



ABOUT DSA

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) is one of the executive agencies that forms the Motoring and Freight Services group, within the Department for Transport (DfT). DSA is a national organisation delivering tests from over 400 driving test centres and 140 theory test centres.

DSA has a statutory responsibility for setting standards and conducting theory and practical driving tests. They are also responsible for:

- the statutory regulation of driving instructors and trainers
- the promotion of voluntary registers and non-statutory activities to improve driving standards

DSA's communication principles include:

- We will share our knowledge and information unless there is a justifiable reason not to do so;
- We will communicate in ways that reflect our audiences' needs, not our internal management structures;
- Our communication will be coherent, cohesive and consistent for all audiences; and
- We will use the right tools to deliver the right messages to the right people at the right time.

STAY CONNECTED, KEEP INFORMED:



DSA Website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/dsa/>
 DSA Subscription Sign up:
<http://www.dsa.gov.uk/Category.asp?cat=686>

Driving Standards Agency Shifts Communication Channels to Reduce Avoidable Contact and Enhance Service to Customers

Situation

The [Driving Standards Agency \(DSA\)](#) is one of the executive agencies that forms the Motoring and Freight Services group within the Department for Transport (DfT). DSA is a national organisation that delivers practical driving tests from over 400 driving test centres and 140 theory test centres throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The agency prides itself in providing exceptional customer support through communicating and sharing the information that is most important to its stakeholders. DSA's primary customers include driving instructors and driving test candidates.

DSA had an email service and list of nearly 40,000 addresses. The service was unreliable, subscribers had very few preferences available to them, and each email sent resulted in around 10,000 'undeliverable' reports being returned to the DSA email inbox. DSA discontinued the service in April of 2009.

The need to communicate news quickly and efficiently to large numbers of interested people remained unaddressed. In order to reach its audience, DSA was predominantly relying on expensive and time-consuming methods of hard copy mailings and face-to-face events. While the agency had a YouTube® channel to distribute educational videos, it still struggled with building the channel subscriber audience for DSA videos.

Driving Standards Agency's overall mission is "to contribute to the public service agreement objective to achieve a 40 percent reduction in riders and drivers killed or seriously injured in road incidents..." To achieve its mission, DSA's primary aim is to promote road safety by influencing driver and rider behaviour. This is done through effective, cohesive and consistent communication to its key audience.

While DSA received acclaim for its use of YouTube® and Twitter® to share information, the agency knew that it had to utilise multiple communication channels in order to reach as many stakeholders as possible. DSA officials set out to find a solution that allowed efficient integration of the most effective communication channels and a solution that also fell within budget.

DSA's challenge was to extend its reach and service to its customers and stakeholders; support its core messages and communication strategies and goals; and enhance awareness of its other digital channels.

“That’s the beauty of GovDelivery – We’ve been able to use the preferences that our subscribers have set up to make sure that they find out about what’s important to them.”

- John Ploughman, Digital Communications Manager

Solution

Upon seeing the successful implementation of the GovDelivery digital communication platform at a sister agency of the Department of Transport (the Highways Agency), John Ploughman, DSA’s Digital Communications Manager, developed a business case for the acquisition of a digital communication solution. After comparing GovDelivery to solutions used at other agencies, DSA found the platform provided more functionality, was scalable, and was competitively priced. With a clear understanding of the cost-savings and enhanced communications capabilities benefiting its citizens and partners, DSA launched the service in January 2010 as “DSA Direct” with the tagline “News direct to you, when you want it.”

DSA sends out automatic alerts on topics such as news and social media; learning to drive and ride (everything from driving a lorry to riding a motorcycle); approved driving instructors; and updates on The Highway Code, essential reading for everyone in England, Scotland and Wales.

The GovDelivery communications platform allows DSA to efficiently and effectively integrate with existing social media channels such as Twitter® and YouTube®. This makes cross-promotion of content effortless and dramatically increases the awareness of content and the number of viewers.

DSA utilises the Collaboration Network feature, a unique network linking authorities together so that subscribers can choose to get alerts from other agencies during one easy-to-use sign up process. DSA collaboration partners include the Met Office and Highways Agency. Collaboration is reciprocated – Met Office and Highways Agency also offer and promote DSA topics, ultimately increasing the potential reach and subscriber base.

From initial setup to daily staff use, GovDelivery has been nearly effortless. Gone are the days of managing thousands of bounced messages and large email databases. GovDelivery manages DSA’s user subscription queries, undelivered emails and everything else in between. Resources are now used where they are most valuable – providing relevant and timely content and communications to its customers.



Results

Within six months, Driving Standards Agency built a total subscriber base of nearly 18,500 and sent more than 812,700 messages since first offering the service in January of 2010. The agency has had the fastest sign-up rate of any of GovDelivery's UK clients.

The benefits to DSA and its customers were immediate and plentiful. For DSA staff, they now have a single and easily-managed communications platform that supports their goal of promoting information that is most important and impactful to their customers. In some cases it's important to let DSA's subscribers know about a new video that's been published on YouTube[®] because it explains changes that have been made to the driving test. Other times, it may be explaining how industrial action might affect driving tests. That's the biggest benefit DSA gets out of GovDelivery – the ability to use the preferences that their subscribers have set up to make sure that they find out about what's important to them.

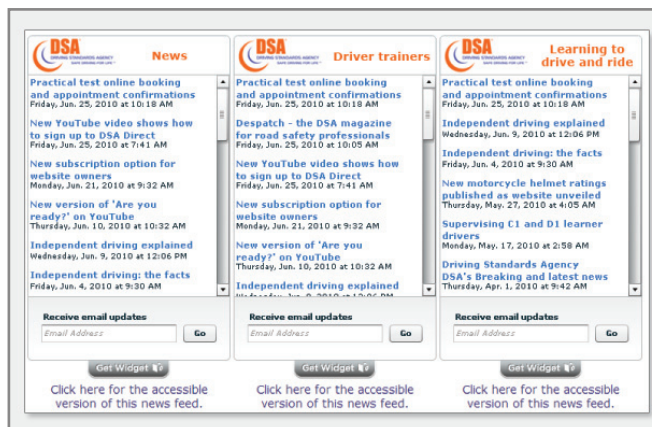
DSA customers no longer need to remember to search out updated DSA materials – it's automatically sent to them based on their preferences. Many of DSA's business customers receive an additional benefit of easy access to official DSA news and information, available to them for their own website use. By adding the DSA news widget to their personal websites, driving instructors can provide their customers the latest news about learning to drive. From DSA's point of view, that's really powerful for two reasons; they're able to help their customers enhance their web offering, and they can be sure that the DSA message is communicated how it is intended to be.

For DSA, using GovDelivery has meant that they can instantly measure results from their communications. They've been able to expand the reach of their content and social media. Over 14,000 people get email updates about YouTube[®] videos, a substantially larger audience than the 1,850 subscribers to YouTube[®] itself. A growing number of 8,100 individuals subscribe to Twitter[®] updates, adding to the overall awareness of DSA's social media channels.

Using news widgets has helped DSA let people help themselves to information, sharing the information virally with others across the digital landscape. In a mere six months DSA has managed to attract 32,800 subscribers – that's 32,980 people they wouldn't be talking to regularly if they hadn't created DSA Direct.

"Going forward, our GovDelivery service will be at the centre of how we communicate with our customers, such as driving instructors and road safety professionals."

- John Ploughman, Digital Communications Manager



PROGRESS

Since launching GovDelivery in January 2010 DSA has:

- Sent more than 2,650,000 email updates to subscribers.
- Signed up more than 32,800 subscribers.
- Incorporated various specific subscription topics including:
 - YouTube® Latest DSA Videos
 - DSA's Latest Tweets
 - Learning to Drive a Car
 - Travel News
 - Highway Code Updates

GOVDelivery

GovDelivery is the leading provider of government-to-citizen communication solutions. Our Digital Subscription Management solution is a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that provides organizations a fully-automated, on-demand public communication system.

Summary

Part of Driving Standards Agency's success is their approach to utilising the GovDelivery communications platform. The DSA staff uses GovDelivery as its main communication tool, delivering and promoting official content through multiple channels (email, YouTube®, Twitter® and news Widgets) instantaneously. The agency has taken a 'best practices' approach from implementation to service promotion, resulting in a larger number of subscribers and awareness of the DSA service.

Starting with buy-in and communication internally, DSA staff were educated on the benefits of the solution and included in the discussions on how to use it. The staff soon started thinking of creative ways they could use the service.

DSA involved marketing colleagues from a very early stage, which resulted in a team effort and approach to the public launch of the service. A marketing plan was set in place to promote the new GovDelivery service. "DSA Direct" promotions included:

- a [sign up page](#) on the website, explaining the service
- a poster displayed at over 400 driving test centres across Great Britain
- postcards for visiting instructors and driving test candidates
- an article in DSA's "Despatch" magazine, a bi-monthly magazine produced for road safety professionals with an audience size of approximately 56,000
- a YouTube® video "[DSA Direct email alerts: how to sign up](#)"

Much of DSA's information is now on the [Directgov](#) website, the official UK government website. Advertisements are placed on this site, encouraging the public to sign up for the service.

An email promotion through DSA's own network to all driving instructors was sent, encouraging instructors to sign up or forward to a friend. Within a 48 hour period after sending one email, DSA had almost 2,000 people sign up for the service out of a total distribution of 40,000.

DSA has added the GovDelivery digital communication service to their integrated communications plan while continuing to run its traditional communications methods such as paper mailings. While the agency has not replaced paper communications to date, they expect additional constraints on public sector spending in the coming months and years. DSA is currently evaluating its communication methods, looking for how more information can be made available online.