

Report to:	QSMTM
Report by:	Lorraine Currie
Meeting Date:	8 August 2018
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	CR Website Statistics Report Q1 2018-19 (VC 105037)
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	2018 07 02 Website Statistics Report Q1 2018-19 (VC 104465)

Purpose of report

1. To provide data about visits to the SIC website in Q1 2018-19.

Recommendation and actions

2. I recommend:
 - (i) The SMT notes the content of this report.
 - (ii) The report and attached paper is published in full.

Executive summary

3. The Commissioner's Performance and Quality Framework requires a report on website usage and performance against targets. The measure / indicator for the website is to achieve a 20% increase in the number of annual unique website users (from 54,000 to 64,800) by 2020.
4. Last year the number of unique users was 52,839 (a 4% decrease on the previous year). To reach the target by 2020, we need to gather
5. Assuming this will be an incremental increase over each quarter over the next two operational years, we need to be hitting the following targets to get on track to meet the target.

Year	Target annual unique website users
2017/18	52,839
2018/19	58,820
2019/20	64,800

6. In order to achieve 58,820 absolute unique visits (i.e. individual visitors) to the SIC website by the end of this year, we need to see 14,705 absolute unique visits per quarter. As the attached report indicates, this measure was exceeded in Q1 of the current operational plan year (15,638 absolutely unique visits).
7. However, as detailed in the report, the publication of the Scottish Government Intervention Report drove significant traffic to the website this quarter. Future reports will monitor whether this progress towards the target is sustained.

8. The report also provides information about:
- The proportion of new to returning visitors
 - Traffic highlights
 - Most frequently viewed content
 - Twitter statistics
 - Visits to Decisions Round-up pages
 - Website maintenance carried out in the quarter.

Risk impact

9. The website is our main method of communication about our work. The risks associated with communications are identified in the current Risk Register.

Equalities impact

10. We have achieved a WCAG “AA” rating for the website which means that it should be accessible to people who use screen readers to access website content. We recognise, however, that not everyone can or wants to use the internet. We provide information in alternative formats via our enquiries service.

Privacy impact

11. No privacy implications arise from this report.

Resources impact

12. The website is maintained within planned operational resources.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

13. BAU P&C 6 in the current operational plan requires maintenance of website content.
14. Project P&C 3 in the current operational plan requires a review of the website and signposting.
15. Many other projects and business as usual activities are dependent on a fully functioning website that is accessible to all visitors.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

16. None identified.

Consultation and Communication

17. None identified.

Publication

18. I recommend that this committee report (and attached papers – see table at the start of this report) are published in full.

Website Statistics Report Q1 2018/19

Visitor volumes

1. There were 15,638 absolutely unique visits (i.e. individual visitors) to the website in Q1.
2. The number of users increased by 9% compared to the same period in 2017/18. The number of sessions increased by 4%. These are pleasing statistics, given that the previous three quarters showed a downward trend for both measures.
3. Compared to Q1 of 2017/18, page views and pages per session have decreased by 5% and 8% respectively.
4. There was a 6% increase in overall bounce rate.
5. On average, users are spending less time on the website, with average session duration dropping by 20 seconds to 2 minutes and 37 seconds. It is difficult to tell whether this is a positive or negative sign, as a shorter average session duration can indicate that users have found what they are looking for so exit the website sooner than previously. On the other hand, more time spent on the website could indicate users found more interesting content and clicked through to other pages.
6. Improving and updating content so that it is appealing to users (especially new users visiting the website) and encourages clicking through to additional content would be worthwhile.

Visitor Volumes	Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1		
	2016-17	2017-18	% change	2016-17	2017-18	% change	2016-17	2017-18	% change	2017-18	2018-19	% change
Sessions	21,703	21,323	-2%	22595	21,345	-6%	24852	21867	-12%	22,140	23,023	4%
Users	13,871	13,795	-1%	14491	14209	-2%	16283	14207	-13%	14,395	15,638	9%
Page views	73,730	63,717	-14%	74092	61756	-17%	77950	64345	-17%	66,970	63,817	-5%
Pages per session	3.40	2.99	-12%	3.28	2.89	-12%	3.14	2.94	-6%	3.02	2.77	-8%
Average session duration	00:03:11	00:02:48	-12%	00:02:53	00:02:50	-2%	00:02:57	00:02:49	-5%	00:02:57	00:02:37	-11%
Bounce rate	52%	53%	2%	53%	56%	6%	54%	54%	0%	54%	57%	6%

Proportion of new visitors

7. The proportion of new (versus returning) visitors to the website had remained steadily at around 59-60% for years. However, in Q4 of 2017/18 we saw a sharp increase in the proportion of new users, with 82% of our website visitors being new to it. During Q1 of 2018/19 the higher proportion of new users has been sustained.

New visitor v returning	Q1	
	2017-18	2018-19
New	59%	83%
Returning	41%	17%

8. There has been a shift in the ways that people access our site, compared to Q1 last year.

Visitor Volumes	Q1
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	2017-18	2018-19	% difference
Organic search	13,466	13,228	-2%
Direct (URL typed in)	6,023	7,165	19%
Referral from somewhere else	2,375	2,145	-10%
Social	219	415	89%
Email	57	70	23%
Other			
Total	22,140	23,023	4%




9. These figures do tend to fluctuate, depending on our activity and the activity of others who might be referring traffic to our website.
10. Organic search (i.e. via a search engine like Google) remains the most common way that people find our site. The number of people who came to our site by directly typing in our URL into their web browser increased this year, suggesting that there continues to be a growing group of people who know, or have bookmarked, our site.
11. There was a significant increase (89%) in the number of users coming to us via social media, compared to Q1 of 2017/18. The only social media we use is Twitter, and we are seeing continuous increase in the number of followers we have via Twitter (currently 552). This makes it a very valuable communication channel, and we will continue to use Twitter to promote our work and drive traffic to our website whenever there is opportunity to do so.
12. There has also been a notable increase in the number of users coming to us via links in e-mails. It is important to view this increase in context: during this quarter we emailed a link to the Scottish Government intervention report to the journalists who had signed the letter to SPCB, and other interested stakeholders, and that one email is likely to have driven traffic to the website. Likely to have had the opposite impact is the decision not to circulate the DRU email since 18th May.

Twitter statistics

Month	Tweets	Tweet impressions	Profile visits	Mentions	New followers
April	10	22,400	730	234	1
May	8	22,900	817	19	6
June	16	42,500	1,271	98	43
Q1 totals	34	87,800	2,818	351	50

* "impression" means the tweet was delivered to a Twitter users' timeline, so is an indication of its reach

13. Our top tweets in each month (i.e. the ones which earned the most impressions) were:

Month	Top Tweet	Impressions
April	<p>#FOI request handling: the value of a proper explanation in this week's Decisions Round-up bit.ly/2q8wXxu pic.twitter.com/6YNqVg6yGe</p>  <p>↩ 1 ↻ 1 ❤ 1</p>	2,654
May	<p>We've published draft guidance on disclosing personal information under the new rules bit.ly/2KSS4NM pic.twitter.com/CZCRnJFfk3</p>  <p>↻ 8 ❤ 8</p>	3,961
June	<p>Commissioner's Intervention Report on Scottish Government FOI practice and performance published: bit.ly/2sRII48 pic.twitter.com/gcbP9aYu6l</p>  <p>↻ 11 ❤ 9</p>	6,681

Subscribers

14. Our target is to achieve a 20% increase in the number of subscribers to content via our website (from 1,017 in 2015 to 1,220 by 2020). We have already met this target. We currently have 1463 subscribers (a 14% increase on Q1 of 2017/18).
15. However, with our plans to introduce a new mailing system and refresh our mailing lists, it is likely that the number of subscribers will drop significantly once the new system is put in place.

Traffic highlights

16. There was one notable peak in traffic to the website in the quarter. As was anticipated, there was a surge in visits to the websites when the report into the assessment phase of the Scottish Government intervention was published. On the date of publication (13 June 2018) there were 2,736 visits to the website, compared to 1,204 the day before and 1,219 on the same day in 2017.
17. Other reports and news releases issued in the quarter were:

Reports and consultation responses issued 2018-19		
		Unique page views
Launch date		Within first week
28 June 2018	Ipsos MORI Young People in Scotland Research*	9
13 June 2018	Scottish Government Intervention Report**	1,784

News releases		
		Unique page views
Launch date		Within first week
28 June 2018	Young people's awareness of FOI rights is "significantly lower"*	9
13 June 2018	Commissioner publishes Intervention Report on Scottish Government FOI performance**	1,784

* Report and news release on same page (</home/News/20180628.aspx>)

** Report and news release on same page (</home/AboutSIC/WhatWeDo/Intervention201702016ScottishGovernment.aspx>)

Content

18. The table below shows the 10 most viewed pages over the quarter.

Most frequently viewed content (unique page views)	Q1		Bounce rate	
	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19
1 Home	6,938	7,308	26%	28%
2 SG Intervention Report	n/a*	2,131	n/a*	90%
3 FOISA/EIRs briefings (intro)	1,928	2,045	28%	35%
4 Law / legislation (intro)	1,977	1,792	43%	31%
5 For public authorities (intro)	1,551	1,661	18%	26%
6 Your rights (intro)	1,269	1,431	35%	36%
7 Law / FOISA	1,565	1,356	60%	60%
8 About the Commissioner	1,421	1,355	34%	33%
9 Law/What is environmental info	795	873	87%	84%
10 Draft section 38 briefing	n/a*	858	n/a*	84%

* New pages that did not exist last year

19. The Scottish Government intervention report page was the second most viewed page, second only to the home page, and as noted above, created a noticeable traffic peak on the website. The high bounce rate suggests users found everything they were looking for on this page.

20. The draft section 38 guidance also featured in the top 10 most viewed pages. Promotion of the draft guidance through Twitter on 10 May and at the Centre for FOI Practitioners' Conference on 8 May drove visitors to this page.

Date	Page views
Fri 4 May 2018	1
Mon 7 May 2018	3
Tues 8 May 2018	14
Wed 9 May 2018	107
Thurs 10 May 2018	129
Fri 11 May 2018	98

21. Not listed in the table (because it was not one of the top 10 most viewed pages) is the decisions database. This page usually does appear in the top 10, but there has been a significant decrease in page views compared with last year.

Most frequently viewed content (unique page views)	Q1		Bounce rate	
	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19
18 Decisions	2,027	465	38%	51%

22. As reported at the end of 2017/18, over the course of that year views of the decisions **section** of the website dropped by 31%. The decrease in page views for the decisions section of the website, and the decisions database in particular, remains unexplained. There has simultaneously been an increase in bounce rates from the decisions database. It is surprising that half of the visits to the decisions database ended in an exit from the website without clicking through to any of the decisions. No errors or problems with the decisions database have been identified. This trend will continue to be monitored.

23. The bounce rate for the legislation introductory page was lower than the same period last year (dropping from 43% to 31%). This page tends to have high bounce rates (on account of the number of external links on the page, e.g. to www.legislation.gov.uk, which means users are likely to exit the website here by clicking on one of the links). The drop in bounce rate simply means visitors are moving onto another page on our website (most likely either one of the internal links on this page, or via the menus on the page) rather than the external links.

Decisions Round Up

24. Monthly average visits to the DRU page were lower than usual for April and May (216 in April 2018 compared to 230 for April 2017; and 138 in April 2018 compared to 266 for May 2017). More importantly the monthly visits to the DRU page in June 2018 was 29 compared with 186 in June 2017, most likely because the DRU e-mail has not been circulated since 18 May. A new mailing system is being set up by the Policy & Information Team. Links to the DRU pages continue to be tweeted in the meantime.
25. The most viewed DRU in the quarter was the 20 April DRU, which was viewed 226 times.

Website maintenance

26. As requested, the log of changes undertaken in the website maintenance programme in the quarter is included below.

URL	Section	Sub Section	Date changes made	Change(s) made
http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/home/ScottishInformationCommissioner.aspx	Home	All sections	21/05/18	'Privacy Statement' changed to 'Privacy Notice' in website footer.