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The electronic magazine of the United Kingdom ACE Association

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REPORTER

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Information is an asset

I am delighted to be the guest editor for the October edition of ACE Reporter. And you'll see that this edition has a particular theme to it – the theme of 'information'.

I've been managing The National Archives, with a secondary role as Government's Head of Profession for Information Management, for three years now. For most of that time I've had comments back along the lines of 'What do you mean by information? Don't you mean IT?'

Over the past year, I don't think any of us could have failed to notice how radically all of that's changed, prompted both by the scares of large scale data loss, but also by the opportunities that good information management presents – opportunities increasingly exploited by ACE members, as the DVLA, Met Office, ACAS and other examples in this edition demonstrate. The world is getting more and more complex, with increasing amounts of guidance being directed at us, as Accounting

Officers of government delivery bodies!

I believe that information is becoming the third big 'asset' of organisation – alongside money and people. And, as this edition shows, it's something extremely relevant to all of us, given our roles in delivering government services, most of which are critically dependent on information – or even have information as the item being transacted.

I hope the articles in this edition, which range from briefings to reflections and case studies, bring this issue alive to everyone - and apologies for having such a single issue approach to this issue!



Guest Editor
Natalie Ceeney
Chief Executive
The National Archives



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When children come ...

Employment rights and responsibilities on maternity, paternity and adoption for employees and employers have been brought together on two pilot websites. The project is part of the transformational government agenda to organise as much Government content as possible on to just two websites.

Acas, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, has been involved in the pilot to test its success in the area of employing people. Acas has worked with several government departments to see how their information could be used to improve the guidance on maternity, paternity and adoption policy for employers and employees. The result is two one-stop Government-funded websites – one for employers and one for employees.

Sue Terry, Acas Helpline Knowledge Manager, said: 'A group of relevant people from a number of government departments were asked to take part. We started by carrying out a customer journey to see how easy it was for people to access information on all the existing government websites. We then carried out a gap analysis to see what additional information was needed so the



two websites provided all the information that everyone needed.

'As each government department had an expertise in some area we worked well in bringing this together. Acas, for example, used its national helpline experience in dealing with calls from a variety of people to help inform the group on the type of questions likely to be asked by both employer and employee.

'The group was then given the draft copies of the new guidance to proof-read and ensure

all information was correct and up to date. We then carried out a customer journey again to ensure the site was user-friendly and the relevant information could be found'.

- The two sites are now live at www.businesslink.gov.uk and www.direct.gov.uk. Future projects on employment matters include bringing together information on flexible working, parental leave and the national minimum wage.

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Podcasts in the Park

Online virtual tours of all London's eight Royal Parks, together with downloadable maps, podcasts of walks and disabled access guides, can now be part of the experience of visiting a Royal Park.

Over the centuries Royal Parks have provided entertainment for monarchs and American Presidents. But the most important element of a successful park is – its visitors! Royal Park chief executive Mark Camley said: 'A park without people and the support of its community is not a park but a vacant lot. If our parks had not been enjoyed on a daily basis or managed in the right way to ensure their long-term future, they could have been built on years ago. We are fortunate that more than 30 million visitors come to the Royal Parks each year.

'The public sector has changed dramatically since the Agency was set up in the early 1990s and so have visitor expectations'. Greater focus on visitors has seen the Royal Parks double its income over the last four years to £15m. Events range from Proms in the Park to the London Marathon and the Frieze Art Fair.

A new park visitor experience has been adopted. The first stage is information

gathering, a pre-park visit online, with virtual tours of all eight Royal Parks together with downloadable maps, disabled access guides and podcasts of walks around the Parks.

The second stage sees improved on-site park maps, which show transport links, peripheral landmarks, walking distances and times, information points, statues, memorials, cafes, restaurants, sport and leisure facilities and disabled access. On-site noticeboards display information on the history of the park, events and activities, plants, trees and wildlife to look out for and park regulations.

Camley said: 'Our maps are designed to be legible and accessible, conforming to Disability Discrimination Act regulations. We worked with the Legible London initiative, so there is an integrated approach to mapping and signage, while retaining the brand identity of the Royal Parks. The project has been recognised as a best practice case study for walking maps by the Department for Transport.

'Consultation and engagement has been key to the project,' said Camley. In addition to engaging with park visitors, we also worked with The Access Company/Walk London,



Transport for London, Intelligent Health, and others. We have engaged partners, such as the World Heritage Centre in the case of Greenwich Park.

'So while we will not turn the Royal Parks into Disneyland we are beginning to recognise that visitors and their experience is important to the continued development of the Parks.'

Visit the virtual tours of the Royal Parks at: www.royalpark.org.uk

The Royal Parks is an executive agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The Royal Parks are: Greenwich, Richmond, Bushy, Hyde, Green, Regent's, St James's and Kensington Gardens.

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Telling it in tartan

Edinburgh Castle, built on the 340 million-year-old remains of an extinct volcano, has long dominated the Scottish capital city's skyline just as it has dominated Scotland's history. A major investment programme has seen Historic Scotland increase international awareness of the Castle as a truly world-class attraction and raise the standard of the visitor experience.

Historic Scotland Chief Executive John Graham said that, in an increasingly competitive global tourism market, maintaining and developing the standard of the visitor experience on offer at heritage attractions had become even more vital. He said: 'The major investment programme at Edinburgh Castle, our most visited property, aims to give every single person coming through its gates an outstanding impression of the Castle and an unforgettable, wonderful visit.'

The Edinburgh Castle Visitor Reception Project – a £2.7 million initiative, completed earlier this year, has implemented a series of significant enhancements to visitor facilities and services. Chris Watkins, Historic Scotland Head of Major Projects, said: 'One of the priorities of the project was to enhance the setting of the Castle, which sits in the centre of a World Heritage



Site, to improve our visitors' experience as they approach and enter the Castle.

'To do this we removed the old ticket office from the Esplanade to give visitors uninterrupted views of the stunning Castle on their approach. It was replaced with a larger and more efficient ticket office – designed by one of Scotland's leading architectural practices – inside the Castle walls, situated on a new spacious terrace and gathering area which

offers stunning views over the city.'

Another benefit is that visitors can buy online tickets at the new official Edinburgh Castle website: www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk.

The Project aimed to generate an Edinburgh Castle brand, designed to strengthen its image and identity. Rebecca Hamilton, Historic Scotland Media and Marketing Manager, said: 'The distinctive new Edinburgh Castle logo features a mighty lion perched on a rock and symbolises its mighty presence and role as guardian of the nation.'

As part of the branding, an exclusive Edinburgh Castle Tartan has been created. It comprises a rich blend of black, gold and red set against charcoal. The tartan has been used for striking new uniforms for visitor services staff. The uniforms feature black wool jackets and cloaks teamed with kilts and trousers in the new tartan.

'Now that our ambitious investment scheme has been completed,' said Watkins, 'it will help ensure Edinburgh Castle is recognised as a must see world-class attraction and stands out in an increasingly competitive leisure and business tourism industry both at home and abroad.'

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Frank and open describes the debate at the first ACE discussion forum, held as part of the ACE annual drinks reception. Permanent Secretaries gave their personal views on the future of arms-length bodies as delivery partners.

More than 50 ACE members heard from Sir Brian Bender, Permanent Secretary of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, Robert Devereux, Permanent Secretary of the Department

of Transport, and Stephen Lovegrove, chief executive of the Shareholder Executive.

Key points to emerge included the importance of setting realistic and achievable targets; being prepared to share information and views with the policy team even if not involved in policy decision making; having the right sort of dialogue with Ministers and central government departments; and looking at what value is being created in the process.

Chief executive of National Savings and Investments Jane Platt, who organised the evening, said: 'It was a very informative evening with a lot of lively discussion. Ideas generated will be taken forward into the planning of ACE conference and the paper on delivery that will go through to Sir Gus O'Donnell at the end of the year.'



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ACE Conference: Discussing delivery

ACE annual conference in November will be another chance to discuss delivery issues with government colleagues and private sector speakers. The line-up for the conference is taking shape under the topic of Delivering in the Public Eye. A number of high-level speakers have confirmed they will take part.

Time is being worked into the conference programme for delegates to focus on issues in smaller groups. ACE Vice Chair Andrew Hudson, chief executive Valuation Office Agency, said: 'The feedback from last year's conference was very positive. We have kept the features people liked and have tried to work in more time for breakout sessions where people can concentrate on an issue.'

'The breakout sessions and the whole conference itself will feed through to the meeting ACE members usually have with Sir Gus O'Donnell at the end of the year.'

- ACE Conference will be held on 27-28 November at the National School of Government, Sunningdale Park, Ascot. To register or keep an eye on the line-up of speakers visit: www.ace.gov.uk

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Sir Gus has led the way in improving data handling

UK families put on fraud alert or Royal Navy laptop stolen from car. Headlines like this – most notably the loss by HMRC of 25 million child benefit records contained on two computer discs – have been an increasing feature of the news agenda over the past year.

Head of the Civil Service Sir Gus O'Donnell led the way in setting out a new approach with

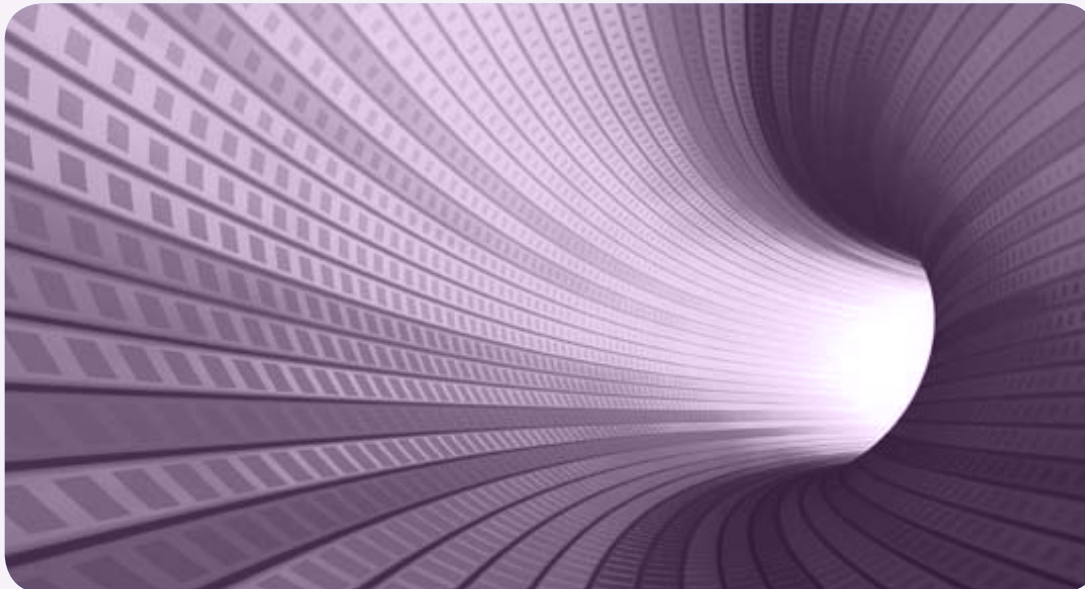
the completion over the summer of his review of data handling procedures in government, putting in place a new framework for the future to improve the rules, culture, accountability and scrutiny of data handling.

A range of initiatives and announcements – many in development prior to the recent lapses – have been introduced, designed to improve the security of both personally and

nationally-valuable, confidential information. One such initiative has seen the introduction of a new framework agreement for reliable, secure and cost-effective public sector courier services drawn up by OGCbuying.solutions, an Executive Agency of the Office of Government Commerce in HM Treasury.

O'Donnell said: 'To deliver the efficient, effective, joined-up services that people in the 21st century expect, government departments must be able to share the information they hold – there are countless benefits in doing so, from making everyday tasks easier to saving lives.

'But we can only do this good work if the public trust us to keep their personal information safe and secure. Recent data losses and thefts have underlined the need for urgent action to improve data protection across government and to bring about a fundamental change in culture among those entrusted with the public's



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personal records.

'Since November, the Civil Service has responded with urgency and vigour to improve data security, and I am proud of all that has been achieved so far. However, I am under no illusion that more still needs to be done to restore public faith in the Government's ability to handle personal information safely.

'Although no organisation, public or private, can ever guarantee that it will never make a mistake, I believe these measures will ensure that the public can be assured we are taking the necessary measures to keep people's data secure.'

Action taken to improve security includes the Cabinet Office issuing new, stricter guidelines on the handling of sensitive personal data; 90,000 employees at HMRC being given additional security training; and the encryption of 20,000 laptops at the MoD.

The O'Donnell's review, commissioned by the Prime Minister, sets out the wide range of actions that have already been put in place to improve data security, and outlines what will be done to strengthen policies further by building on existing momentum.

Improvements outlined fall into four categories:

- **Core measures:** A series of mandatory minimum measures is being put in place across government, including encryption and compulsory testing by independent experts of the resilience of systems.
- **Cultural change:** All civil servants dealing with personal data are to undergo mandatory annual training. The Government will also introduce Privacy Impact Assessments, as recommended by the Information Commissioner.
- **Stronger accountability:** Data security roles within departments are being standardised and enhanced to ensure clear lines of responsibility.
- **Increased scrutiny:** Departments will report on their performance, the National Audit Office will look at what they say, and the Information Commissioner is already planning the first spot checks.

The Cabinet Office stressed that publication of the review does not mark the end of the process. Work will continue to implement the review's findings and

fresh guidance will be issued as and when circumstances change.

The Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Executive have carried out their own reviews into information security and data handling arrangements, triggered by the Prime Minister's announcement last November.

A fuller version of this article first appeared in the customer magazine of OGCbuying.solutions, Public Sector Procurement. OGCbuying.solutions provides public sector procurement professionals with a route to the products and services they need to maximise procurement efficiency and value for money. Data security is an essential part of effective procurement and has implications for their suppliers and customers alike.

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Information is an asset – and a risk!

Information as a vital asset is the theme of this issue of ACE Reporter. Here Natalie Ceeney says information management must be a Board matter

Information is crucial. And it must be managed. When it is managed badly, it will cost. A recent report by Cap Gemini showed almost two-thirds of managers believed poor information management was hurting productivity and that it was currently costing the UK public sector £21 billion in lost effectiveness.

In the public sector, where we deal with citizen's care and safety, the consequences of poor management of information are worse than just incurring financial costs. But many of our own organisations hold multiple versions of customer data, don't share information between teams, or lose opportunities because information is not shared, increasing the risks of things going wrong.

News – even scandals – around the loss of information and the mishandling of personal data have been in the headlines. As public servants, this concerns us – and we've just had three reports to prove it, the Hannigan

review into handling personal data, the Walport/ Thomas review into data sharing, and the Poynter review into HMRC's data loss.

'In most public bodies, information is not discussed at the Board table'

– *Ceeney*

Yet, in most public bodies, information is not discussed at the Board table in the same way that Finance, HR and IT are. CEOs still struggle to know exactly how to address this new challenge, or to fully understand it. This lack of board-level engagement with information management is the single biggest challenge we face in managing our information effectively.

Information is critical to the public, and to today's government. So what is 'information'? It is not, as is often wrongly assumed, synonymous with IT. IT systems are just the conduit for information – and systems can only manage what is put on them. We don't assume that Finance is the same as IT just because we put financial data on IT systems.

Information is the currency of what we do. It's the data that flows through our customer databases, it's the write-up of key meetings and submissions or discussion papers analysing new policies. It's our FOI requests, our internal 'wikis' sharing knowledge, and our key conversations. There is a growing argument that 'information' is the big undiscovered asset after money and people.

If we see information as an asset, as with all assets, there are risks of not exploiting it, and of managing it incorrectly. We've all seen the

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consequences to government's reputation of the HMRC data loss.

High profile failures of delivery partners of both the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department of Health led to personal details (visa applicants and junior doctors) being revealed inappropriately. But our risks are not just around protecting data.

Lord Laming's enquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié found that poor record keeping was a major contributory factor, stating in his report that *'in Brent, Victoria's case was given no less than 5 unique reference numbers. Retrieving files was, I was told, like the National Lottery, with similar odds.'*

The Bichard enquiry, established to investigate the circumstances leading to the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham, found information known about Ian Huntley that might have prevented his working with children was not shared between police forces because of fundamental information management failures. These are all business risks – and risks caused by managing, or mismanaging, information.

In Japan, a catastrophic mismanagement of information over many years meant that by 2007, 50m Japanese government pension files could not be linked to individuals who had been making payments. The Japanese government has had to match the 50m unattributed pension records against the payment records of 100 million people – the entire population of those paying into the pension system or receiving payments.

So what should Boards do? We need to discuss information management at the Board table, alongside Finance, HR and IT. There is no special mystique to information management – every organisation has information to manage, and the nature of that information depends upon the nature of the business. Some organisations will be very dependent on geospatial information, others on customer data, and others on internally generated analysis and knowledge.

What Boards need to do is to understand what information they hold, and how their business is dependent on information, and then discuss their information issues through the lens of business risk. Doing this will raise challenges.

It may highlight capability gaps, or issues with key policies or approaches. It may expose the need for training, for more senior level advisors.

Or it might reveal opportunities to exploit knowledge or intellectual assets for the benefit of the wider business. Information is, without doubt, one of the biggest assets we have in all of our organisations, and we need to manage it as such. Using business risk tools may give us the most effective way to enable Boards to engage with this agenda in the right way.

- Natalie Ceeney is Chief Executive, The National Archives and Government Head of Profession, Knowledge & Information Management

Guidance for Boards on 'managing information risk' can be found at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/services/publications/information-risk.pdf

The Cap Gemini report cited can be found at www.uk.capgemini.com/for_you_to_use/thought_leadership/the_information_opportunity_report_2008

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A fine balancing act

There is a fine balance between sharing and protecting personal data, says Noel Shanahan

Data held on DVLA registers is widely recognised as an invaluable source of information and there is a growing demand to share personal data for reasons other than why we collect it – for instance, serious crime and fraud.

Given our important role as a data controller, and the significant number of members of the public who transact with DVLA, it is important that we have a consistent and co-ordinated approach to data sharing. We take our obligations under the Data Protection Act (DPA) very seriously.

We have a dedicated Data Protection team. It is their role to review requests for the release or sharing of data and ensure that DPA and associated legislation requirements are met. They work closely with the Agency's Information Assurance Group, which is responsible for all aspects of information security.

DVLA also has a team of dedicated Data Protection Champions located in key areas



of the business. They are the eyes and ears on the ground. As well as assisting in identifying any potential issues, they provide advice to staff on data handling in the context of everyday processes.

DVLA does its utmost to ensure the Agency works consistently and in compliance with the DPA, and has developed a gold standard for

handling data to help mitigate risks. Robust audit procedures are in place to monitor the use of data and any abuse is reported to the Information Commissioner. DVLA consults regularly with his office and meets formally every six months.

The Agency has been focusing on

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replatforming its drivers' systems to provide for secure online access to various authorised customers. This removes the need for data to be transferred in bulk via the mail. Where this is not possible, encrypted data is sent securely via the Government Car and Despatch Agency or is delivered point to point via courier service.

Service level agreements and contracts are in place when sharing with other government departments and commercial companies. These specify the reason for which the data can be used and whether or not the data may be transmitted further. Any use and transmission must be DPA compliant.

Customer research shows an increasing demand for use of online services. This enables us to carry out our business more cost effectively and via the channels preferred by our customers. DVLA's Electronic Vehicle Re-licensing (EVL) system was recently quoted in the Thomas and Walport report as being a good example of data sharing across government for members of the public.

DVLA is currently developing its online services further to enable customers to update their driver records online. It is already

Noel Shanahan became chief executive of DVLA in December 2007, just as interest in data protection and data security increased following publicity around some high profile data losses



possible to apply for provisional licenses via the web, due mainly to the data sharing arrangements that exist between DVLA and the Passport Service, which enable an applicant's photograph to be imported from their passport image.

This co-ordinated approach to data protection enables the DVLA to meet its objectives of ensuring the completeness, accuracy and accessibility of our records satisfies our customers and stakeholders and that customers

receive a level of service and choice of channels that meets expectations and encourages compliance with legal obligations.

DVLA's work on data sharing and protection is an integral part of the Agency's vision to be a modern, highly efficient organisation, which provides complete, accurate and up to date information and services that fully meet customer and stakeholder requirements.

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Global storm chasers

Sharing information globally is all in a day's work come rain or shine for the Met Office, says Sarah Tempest

On 18 August 2008, a tropical wave off the coast of Africa moved westwards across the Atlantic Ocean. Tracked by satellites and the Met Office's global forecast model, it eventually attained tropical storm status. Soon after, Hurricane Hanna was born.

Hanna was the eighth tropical storm and the fourth hurricane of the 2008 Atlantic hurricane

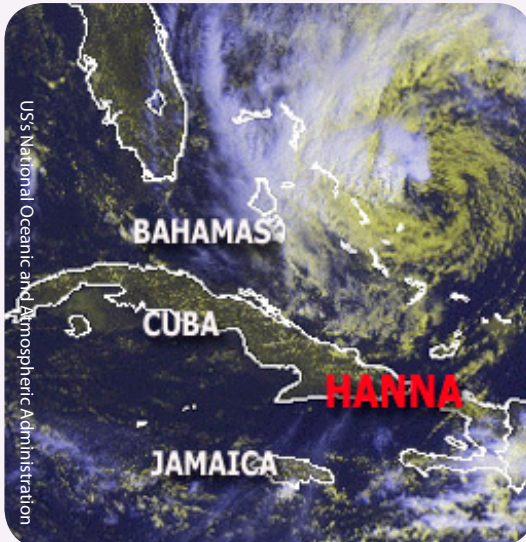
season, as well as the deadliest in the Atlantic basin since Hurricane Stan in 2005.

As the tropical wave formed over West Africa, Hanna's early development and progress were monitored via a network of satellites orbiting above the Earth. Data from the European satellite system flows into EUMETSAT headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany, before being shared with the Met Office and other national meteorological services across Europe.

Once at the Met Office, this data joins information from other international satellite systems and many thousands of observations from around the world to be fed into the global forecast model. Having processed this vast stock of basic data, one of the most important things the Met Office does is to share its potentially life-saving forecasts with other countries. Its weather and climate change advice informs the actions of businesses and governments right across the world.

During the annual hurricane season in the Atlantic, for instance, the Met Office works closely with the National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami, USA, to warn of the formation, track and landfall of tropical storms and hurricanes. On 28 August, the tropical storm that was being tracked by both weather services was named Hanna by the NHC.

A few days later, already saturated by Fay and Gustav, Haiti was hit hard by flooding and mudslides as Hanna briefly reached hurricane status. Almost the entire city of Gonaïves was flooded with water nearly two metres deep. Around 48,000 people were moved to shelters due to the flooding, some having been rescued from their rooftops. A hospital in Les Cayes had to be evacuated as it was swamped by floodwater. The catastrophe left 529 people dead and thousands homeless. Many headed for the mountains, hoping to wait out the next



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storms of the season.

While Hanna was wreaking havoc on land, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) — parent of the NHC — was busy flying reconnaissance aircraft in the area to predict Hanna's next move. Observations also came in from US weather satellites, land-based observing stations, aeroplanes, ships and ocean buoys. The data was fed into NOAA's models while being shared and compared with the Met Office and others.

As Hanna neared the USA, authorities declared states of emergency and placed several North Carolina communities under evacuation orders. Storm alerts were issued along the Atlantic coast, from Georgia to New Jersey including Washington DC, with Hanna forecast to bring up to 25 cm of rain to some areas, strong winds, storm surges and flash flooding.

This prompted NASA to move the launch of the Space Shuttle Atlantis for its mission to the Hubble Space Telescope and the rain eventually halted the US Open tennis tournament. Hanna also knocked-out power to about 32,000 people in Long Island but was below hurricane status even before making

landfall around the North Carolina–South Carolina border early on 6 September.

Hard on Hanna's heels, however, was a more worrying weather system, Hurricane Ike, which forecast models predicted could pass near

'One of the most important things the Met Office does is to share its potentially life-saving forecasts with other countries'

– *Tempest*

Miami where up to 1.3 million people might have had to flee the coast. Behind Ike, a third weather system, tropical storm Josephine had begun to spin slowly across the eastern Atlantic — the tenth storm of what was threatening to become a particularly active Atlantic hurricane season.

Nestled safely on the opposite side of the

Atlantic, you may wonder why the Met Office takes such a strong interest in what's happening some 1,700 miles across the ocean. Taking in international data before sharing forecasting know-how across the world preserves the Met Office's status as a world-leading weather and climate service. More importantly, in regions prone to hurricanes this work can save lives.

An international reach is also fundamental to forecasting the weather closer to home. In the UK, we're sometimes affected by the remnants of hurricanes travelling back across the Atlantic in the form of deep depressions. Ex-hurricane Hanna left the shores of North America on 8 September and a few days later brought wet and windy conditions to some western parts of the British Isles. Then, almost one month after its tropical wave first emerged off the coast of West Africa, Hanna finally petered out over the cold waters of the Arctic Ocean.

- The Met Office is an executive agency of the Ministry of Defence. Sarah Tempest is the senior writer at the Met Office

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Protecting Identities

People trust the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) with their personal details. Passport records have been kept by Government since 1540 and despite some much publicised data losses from government sources, research shows that IPS is the government agency most trusted with personal data (Taylor Nelson Sofres 2008).

Today IPS, which holds more than 92 million individual passport records, is hoping to build on that level of trust as it rolls out the National Identity Scheme with the introduction in November 2008, working alongside the UK Border Agency, of the first ID cards in the form of biometric immigration documents to foreign (non-European Economic Area) nationals.

The new credit-card sized document will show the holder's photograph, name, date of birth, nationality and immigration status. A secure electronic chip will hold their biometric details, including fingerprints, and a digital facial image.

IPS chief executive James Hall said: 'The cards mark the start of giving everyone in the UK the right to a single, simple and safe way of



protecting and verifying their identity. It also means that everyone will have the right to better protection against those who use false identities to mask criminal or terrorist activity.

'Government needs a single approach that will build trust with the public and enable better, faster, safer transactions that reduce duplication. Our job, in the wider Home Office family, is to protect people. That's why we're creating a National Identity Scheme.

'Our aim is to make everyone safer, lives easier, and to protect UK jobs from illegal working. To do this our data, our personal

information, must be protected and we must be able to trust the Scheme.'

To help maintain its record of trust IPS is ensuring the National Identity Scheme complies with the spirit of the Data Protection Act and that the data, held by the Scheme, is covered by the Official Secrets Act. Tampering with the data will be a criminal offence.

Oversight of the Scheme will be provided by a Scheme Commissioner, who will report to Parliament. The Scheme Commissioner, who will be appointed in the New Year, is a crucial role in the overall governance structure, providing the public scrutiny of the Scheme. The role will be backed up by a public panel, also appointed in the New Year.

Hall said: 'The Scheme must deliver our obligations under EU legislation, as well as our own Government's commitment that the UK passport will be among the strongest in the world. It is essential that in delivering the Scheme, the Identity and Passport Service continue to deliver a service that we can all trust.'

The theory behind the National Identity

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Scheme is that each person has a unique identity. Hall said: 'Once the relationship between the individual and this unique document is locked, via their biometrics and an identity document, it will be easier for the individual to assert their identity and for those seeking assurance that the individual is who they say they are. It will then make it much harder to misuse an identity or to steal it.'

The introduction of cards for foreign nationals will be followed by the first ID cards for British citizens, targeting workers in sensitive roles and locations like airports from 2009. Then from

2010 ID cards will be available to young people who want them and from 2011/12 cards will be available to the general population.

Integrating personal data might be easier for the IPS after taking on responsibility for overseeing the recording of births, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths in England and Wales from the General Register Office (GRO) in April 2008.

In the past, the GRO has provided IPS with information to prevent fraud in relation to passport applications. This data sharing has led to notable successes, preventing and

prosecuting the hijacking of dead children's identities. Work is also being done to provide online access for IPS to GRO birth, marriage and death registers.

Hall said: 'Working as one organisation will allow us to explore the possibility of integrating passport, identity card and life event registration processes. This would reduce red tape and make life easier for people, as well as strengthen the integrity of our systems.'

For further information on the National Identity Scheme visit: www.ips.gov.uk/identity

Identity Cards by numbers

59 % – of those questioned support the introduction of identity cards

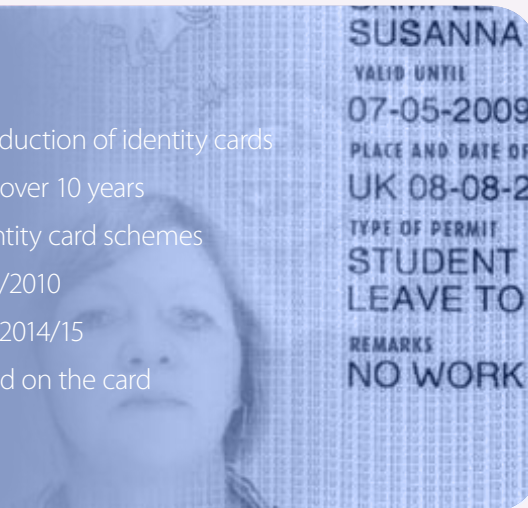
£4.74 bn – the cost of delivering the scheme over 10 years

24 (out of 27 EU countries) – already have identity card schemes

£30 – the cost of identity cards issued in 2009/2010

90 % – of foreign nationals will have cards by 2014/15

eight – pieces of information will be contained on the card



The Identity and Passport Service (IPS) was established as an Executive Agency of the Home Office on 1st April 2006. It builds on the strong foundations of the UK Passport Service to provide passport services and in the future, as part of the National Identity Scheme, ID cards for British and Irish nationals and foreign nationals resident in the UK.

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Data has its difficulties

Sensitive information that can affect property prices is a continuing challenge for The Coal Authority

Property search services are a major activity for The Coal Authority (TCA). It often handles more than 2,000 enquiries a day and thanks to its award-winning PFI-funded multi-channelled electronic search service it manages to return the vast majority within 24 hours, primarily through its online service at www.groundstability.com.

Recent regulations on access and re-use of public sector information, together with recommendations made by the Office of Fair Trading and Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), and the Government's commercialisation of the public services agenda, have put increased pressures on TCA to encourage access and re-use of its data.

The difficulty for the TCA is that there is potential for some of the information it holds to have an adverse impact on property values in the minds of the public.

For example, where information about



Data has its difficulties

mineshafes and similar coal legacy hazards are misunderstood or misinterpreted it could have a detrimental impact on the ability to sell, obtain a mortgage or on the value of property.

While TCA is keen to encourage access and appropriate use of information in its possession, it has recognised the importance of ensuring that any information it provides is fit for purpose and in a manner that adverse impacts are minimised.

TCA Chief Executive Philip Lawrence said: 'We are keen for private and other public sector organisations to use our data but clearly a balance needs to be found to ensure that any increased disclosure of information does not have any unnecessary adverse impact on the public.'

The need to ensure data is fit for purpose, used appropriately and that necessary controls are in place has seen the TCA create a new Planning and Local Authority Liaison team which is in active dialogue with local authorities throughout the coalfield areas.

TCA is also working with the OPSI and seeking Information Fair Trading Scheme (IFTS) accreditation to help ensure that access

and re-use of its information is open, fair and transparent. In particular it is developing licences and will work with OPSI to ensure that third parties use TCA's information responsibly.

TCA is developing a new business framework that will provide an operating model that is IFTS compliant and ensures level playing field access to TCA information assets. Lawrence

acknowledges that greater awareness of coal legacy hazards may lead to an increase in the number of enquiries made by the public. He also recognises that TCA may not currently have enough administrative and technical support staff in place to deal with an increase in enquiries, which may put additional funding pressure on TCA.



The Coal Authority was created back in 1994 on the privatisation of the British Coal Industry. One of its key statutory functions is to provide public access to the range of information it holds. It does this primarily through its mining records heritage centre which houses a collection of more than 120,000 historical coal mining plans and related records with some 60,000 archive photographs, and its property search service, which provides information on past, present and future underground and surface coal mine activity for any individual property or site in Britain.

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More about Ace

ACE is the UK ACE Association and is an inclusive organisation open to Chief Executives and senior managers who report to Chief Executives, working in central government Executive Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, Non-Ministerial Departments and Trading Funds. Other Chief Executives of public sector organisations are able to apply for membership, but approval of membership will be subject to the agreement of the Board.

ACE promotes effective government and provides networking and learning opportunities for its members. ACE was formed in 2004 and exists to promote excellent working relationships throughout all aspects of government. It will seek, on an annual basis, to:

- Generate the opportunity for networking on the basis of an up-to-date database of contact details and specialisms.
- Produce regular newsletters for the purpose of promoting and sharing good practice, experience and knowledge.

- Organise an annual conference
- Organise two events which:
 - Highlight priority areas of action for government
 - Offer specific opportunities for networking across the public and private sector
 - Provide a point of contact between the Civil Service Steering Board (CSSB) and the Association and its members.

In undertaking the above, ACE will neither seek to involve itself in policy development nor representative lobbying. Neither will ACE have the power to make decisions that would bind one, any or all, of the members. ACE is funded from member subscriptions. The ACE London headquarters is located in the heart of Westminster and provides a range of facilities for members. This quiet and private location is ideal for relaxing, reading the current journals, meeting a colleague or simply having a cuppa. You can use the dedicated computer terminal to access the internet and read your emails

- For a location map click [here](#).

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Feedback

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