



## Japan Local Government Centre, London

### Monthly Report for December 2010 (UK) – Digital By Default

The UK Government's Digital Inclusion Champion Martha Lane Fox has proposed a major 'channel shift' in the delivery of UK public services in a report welcomed by her Cabinet Office paymasters. Ms Lane Fox, one of Britain's first internet entrepreneurs as founder of the online travel agent lastminute.com, published her report *Directgov 2010 and Beyond: Revolution not Evolution* in October 2010, which proposed that all government services in the UK should become 'digital by default'. In response to Ms Lane Fox, who also heads up the Digital Public Services Unit at the Cabinet Office, the government said it welcomed her report and would act on its recommendations in full. Therefore it is possible that transactions such as car tax, parking fines, passports and driving licences, as well as school places, should be applied for or paid entirely online in the near future.

The report suggests:

- making Directgov the 'customer champion with teeth' to drive up the quality of government's online services
- simplifying the user experience of digital public services by making all of government's transactional services available through Directgov
- ensuring online government information and services are available wherever people are on the web by opening up applications and services to other organizations
- recruiting an Executive Director for Digital and Information in the Cabinet Office to drive change and bring together existing teams working in this area
- asking Directgov and Business Link to create a plan of what would be involved to converge the sites into a single domain

Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude replied to Ms Lane Fox in November in saying that he agreed *"in principle with [the] proposal that over time Government should move to a single domain based on agile shared web services. However, as [the] report makes clear, this will be challenging for Government and I will need to consult colleagues before we make a final decision about how to proceed. To take these and other cross government issues forward, I intend to set up a new Ministerial Working Group on Digital reporting to the Cabinet Economic Affairs Committee."*

The report argues that shifting 30% of government service delivery contacts to digital channels has the potential to deliver gross annual savings of more than £1.3 billion, rising to £2.2 billion if 50% of contacts shifted to digital.

*Any opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of JLGCC or CLAIR.*

The move was hailed by some in the media as entirely befitting the “facebook generation” and how they engage with government. As well as founding lastminute.com and acting as ‘Digital Tsar’ for the UK Government, Ms Lane Fox sits on the boards of Channel 4 and Marks & Spencer. Her latest business venture is the Lucky Voice chain of upscale karaoke venues.

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