



## Case Study

# Foreign & Commonwealth Office Web Platform development

*"The development of the Web Platform has been an important step for the FCO in ensuring that we are using the most up to date tools available to communicate with stakeholders and to promote the work of the FCO both at home and overseas. LogicaCMG's approach, proven track record and overall attitude have complemented the team at the FCO and helped us all to deliver this project."*

**Tracy Green, Head, e-Media Team, FCO**

### Who are the FCO and what do they do?

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is a network of people working in the UK and in over 200 Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates (collectively known as 'Posts') abroad. The total number of staff is around 16,000 people, of whom some 10,000 are local staff recruited around the world. The purpose of the FCO is to work for UK interests in a safe, just and prosperous world. To do that the FCO:

- leads and co-ordinates the UK's European and international policies
- promotes UK policies and values around the world
- provides important direct services to UK citizens and businesses both in the UK and overseas
- provides expert foreign policy advice to Ministers and the Prime Minister
- pursues UK interests on the ground in crisis regions
- negotiates for the UK in international organisations
- gathers, analyses and targets information for the Government and others
- organises senior level international contacts.

The FCO Strategy clarifies UK foreign policy priorities, so that the FCO can concentrate its efforts where they are most needed, build flexibility and capacity to respond to the unexpected, and so best serve the UK and its citizens. Those international priorities are:

1. a world safer from global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction
2. protection of the UK from illegal immigration, drug trafficking and other international crime
3. an international system based on the rule of law, which is better able to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts
4. an effective EU in a secure neighbourhood
5. promotion of UK economic interests in an open and expanding global economy
6. sustainable development, underpinned by democracy, good governance and human rights
7. security of UK and global energy supplies
8. security and good governance of the UK's Overseas Territories.

### Need for a global web strategy

The project to develop the FCO Web Platform began in 1999 as The Information Kiosk and FCO Web Development Projects. The project aimed to take the FCO to the forefront of electronic information delivery and provide an important building block for the e-delivery of further FCO services. From a public diplomacy perspective, the project also aimed to improve perceptions of the UK overseas, and promote the UK as a modern, dynamic, innovative and young-feeling country, as well as a premier location for work, education, investment and tourism. Other drivers for change included a requirement to raise the quality of Post websites and to establish consistent branding and information; tighter resource allocation; and a need to meet the Government's commitment to provide as many services as possible to the public electronically by 2005. It was recognised that the development of a global web presence was key in helping to deliver this vision.

The main thrust of The Web Development Project was to create a central infrastructure that could host all of the FCO's public facing websites. This encompassed a major upgrade to the existing FCO website and the creation of a central solution for Post websites as well as the development of i-UK, a portal website delivering content to an overseas audience.

The FCO Web Platform is now a sophisticated web architecture at the centre of which is a highly developed content management system. A secure central infrastructure hosts the FCO's public facing websites, and provides a common set of templates which enable Posts to launch and maintain their own websites. The Web Platform is hosted at FCO secure premises in London and Milton Keynes.

### Partners in development and delivery

As well as the technical scope of supply, the FCO wanted to work with a systems integrator that could help them develop the new "brand" for the UK, and then ensure that the portal re-enforced this brand. This brand would help to coordinate the Posts' work of promoting the UK.

LogicaCMG were awarded a contract worth over £6.5 million to develop, build and maintain a new Web Platform in January 2001. This included a three year infrastructure and application support service arrangement following the initial 15 month development.

The main deliverables were to provide:

- A Web Platform made up of a Live and Staging environment comprising hardware, product and bespoke software
- A pilot deployment of Information Kiosks<sup>1</sup>

The timetable was to roll-out a new-look website to every Embassy & High Commission able to run a website by 2005/2006.

### Implementation

LogicaCMG and its partners on the project, including CCG.XM (used to deliver the creative website design) and SUN Microsystems, all worked closely with the FCO to deliver the system in early 2002. Several 3rd party software packages were integrated and customised by LogicaCMG to create the Web Platform. Following the launch, the FCO embarked on a training and migration programme to transfer the majority of the FCO's public facing websites onto the platform as well as utilising its functionality to develop new websites.

The following technologies were employed to implement the system: UNIX (Solaris), Apache, WebLogic, JSP, Java, JavaScript, HTML, Oracle 9i, Content Management System (Fatwire ContentServer) and Alta Vista Search Enterprise.

### Support Services

Working as an integrated team LogicaCMG and the FCO provide end-to-end service delivery ensuring that the supply of critical information to the general public, both at home and overseas, is maintained on a 24x7 basis. This service includes the provision of a Helpdesk, Problem Management, Infrastructure Monitoring, Application and Change Management.

### Platform Benefits

The FCO Web Platform has largely achieved the objectives of the original Internet project. The Platform now hosts over 175 websites including the FCO Website ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)), the i-UK.com portal ([www.i-uk.com](http://www.i-uk.com)), UKvisas website ([www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)), over 170 post websites (in both English and foreign languages including Arabic, Thai and Russian), the G8 ([www.g8.gov.uk](http://www.g8.gov.uk)) and EU Presidency ([www.eu2005.gov.uk](http://www.eu2005.gov.uk)) websites and an Arabic and Freedom of Information websites. These sites deliver key services including travel advice, email updates, visa information and application forms, and consular registration as well as offering a wealth of other information.

The successful implementation of the Web Platform has delivered many specific business benefits to the FCO, including:

- The ability to reach a wider audience (playing a critical role in providing information to customers during important world events such as the Iraq Crisis and Asian Tsunami)
- Achieving central e-Government targets for the provision of information and services online
- Resource savings by centralising website design, hosting, and support in the form of the Web Platform system
- Efficiency savings by reducing duplication and sharing more central content
- Provision of a strong and consistent corporate brand, joining up the services of the public diplomacy partners and promoting the UK overseas
- Robust Internet security
- The ability to effectively promote UK trade, tourism, investment & education services
- Enhanced capacity for public interaction
- Meeting rising expectations for online information & enhancing perceptions of the UK

As a consequence the FCO's online services are now largely built around the Web Platform, including Travel Advice, Email Alerts, Consular Registration Forms and Forums.

### Business growth

The platform currently attracts well over 5 million page impressions per month; has 430 active worldwide FCO authors, editors and publishers updating and maintaining the content of their websites; and over 50,000 users registered to the subscription service receiving over 1 million email alerts per month.

In response to increased business needs, the need to address the issue of continued product support life and the requirement for both a G8 and an EU Presidency website in 2005, a major upgrade of the Web Platform infrastructure, including additional functional changes, was completed by LogicaCMG, successfully on time and to budget during the second half of 2004.

### What next?

The support service relationship between LogicaCMG and the FCO has been extended for a further 3 years until 2008. This will involve relocating the LogicaCMG support team to the FCO's offices in King Charles Street, Whitehall, thereby further improving the working relationship and providing greater business benefit through increased responsiveness and closer working.

Enhancements, service improvements and customer satisfaction for the Web Platform service will continue to be identified and measured respectively, ensuring that business benefit and value for money continue to be achieved, whilst still maintaining the current high levels of performance.

**To discuss how LogicaCMG can help your business, please contact:**

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LogicaCMG is a major international force in IT services and wireless telecoms. It provides management and IT consultancy, systems integration and outsourcing services to clients across diverse markets including telecoms, financial services, energy and utilities, industry, distribution and transport and the public sector. The group holds a 60 per cent controlling interest in Edinfor, S.A. (Edinfor), one of the largest IT service providers in Portugal, with additional operations in Spain and Brazil. LogicaCMG employs around 21,000 staff in offices across 34 countries and has more than 40 years of experience in IT services. Headquartered in Europe, LogicaCMG is listed on both the London and Amsterdam stock exchanges (LSE: LOG; Euronext: LOG). More information is available from [www.logicacmg.com](http://www.logicacmg.com)

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