

FROM: MR J A CANAVAN  
CCRU  
DATE: 10 MAY 1995

cc Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Maxwell - B  
Mrs Devlin - B  
Mr Corbett  
Mr Morrow *15/5*  
Dr McCoy *[Signature]*

TO: DEIRDRE KENNY

OPEN GOVERNMENT AND THE INTERNET

I have now seen your minute of 5 April to Mrs Devlin about possible use by Central Secretariat of Internet facilities to publicise information.

There seem to be two types of information for which the Internet could be used. The first are the snappy short texts which you asked us to identify and which BDS seem to be keen to transfer. We have a number of "bull point" briefs on subjects like TSN, CR and Irish language which could be put on permanent access (though arrangements would need to be made for regular updating of the information). I wonder if Information Service also puts its press statements on the Internet on a regular basis. They would seem to be ideal for this purpose, and could perhaps be withdrawn after a few days.

The second type of document is more substantial, perhaps on the scale of Frameworks for the Future. This would be genuine electronic publishing and we would be keen to make use of it for documents such as the PAFT annual report, which will be published shortly, or consultation documents on the lines of the race relations paper of 1992. However, I infer from your note that BDS is less interested in documents of this size, probably for logistic reasons. The Frameworks are presumably regarded

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as a one-off and had a greater level of international interest than most government documents. We could put short digests of longer documents on Internet, referring readers to the full version which would be available by mail from CCRU, though this would be a second best option.

(Signed:- JAC)

J A CANAVAN

We looked in particular at EU information and the Canadian Government pilot project. The "trick" appears to be to use simple, attractive graphics/logos, short simple texts and contact points where people can access more detailed information rather than simply downloading voluminous pages of text onto the network. BSE will transfer information from NI Departments onto the Internet. All Departments need to do is identify the information they wish to make available and see it out in a suitable format for BSE to transfer.

AC will be considering a paper on the Internet at its next meeting at the end of this month. This paper will, inter alia, advise that Open Government contacts within NI Departments are considering the opportunities the Internet offers for rolling out Open Government. It also advises that many community groups, organisations and individuals within Northern Ireland already access the Internet.

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1. Mr Conroy 3. " 5..  
2. Ms Beattie  
- of name amended. 4.  
AR  
11/5

Open Govt

FROM: Deirdre Kenny  
5 April 1995

cc Mr Watkins - for info  
Mr Maxwell  
Mr Canavan 11.5  
Mrs Brown  
Miss Steele  
Ms Murphy  
Mrs Hetherington  
Mr Martin DFP - for info

-B  
-B  
-B  
-B  
-B  
-B

Mrs Devlin -B

OPEN GOVERNMENT AND THE INTERNET

1. We attended a presentation on the above in Craigantlet Buildings on Tuesday 4 April. It was organised by BDS (Des Vincent and Clifford Kitson) and demonstrated how governments and institutions around the world provided information to the public via the Internet.
2. We looked in particular at EU information and the Canadian Government pilot project. The "trick" appears to be to use simple, attractive graphics/logos, short simple texts and contacts points where people can access more detailed information rather than simply downloading voluminous pages of text onto the network. BDS will transfer information from NI Departments onto the Internet. All Departments need to do is identify the information they wish to make available and set it out in a suitable format for BDS to transfer.
3. PCC will be considering a paper on the Internet at its next meeting at the end of this month. This paper will, inter alia, advise that Open Government contacts within NI Departments are considering the opportunities the Internet offers for rolling out Open Government. It also advises that many community groups, organisations and individuals within Northern Ireland already access the Internet.

4. Central Secretariat already has data on the Internet viz the weekly Good News reports and Frameworks for the Future. However, there is plenty of scope for us to make more information available to the public at no cost to us. By copy of this minute I would ask HODs within Central Secretariat, Miss Steele, Ms Murphy and Mrs Hetherington to consider what additional Central Secretariat information could be put on the Internet, possibilities include

- TSN: what the Government is doing to meet its TSN objectives, expenditure etc.
- Community Relations ditto, plus details of grant schemes, eligibility conditions etc.
- Public Appointments: names of Chairmen and appointees to public bodies.
- Notification of forthcoming public appointment vacancies.
- NI legislative programme: a brief description of the purpose of each Order and the name and address of a contact point.
- Notification of the consultation period for an Order (this would be for Departments to action rather than Central Secretariat).
- List of North/South contacts held in House libraries.

4. I would be grateful for responses by Friday 28 April.



DEIRDRE KENNY