool and; handy fact sheets.

Building the Perfect Council Website

Jonathan Hollow, Director of Strategy and Propositions, spoke at this event alongside Directgov and NHS Choices about the importance of local business information and support, and the Point of Single Contact Services Directive – ukwelcomes.businesslink.gov.uk.

Total visits
1.2m

Increase from 2008
19%

Business Support

Events search location filters and lookup added

Convergence

21 new guides outlining the types of work covered by the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) were delivered. They provide guidance on whether the user is a contractor or sub-contractor, and tell them what they need to do to comply with CIS requirements



Service Improvement

Development of a segmentation model for the whole UK business population initiated

Government Tool

Tariff footnotes functionality added

Convergence

Construction Industry Scheme guides launched

Segmentation of UK business population model










In order to understand our customers better and provide them with the best digital services, we embarked on a large-scale research project into their needs, wants and behaviours.

The model developed has provided us with four behavioural types and six business segments. Within these, we've identified seven types of business decision maker and two intermediary classes.

The research has given us a greater understanding of the differences between

the business segments, as well as examples of typical customers. This will provide the focus when we are developing new content, tools and transactions, as well as continual improvement of our digital service.

For more information, please email annual.review@businesslink.gsi.gov.uk.

4 Behavioural Types	Future Businesses The future of the UK economy	Bedrock Businesses The heart of the UK economy	Threshold Businesses Businesses on the brink of change	Confident Corporates Experienced businesses with complex needs				
6 Segments by Complexity	Pre Start-Up	Very Simple	Simple	Some Complexity	Complex	Very Complex		
7 Business Decision Makers		Enthusiastic Entrepreneur				Information Seeker		
			Small Business as Usual					
					Expansion Planner		Task Master	
						Crisis Manager		
					Steady Driver			
2 Intermediary Classes		Small Business Expert (Intermediary)					Professional Adviser (Intermediary)	

Segmentation model of the UK business population. The model is based on business complexity and contains nine customer profiles which detail the typical characteristics of these customers.

Yearly Overview: Online fulfilment for government marketing campaigns

The current campaign support service was launched in October 2008.

Since then, it has supported 39 government campaigns, generating over 4 million visits to the site (up to 30% of all monthly visits) and created channel shift savings for government.

Government campaigns timeline 2009-10

Campaigns launched:	31
Departments supported:	10
Campaign visits generated:	2.9 million ³
% of visits to site:	18.8%

What makes this service so key in delivering the vision for service transformation?

The businesslink.gov.uk fulfilment service for government campaigns:

- Provides a central online platform for managing responses for business-facing marketing campaigns, offering a seamless link with marketing channels

- Facilitates a channel shift for campaign response handling from call centres, print distribution and face-to-face, offering a flexible user journey that can lower costs

- Introduces a wider range of business users to businesslink.gov.uk and cross-government content, tools and transactions

During the year we have reviewed the support we offer to ensure it is best meeting the needs of government departments, and ultimately our business customers.

Based on feedback received from marketing representatives within government departments we have made a number of improvements to the service, which will be available from April 2010.

For further information visit businesslink.gov.uk/campaigns.

Events search location filters and postcode lookup

Running business events and workshops is an important part of the support Business Link offers. To enhance the user journey, we made it possible to search for events using a location dropdown box. Users can now combine these new search options with existing keyword and date criteria for a far more effective events search.

Tariff footnotes

We made it possible for HMRC to make direct edits to the UK Trade Tariff footnotes to significantly reduce the time it takes to publish information for traders.

Feedback in August

"Business Link again is a fantastic resource." – *mumsrock.com*

"A free [holiday] calculator on: www.businesslink.gov.uk/holiday." – *Telegraph.co.uk*

"Thanks to spending a few hours with this site, I feel a lot more confident about my business plans now, both existing and new. Very informing, extremely relevant, superb public advice site." – Customer feedback

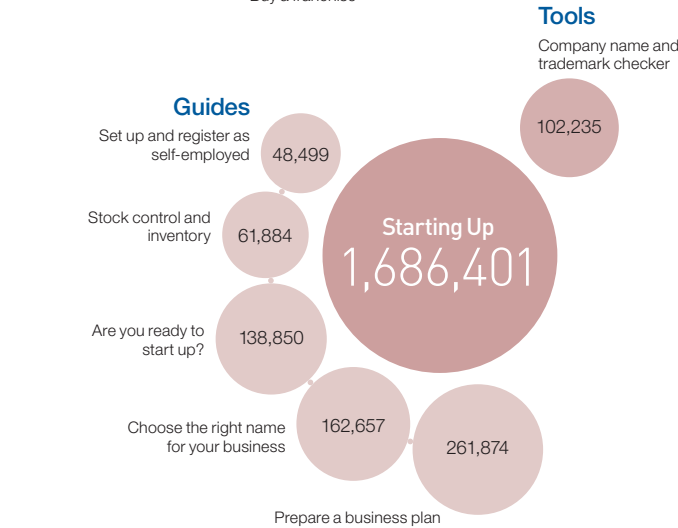
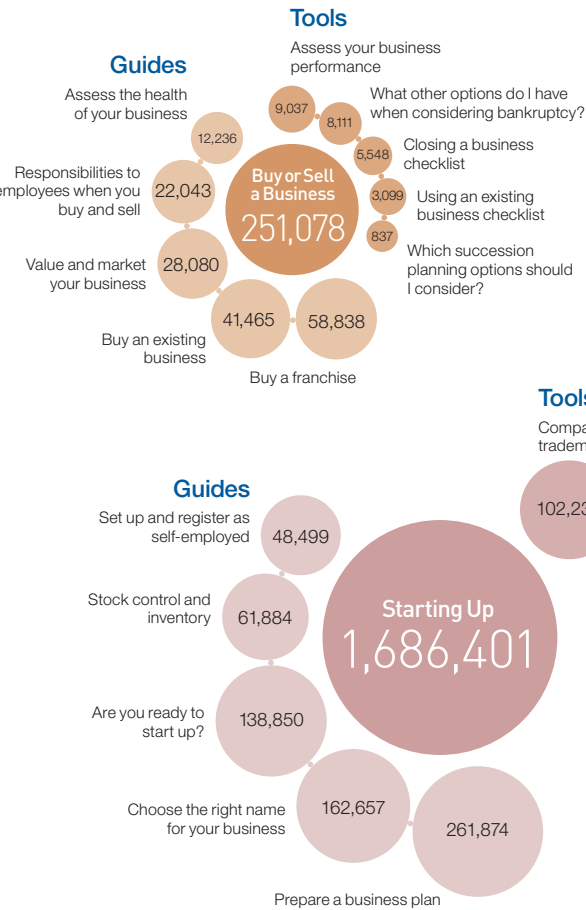
³ Omniture Site Catalyst.

Yearly Overview: Visits by theme or sector

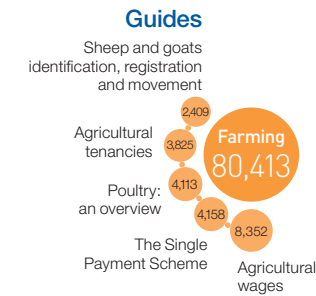
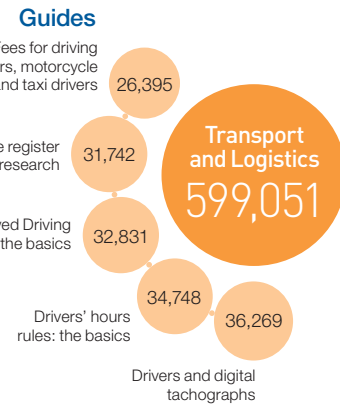
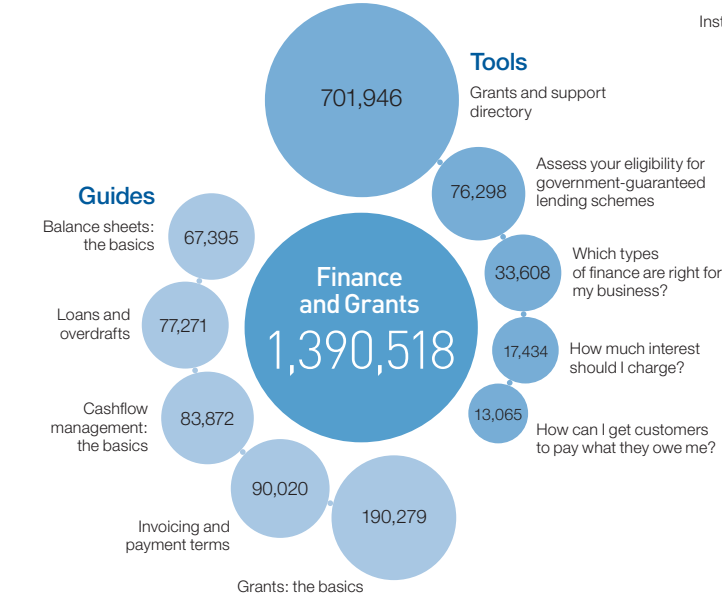
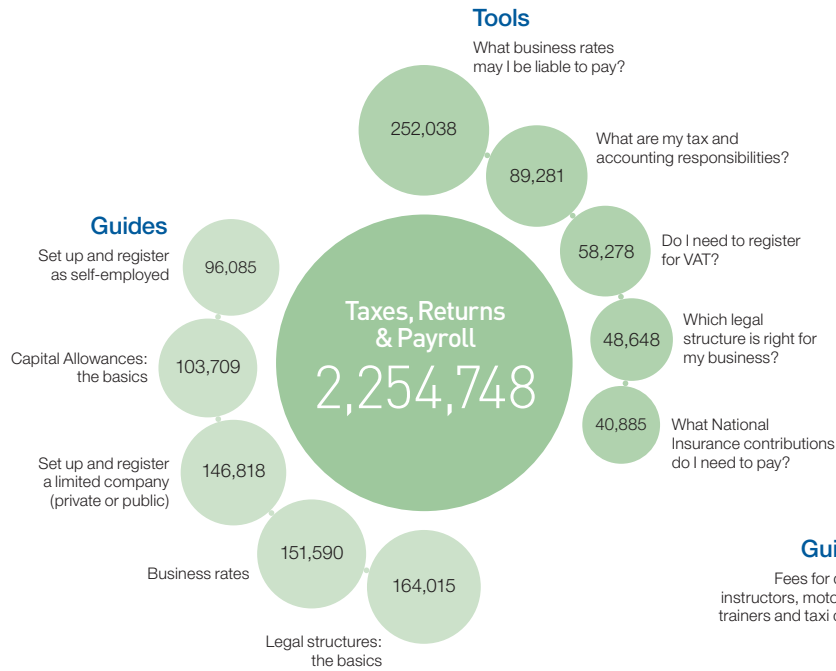
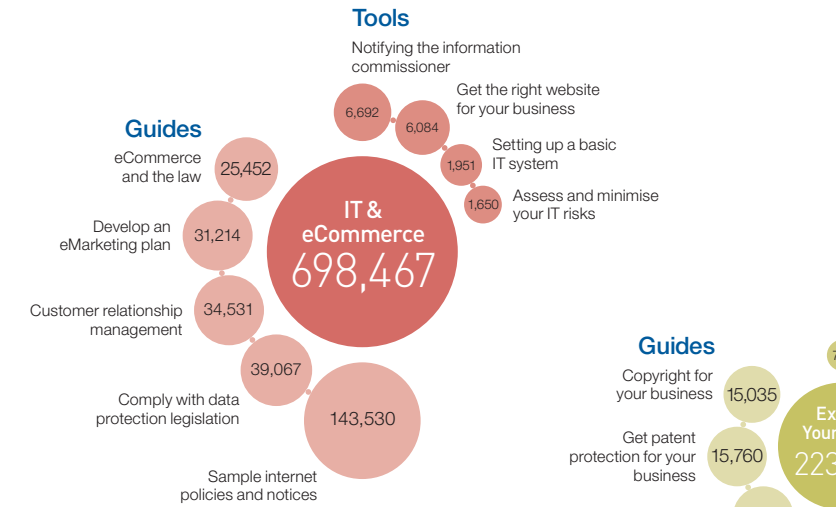
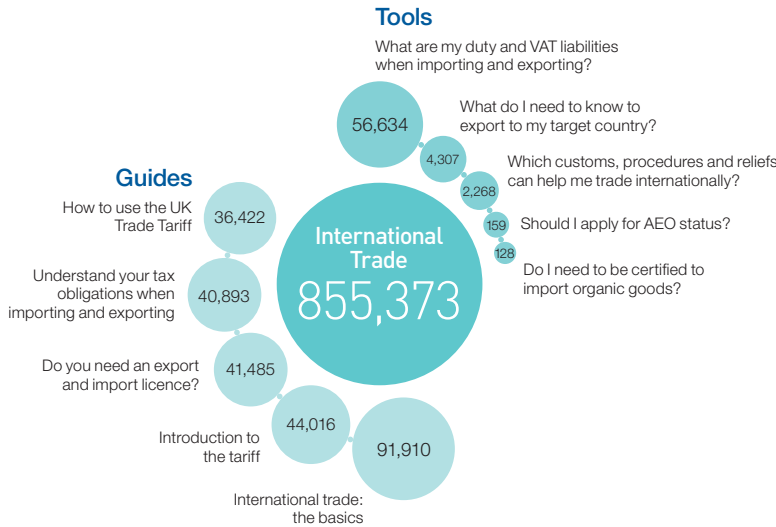
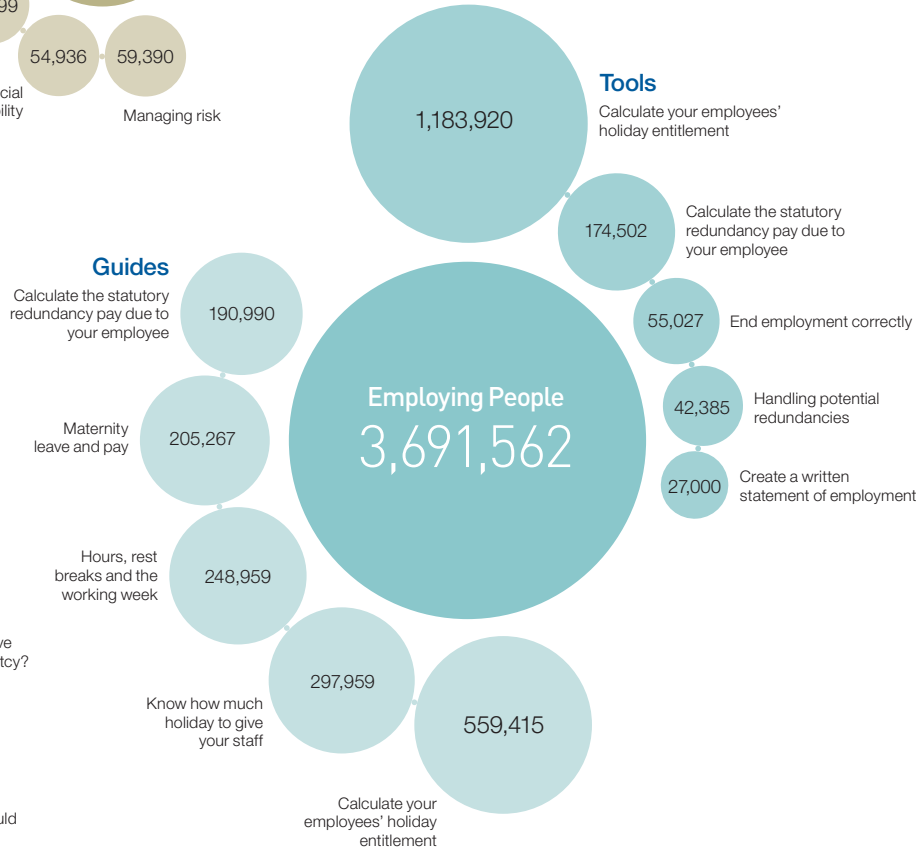
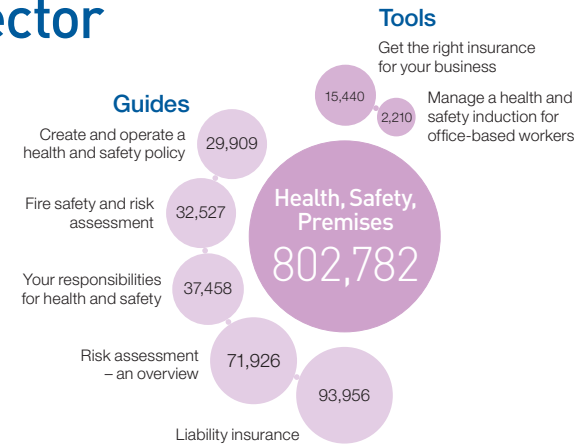
Total visits – 19.4 million

Top ten transactions

- 34,889 Book an annual test for a single vehicle
- 31,831 Book annual tests or make slot bookings for multiple vehicles
- 27,902 Before you start using the Business Advice Open Days
- 24,336 Vehicle operator licensing self-service
- 23,484 Order DVLA application forms online
- 20,559 Use Self Assessment Online
- 20,344 Manage your Approved Driving Instructor registration and Continuing Professional Development
- 19,733 Advertise a job online using the Employer Direct online service
- 14,346 Use VAT Online
- 14,243 Apply to become an Approved Driving Instructor



Omniture Site Catalyst. All figures, except the total, are from the national businesslink.gov.uk site only.



Other new sectors

- 469 Food and Drink
- 180 Manufacturing
- 189 Construction
- 69 Private Security and Surveillance

September 09

Total visits

1.5m

Increase from 2008

22%

Award

Businesslink.gov.uk announced as a finalist in the UK IT Industry Awards

Government Campaign

BIS 'Pay and Work Rights' campaign launched

Government Campaign

Identity and Passport Service (IPS) 'ID Smart' campaign launched

October 09

Total visits

1.8m

Increase from 2008

22%

Business Support

Common Commencement Date
'Estimate your rates bill' tool launched

Convergence

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) service closed

Government Campaign

DWP 'It Pays' campaign launched

Event

Digital Engagement

Convergence

Envirowise and HMRC guides added

Government Campaign

HMRC 'Self Assessment October 31' campaign launched

Event

Public Sector Online

Government Campaign

Cross-government 'New Director' campaign launched

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Employment Law Organiser

In September we launched a landing page to provide users with access to a downloadable tool that would sit on their desktops.

The free and easy to use tool, which formed part of the broader 'Employing

People' campaign, is designed to help those in business manage their key legal obligations as employers.

The tool features links to a wide range of guidance and business tools within the *Employment & Skills* area of the site, including the areas of recruitment, annual leave and redundancy.

In top 10 websites

This month businesslink.gov.uk was the 9th most popular website accessed across the UK for both business information and government information.⁷

Award finalist

Businesslink.gov.uk was named a finalist in the BCS (The Chartered Institute for IT) & Computing UK IT Industry Awards 2009 – in the 'Best IT Strategy of the Year' category for our role in the Public Service Reform agenda.

Feedback in September

"The Business Link website, www.businesslink.gov.uk, provides business advice in an accessible format for disabled businessmen and women... the site has the online resources and information to help businesses succeed."
– Claire West, *Freshbusinessstinking.com*

"I am currently in the ideas stage of a new business and have just discovered your site. I just wanted to say this site is fantastic. I was looking for information like this a couple of years ago and couldn't find it."
– Customer feedback

Key convergence activity throughout October:

DWP Pension Service closes

Following the successful convergence of all business-facing content from DWP to businesslink.gov.uk in September, the DWP website closed on 1 October. The *Employment & Skills* Devolved Publishing theme team now manages all content.

Envirowise content

Envirowise convergence delivered 41 guides, 23 written case studies, eight video case studies and seven tools to the site's *Environment & Efficiency* section.

HMRC guides:

PAYE for employers – 76 guides providing information on PAYE for those that are starting up, growing or taking on new employees, including information on how to deal with changing employee circumstances, guidance about PAYE online filing, and links to 'PAYE for employers' forms and notices.

VAT – 82 guides providing guidance on paying VAT, including specific guidance for start-up businesses paying VAT for the first time, information and links to VAT forms and notices, information on how to manage VAT, guidance about paying VAT online, and sector-specific VAT advice.

'Estimate your rates bill' tool

Following the announcement that business rates had been recalculated and, in most cases would increase in April 2010, businesslink.gov.uk launched a new tool to help businesses understand the changes and estimate their business rates for 2010-11. The Valuation Offices Agency directed 1.3 million UK businesses to this tool and within three weeks of its launch, it was successfully used over 93,000 times.³

Public Sector Online

Businesslink.gov.uk joined up with Directgov, the HMRC Carter Programme and the Department of Health to speak at Public Sector Online about how best to offer easily accessible services while reducing low-value contact and saving costs.

Support during the postal strike

Businesslink.gov.uk developed new site content and issued a press release to help businesses affected by the postal strike. The release had high take-up and featured in the Financial Times and on ft.com.

Feedback in October

"The information available, and the way it's broken down, is impressive. Thanks to a few hours with this site, I feel a lot more confident about my business plans now. Very informing, extremely relevant, superb public advice site."
– Customer feedback

"The site is very well done! Congratulations!"
– Customer feedback

Continuous improvement

A major technology release introduced some key new functionality to the site, including the addition of right-hand panels. These allow better flexibility for delivering content on the service, and have made the site easier to navigate for business users.

Digital Engagement

Businesslink.gov.uk exhibited alongside Directgov and NHS Choices at Digital Engagement 'Empowering Citizens & Government through Digital Innovation'.



⁷Hitwise

³Omniure Site Catalyst

November 09

Total visits
1.7m

Increase from 2008
28%

Government Campaign

HMRC 'Self Assessment January 31' campaign launched

Convergence

Transportoffice.gov.uk customers redirected to businesslink.gov.uk/transport – the *Transport and Logistics* theme

Government Campaign

Defra 'Saving Money (resource efficiency phase 2)' campaign launched
Cross-government 'Climate Change' campaign launched

Business Support

DfT 'Van Best Practice' programme launched

Award

Businesslink.gov.uk shortlisted in the eGovernment National Awards

Government Campaign

BIS 'Employee Engagement' campaign launched

Business Support

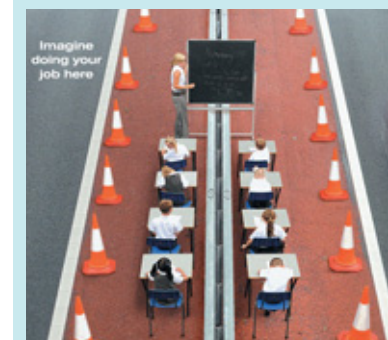
Businesslink.gov.uk sponsored the National Business Awards

Convergence

Vehicle tax, SORN, and registration services available through businesslink.gov.uk

Government Campaign

Highway's Agency 'Road Worker Safety' campaign launched



Convergence

HMRC's 'Big Four' transactions were added to businesslink.gov.uk

Survey

Customer Impact Assessment

Business Support

New tool to assess finance options

Business Support

Businesslink.gov.uk joined Business Link in London to exhibit at the Business Startup Show at the Olympia Conference Centre

Yearly Overview: Regional engagement

The Regional Engagement team aims to bring regional business support partners in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland into the Programme. This gives them the opportunity to influence policy and strategy, to collaborate in development projects, and raise understanding of their services and needs.

The team also provided technical support for the regional websites, which are localised versions of the national site. Our partners are the nine English Regional Development Agencies and their respective Business Link providers, plus the three Devolved Administrations.

During 2009-10, we improved regional representation across the Programme and engaged the Devolved Administrations

in our governance structures, our Theme Boards and our strategic planning activities. We delivered English and Welsh language versions of the national website for Wales, Flexible Support for Business. This was launched in February, thereby completing the provision of localised web content across the UK.

We've also delivered a number of other partner-specified site improvements, including redevelopment of the event directories and referral to regional advisers.

Recorded partner satisfaction scores leapt from 72% in July 2009 to 85.7% in December 2009.

Vehicle tax, SORN, and registration services launched

The co-branded 'Apply for a tax disc online' service quickly became the most used service on the *Transport and Logistics* theme.

Transportoffice.gov.uk customer redirection

The redirection of Transportoffice.gov.uk customers made the *Transport and Logistics* theme the single online source of information for the business customers of the Driving Standards Agency, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency.

Business Startup Show

We attended the Business Startup Show, a biannual exhibition attracting around 40,000 visitors, to market our services directly to businesses – and explain our vision for businesslink.gov.uk.

Here, we joined Business Link in London to speak to a wide range of people looking to start up a business, or who had recently started a business, to show them exactly what services they can access through businesslink.gov.uk.

New tool to assess finance options

Businesses seeking finance can now better assess the finance options most appropriate for their business using the enhanced 'Identify the right finance options for your business' tool.

The 'Big Four'

HMRC's 'Big Four' transactions launched on businesslink.gov.uk.



HM Revenue & Customs

This year, we delivered 13 key HMRC transaction groups. These mean that our users can now file a number of key returns online, including HMRC's 'big four':

VAT – this applies to any business whose turnover has exceeded the VAT threshold (currently £68,000) within the last 12 months and any business that believes they will exceed the VAT threshold soon, as well as those below the threshold who choose to register.

Corporation Tax – tax on the taxable profits of limited companies and other organisations.

PAYE – compulsory for any employer with employees whose earnings reach the National Insurance Lower Earning Limit.

Self Assessment – to inform HMRC about income, capital gains, claiming tax allowances or reliefs against a tax bill.

Each transaction is supported by practical, user-friendly guidance provided through the wider family of Business Link sites in England, and the Devolved Administrations.

The convergence of HMRC transactions marks a significant step forwards in helping to simplify the number of access points for business users when interacting with government. It also demonstrates businesslink.gov.uk's potential to handle complex and large-volume transactions, with HMRC campaigns directing businesses to businesslink.gov.uk.

Corporation Tax convergence

16 Corporation Tax guides were also added to support the transactions. These guides provide guidance for businesses on:

- Completing and submitting their company tax returns
- Finding the relevant corporation tax forms their company may need to complete
- Whether they are eligible to claim allowances, relief and benefits for corporation tax

Feedback in November

"I'm a big fan of Business Link – when I set up Call Britannia I used their online tools to create a written statement of employment, which was really helpful."
– Karen Darby, CEO of Call Britannia and a Business Link Ambassador

"Whoever created the Employment Law Organiser has done a brilliant job! Thanks very much." – Customer feedback

Awards finalist

Businesslink.gov.uk was shortlisted in the eGovernment National Awards for our work in helping to deliver simpler services for business.

National Business Awards

Businesslink.gov.uk sponsored the 'Growth Strategy of the Year' award at the National Business Awards – a high-profile event which attracts around 1,200 business leaders and guests.



Businesslink.gov.uk presenting dotDigital Group PLC with the 2009 'Growth Strategy of the Year' award

New Department for Transport Van Best Practice programme

The Department for Transport's new 'Van Best Practice' programme allows businesses to share information to help reduce fuel costs and emissions, and thus improve efficiency of van usage.

December 09

Total visits
1.2m

Increase from 2008
22%

Convergence

Driving instructor, driver theory test booking, and Driver Certificate of Professional Competence services added

Business Support

Business Link Ambassadors launched at the IoD

Business Support

Businesslink.gov.uk helped businesses prepare for the seasonal rush by issuing a press release with guidance on recruiting temporary workers, engaging employees on fixed-term contracts, extending the hours of part-time workers, and other seasonal staffing issues

Business Support

UK Welcomes launched



Government Campaign

Cross-government 'Real Help for Business' campaign pages updated

Business Support

Guide on starting a business at home added

Business Support

Pre-Budget Report summary provided

Convergence

13 Food Standards Agency guides added to the *Health, Safety, Premises* section
Intellectual Property Office transactions added

Convergence

Convergence of two of 12 key areas of the Defra Corporate site onto the website's *Environment & Efficiency* section, including six guides and eight fact edits

Ambassadors' launch

The Business Link service is supported by a number of high-profile ambassadors, including Karen Hanton, founder of Top Table, the restaurant booking service; Claire Young, BBC's *Apprentice* runner-up and; Sabirul Islam, entrepreneur. These ambassadors publicly endorse and recommend Business Link. Business broadcaster, Adam Shaw, introduced

them for the first time at an event in December 2009. Around 100 business people, entrepreneurs, press, and stakeholders of our service attended.

One of the ambassadors, John Cowell from Cowell Consulting, also recorded an audio feature about the benefits of using Business Link. It reached 35 radio stations across England, with a potential audience of over 1,358,000.

A major technological delivery

This year, for the first time, we used cloud technology to improve the availability, responsiveness and resilience of the Business Link family of websites.

The cloud uses an existing global network of web servers to deliver content and functionality from a service provider. Three cloud products were launched on the site throughout the year.

The first, launched in March 2009, provides an instant capability to support the main platform, should that fail, ensuring that site content is always available.

The second allowed the serving of content from the cloud in time for the Pre-Budget Report from December onwards. This enabled the Programme to deliver the Pre-Budget Report material on time without having to worry about capacity and resilience.

The third, added in March 2010, is a Content Delivery Network that reduces the time website content takes to load – and therefore improves the user experience.

Delivery of Pre-Budget Report content

Our Pre-Budget Report delivery involved close working with Directgov to align content for businesses and citizens. Detailed planning, including engaging with HM Treasury and HMRC months in advance, meant the content went live within an hour of the Chancellor finishing his speech.

Over the first three days following the publication of the Pre-Budget Report, website resilience was maintained and in excess of 33,000 visitors accessed the Pre-Budget Report information.

UK Welcomes – the UK Point of Single Contact

The European Services Directive required all EU member states to break down barriers to cross-border trade in services between countries in the EU. As a result, every country within the EU has had to implement an online Point of Single Contact website that will help service businesses to operate in that country. We were proud to launch UK Welcomes on 28 December on businesslink.gov.uk.

The UK portal aims to cut red tape and allow all service businesses, both foreign and local, to identify the legal requirements to operate anywhere in the UK. Additionally, businesses will be able to apply online for the relevant licences they need to do business from regulators or local authorities. It will make it much easier for service businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, to set up and expand, and to offer their services to customers elsewhere in the UK and EU.

In the UK, it will help boost our economy by helping businesses set up or expand into England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, bringing both jobs and more competitive services. The portal will provide these businesses with all the advice, guidance and support they need to do business in the UK.

Real Help for Businesses campaign

Businesslink.gov.uk continued to support businesses during the economic downturn by providing guidance on help with finances, improving productivity and saving money.

In December the cross-government 'Real Help for Businesses' campaign pages were updated to support a BIS direct mail campaign targeting all businesses to encourage them to access the information and support on businesslink.gov.uk.

Continuous improvement

A major technical update added key functionality to enable the launch of our UK Welcomes service, improve the resilience and capacity of the businesslink.gov.uk server platform, and enhance the website's capability for transactional content.

New guide on starting a business at home

Home-based businesses tend to be cost-effective to run. Therefore during the recession, businesslink.gov.uk launched a new guide explaining everything people need to know on the subject.

Intellectual Property Office transactions

Two new transactions were launched on businesslink.gov.uk in conjunction with the Intellectual Property Office:

- Application to register trademarks
- Trademark lookup

Oxford University research has found businesses with trademarks have greater profitability and productivity. As well as reading about the benefits of a trademark, businesses can now apply for one directly via businesslink.gov.uk.

Users are now able to search to see whether the trademark they wish to use has already been applied for, and whether the application was successful. Since July 2009 they have also been able to apply to register their desired trademark online.



From left to right: Claire Young, Elegant Venues; David Dinsdale, businesslink.gov.uk; Penina Shepherd, Acumen Business Law; Simon Webbe, entrepreneur and entertainer; Sabirul Islam, entrepreneur, author and public speaker; John Cowell, Cowell Consulting; Karen Hanton, Top Table; David Parkin, EMDA; Karen Darby, Call Britannia; Kyran Bracken, entrepreneur and former rugby player

January 10

Total visits
2.3m

Increase from 2009
26%

Business Support

Businesslink.gov.uk issued a press notice to provide support to the many businesses across the country that were impacted by heavy snowfalls in January. This included support on crisis management and guidance on how to continue their day-to-day business activities, despite the adverse weather

Business Support

Events directory updated

Convergence

Movement of dangerous goods: 12 guides launched on the *Transport and Logistics* theme

Convergence

Communities and Local Government (CLG) guides launched

Event

Dotgov Live hosted with Directgov and NHS Choices

Convergence

Department of Work and Pensions guides launched

Government Campaign

The HMRC Self Assessment campaign landing page was the most popular page on the site in January. The page supported HMRC's campaign and received over 500,000 visits in one month, with more than 200,000 visits in the week leading up to the Self Assessment deadline on 31 January

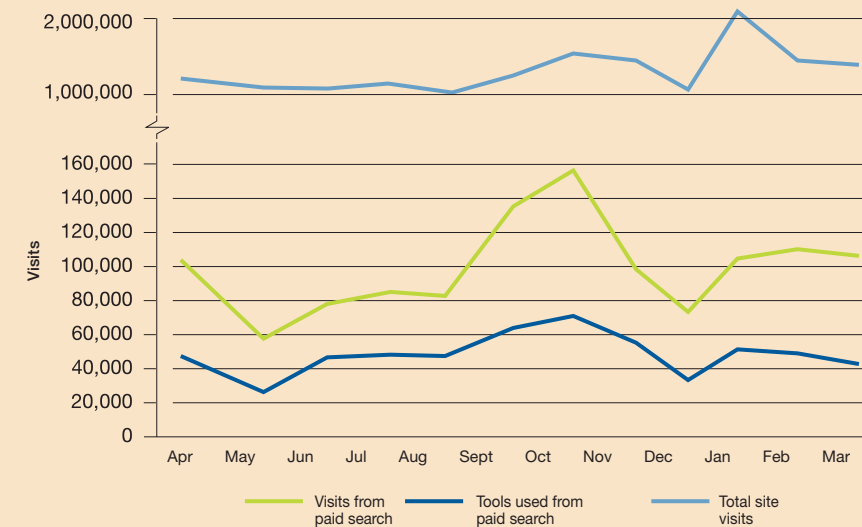


Yearly Overview: Paid search

Paid search has proved itself again this year as a consistent method of driving high-quality traffic to the site, converting visit to tool usage at a rate of 50.3%, against the site's average of 31.1%.

In terms of cost-efficiency, we have reduced our cost per click from an average of £0.42 in 2008-09 to £0.26 this year.

Visits and tool usage from paid search



New guides added:

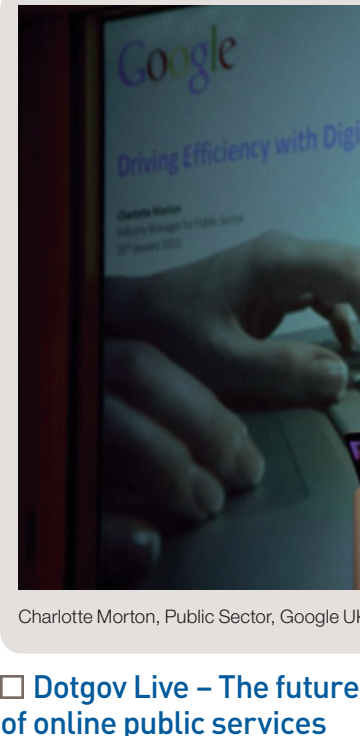
DWP guides – promote opportunity and independence for all, helping people achieve their potential through employment – associated guides were launched on businesslink.gov.uk in the *Employment & Skills* section.

CLG Housing – launched three guides in the *Health, Safety, Premises* section from housing websites, including The Housing Corporation and The Leaseholder Advisory Service.

Feedback in January

"Business Link has been a great help to me. I came across it about a year ago and used the website, and we're going to do a Business Link Health Check soon. Business Link gives people what they want; it listens to business and is accessible to all no matter what they do."
– *Freshbusinesstinking.com* featuring quote from ambassador Claire Young

"The site is proving to be very, very helpful in finding payroll information to help a leadership team make some decisions. The information under *Taxes, Returns & Payroll* and *Employment & Skills* is exactly what I have been looking for. Well done!" – **Customer feedback**



Charlotte Morton, Public Sector, Google UK

Dotgov Live – The future of online public services

On 20 January, the three government 'supersites' hosted Dotgov Live to show what we are doing to meet the rising expectations people have for public services, share our vision for the future of digital public services and how we intend to develop this vision with our wide range of stakeholders across government.

To open the event the Digital Minister highlighted the work the sites had done over the last year, and Charlotte Morton from Google UK discussed how we can further drive efficiencies within public services through digital.

This was followed by a number of interactive workshops and presentations to showcase research and initiatives being implemented across the sites, including our DotGovLabs programme. 95% of delegates said that if a similar event was held later in the year, they would attend.

"Digital has an 80% reach in the UK... 5.5 billion search page views each month" – Charlotte Morton, Public Sector, Google UK

Continuous improvement

A technical release delivered new functionality in preparation for the launch of the Welsh Flexible Support for Business website, and a number of layout improvements to enable our customers to scan content on a page more easily.

Yearly Overview: eNewsletter

Over 45,000 businesses are now signed up to receive our monthly email newsletter.

The newsletter, alongside targeted email alerts, has continued to be a strong vehicle through which we ensure businesses continue to gain benefits from the site, particularly by promoting our online business tools.

February 10

Total visits 1.8m
Increase from 2009 19%

Service Improvement

Businesslink.gov.uk
YouTube channel launched

Government Campaign

HMRC 'Tax Help'
campaign launched
HMRC 'Small Business
Partners' campaign launched

Business Support

Flexible Support for
Business website launched

Government Campaign

IPO 'Intellectual Property Health Check'
campaign launched
Environment Agency Carbon Reduction
Commitment 'Energy Efficiency Scheme'
campaign launched
Identity and Passport Service 'ID Smart'
(phase 2) campaign launched

Convergence

Automatic Licence Verification
System launched

Government Campaign

BIS 'Tipping' campaign launched
BIS 'Which Boss Are You?'
campaign launched
HMRC 'Tax for Agents' campaign
launched

Government Campaign

BIS 'Vocational Qualifications'
campaign launched

Business Support

New Farming sector launched at the
National Farmers Union Conference



Tax Help campaign

Businesslink.gov.uk delivered a new
campaign hub to support HMRC's
'Tax Help' campaign.

The pages were designed to best support
customers, featuring dynamic design and
used functionality creatively to deliver
appropriate content. The campaign hub
includes an interactive events calendar,
a tag cloud and video capability, as well
as 40 links to relevant information, support
and transactions within the *Tax, Returns
and Payroll* area on businesslink.gov.uk.

In total this campaign received more
than 765,000 visits, 65,000 over target,
resulting in a reduction of 250,000 phone
calls to HMRC. Each phone call costs
HMRC £2, therefore in total it is
predicted this campaign saved HMRC
approximately £500,000.



YouTube

Businesslink.gov.uk launched its branded
YouTube channel on 8 February. This is the
first step along our planned syndication
route to make businesslink.gov.uk content
more widely available to our customers
wherever they are. All video content on
businesslink.gov.uk will be available on our
YouTube channel.

Visit www.youtube.com/businesslinkgov
to find out more.

Transport and Logistics theme

By February 2010 the *Transport and
Logistics* theme was contributing 37%
of the traffic to 'Do it online', making
it the most popular theme for online
transactions on businesslink.gov.uk.

Farming launch

A new area of the site designed specifically
for farmers and their agents was launched,
providing information on complying with
regulations and best practice guidance.

There are 109 guides, containing
information on topics such as environmental
stewardship, cross compliance and the
Single Payment Scheme. This sector
contains support from all over government
in one place. Customers can register for
regular updates when rules on inspections,
taxes and subsidies change, and there are
links to relevant associations and further
sources of funding and support. As a
result farmers and their agents can easily
access a wealth of information and help
at businesslink.gov.uk/farming.

The new *Farming* theme was publicly
unveiled at the National Farmers Union
Conference on 23-24 February. We
supported this launch with a marketing
campaign that included PR, stakeholder
briefings and supporting collateral, as well
as print and online banner advertising in
trade press. The number of monthly visits
to the new farming section increased
significantly from 10,000 in February to
17,000 in March.

Automatic Licence Verification System

On 16 February, the 'International Trade
Single Window' project launched the
Automatic Licence Verification system. This
provides an electronic link between HMRC
and Defra import systems. It reduces the
time it takes for fresh, perishable produce,
such as fruit and vegetables, plants, flowers
and seeds, to clear customs.

This has resulted in huge savings in both
time and money for horticultural importers
and for the international freight industry.
The project was well received with Nigel
Jenney of the Fresh Produce Consortium
commenting "We are delighted that all
importers and agents can enjoy now the
benefits of significant reductions in time
taken to clear containers, subject to Her
Majesty's Inspectors or Plant Health and
Seeds Inspectorate control".

Benefits in reduced administrative burden
alone are conservatively estimated to be
£1.5m – £1.7m per year. A figure for the
benefits of reduced clearance time is being
calculated with traders but this is currently
projected to be in the region of £50m –
£100m per year. In February, the project was
shortlisted for the Guardian's GC Awards,
'Recognising excellence in public sector IT'
within the Collaborative Working category.

Flexible Support for Business

The Welsh Flexible Support for Business
site launched on 15 February. This
extended localised business support to
the Welsh Business Community with over
1,200 guides and factsheets, over 70
interactive tools, events scheduling, and
regulation and legislation updates.

Locally produced information now provides
Welsh business users with added-value
content tailored specifically to their needs.
Just like the Business Gateway site in
Scotland and the nibusinessinfo.co.uk site
in Northern Ireland, the Welsh site also has
its own unique branding.

Cymorth Hyblyg i Fusnes
Flexible Support for Business



March 10

Total visits
2.4m

Increase from 2009
38%

Government Campaign

DWP 'Jobcentre Plus Awards' campaign launched

Government Campaign

DWP 'Age Positive' campaign launched
DWP 'Health, Work and Well Being' (phase 2) campaign launched

Government Campaign

VAT is moving online. This HMRC campaign supported the new VAT returns online service available on businesslink.gov.uk



Convergence

Debt recovery and insolvency guidance added

Service Improvement

The DotGovLabs hackday hosted as part of the DotGovLabs programme

Survey

Customer Impact Assessment

Government Campaign

BIS 'Employee Engagement' and 'Training Accreditation' campaigns launched

Business Support

Budget summary provided

Convergence

Department for Transport's 'Freight Best Practice' programme now on businesslink.gov.uk

Convergence

Jobcentre Plus website closed – all content now on businesslink.gov.uk and Directgov

Convergence

Regional Development Agency to businesslink.gov.uk convergence – first regions launched

Business Support

New sectors launched

Budget March 2010

Following our on-the-day publication of a business summary of the Pre-Budget Report in December 09, we again published the main points of interest from the Budget statement for business on the Budget day itself, 24 March. Collegiate working with key government partners ensured that coverage on businesslink.gov.uk, Directgov, HMRC and HM Treasury were all reciprocally linked.



Businesslink.gov.uk's coverage ranked highly on search engines throughout the day. We also provided the Devolved Administrations with Budget content and the ability to deliver their own tailored coverage to business audiences in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Jobcentre Plus website closed

A redirect page now leads users to content on either businesslink.gov.uk or Directgov. This was a major milestone in delivering the web convergence programme and providing significant cost savings to government. It also helps remind the public that all government services are moving to one of three 'supersites', with better user journeys between them.

Transactions now on businesslink.gov.uk include Employers Direct Online, which allows employers to post jobs to Jobcentre Plus.

Creation of task management functionality and progress bar

From March customers can now select specific tasks from a tool results page and add them to the new *My Tasks* area in the *My Business* section. Effectively, the page becomes the user's 'to do list', a compendium of all the customer's tasks taken from the results pages of various tools where they can add notes, prioritise tasks and add due-dates, as well as create new tasks. A progress indicator will be added to all existing and new tools throughout 2010-11.

Regional Development Agency to local Business Link website convergence

We are currently working with the nine English Regional Development Agencies and the regional Business Link providers to offer businesses the ability to access information and assistance more efficiently from one place.

In making the wealth of Regional Development Agency business support available on the businesslink.gov.uk platform, we increased the benefits to business. We undertook a comprehensive review and refresh of business content by web copy experts, and we increased awareness and take up of regional business support initiatives by making them more widely available.

New business plan tool

This new tool allows customers to create and manage their business plan online. Users can customise a business plan template based on what they want their plan to deliver. They are taken step by step through their individual plans, providing a business framework with advice and guidance along the way.

Freight Best Practice programme

The Department for Transport's 'Freight Best Practice' programme allows businesses to share information to help reduce fuel costs and emissions, and thus improve efficiency in freight operations. There are plans to further develop these services in 2010-11.

Feedback in March

"We have found the information on your site really useful, but especially like the case studies. They really help focus the information and make it clear."
– Customer feedback

New sectors launched

Businesses can now access even more sector-specific content, with the introduction of four new sector areas; *Construction*, *Manufacturing*, *Food and Drink* and *Private Security and Surveillance*. These sectors bring together new content from across a number of government departments with existing content already live on businesslink.gov.uk.

This project involved converging 55 new guides from a number of government departments, including BIS, Manufacturing Advisory Service, National Measurement Office, Security Industry Authority and the Food Standards Agency.

The aim is to develop these sector areas next year to provide a platform to communicate information specific to an individual's business and allow them better access to government information. The new content has been welcomed by both stakeholders and businesses and provides quality advice, support and help in an area previously not covered in such depth and detail on businesslink.gov.uk.

New and enhanced content developed:

Design Council guides – seven new guides developed in conjunction with the Design Council to help businesses become more competitive in branding and sustainable design.

Home working – making the transition from the place you live to a place of work, including a case study.

Cloud computing – offering businesses a cost-effective way to manage all their data, software and hardware requirements over the internet.

Mentoring – explains how a business mentor can offer guidance and support to help a business succeed, and how to become a mentor.

London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics – how to get involved, what procurement opportunities are available and how businesses can benefit from the games.

Marketing on a budget – explores the ways a business can achieve their marketing objectives while keeping costs low.

Incident management – enhances existing guidance on business continuity, helping businesses to plan for unexpected events.

The end of the financial year meant March was a huge month for convergence activity:

- Two multi-agency Geographic Information for the Countryside guides
- One Working for Health guide and transaction
- Four guides from the Home Office Security Industry Authority
- One guide on Foundation Degrees
- One guide, one fact sheet and two transactions from the Learning & Skills Council
- 12 guides from the Ministry of Justice Tribunals, incorporating seven Non Departmental Public Bodies/Agencies
- Over 70 guides from BIS on Export Control Organisation

Convergence of information and guidance on debt recovery and insolvency

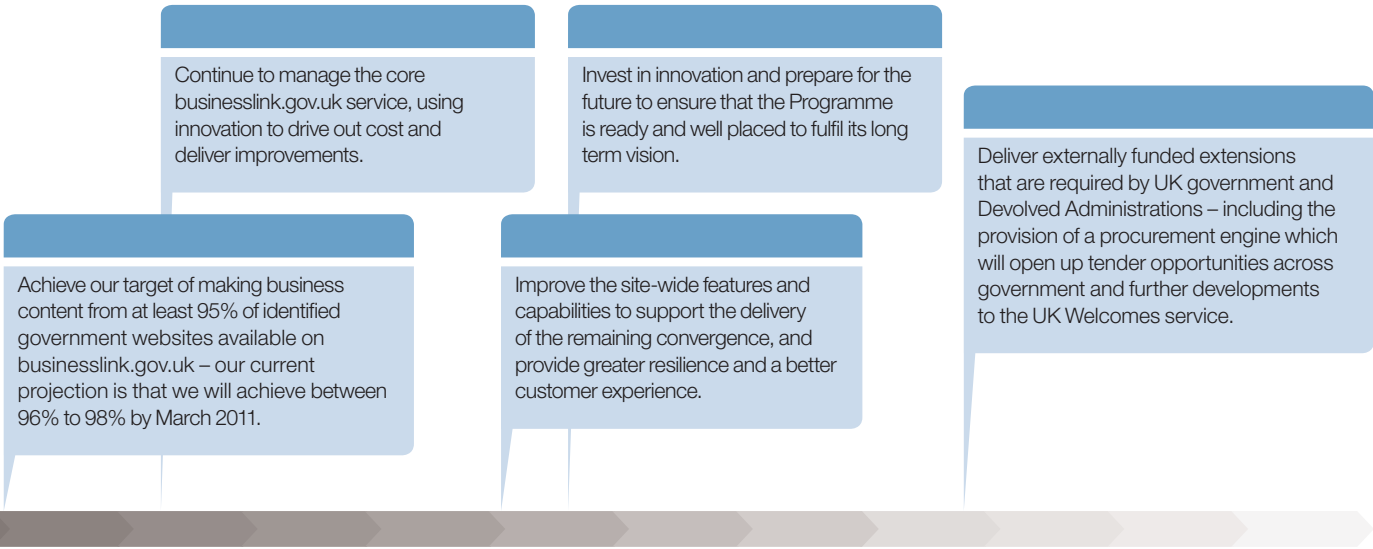
Businesses can now access information on how to avoid insolvency and what the options and obligations are for those who find themselves in financial difficulty. This project incorporated information from three websites, to create a smoother customer journey.

The *Finance and Grants* sitemap was also revised to better present the four areas of content now available: the reorganised *Raising Finance* and *Expert Financial Advice* sections and the new *Managing Finance* and *Financial Difficulty* areas.

The project involved convergence of 28 guides and one transaction from the Insolvency Service and HM Courts Service, and two guides and supporting information from the Ministry of Justice (which were launched earlier in the year).

Our plans for 2010-11 and the future

In 2010-11 the businesslink.gov.uk Programme aims to achieve the following five key objectives:



2010-11 will see the Programme achieve its major and challenging milestone of converging content and transactions from at least 95% of identified websites that deliver services to business.

Our business plan for 2010-11 focuses on getting us to this milestone, but investing some 20% of the allocation in this area to make marked improvements to the usability of the information we converge.

This will enable us to deliver most of the improvements identified from usability research and customer feedback.

At the same time we need to continue to maintain and improve the services already on the website. We will invest part of the funds allocated to this area in embedding into all our design work the customer segmentation and customer knowledge we gathered from research in 2009-10. We also plan to streamline internal governance, and to move our teams from their focus on delivering web convergence into delivering a responsive and innovative service channel for the rest of government.

We also propose to invest in technology: to support massive increases in content and traffic volumes; to improve physical infrastructure resilience and responsiveness; and to up the performance of our site's search engine. We will also deliver a major new user support service, focused on helping users to answer their problems online before they need to telephone or email.

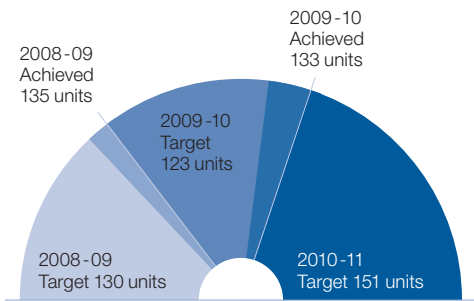
We have also been developing a strategy and future business case to answer the questions:

- What should the businesslink.gov.uk service look like in 2014?
- What would we need to do to get there?

Our thinking in this area is that we must make the service more personalised, more widely known and more focused on business customers "self-serving" – not just with simple information queries, but with at least some elements of self-diagnosis when their business has a challenge or a difficulty. We want to make the information on the service much more flexible and available for very widespread syndication, so that users encounter it on a variety of websites and platforms.

In 2010-11 we will be not only making this case, but also carrying out customer research and initial design studies so that, if funding is granted for the changes we propose, we are ready to implement them in a customer-focused way.

Achievements and targets for convergence of web units 2008-11



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From customers



“It’s just a really well thought out, well laid out, impartial source of information for businesses that would otherwise be hard to come by.” – Customer feedback