

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER  
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ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2014**

**Question**

Does the Chief Minister accept that many of the States/departmental websites are far from optimal regarding user-friendliness and, if so, will he explain how this has happened and what, if anything, is being done about it?

**Answer**

Expectations of what makes a good website have increased over the last few years as the internet has become an indispensable tool in the lives of most of us. It was only four years ago that Apple launched the iPad. The existing [www.gov.je](http://www.gov.je) site was not designed with tablets and smartphones in mind, yet today more of us use them to access the internet than PCs.

It is acknowledged that [www.gov.je](http://www.gov.je) needs a design refresh. In May 2013, a local company 4Insight was commissioned to carry out independent usability testing on the site involving 30 members of the public. The headline results of that testing were made public on 23 May 2013 <http://www.gov.je/News/2013/Pages/WebsiteCustomerResearch.aspx>

A project was initiated to address the lessons of the usability testing. Six local companies contributed to the new design, which is intended to work as well on smartphones and tablets as on desktop PCs. It is now in the final stage of development and is expected to launch by the end of this year. independent testing involving members of the public is being planned to take place before the redesign goes live.

The new site has been designed to be usable by those with disabilities. The design team of local suppliers has received specialist training from the Digital Accessibility Centre. The new site is being tested by users with conditions including blindness, low vision, colour blindness, dyslexia, limited limb mobility, learning disabilities, deafness and Asperger's.

Other States websites are also in the process of being redeveloped:

- The States of Jersey Police web site [www.jersey.police.uk](http://www.jersey.police.uk) was re-launched in February 2014
- A new parish site [www.parish.gov.je](http://www.parish.gov.je) went live at the beginning of August – a good example of the parishes and States staff working together.
- The [www.jerseymet.gov.je](http://www.jerseymet.gov.je) site has been replaced with a new weather section on gov.je at [www.gov.je/weather](http://www.gov.je/weather).
- A new website for Andium Homes [www.andiumhomes.je](http://www.andiumhomes.je) launched in July.
- A project has been agreed to refresh the [www.jersey.com](http://www.jersey.com) site – vital for our Tourism industry.
- The Jersey Law website ([www.jerseylaw.je](http://www.jerseylaw.je)) will be relaunched in 2015.
- Plans are being made to replace the [www.jerseyairport.com](http://www.jerseyairport.com) site and to refresh the [www.portofjersey.je](http://www.portofjersey.je) site
- A replacement [www.jerseycourts.je](http://www.jerseycourts.je) site is being designed
- Customs & Immigration are working with usability experts to improve the CAESAR website which islanders use to pay GST on goods arriving in the island.

The States has come a long way since 2008 when there were many separate departmental web sites, each with their own writing style, branding, navigation and domain name. Sites were often based on different technology, hosted by different companies, and looked amateurish. We have had a strategy since then to improve the States web sites by consolidating them onto a single platform, with consistently applied high standards for content based on best practice.

In 2014, SOCITM rated the gov.je website as 'excellent' and commended its 'clear, easy to use content'. And in January's quarterly Sitemorse survey, Jersey's site was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 429 local government sites.