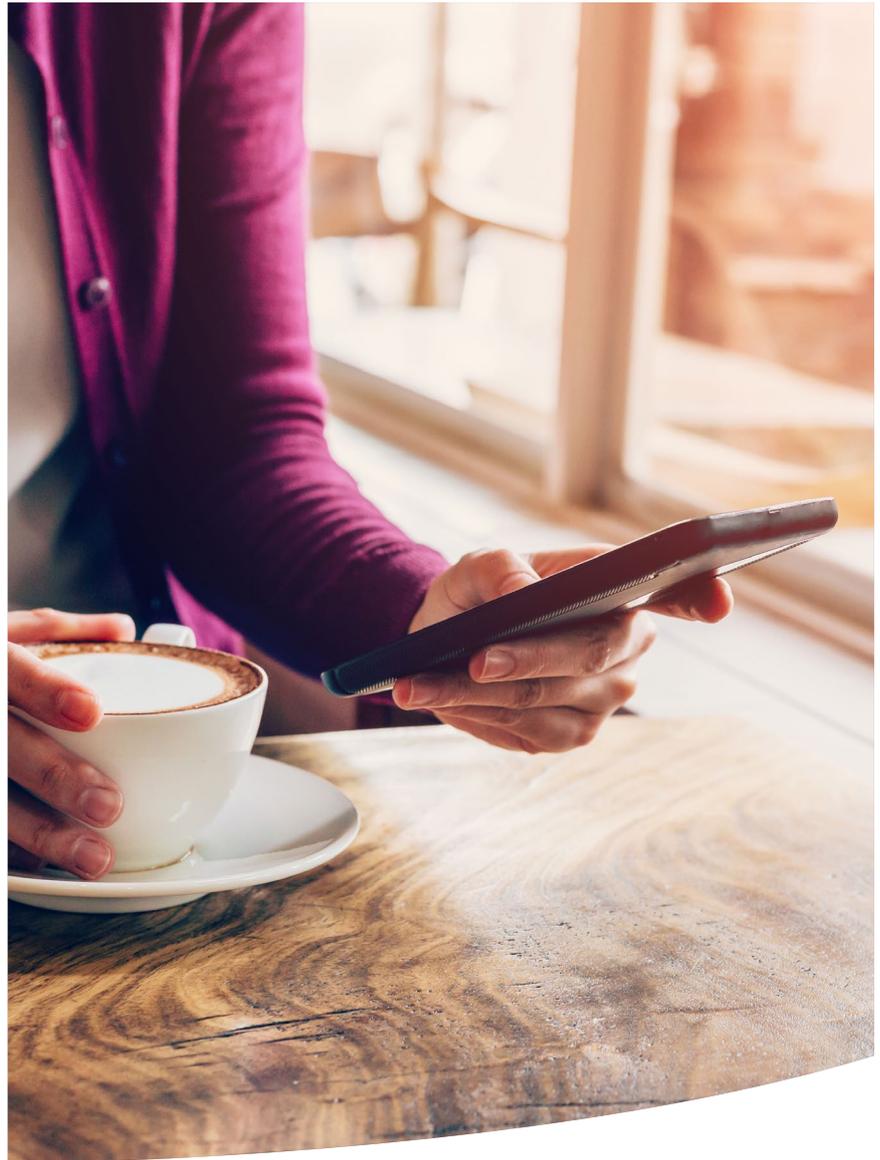


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# The Citizen View of the Digital Transformation of Government



GAME CHANGERS



# Lifting the lid on digital government

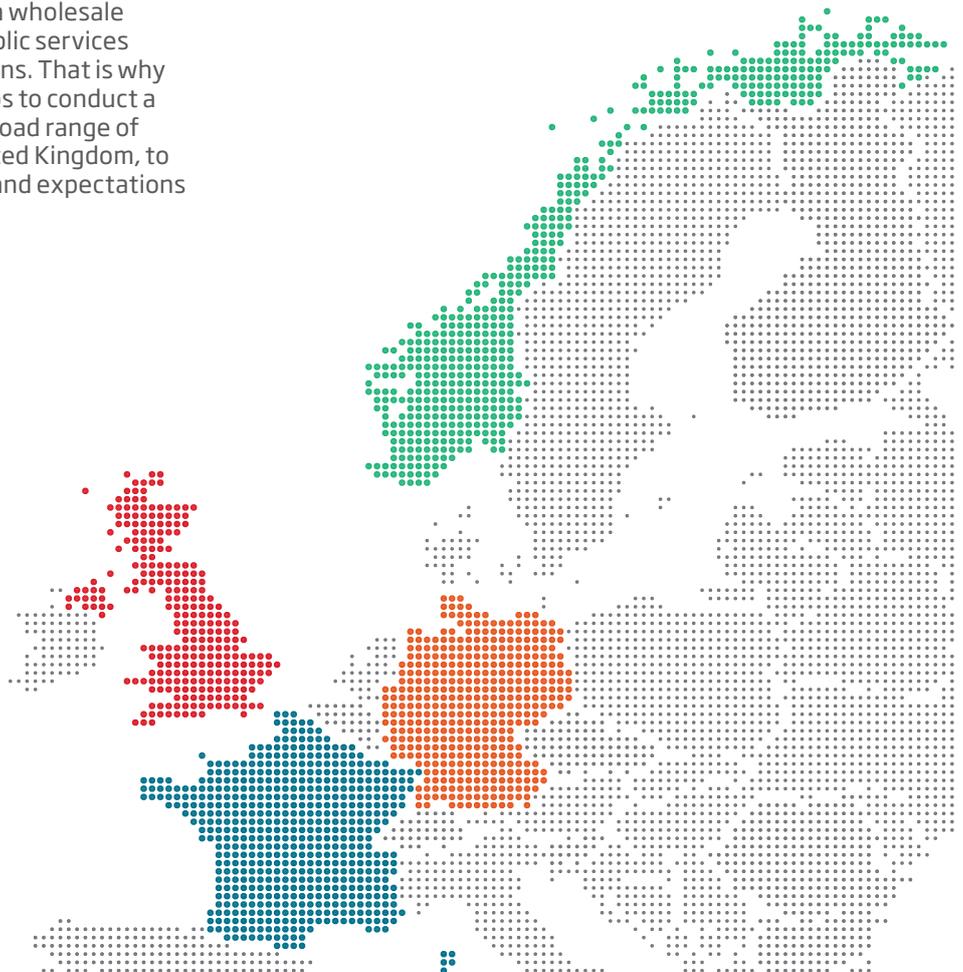
Government has been looking for decades at how best to use digital - new platforms and services that are enabled through a mix of cloud computing, smarter devices and collaboration tools - to improve public services. It sought to resolve a lack of coherency in service delivery and make services more accessible to citizens by putting them online. Automation of internal systems and processes would free up resources for more productive use.

In practice government initially saw low adoption and use of digitally enabled services. Many services still remain paper based and manual. The explanation for is often a singular focus on technology that overshadows the need for structural and cultural change.

The challenge remains to adopt a wholesale organisational shift to digital public services that draws on the needs of citizens. That is why we asked the researchers at Ipsos to conduct a survey of 1000 people, from a broad range of social groups and across the United Kingdom, to understand their experience of and expectations for digital government.

As a partner of government, working with them to deliver technology enabled business change, we wanted a better understanding of the complex and diverse reasons behind adoption of digital government services, where there is an appetite for more or better services and the obstacles that block greater adoption.

The same survey took place in France, Germany and Norway. As a result we can compare how citizens in the UK experience digital with others across Europe and assess alternative approaches.



# We found an increasing appetite for joined up digital services

So what are the headlines? We found that much progress has been made. Digital is now bleeding into government as it abandons analogue operating models:

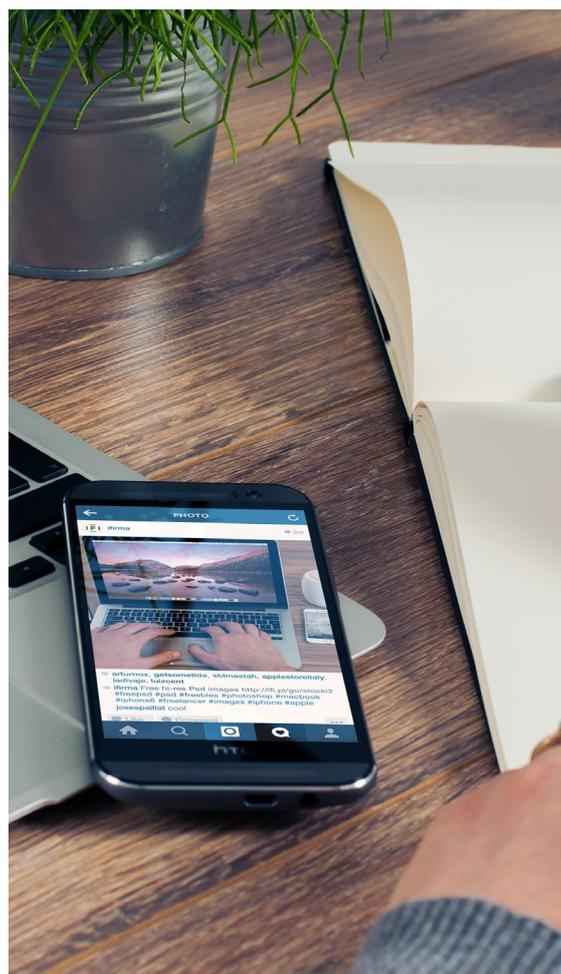
- 64% of citizens describe the current degree of digital development as advanced (although government is not considered as advanced as large parts of the private sector)
- Taxation services are highlighted by 59% of citizens as advanced in their use of the internet and technology (followed by 55% who identified job seeking as advanced)
- 83% say that they are willing to use online services as new digital channels are introduced and even if this means changing their own habits and behaviours

Government now has a historic opportunity to transform government. But rising citizen expectations also present a challenge to government. It must be ready to deliver joined up public services anytime, anywhere and on any device. It must do so safely, securely and (often) with fewer resources. We found that:

- Citizens want the creation of a single portal that allowed access to multiple public services (76%) and facilitates a single transmission of data and information (77%)
- Only a third of citizens were able to cite examples where services drew from data and information from other parts of government (often through passports, driving licences and tax)
- They also want tasks to be carried out whenever they want (52%), reducing the need for visits and calls to government offices (36%)
- A third of citizens expect services to be delivered at less cost through digital
- Health services are considered a priority for digital development by 49% of the respondents (followed by welfare and benefits at 32%)

Security and confidentiality of personal data are the two most significant obstacles to digital adoption of public services:

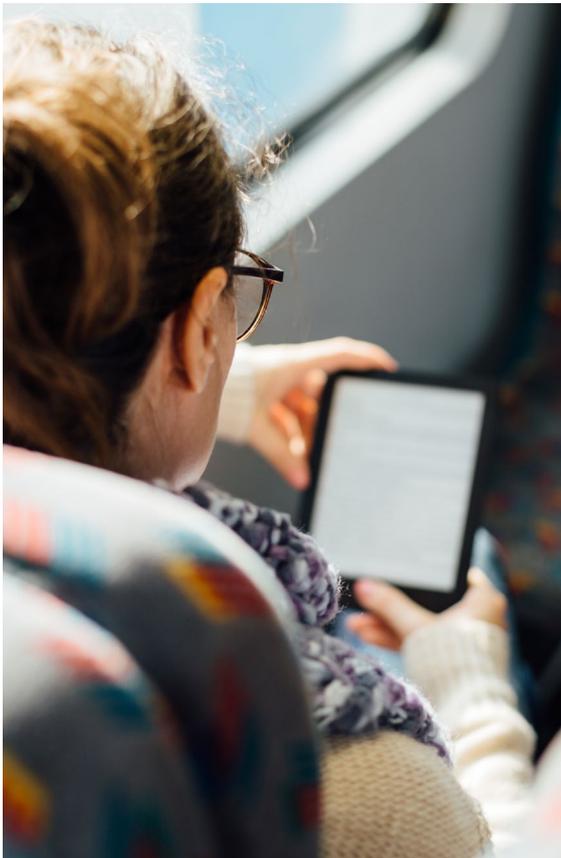
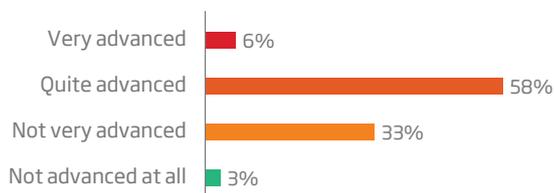
- 48% of citizens said they were worried that someone other than themselves could access their data via a computer, mobile or tablet
- 39% said they were worried about giving personal information about themselves over the internet
- However, and perhaps quite surprisingly, citizens see government as part of the solution rather than the problem. Over half told us that they trust and expect government to play more of a role in tightening data security.



# We found that citizens have positive attitudes to digital services

We wanted to know, after significant government investment in technology, whether it has had a significant impact on citizens. 64% viewed digital as advanced in the UK. This is a view shared by every social group – irrespective of age or gender, including citizens in rural and urban areas. So over two thirds of citizens aged 60 years old and over considered digital development as advanced.

## Citizen view of the current development of digital technology



The UK Government is often cited as a pioneer in digital government. The United States has copied the GDS template. 18F, which partners with agencies to approach technology projects in new ways, is working on 18 digital services in an approach very similar to the UK's transformation programme of 2013-15. However citizens in France (70 per cent) and Norway (75 per cent) both viewed digital as more advanced than the UK. Which raises the question: should the UK Government now be looking to administrations in Europe for inspiration?

We also asked citizens to compare government with equivalent digital services in the private sector. The private sector was judged to be more advanced than the public sector across telecoms, banks, transport and most other areas of the economy. This finding does not come as a great surprise. Large parts of the private sector have invested heavily in people and digital technology for many years. Perhaps more of a surprise was the finding that citizens in France and Germany judged government more advanced than telecoms, banks and insurance companies.

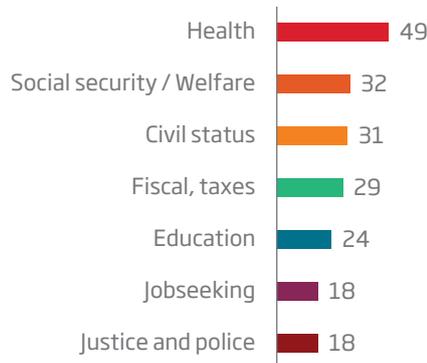
The further development of digital government services was considered a priority by 74% of citizens in the UK (only Norway, with 89%, had a greater appetite). And again this view was adopted by all social groups, particularly those aged less than 35 years old and living in towns and cities. The main reasons given for improving existing or introducing new digital services was convenience. 52% of citizens told us that they wanted to carry out tasks whenever they wanted, avoiding the need to visit or call government offices (36%) and saving time when accessing services or information (35%).

# Citizen appetite for joined-up digital government is increasing

Given the appetite for digital services, both within government and from citizens, what are the priorities for investment? We asked citizens for their opinion on areas of government and type of services that should be considered a priority.

Tax returns were considered the most advanced digital government services (by 60% of citizens). Health (49%) was considered as the top priority for investment in digital transformation (it was a significant - top three - priority across all four countries).

## Priority areas for the digital development of public services



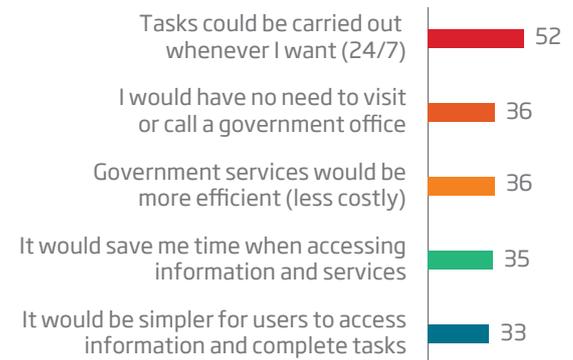
This should come as no surprise. While the NHS is a world-leader in some areas, such as the information site NHS Choices which gets 40 million visits a month, progress on hospital (and integration with primary and social care) systems has been slow.

Technology can be a great leveller and, contrary to perceptions, many older people use the internet. We expect the NHS and others to introduce an expanding set of health apps can be used by citizens to organize and manage their own health and care. And transparency of data would help citizens make more informed choices and accelerate innovation through clinical research.

We also wanted to understand how far digital was joining up government and creating seamless services. The earliest digital programmes aimed simply to provide information on websites. Attention then turned to the online delivery of transactions such as tax and benefits. We found

that citizens felt that accessibility to services via various channels was advanced. But the administration of services continued to be siloed and uncoordinated.

## Top five reasons for simplifying access to public services



While 24/7 access to services via channels remains a priority, three quarters of citizens told us that they wanted to make the objective of 'tell us once' a reality. This means citizens being able to inform the government of a birth, death, marriage of other major life event once rather than many times. Rather than currently in the UK where only reporting a death to most government organisations in one go is available (and not everywhere).

Examples include Norway where a citizen can notify a service of a change of address, view pension details and register with a doctor in one transaction. This might explain why 46% of citizens in Norway said they had used a joined-up digital government service compared to just 39% in the United Kingdom. Citizens in the UK highlighted the convenience of joined up digital government services such as DVLA car tax renewals and online tax returns. But they want more with, for example, one respondent telling us she wanted 'a portal for everything that made the filling out of multiple forms a thing of the past'.

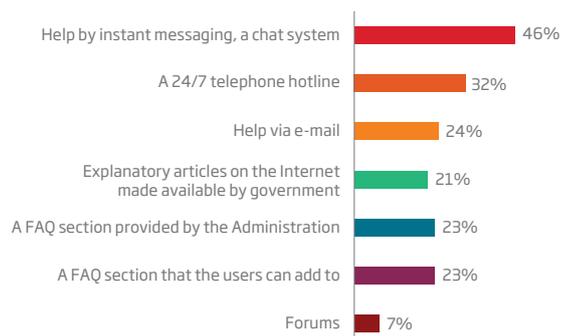
# Data privacy and security obstacles are major obstacles

We found that citizens in the United Kingdom tend to use digital public services less often than others in Europe. 31% told us that they hardly ever access these services and 20% never access them.

Of course most of us do not need to access government services - digital or analogue - very often. For example, we take the accurate collection of our taxes through HM Revenue and Customs or our local council for granted. However digital services need to be universally accessible. This means ensuring citizens are connected to higher speed broadband and recognition in government of the breadth of issues that stifle accessibility - skills, affordability and social and cultural barriers. We found that a significant majority of citizens (58%) managed to access online services without any assistance. However another 35 per cent managed reasonably well but needed some help.

When citizens accessed digital government services, what sort of help and assistance to they expect? We found that nearly half (46%) of citizens thought that online chat systems were most suitable for their needs. That response was 14% higher than 24/7 hotlines and 22% more than help via email. Support for online chat systems was higher in the UK than any other country we surveyed.

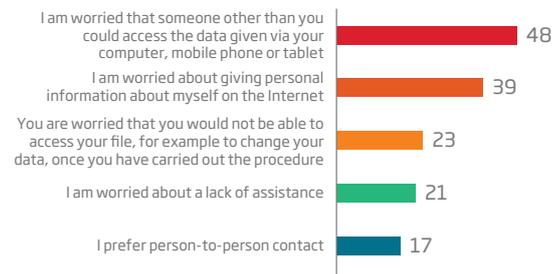
## What sort of help and assistance is expected?



Our survey supports the Government's piloting of web chat and plans to create services that speed up future implementations. It appears that, as citizens become more familiar with web chat in the private sector, their expectations for government are evolving. And given the large number of customer service interactions across government, the efficiency savings could be considerable. For example, the London Borough of Harrow handles close to two million enquiries each year and saved over £1.5 million through web chat 'pop ups' that supported customers having difficulty navigating their services or struggling with forms.

Finally, concerns remain about the security and privacy of personal data. This was the number one concern expressed by citizens in the UK (48 per cent) and other countries.

## Top five obstacles to using digital public services



Citizens are unlikely to use digital government services without a guarantee of privacy and security. Governments also have a strong interest in maintaining citizens' trust. And they have good foundations to build on - 54% of UK respondents told us they trusted government to ensure the security of their data and confidential information.

However the challenge remains, to respect accepted privacy principles while allowing the benefits of the web and digital technologies to flow to citizens. This balance is of particular importance when considering seamless government digital services involving data sharing among agencies.

# What next for digital government?

Online services and digital technologies are now a key enabler of better government - improved policy outcomes, higher quality services, greater engagement with citizens and improved back office processes. Governments will, and should, continue to be judged against these traditional, established criteria of success.

Through our survey we found that digital ways of working are becoming the norm. There are promising signs of improved services and citizen engagement. But one of the biggest challenges to implementation is the need for a seamless approach for serving citizens. This implies a common vision, strategy and numerous organizational changes. Citizens (from across the UK and Europe) are demanding an end to compartmentalised structures and the extension of joined up and simple services.

The next stage of digital government services will involve the development of hidden infrastructure, joined-up back-office arrangements, through sustainable levels of funding and possibly more disruptive changes to organisations. The lack of vertical integration across different levels of government (local, devolved, national) is a key challenge. Citizens want effective service, and care less about differences in approach or responsibility among levels of government. Uncoordinated initiatives can also lead to costly incompatibility or duplication.

Government must continue to develop policies and technical solutions around the key areas of security, authentication and data storage, in order to preserve the privacy of individual citizens' data. If not handled correctly, this issue, more than any other, has the potential to undermine support for digital government services. Solutions in this area can be contentious, and privacy issues are exacerbated when linked with seamless government initiatives; the linking and matching of separate data holdings in particular heightens concerns.

## A single portal for all procedures



“A personal home screen, that showed me all my info: Eg. My car tax and dates, council tax, my income - stuff about the way my taxes are spent, info on my pension contributions, student loan.”

## A more developed digital service for the health sector



“Ability to find and book appointments with doctors/hospitals online, order prescriptions online and have medical information shared among all doctors and hospitals to allow for seamless treatment where ever you go.”

## About Sopra Steria

Sopra Steria, European leader in digital transformation, provides one of the most comprehensive portfolios of end to end service offerings in the market: Consulting, Systems Integration, Software Development and Business Process Services. Sopra Steria is trusted by leading private and public organisations to deliver successful transformation programmes that address their most complex and critical business challenges. Combining high quality and performance services, added-value and innovation, Sopra Steria enables its clients to make the best use of information technology.



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**SOPRA STERIA**  
Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7AH  
+44 (0)370 600 4466 - [info.uk@soprasteria.com](mailto:info.uk@soprasteria.com)

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