Digital by Default Service Standard

The Government Digital Service (GDS) was established in April 2010, under the banner of Digital by Default, to make government services available online by default. The purpose of the GDS is to help the government use digital technology and data to improve the quality of public services, reduce costs and make the most of tax payers’ money.

The GDS has developed a Service Standard to provide a framework to achieve this on a government-wide basis. The standard is intended to help those running digital services to demonstrate that they are delivering services that meet a high standard.

The criteria below, and must be able to maintain this quality for the lifetime of the service, in order to meet the standard from April 2014.

To do this, teams must demonstrate that they have met the criteria below, and must be able to maintain this quality for the lifetime of the service, in order to meet the standard from April 2014.

What if we fail to meet the standard?

How can we continue to meet the standard after launch?

How will we demonstrate we’ve met the standard?

How will our service be assessed against the standard?

Does our service need to meet the standard?

The criteria

1. Understand user needs, involving research to be carried out to identify and prioritise the needs of digital and assisted digital service users.

2. Design services that are simple and intuitive, using the same look, feel and tone as GOV.UK, using the service manual.

3. Create a working prototype, using the agile, iterative and user-centred methods set out in the manual.

4. Integrate the service into the official live version, with dummy accounts and a representative sample of potential service users, on all common browsers and devices.

5. Be able to test the end-to-end service as if it were in an environment identical to that of the live version, with dummy accounts and a representative sample of potential service users, on all common browsers and devices.

6. Make all new source code open and reuseable, including the ability to support multivariate testing.

7. Put a plan in place for ongoing user testing, including the ability to support multivariate testing.

8. Integrate any new digital changes reported on the Performance Platform.

9. Develop a comprehensive plan for, and evidence to support, the phasing out of existing alternative channels where appropriate.

10. Put in place a plan for ongoing user testing, including the ability to support multivariate testing.

11. Integrate user needs and evidence, involving research, to be carried out to identify and prioritise the needs of digital and assisted digital service users.

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16. Make all new source code open and reuseable, including the ability to support multivariate testing.

17. Put a plan in place for ongoing user testing, including the ability to support multivariate testing.

18. Integrate any new digital changes reported on the Performance Platform.

19. Build and maintain a service that can be tested in a real-world environment, using to build, host, operate and measure the service.

20. Put in place a plan for ongoing user testing, including the ability to support multivariate testing.

21. Architecture high-quality data sets on which the service is based, and evidence to support multivariate testing.

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25. Be able to test the end-to-end service as if it were in an environment identical to that of the live version, with dummy accounts and a representative sample of potential service users, on all common browsers and devices.

26. Successfully test the service from beginning to end with the Minister responsible for it.

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