Dear Ms Townend

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your emails of 8th September 2010 in which you asked a variety of questions regarding the ‘You be the Judge’ website, and HMCS plans to publish courts data online, from the Ministry of Justice.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). We have aggregated your requests in line with section 12(4).

I can confirm that the Department does hold information relating to your request. However, unfortunately I am unable to process it. I have estimated that it would take one person approximately 173 hours in total to gather the information. Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for Central Government is set at £600, which represents one person spending 3.5 working days in locating, extracting and collating the requested information. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to narrow the frame of your request.

However, outside the scope of the act, on a discretionary basis, I can provide the following information:

1) How much money was spent on the You Be the Judge website from its creation until September 7, 2010? [http://ybtj.cjsonline.gov.uk/]
£56,403.60 (excl. VAT). This cost covers the cost of producing four separate interactive scenarios in order to demystify sentencing and better explain a complex and technical subject to members of the public. For each scenario this involved casting, scripting, filming, photography and preparation of material for online delivery.

2) Where possible, please break down these costs out by function (for example, development, content, design, updates, changes, hosting, co-location, domain registration, licensing etc)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>The coding and technical build of the interactive guide was carried out by internal web resources who were simultaneously working on other activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>The content was spread across four separate scenarios and comprised scripting and video production for each. This cost</td>
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is as stated in answer to question 1 above.

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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>The design of the interactive guide was carried out by internal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>web resources who were simultaneously working on other activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Updates</td>
<td>Updates were handled by internal resources (as above).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>Changes were also handled by internal resources (as above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosting</td>
<td>Hosting the guides incurred no additional costs over and above</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the existing Ministry of Justice arrangements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-location</td>
<td>No costs incurred</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domain registration</td>
<td>Domain registration incurred no additional costs over and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the existing Ministry of Justice arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing</td>
<td>The interactive guides were not subject to licensing charges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Was the work outsourced to an external company? If so, which company and how long is its contract with the Ministry of Justice?

Scriptwriting, filming and editing were outsourced to Speakeasy, a specialist video production company, following a competitive tender process. The contract was for this project only and has now been closed.

4) In 2007, it was reported by Press Gazette that there were discussions for an online media database of court orders and the Ministry of Justice was in discussion with the Society of Editors over this. In 2010, it was reported on Malcolm Coles’ blog that the Ministry of Justice confirmed plans were ongoing. What stage is the development of this database at, and what are the estimated costs? Who would pay for the database?

(ref: http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=39587 http://www.malcolmcoles.co.uk/blog/reporting-restrictions-blogging)

HMCS has been in discussions with representatives of the media, co-ordinated by the Society of Editors, to explore the possibility of developing a database of reporting restrictions. However, there are currently no plans to develop such a database as we have been unable to satisfactorily resolve a number of key issues. These include:

- Finding the right level of information that will support journalists needs but not make the information protected by the reporting restriction public;
- Managing the risk to individual/s protected by the reporting restrictions if the data were available in the public domain;
- How to control access to those with a right and need to access it;
- The level of security that would have to be placed onto the IT infrastructure that would be used to host the sensitive information;
- How it would be paid for.

As an agreed specification for any database has not been developed there are currently no cost estimates available.

In the meantime the existing processes for media wishing to check whether a reporting restriction applies in a particular case remain in place. Firstly, the reporter can always contact/visit the court where the case is being/was heard and the court will provide any copies of reporting restrictions. If they are uncertain that the person is a journalist they would ask for press card or email showing a press email address.

5) I would like to know about HCMS plans to publish courts data online. I am aware some parts of Her Majesty's Courts data is already available online. Has the Ministry of Justice considered making additional court case details available online, for example (but not exclusively): case type, date of grant or
The Ministry of Justice will be publishing court level sentencing outcomes as part of the annual National Statistics publication “Criminal Statistics England and Wales” from October 2010. Information will be displayed at individual petty sessional area, providing aggregated offence level data. This will be able to be viewed on the Ministry of Justice web site.

Case specific information is available at a number of existing websites including:
http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/onlineservices/xhibit/;
http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/cms/courthearings.htm;
http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/cms/judgments.htm
http://www.trustonline.org.uk/

As part of our obligations under the FOIA, the Ministry of Justice has an independent review process. If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you may write to request an internal review. The internal review will be carried out by someone who did not make the original decision, and they will re-assess how the Department handled the original request.

If you wish to request an internal review, please write or send an email to the Data Access and Compliance Unit within two months of the date of this letter, at the following address:

Data Access and Compliance Unit
Information Directorate
Ministry of Justice
Postal point 6.25
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

e-mail: data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

If you remain dissatisfied after an internal review decision, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner’s Office under Section 50 of the FOIA. You can contact the Information Commissioner’s Office at the following address:

Information Commissioner’s Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Internet: https://www.ico.gov.uk/Global/contact_us.aspx

Yours sincerely

Neil Carne
Court Modernisation

Juliet Lopez-Real
Criminal Justice Reform