



HM TREASURY

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03 September 2010

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Information Rights Unit

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FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk

Ref: 10/645

Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000: Spending Challenge Website

Further to our email of 13 August we have now completed our consideration of the public interest.

You asked for information covering –

... a full list of all terms and words used for the "Tag Cloud" from the launch of the site to its removal or suspension at around 2.00 pm today 15 June 2010.

I understand that the delib dialogue app (crowd-sourcing), used to run the site, is able to generate such reports in CSV format upon request, and as such minimal cost and delay will be involved.

Please also provide the frequency of use of such tags, and if possible a break down as to whether the tags were placed on posts by the OP (Original Poster) or if they were added subsequently by third parties.

The spending challenge website and the tags on it have been reinstated and are available at the following link:

http://spendingchallenge.hm-treasury.gov.uk/all_tags

This information is exempt under section 21 (information accessible by other means) of the Act. The website also provides the frequency of use of each tag.

As we explained in our previous letter the website was taken down because a number of users posted content that was contrary to our moderation policy. Information that breached our moderation policy has been removed from the public website. This information included a number of tags. The moderation policy can be found at the following link:

http://spendingchallenge.hm-treasury.gov.uk/moderation_policy

We consider that the tags that were found to breach our moderation policy, and consequently no longer appear on the website, engage the exemption at section 36(2)(c) (prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs) of the Act.

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We recognise the public interest in providing a full record of public ideas and the principle of free speech however we consider that this is outweighed by the arguments against disclosure.

The purpose of the spending challenge website is to enable as many people as possible to propose and comment on ideas to reduce the deficit by cutting public spending in a way that is fair and responsible. To protect this service from abuse moderators reviewed the website to remove comments that were defamatory, offensive, intemperate or provocative in line with our moderation policy. Given that this information was found to have failed our moderation policy, to make a release under FoI, would cause the damage and offence that HMT had sought to avoid.

In light of this we are withholding this information under the above exemption.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. It will be helpful to us if you remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Information Rights Unit
HM Treasury

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

If you are not happy with this reply, you may request a review by writing to HM Treasury, Information Rights Unit, 2/S2, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ.

Email FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gov.uk

Any review request must be made within 2 months of the date of this letter.

It would assist our review if you set out which aspects of the reply concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

If you are not content with the outcome your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Treasury. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

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