

Building a world-class digital government platform

Creating world-class digital products for millions of UK citizens

The challenge: Simplifying digital government for citizens

Before GOV.UK, the UK Government's single online platform for information and services, UK citizens navigated more than one thousand government websites with inconsistent navigation and user experiences. The Government was handling around two million searches a month across these disparate departmental websites, making it difficult for citizens to find information and access services.

Government Digital Service (GDS) was established to radically simplify the way digital public services are delivered by bringing these websites together into a single, easy-to-use platform that provides the best possible user experience for citizens.

As the transformation progressed, GDS also sought to enable users to submit secure applications online that had previously needed to be completed in person, while gaining better insight into how services were being used.

The solution: One platform for digital government

Over the course of a seven-year partnership, Thoughtworks was involved in the design, build and delivery of more than 11 different projects as the UK Government implemented its digital transformation.

The first step in this transformation was [GOV.UK](#), the GDS' flagship product and the principal point of contact for citizens to access government information and interact with public services. Launched in October 2012, it brought together more than one thousand government websites into a single digital platform.

GDS then extended this work with **GOV.UK Verify**, an online identity assurance service that works with certified identity providers to check users' details against records held by credit agencies and Government departments. The technology was built so that all parties adhered to the necessary data protection and contractual law while respecting users' rights.

Alongside GOV.UK and GOV.UK Verify, GDS developed the **Performance Platform** to provide Government teams with real-time insight into how public services were performing, enabling continuous improvement across government.

The platform: Cloud-first, open and built for continuous improvement

GOV.UK was the UK's first major public website to leverage cloud infrastructure. Continuous delivery helped move deployment cycles from once every two months to seven times a day, with more than 1,500 application changes released in the platform's first year.

The platform was also built with openness in mind. Because all code is published online, governments around the world are able to benefit from GDS' bold thinking and delivery.

Alongside GOV.UK, the broader platform combined secure identity verification through **GOV.UK Verify** with real-time service performance data through the **Performance Platform**, giving Government teams the digital foundations needed to improve public services at scale.

The outcome: One digital destination for government services

In addition to saving GBP 70 million through the consolidation of government websites, GOV.UK quickly became a widely used platform. A year after launch, it had more than 1,000 publishers using the platform and six million unique visitors every week.

The impact of GOV.UK Verify was also significant. In January 2015, UK citizens were among the first in the world to file their self-assessment tax returns online. By September 2015, a beta version of GOV.UK Verify had verified 275,000 people, and by November 2018 more than three million people had signed up, with 18 Government services available online, including tax, pension and driving licence services.

The impact extended beyond citizen-facing services. By developing the Performance platform, GDS enabled government service managers to reduce time spent on data collection and make informed decisions based on the latest information about their own and other public services. Due to the success of this work, the cloud-first approach has continued to spread across UK public sector departments.



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