Government Digital Service to improve GOV.UK with new measurement approach

The Government Digital Service (GDS) will today introduce 'Real User Monitoring' (RUM) on GOV.UK to improve the experience of the 335 million annual users of the government's website.

RUM provides GOV.UK with detailed, anonymous information about how a website is performing for its users based on the device they are using and their internet connection speed. This information is only collected if users consent via cookies.

Through RUM, GOV.UK will be able to make improvements by knowing:

the device users are viewing the site on; whether it's a mobile or desktop and the browser and the size of the screen being used. This shows how the complexity and structure of GOV.UK impacts the speed that a page loads up and, in turn, how these factors affect things like memory and battery use

users' bandwidth and connection speed and how these might be limiting how GOV.UK pages can be viewed and interacted with

By collecting this information the GOV.UK team can see patterns and trends that can identify problematic pages; to better understand why a page is performing badly and how to fix it. This will bring GOV.UK up to industry best practice in ensuring a quality service; making GOV.UK a faster, easier and more efficient site for users.

No personal data is used in this process, and the data is only collected when a user has given explicit consent to the use of cookies on GOV.UK for analytics purposes. GOV.UK's cookie information has been updated to make sure it's clear that users can opt in if they want this information about their visit collected.

Jen Allum, Head of GOV.UK said:

With more than 53 million visits a month to over half a million pages of information, making sure that GOV.UK remains reliable, accurate and continues to meet user needs is one of the most important things GDS does.

While users' personal data is not collected, RUM means we are able to find out more about where and how visitors view GOV.UK. This helps us to work out which parts of the website aren't performing well. If we know, for example, that some of our pages aren't easy to access for people viewing on their phone, or if a slower broadband speed is making some pages difficult to load up, we can fix them to make sure they are easier and quicker to use.

As always, users of GOV.UK have to give their consent before information about their visit to the site is recorded so users are always able to choose and remain in control.

RUM is one of many ways we're working to further improve GOV.UK this year. During 2021 there will be improvements to navigation; making it easier for users to find their way round GOV.UK and continued work on personalisation so it's easier for users to find information on a topic, such as starting a business.

Notes to editors

Read more about Real User Monitoring on GOV.UK

Read more about GDS' priorities

Read about GOV.UK's 2021/22 roadmap

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of GOV.UK, on Jun 16, 2021. For more information subscribe and   follow us.

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