

Good Practice in promoting PSI re-use: The OPSI brand

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Abstract

This paper is the first of a series that considers the role of branding Government initiatives related to the re-use of public sector information.

In May 2005 the UK Government as part of a package of measures related to the transposition and implementation of the European Union Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information announced the formation of The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) within the UK Government Cabinet Office. Since its formation OPSI has been central to driving forward the public sector information re-use agenda in the UK. As a result of its endeavours OPSI has gained wide recognition within Europe as one of the best practice models with respect to implementing the Directive. In June 2006 the UK Government announced that OPSI would be merged with The National Archives. This paper reviews the impact of the merger on the OPSI brand that has become synonymous with the implementation of the EU legal framework that governs the re-use of public sector information.

Key words

Public Sector Information, Directive 2003/98/EC, Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 1515, The Office of Public Sector Information, The National Archives, The Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information, OPSI brand.

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This report has been published under the auspices of the European Public Sector Information Platform. The report may be reproduced providing acknowledgement is made to the author and the European PSI Platform.

The [European Public Sector Information \(PSI\) Platform](#) is funded under the [European Commission eContentplus programme](#).

Introduction

Three years have now elapsed since the merger of the UK Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI)¹ with the UK The National Archives (TNA)² took place. At the time of the merger the TNA reported to the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) that was absorbed into the newly formed Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in May 2007. The Ministry of Justice also has a responsibility for the UK Information Commissioners Office (ICO)³.

This paper considers the impact of Government reorganisation and in particular the impact the merger has had on the OPSI brand and whether the merger has diluted the brand or that there is evidence that indicates that the brand is in the process of being phased out.

Since its inception in May 2005 OPSI has gained a high profile both within the UK, across Europe and the wider world due to its roles related to opening up public sector information for wider access, use and re-use. The OPSI brand has become synonymous with the implementation of the EU legal framework that governs the re-use of public sector information. The European Commission has cited OPSI as an example of best practice that other EU Member States should adopt and amend where necessary.

As a result of UK Government public sector austerity measures the National Archives announcement^{4&5} that a number of changes will need to be made to operations and services in order to reduce the running costs by 10% by 2010 due to the budget remaining flat may also have implications on the OPSI brand.

Background - Timeline

| Date | Event |
|---------------|--|
| December 2000 | HM Treasury publish ⁶ the final report of the Cross Cutting review of the Knowledge Economy: Review of government information |
| 14 April 2003 | UK Government announces the formation of The Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information (APPSI) |
| 12 June 2003 | UK Government forms the Department for Constitutional Affairs |
| 5 April 2005 | Cabinet Office publish ⁷ press release titled: Transition to the Office of Public Sector Information begins |
| 16 May 2005 | Cabinet Office publish ⁸ press release titled: <i>New Office of Public Sector Information</i> |
| 10 June 2005 | <i>Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 1515 The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005</i> Laid before Parliament |
| 5 August 2005 | Cabinet Office announces the publication ⁹ of the APPSI Annual report for 2005 |
| 21 June 2006 | Cabinet Office publish ¹⁰ press release titled: <i>The National Archives and The Office of Public Sector Information to merge</i> |
| 21 June 2006 | TNA publish ¹¹ press release titled: <i>The Office of Public Sector Information and The</i> |

¹ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

³ <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

⁴ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/changes.htm>

⁵ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/changes-general-info.htm>

⁶ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spend_sr00_ccr.htm

⁷ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2005/050405_opsitransition.aspx

⁸ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2005/050516_opsi.aspx

⁹ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2005/050805_appsireport.aspx

¹⁰ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2006/statements/press_office/060621_opsi.aspx

| Date | Event |
|-----------------|--|
| | <i>National Archives are to merge</i> |
| 31 October 2006 | TNA publish ¹² press release titled: <i>The National Archives and The Office of Public Sector Information have merged</i> |
| 7 November 2006 | Statutory Instrument Practice Circular No.3 (2006) published ¹³ |
| 9 May 2007 | The Ministry of Justice ¹⁴ was formed and took forward the work of the Department for Constitutional Affairs and took over some of the responsibilities of the Home Office. |
| 9 May 2007 | The Lord Chancellor publishes the revised Executive Agency Framework Agreement for The National Archives. |
| 31 July 2007 | OPSI publish ¹⁵ report titled: Report on the UK implementation of the. European directive on the re-use of public. Sector information: the first two years |
| 18 June 2008 | TNA publish ¹⁶ press release titled: UK spearheads Europe's emerging knowledge economy |
| 22 July 2008 | TNA publish ¹⁷ press release titled: <i>The Office of Public Sector Information publishes UK annual report on public sector information</i> |
| 20 July 2009 | TNA publish ¹⁸ press release titled: <i>UK Annual Report on Public Sector Information is published</i> |

Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 1515 The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005

The statutory instrument SI 2005 No. 1515¹⁹ (the statutory instrument)²⁰ transposes the EU Directive 2003/98/EC into UK law and came into force on the 1st July 2005.

The statutory instrument makes reference to the Office of Public Sector Information within the following articles:

- Article 17 *Internal complaints procedure*
- Article 18 *Complaints to the Office of Public Sector Information*
- Article 19 *Consideration of complaints by the Office of Public Sector Information*
- Article 21 *Consideration of complaints and reviews by the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information*

The statutory instrument makes reference to the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information within the following articles:

- Article 20 *Requests for review by the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information*
- Article 21 *Consideration of complaints and reviews by the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information*

¹¹ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/stories/117.htm>

¹² <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/stories/133.htm>

¹³ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/sip-circulars/sip-circ03-2006.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/>

¹⁵ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/psi-regulations/uk-implementation-first-years.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/stories/201.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/stories/205.htm>

¹⁸ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/stories/334.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051515>

²⁰ ISBN 0 11 072900 5

Executive Agency Framework Agreement for The National Archives

A revised framework agreement was published for the National Archives during May 2007²¹ & ²². The framework agreement makes specific reference to the roles of the Office of Public Sector information within TNA.

“The Public Record Office became an Executive Agency on 1 April 1992 and merged with the Historical Manuscripts Commission to create The National Archives in 2003. In 2006, the National Archives merged with the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty’s Stationery Office. These changes are reflected in this third edition of the Framework Agreement, which became operational on 1 April 2007.

The National Archives operates under the authority primarily of the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967, the Historical Manuscripts Commission Royal Warrant of 2003, the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005, the Statutory Instruments Act 1946 (the “relevant statutory provisions”) and through the responsibilities of its officers under Letters Patent. It is a separate government department with its own Accounting Officer.”

4 OPSI⁴ OBLIGATIONS Statutory Obligations

Source

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>The Queen’s Printer to hold and exercise all rights and privileges in connection with Crown copyright and Crown database rights</p> | <p><i>Letters Patent</i></p> |
| <p>Office of Public Sector Information to investigate complaints in relation to the re-use of public sector information and to give its recommendations in writing</p> | <p><i>Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005</i></p> |
| <p>The Queen’s Printer to print all Acts of Parliament (including Measures of the National Assembly of Wales)</p> | <p><i>Letters Patent</i></p> |
| <p>The Queen’s Printer to produce an Annual Volume of Acts of Parliament containing tables of effect of legislation on previous legislation.</p> | <p><i>Instruction from Statute Law Committee</i></p> |
| <p>Statutory Instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Statutory Instruments to be registered and numbered by the Queen’s Printer • All Statutory Instruments shall as soon as possible be printed and sold by or under the authority of the Queen’s Printer • HMSO to produce lists showing the date upon which every statutory instrument printed and sold was first issued by HMSO • Advice to ministers⁵ in respect of his responsibilities in relation to the making of regulations under the Statutory Instruments Act • Production of an Annual Edition of Statutory Instruments with an Annual Numerical and Issue List, a classified list and tables showing the effects of legislation on previous instruments (on behalf of the Secretary of State)⁶ • Annual Edition of SIs to be printed by the Queen’s Printer and published by HMSO. | <p><i>Statutory Instruments Act 1946 as amended by the Statutory Instruments (Production and Sale) Act 1996</i></p> <p><i>Statutory Instruments Regulations 1948</i></p> |

²¹ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/executive-agency-framework-agreement.pdf>

²² <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/whowhatow.htm>

4 OPSI⁴ OBLIGATIONS Statutory Obligations

Source

| | |
|--|---|
| Obligation of the Government Printer for Northern Ireland, the officer appointed to print Acts of the NI Assembly, for publication of Statutory Rules by Her Majesty's Stationery Office | <i>Statutory Rules (N.I.) Order 1979</i> |
| Copies of legislation, the Official Gazettes (i.e. the London, Belfast and Edinburgh Gazettes) and other documents (e.g. copies of Treaties, Command Papers etc) admitted into evidence if printed by or under the authority of the Queen's printer or Government Printer | <i>Documentary Evidence Acts 1868 and 1882</i> |
| Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information: APPSI is an independent NDPB. Its remit is to investigate complaints in relation to OPSI, HMSO and QPS and to review OPSI's recommendations in relation to re-use of public sector information and to give its recommendations in writing | <i>Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005</i> |

⁴ OPSI is used as shorthand for the Office of Public Sector Information, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, the Queen's Printer/Government Printer and the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information. Note that Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) is a separate legal entity operating from within OPSI, while APPSI is a NDPB serviced by OPSI. Responsibilities of the Queen's Printer for Scotland are not included in this document as they will fall outside TNA's remit.

⁵ The functions remain with the Minister for the Civil Service until 31 October 2006

⁶ The responsibility remains with the Minister for the Civil Service until 31 October 2006

APPSI position on OPSI merger with TNA

The UK Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information (APPSI)²³ raised concerns when the UK Office of Public Sector Information was transferred from the UK Cabinet Office to The National Archives (TNA). The APPSI Annual reports reported on the panel's concerns as detailed in the following extracts. The UK Guardian newspaper as part of the *Free Our Data* campaign reflected on APPSI's concerns in an article published²⁴ on the 8th February 2007 titled: *Yes, minister, it's time for the data debate - Advisory panel despairs at the low priority given to public sector information - and praises Technology Guardian's campaign.*

APPSI Annual Report 2008-2009

The report makes no reference to the merger of The National Archives and OPSI.

APPSI Annual report 2007²⁵

“The merger of The National Archives and OPSI

In last year's annual report, we said that, in 2007, we would monitor the impact of the merger between The National Archives and the Office of Public Sector Information. While we were generally supportive, we had expressed reservations about the merger in our 2006 report. Our main concern was that this machinery of government change might result in a reduction of Government focus on the re-use of PSI. In the event, we are pleased to report that, in our view, the merger has been a success and has in fact helped increase rather than diminish the level of public sector interest in PSI. The National Archives is steadily emerging as a focal point for public information policy and, in turn, OPSI is now better positioned than in the past to promote the re-use of PSI. “

²³ <http://www.appsi.gov.uk/>

²⁴ <http://technology.guardian.co.uk/weekly/story/0,,2007590,00.html>

²⁵ <http://www.appsi.gov.uk/2008/06/>

(Reference: Section 3-Priorities during 2007, page 8)

APPSI Annual report 2006²⁶

“APPSI’s views on the merger

On 21 August 2006, APPSI held an extraordinary meeting to consider the proposed merger. The Chief Executive of TNA and the Director of OPSI each gave presentations to the Panel, explaining the thinking behind the merger.

Consistent with APPSI’s past recommendations on the need for greater coherence, as just noted, there was broad support for the idea of merging OPSI with TNA and, in turn, bringing it into DCA’s extended family (although it is fair to say that most members would have been more comfortable with OPSI becoming a division of DCA).

Crucial to APPSI’s broad support for the merger was the prospect, through being part of TNA and, in turn, being related to DCA, of OPSI securing greater Ministerial interest in and support for the greater re-use of PSI. The reasons for this optimism are outlined in Section 2 of this report, in relation to APPSI’s attempts to engage Ministers.

However, at the meeting on 21 August 2006 and in the days that followed, members did express two serious concerns, which were said also to have been echoed in the publishing and digital content communities:

1. That the merger between TNA and OPSI was, in practice, a take-over of OPSI by TNA and, in consequence, the re-use of PSI would become a lesser priority for the Government and that the commercial value of PSI would be neglected.
2. That the very name, “The National Archives”, no matter how much work was being done to modernise that organisation, would continue to be associated with historical materials and, in consequence, the image of OPSI that had been emerging, as a forward-looking innovator, might be lost when absorbed into TNA.

APPSI raised these concerns in frank discussions with TNA and OPSI. In response, the Chief Executive of TNA and the Director of OPSI worked hard to reassure APPSI in respect of both of these issues.

That TNA was much larger than OPSI and was the dominant party in the merger could not be denied. But, as its Chief Executive explained, TNA is repositioning itself at present and is rapidly emerging as the focal point in the public sector for information policy and information management. APPSI accepts this and has been especially impressed with the rapidity with which the Chief Executive has led an initiative to set up a Knowledge Council within government, a development wholly consistent with various APPSI recommendations in the past. (APPSI sees strong synergies between the projected Knowledge Council and the existing CIO Council.)

The Chief Executive went on to argue that the re-use of PSI is a fundamental building block in bringing about more coherent information management and, far from neglecting the OPSI agenda, TNA, with its much greater resources and reach, will provide a far more effective platform from which OPSI can promote and regulate the exploitation of PSI.

On 9 October 2006, the Director of OPSI wrote to APPSI, expressing her views. In the letter, she said:

I feel strongly that in redefining a National Archive for the 21st century and allowing OPSI’s PSI and regulatory role to develop with rigour, we will meet the confidence and reassurance our stakeholders demand. Within TNA we have a unique opportunity to cover every strand of the information cycle and deliver the coordinated approach that APPSI has been promoting since its inception. In the initial sharing of priorities and opportunities working across The National Archives policy related teams, we have already identified some exciting initiatives where we can reinforce our work and also develop an

²⁶ <http://www.appsi.gov.uk/archive/index.htm>

efficient and effective information management approach to support the wider public sector.

This letter has provided APPSI with considerable comfort. The Director's commitment to PSI re-use cannot be over-stated and her favourable assessment has reassured APPSI considerably.

As for the name, "The National Archives", we accept that this is largely a branding issue. We maintain that it will not be easy to shift the general perception of TNA as a body whose focus is on historical material but we can see that the Chief Executive is working hard precisely to bring about a change of view. APPSI was pleased in this context when she arranged for the Chair to meet with Consolidate, the marketing consultants who are advising on the repositioning of TNA.

The public message is unquestionably being refocused. In the words of TNA's current website at www.nationalarchives.co.uk :

The National Archives is at the heart of information policy – setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information.

In summary, APPSI's conclusion, in relation to the merger of TNA and OPSI, is that we are optimistic about its prospects and supportive of the new, resultant organisation. We view it as an important function of APPSI to monitor the progress of the TNA and OPSI merger, to watch for any diminution of emphasis on PSI re-use, to note successes, and to report back next year on the progress that has been made.

(Reference: APPSI Annual Report 2006, Section 3-The Merger of TNA and OPSI, pages 11 and 12)

A review of documentation published by The National Archives

The National Archives publishes a range of documents that report on the organisations activities, the strategy and the priorities. The published documents include the following:

Annual Reports²⁷

Annual Report and resource accounts 2006-2007

The Office of Public Sector Information is mentioned on twenty occasions within the report with substantive sections at page 20 and at Appendix 3: Background to the Office of Public Sector Information. (pages 68 to 71). The term *public sector information* appears on twenty-two instances. The brand name OPSI is mentioned on 32 instances. The Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information or APPSI appears on two instances. At page 42 the following statement is made:

"1.15 Merger with Office of Public Sector Information

With effect from 1st October 2006 The National Archives merged with the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI). In accordance with HM Treasury guidance in the Financial Reporting Manual this has been accounted for as a merger. As a consequence the FY 05/06 comparative figures have been restated to include OPSI operating costs and balances. The restated figures for FY 05/06 primary statements are as follows:"

Management Board OPSI responsibility: Director of Public Sector Information Directorate

Annual Report and resource accounts 2007 2008

The Office of Public Sector Information is mentioned on five occasions within the report. Financial information about The Office of Public Sector Information appears on page 41. The term *public sector information* appears on nine instances. The brand name OPSI is mentioned on 5 instances. The Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information or APPSI is not mentioned.

Management Board OPSI responsibility: Director, Information Policy and Services

Annual report and resource accounts 2008-2009

²⁷ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/operate/reports.htm>

The Office of Public Sector Information is mentioned on four occasions within the report.²⁸ The brand name OPSI is mentioned on 2 instances. The term *public sector information* appears on eleven instances²⁹. The Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information or APPSI is not mentioned. The following statements that refer to the accounts appear on pages 24 and 48.

“Public sector information

The National Archives has complied with the cost allocation and charging requirements set out in HM Treasury and Office of Public Sector Information guidance. See note 5 to the accounts.”

“c) The National Archives is required, in accordance with HM Treasury’s Fees and Charges Guide and recommendations relating to Public Sector Information Holders, to disclose performance results for its areas of activity. The segmental analysis is not intended to meet the requirements of Statement of Standard Accounting Practice 25: Segmental Reporting.”

Management Board OPSI responsibility: Director, Information Policy and Services

Strategic Plans³⁰

The National Archives Strategic Plan 2007 to 2008 (15 pages)

The term “*public sector information*” appears on four instances. The term “*Office of Public Sector Information*” appears on four instances.

Strategic Plan 2008-2009 (8 pages)

The term “*public sector information*” appears on one instance. The term “*Office of Public Sector Information*” appears on one instance.

The National Archives Strategic Plan 2009–10 (9 pages)

The term “*public sector information*” appears on one instance. The term “*Office of Public Sector Information*” does not appear in the document.

Management Board summaries³¹

The Management Board meets monthly and summaries of the meetings are published. The Management Board has responsibility for setting our long-term strategies, for approving our key investment decisions and ensuring that The National Archives' business planning and risk management is robust and sound.

| Year | Number of summaries published | Number of references to “OPSI”, PSI re-use topics | Number of references to “Information Policy and Services” | Number of references to Public Sector Information |
|------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 2006 | 9 | 4 | | 1 |
| 2007 | 11 | 4 | | |
| 2008 | 10 | 1 | 2 | |
| 2009 | 4 | 0 | 1 | |

Extract from the Management Board Summary for 26th July 2006 meeting

“*Vision*

The Vision message to staff by Directors and Heads of Department at all sites is going well. Response, particularly to the merger with the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), has been both positive and constructive. Members of staff that will need to relocate to the Kew site in 2008 have raised their concerns.

Work has started on repositioning The National Archives brand to include OPSI.”

²⁸ The report contains a quirk that impacts the search on the term “*Office*” as the text appears in the document as “*Off ice*”.

²⁹ Excluding the references made to the Office of Public Sector Information

³⁰ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/operate/plans.htm>

³¹ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/operate/meetings/manboard/management.htm>

Extract from the Management Board Summary for 27th November 2006 meeting

“Introduction to OPSI

The Director of Public Sector Information presented a snapshot of the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) - its services, responsibilities and role as a re-use provider and regulator of Public Sector Information (PSI). She went on to highlight the key issues facing PSI and government. The Board agreed that while there are strong synergies between the two organisations there are still areas of governance to be resolved between OPSI and The National Archives to ensure that OPSI becomes fully integrated.”

Extract from the Management Board summary for 4th December 2008 meeting

“Information Policy & Services (IPS) Directorate—the new structure

The Director Information Policy and Services gave an overview of her Directorate and an outline of the top-level structural and reporting changes that she’ll be introducing over coming months. With a remit that spans policy, operations and regulation, this change programme will impact all three functional areas (Information Management & Practice, Archives Sector Development and e Services & Strategy – Publishing Services) to create a more coherent and unified Directorate.”

Extract from the Management Board summary for the 5th May 2009 meeting

“An integrated legislation solution

The Director of Information Policy and Services introduced members of her team to present a high level view of publishing UK legislation. They went on to give a profile of the audience for this material, to highlight some of the technical issues currently being worked through by the team and to update the Board on the recent transfer of the Statute Law Database from Ministry of Justice to The National Archives.”

Executive Team summaries³²

The Executive Team meets weekly and summaries of the meetings are published. The team takes forward The National Archives' vision and strategy, ensuring that they are implemented effectively and in accordance with the organisation's systems for corporate governance.

| Year | Number of summaries published | Number of references to OPSI, PSI re-use topics | Number of references to “Information Policy and Services” | Number of references to “Public Sector Information” |
|------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 2006 | 30 | 4 | | |
| 2007 | 28 | 12 | | 2 |
| 2008 | 12 | 0 | | |
| 2009 | 5 | 0 | 1 | |

Notes:

1. The summaries changed from meeting oriented to monthly oriented (collation of the months meetings) from January 2008.
2. The summaries reviewed for 2006 – from May to December as merger took place during October 2006 and was announced during June 2006.

Extract from the Executive Team summary for the 27th November 2006 meeting

“The National Archives website Home page

³² <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/operate/meetings/manboard/executive.htm>

The Executive team agreed an interim redesign incorporating the Office of Public Sector (OPSI). This will be the precursor to a full redesign next year.”

Extract from the Executive Team summary for the 5th December 2007 meeting.

“Brand Refresh- update

The Head of Marketing and Communications presented new design guidelines for The National Archives and for OPSI for Executive Team approval. Although OPSI would retain a unique identity, Executive Team in agreeing the redesign acknowledged that the new design palette would ensure that OPSI becomes a more recognizable part of The National Archives brand.”

RecordKeeping Magazine³³

RecordKeeping was a magazine published quarterly by The National Archive – the last edition was published in April 2009. References to *The Office of Public Sector Information* have appeared in the following editions.

RecordKeeping Autumn 2006: TNA Update - *The National Archives and The Office of Public Sector Information have merged*

RecordKeeping Winter 2007: Case Studies - *Interview with Carol Tullo*

Search Engine Statistics

A sample of statistics gathered from Google for a number of sites and domains using the term OPSI, Office of Public Sector Information.

| Search Criteria | Hits |
|---|---------|
| OPSI domain/site: nationalarchives.gov.uk | 113 |
| OPSI domain/site: cabinetoffice.gov.uk | 111 |
| OPSI domain/site: powerofinformation.wordpress.com | 103 |
| OPSI domain/site: frreourdata.org.uk | 148 |
| OPSI domain/site: www.epsiplatform.eu | 522 |
| OPSI domain/site: www.guardian.co.uk | 41 |
| OPSI domain/site: ec.europa.eu/information_society | 64 |
| OPSI | 1880000 |
| Office of Public Sector Information domain/site: opsi.gov.uk | 62600 |
| Office of Public Sector Information domain/site: nationalarchives.gov.uk | 614000 |
| Office of Public Sector Information domain/site: cabinetoffice.gov.uk | 106 |
| Office of Public Sector Information domain/site: powerofinformation.wordpress.com | 104 |
| Office of Public Sector Information domain/site: www.epsiplatform.eu | 67 |
| Office of Public Sector Information domain/site: ec.europa.eu/information_society | 41 |
| Office of Public Sector Information | 3180000 |

The OPSI Brand

The Office of Public Sector Information and its associated OPSI logo came into being in May 2005 and has quickly become a well-recognised brand. In the English language the name of the organisation is informative and it is immediately clear that the organisation is involved with public sector information. The OPSI logo is also clear as it includes the letters PSI the short form for public sector information.

A brand that is self-evident also helps not just those interested in public sector information within the UK but also across Europe as the re-use of public sector information is of interest across the EU - not to mention the global interest. The EU Directive 2003/98/EC is a single market framework as such it is helpful to have a name and a brand that is easily recognisable across the single market.

³³ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/services/recordkeeping.htm>

The Office of Public Sector Information web site also has on the home page both the policy and regulatory functions that relate to the re-use of public sector information. A visitor to the web site does not have to drill down to find the information. The web site is in the top ten most visited web sites in the UK³⁴.

A search on the World Wide Web regarding the OPSI domain name shows that the domain was registered in 2005 and is not due for renewal until 2011. The registered domain details are as follows:

Domain: opsi.gov.uk
Registered For: Office of Public Sector Information
Domain Owner: Cabinet Office
Registered By: The Stationery Office Ltd
Servers: stc3dns3.theso.co.uk & pcl3dns3.theso.co.uk
Registrant Contact: John Sheridan
Registrant Address: Admiralty Arch, Room 1.30, North Side, The Mall, London, SW1A 2WH, United Kingdom, telephone: +44 207 276 5213
Renewal date: Thursday 10th Feb 2011
Entry updated: Monday 12th January 2009
Entry created: Thursday 10th February 2005

The TNA Brand

The National Archives and the associated logo came into being in 2003 and has become a strong brand within the archive community. In the English language the name of the organisation is informative and it is immediately clear that the organisation is involved with national archives. The TNA logo is also clear as it includes the letters NA the short form for national archives. A visitor to the TNA web site is immediately struck by the presentation of the archives. A visitor to the TNA web site interested in public sector information policy and management needs to drill down to find the relevant information and is then directed out to the Office of Public Sector Information³⁵.

Unlike the OPSI brand the brand does not need to serve the EU single market audience. The registered domain details are as follows:

Domain: nationalarchives.gov.uk
Registered For: National Archives
Domain Owner: Public Record Office
Registered By: The National Archives
Servers: wb-dns1.nationalarchives.gov.uk 193.132.104.64, ns0-n.dns.pipex.net, ns1-n.dns.pipex.net
Registrant Contact: Alex Pardoe
Registrant Address: ICTD Department, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU, United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 20 8876 3444.
Renewal date: Sunday 12th Dec 2010
Entry updated: Thursday 13th November 2008
Entry created: Wednesday 17th September 2003

Summary

Individually the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and The National Archive have strong brands that have gained wide recognition with the respective interest groups and stakeholders. The OPSI brand is particularly strong with respect to public sector information and very weak with respect to archives. The TNA brand is strong with respect to archives and very weak with respect to public sector information.

The individual web sites for the OPSI and TNA support the respective brands.

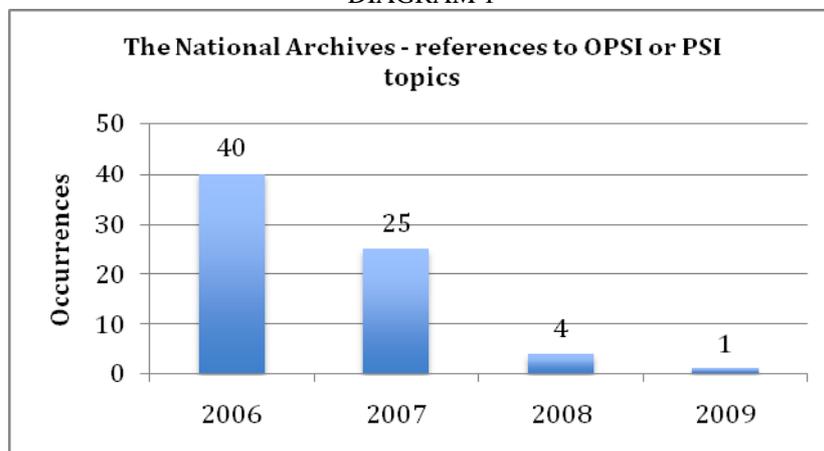
³⁴ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/about/website-statistics/index>

³⁵ http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/services/opsi.htm?source=ddmenu_services5

As a result of the merger of the OPSI with the TNA the published evidence shows a slow brand integration is taking place and is still in process.

A review of the TNA Executive Team and Management Board summaries indicates that once the initial activities of merging the two organisations had taken place the senior management of TNA focussed on the archival aspects far more than that of the re-use of public sector information as shown in DIAGRAM 1.

DIAGRAM 1



At the current time the annual reports published by the TNA and the OPSI report well on the individual remits.

The search engine statistics indicate that The National Archives is not a strong promulgator of the Office of Public Sector Information or the OPSI brand.

The UK re-use of public sector information legislation refers to the Office of Public Sector Information in the regulatory function.

Conclusion

At the current time both the OPSI and the TNA brands co-exist and as such support the individual remits of public sector information policy and archives respectively. All the time that this remains the UK has a strong brand in the context of public sector information.

However, as the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information reported during 2006 there is clearly a branding issue that would impact the re-use of public sector information policy and implementation should the two brands be tightly integrated or should the OPSI brand disappear altogether.

APPSI in its 2006 annual report recognised that this was a potential risk and the TNA Chief Executive gave assurances that the re-positioned TNA would address this issue. The evidence however indicates that this has not as yet occurred and due to the size and importance of the Archives may not be achievable. The National Archives is a large public sector information holder and since the merger of OPSI and TNA the amount of public sector information that the National Archives has responsibility for has grown in breadth with respect to current and past information. As a result it is natural that the TNA managerial team will rightly focus on their PSI holdings at the expense of the public sector information policy and implementation remit and in particular the regulation of the implementation of the re-use of public sector information will be further diluted.

As the public consultations undertaken by Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO)³⁶ and the Department of Trade and Industry during the UK transposition phase of the EU Directive 2003/98/EC highlighted there was a need to ensure the regulatory function was effective and visible and one option proposed by the respondents to the consultation was to merge the PSI Re-use regulatory framework

³⁶ Archived web site content maybe found at the UK Web Archive <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/target/103980>

into the Information Commissioners Office. In the event the regulatory powers were vested in the newly created Office of Public Sector Information. APPSI at the time recognised that the Office of Public Sector Information was a public sector information holder and as such maybe compromised with respect to the regulatory powers when handling complaints related to the OPSI public sector information. As a result the legal framework implemented names the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information as an appeal body. The conflict of interests identified in 2005 has been significantly magnified as a result of the merger of OPSI with TNA. At the current time the individual brands help to separate the interests of the public sector information holder remits from those of the regulatory remit. A review of the TNA documentation and web site shows that the TNA gives little emphasis to this role. Should in the future the TNA wish to tighten the integration of the OPSI within TNA further and consider dropping the Office of Public Sector Information and OPSI brand then a significant amount of work will need to be undertaken to ensure the roles as set out in the TNA framework agreement with respect to the Office of Public Sector Information are addressed. In times of austerity when public sector bodies are under pressure to reduce their demand on financial resources and to gain efficiency savings it is questionable that the work needed to re-brand TNA would be available. The optimum solution at the current time would be for the OPSI brand to remain separate and to be enhanced rather than diluted to stimulate economic activity from the re-use of public sector information. If the OPSI brand was phased out it would have wider repercussions across all of the public sector as the OPSI is heavily referenced and as such has knock on resource issues.

The evidence that is publicly available also indicates that the TNA at the current time does not appreciate the need to implement the PSI re-use framework such that it serves the wider EU single market requirement with respect to the re-use of public sector information.

The APPSI concerns expressed in 2006 are as valid in 2009 as they were back in 2006 except that three years have elapsed for the TNA to deliver what it promised to APPSI back in 2006.

The OPSI brand is clearly a success not just in the UK but also across Europe and elsewhere in the world and has contributed to raising the profile of the public sector information re-use framework as well as acting as a catalyst for change with respect to the culture of public sector information holders. Should the OPSI brand be phased out for reasons related to as a result of merger and integration processes then the UK's achievement will have been wasted and as seriously will have a stalling effect on stimulating economic activity from the re-use of public sector information just when the UK and other parts of Europe are in recession and Governments are taking a series of measures to stimulate their national economies!

Related European Public Sector Information Platform references

The National Archives

TNA to cut resources!

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/tna_to_cut_resources

UK TNA reports

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/uk_tna_reports

The biggest challenges!

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/the_biggest_challenges

PSI Average life = 7 years

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/psi_average_life_7_years

The Office of Public Sector Information

Unlocking PSI Potential

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/unlocking_psi_potential2

UK Report on the Re-use of PSI 2008

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/reports/uk_report_on_the_re_use_of_psi_2008

OPSI Report on UK Implementation of the European Directive on PSI Re-use

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/reports/uk_implementation_of_the_european_directive_on_psi_re_use

UK (PSI and Records Management)

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/uk_psi_and_records_management

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Justice arrives in the UK!

http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/ministry_of_justice_arrives_in_the_uk