Woodnewton

NATIONAL IMAGE, GLOBAL AUDIENCE

Assessing the effectiveness of government websites in communicating with international investors

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Contents

2

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1. Executive Summary

1.1   The internet has revolutionised both communications and commerce and this process continues. Governments have tended to be slow in adapting to this change, and there is often a dramatic gap between the leaders and laggards in both the speed and the effectiveness of their responses. In some areas of government activity, such as the provision of services to the citizen, this process and its implications have been fairly well-studied; others, such as inward investment, less so.

1.2   To be effective in attracting investment, states must adapt their existing investor communications strategy for the internet. But the internet allows businesses to gain a much richer and less tightly-controlled picture of a country. So a further implication for states is that they must manage their overall internet presence effectively: otherwise, their reputation and credibility will suffer.

1.3   The internet also has the potential to shift the balance of affordability in the competition for inward investment. Traditional approaches such as diplomatic representations have higher entry-level costs than effective use of the internet. The internet therefore has the potential to benefit smaller and poorer countries.

1.4   There are currently no widely agreed principles for the way in which nations should present themselves through the internet, nor agreed criteria for judging how well they are doing. This report considers how such principles and criteria might be developed. It is not comprehensive or exhaustive; but exploratory.

1.5   The core to the methodology used was to profile the internet presence of a number of countries from the view of a potential (fictional) inward investor. Each was scored against a range of criteria covering technology, content and functionality. The countries selected had a spread by population, income, geography and language, but with a bias towards smaller and less developed countries: this was to help explore the relationship between wealth, population size and effective use of the internet.

1.6   The main finds of this report are:

- The countries selected showed a wide range of quality and effectiveness in terms of their internet presence

- There was an identifiable core of good and bad practice; with no one country making use of the full range of good practice and all displaying some bad practice

- There was no meaningful correlation between the effectiveness of internet presence and the population of the country

- There was a correlation between effectiveness, income and the level of development

1.7 Overall, the survey suggests that the internet allows smaller and less developed countries to market themselves to potential inward investors on more equal terms with larger and richer countries than in the past; but also that though the 'barriers to entry' have been lowered, few countries have yet taken anything like full advantage of this; and that advice and support to developing states in this field could make a substantial contribution to their economic and social development.

1.8 A further or even annual full-scale study could build on the methodology of this survey and include:

- Using more than one test search to give a more reliable assessment of the overall content and navigation of the site

- Scoring against a wider range of functions such as the effectiveness of the site's search facility

- Taking more account of the totality of the government's web presence (such as tourist sites and ministry sites) as well as the core portal

- Assessing the effectiveness of the main site in acting as a portal and directing users to the rest of the government's internet presence

- A self-completion internet survey of site managers, including requests for data on capital and running costs for each site

Overall Rankings
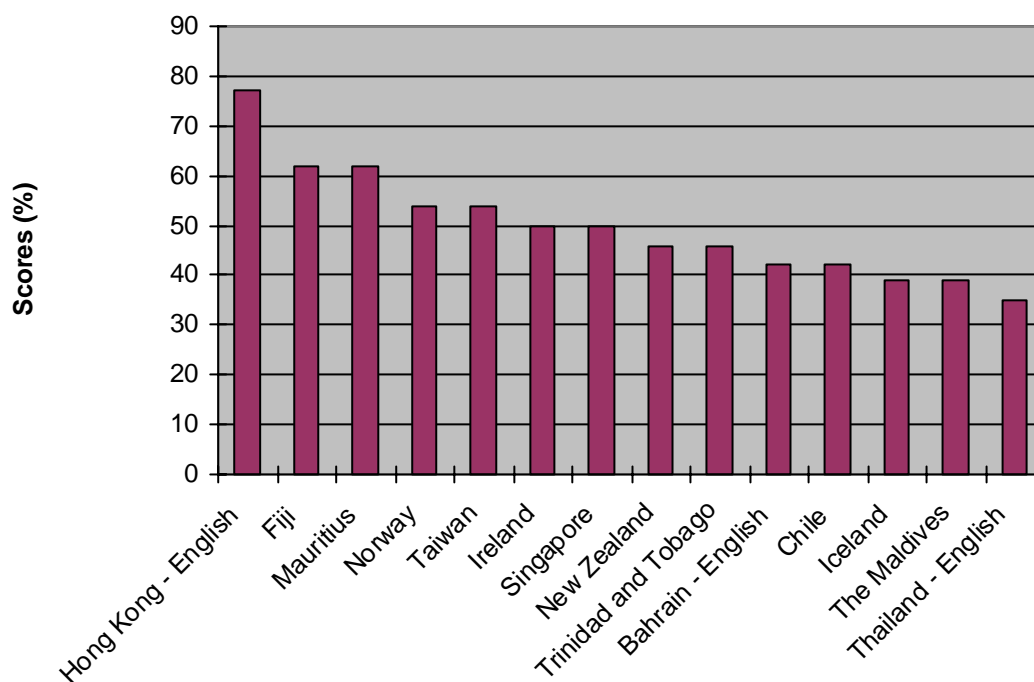
2. Introduction

2.1   Nations have always competed for international investment. It is one of the main justifications for maintaining embassies, consulates and other forms of diplomatic representation around the world. Many states have inward investment agencies, strategies and targets; some have centred their economic policies on attracting and retaining multinational corporations.

2.2   New technologies – in particular the development of the internet – imply substantial changes in the ways in which inward investment decisions are taken. The internet has become a primary research tool for businesses, allowing investors and analysts to gather information on countries and markets from anywhere in the world. If states are to maintain the effectiveness of their inward investment communications, then they must adapt to the medium.

2.3   The impact of the internet is not merely a change in the medium for the transfer of information: it opens up new sources, such as local media, film archives or user-generated content. Potential customers, business partners or other professionals and service providers – from lawyers to interpreters – can be identified, profiled and contacted more easily.

2.4   The internet also gives businesses a much less editorialised picture of the state itself. In place of the more traditional approach of brochures or managed visits, internet research can draw upon a range of formal and informal sources within or about government. Investors may well (and quite reasonably) take the ability of a state to manage its internet presence as an indicator of its wider competence and of its level of development in information technology and communications infrastructure. More widely, the internet can strengthen the salience to potential investors of a country's overall image and reputation – for good or bad.

2.5   One further consequence of the rise of the internet comes from its comparatively low cost. Maintaining development agencies or commercial diplomatic staff is an expensive business, while using the internet to project a nation as a suitable location for investment is affordable to the smallest and least developed states.

2.6   This makes it timely to assess how well nations use the internet to project themselves positively, whether it is to potential tourists, students, migrant workers or investors. As a first stage, this report seeks to establish the parameters for the relationship between a nation's internet presence and its potential impact on inward investment.

3.   The Survey

3.1   This report is not a comprehensive survey but rather an initial exploration of the issue of measuring the nature and effectiveness of the internet presence of governments and countries, and their various outcomes.

3.2   Given the practical nature of the subject matter, the survey is based on an evaluation of the effectiveness of the internet presence in an everyday situation; hence the use of a simulated piece of research on behalf of a fictional business. Research was carried out in the summer of 2008.

3.3   Technical measures were used to give a direct comparison to subjective interpretation of the likely impact with audiences. An initial survey was carried out on selected states that cover a range of different cultural backgrounds, political structures and traditions.

Approach

3.4   The approach taken was to evaluate each national web presence against a set of criteria to cover functionality (what information and services are provided), ease of use (how straightforward it is to find specific information); and reliability (both technicality and in terms of the information it contains). The essential question the criteria are designed to answer is:

> ***To what extent is this country using the internet effectively to project itself in a positive way to an international audience?***

3.5   The survey assessed the internet presence of each country against a set of criteria, to produce a profile of strengths and weaknesses as well as an overall score. This assessment includes both a series of standard 'interrogations' of the web presence of each country to establish whether and how specific functions and information are presented, and more subjective assessments as to the image created by the web presence. This is covered in the 'look and feel' section for each country.

3.6   For each of the countries surveyed, we adopted the same criteria. These were based on a notional visit to the site by a potential inward investor in the water sector, based in the United States. This sector was chosen as having applicability to every country surveyed. States were selected to present a varying combination between developed and developing, differing cultural and political backgrounds and tradition.

Inward Investment (Information)

3.7   There were seven specific criteria[1] in this section, each of which related to the kind of information likely to be required by the potential water sector investor.

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1 See Annex 1.

3.8   The guiding principle focussed on accessibility of information from the government website itself (without reference to a search engine or external site such as the CIA World Factbook) and that it should be readily accessible (within five clicks from the front page). For each interrogation, no more than five attempts to locate the information required were undertaken. It was assumed that after five attempts, a user would give up and look elsewhere.

The Country (Engagement)

3.9   There were three specific criteria in this section. The first was the extent to which audio/video material such as streaming video was used to showcase the country. Handled well, AV adds a powerful dimension to internet communications, both by demonstrating competence in a rapidly-emerging medium, but also by having a power, immediacy and credibility that no other format can match. AV therefore can potentially act as a useful yardstick for the technical competence, ambition and impact of a website.

3.10   The second criteria was for the inclusion of a downloadable map of the country showing the topography, rivers and centres of population. This was of general relevance, as being a versatile tool to help any potential investor to orientate themselves which also presented no technical challenges to the website operator. It was also a test of the extent to which the content editor of the website could empathise with the needs of external visitors (to imagine their need for or interest in a basic map of the country). The particular requirement for topography and major rivers was intended to reflect the specific interests of the user.

3.11   The third was for the provision of a regularly updated and accurate government news and press release service. Such a facility is a quick and easy method in responding to current events, as well as publicising government initiatives. However, there is a necessity for constant updates to avoid appearing out of date, ill-used or irrelevant. A strong government news service will be updated several times daily, both refreshing old stories and adding new ones.

Reliability and Access (Technical)

3.12   There were three criteria in this section. The first was a numerical score given for the extent that the site functioned as designed, including working links. The second was whether the site had a text-only version, so demonstrating awareness of the needs of visually impaired users, and those with limited internet access. The third was whether the 'W3C Accessibility' logo (awarded to sites which meet the criteria laid down by the Web Accessibility Initiative, which develops strategies, guidelines, and resources to help make the Web accessible to people with disabilities) was displayed clearly on the homepage and/or sidebar.

4.   Main Findings

4.1   The survey suggests that there is no direct link between a country's wealth (measured by GDP) and its ability to project an effective internet image. The highest ranked site overall, Hong Kong, does not have the highest GDP of the fourteen countries covered, while the lowest ranking site, Thailand, has by no means the lowest GDP. The survey also showed that it is not necessary to invest in a very sophisticated or 'features-rich' website in order to satisfy at least the initial demands of a potential investor.
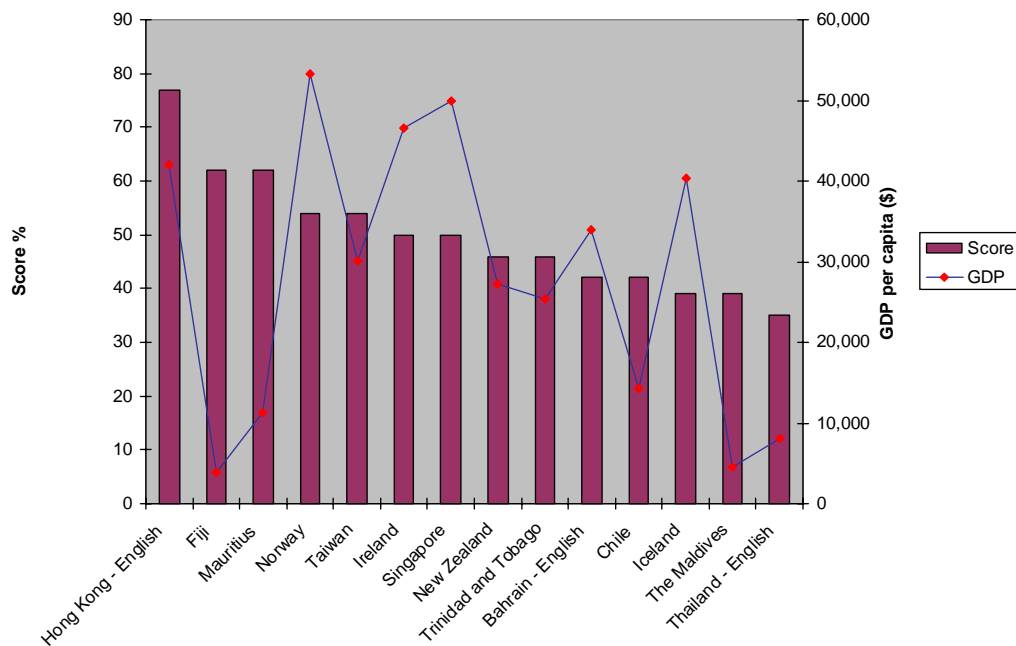
Figure 1: GDP and Score

4.2   There was also no direct link between effectiveness and population size: a larger population did not make for better websites, nor was there a population threshold below which a country could not maintain an effective internet presence.

4.3   There was a link between GDP per head and effectiveness, with some of the poorest-performing countries also being the poorest in wider development terms. A number of factors may lie behind this: the level of ICT development within the country; the availability of employees or contractors with ICT skills and experience; or other priorities for investment within the government or the country. But GDP per head was not of itself a barrier to effectiveness. Taken together with the minimal cost of developing a basic but effective internet presence, it suggests that advice and support from aid programmes in this field would potentially be beneficial.

4.4   The highest scoring sites were those which concentrated on provision of a wide range of information clearly and with logical information architecture, and which recognised the priorities, interests and assumptions of potential users. The most effective websites are divided into clear, coherent sections for different categories of user (for example, 'residents', 'non residents', and 'business'). Some of the more successful websites, as well as making their sites merely an information tool, used web design to give a flavour of what the country might be like to visit and deal with, through images and text.

4.6   Costa Rica, Uruguay and Malaysia were included in the original list of websites under investigation. However, the former two had no official English-language web presence, while the latter's website was non-operational. Such difficulties effectively rule these sites not only out of this particular investigation, but also out of the increasingly web-based competition for international investment capital.

5.   Conclusions

5.1   Though this investigation is a preliminary study of a rapidly changing marketplace, it gives an idea of some of the basic tools necessary to attract the growing numbers of investors whose research, at least initially, is web-based. These include:

- A good understanding of the needs and preferences of the target audience and sub-audiences

- A architecture for the site that arranges content and functions in ways that are easy for the user to find intuitively

- A design that supports the clarity of the architecture and also communicates some of the distinctive and positive characteristics of the country

- Regular updating of content, including news and features

- Realism about the site's functionality and content management to minimise the extent to which the site has out of date material or non-functioning links or other features

5.2   This report is based on a limited survey of a small number of sites. But it has shown that a full-scale study could develop a set of robust benchmarks and allow those responsible for government internet sites to adopt best practice and deepen their understanding of their international audiences. An annual survey would allow the progress of sites in improving their effectiveness to be tracked, both overall and against peers. Such a study might include:

- Using more than one test search to give a more reliable assessment of the overall content and navigation of the site

- Scoring against a wider range of functions such as the effectiveness of the site's search facility

- Taking more account of the totality of the government's web presence (such as tourist sites and ministry sites) as well as the core portal

- Assessing the effectiveness of the main site in acting as a portal and directing users to the rest of the government's internet presence

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![Woodnewton logo]

Bahrain

42%

Information

Score: 4/7

Engagement

Score: 3

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

There is coherence to some extent, although generally the site isn't easy on the eye, lacking a single colour scheme and feeling 'bitty'. Its strength is the 'government ministries' link, through which ministries' separate sites can be easily accessed. These vary in style and layout considerably, though many are internally coherent, for example the Ministry of Education (http://www.education.gov.bh/english/index/index.aspx) and Ministry of Health (http://www.moh.gov.bh/).

Favourable impression

The site trumpets its bill paying and fine paying facilities, as well as Bahrain's 'e-government' strategy, and basic information about the country is well written, but this is not attractively presented (small font, tables, no illustration or video content.)

Reputation of country

The main site's slowness to load makes it an initially frustrating experience, although the speed and accessibility of some functions, such as the e-visa registration, as well as the slick nature of some linked sites, such as Bahrain Gateway, mean that the parts most likely to be accessed by foreign visitors do give a positive impression.

Overall

The site has some good functions and ideas, but it lacks clear illustration or coherent colour scheme fail to leave the user with any clear impression of what Bahrain is like. The accessibility of the visa registration and the 'Bahrain locator' functions give a good impression of efficiency, but there is a lack of coherent basic information on how the government operates or even who its key players are.

Government website: www.e.gov.bh

![Woodnewton logo]

Chile   **42%**

Information

Score: 5/7

Engagement

Score: 2

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

Although fairly basic in content, what is there is coherently laid out with a consistent colour scheme and format, making it easy to navigate. There is a well laid out 'photo gallery' section.

Favourable impression

While the text itself is helpful, and skilfully written to present Chile to its advantage, it is in some areas off-puttingly dense and devoid of illustration, pull-quotes or anything to break up the text (e.g. the 'Chile Your Best Bet' section)

Reputation of country

A helpful gateway site, particularly to business and tourism links. It is sparse in its use of illustration, leaving this more to the tourism sites; nonetheless, it's relatively small size means it is very easy to navigate and certainly gives the impression that Chile is keen to attract foreign visitors and investment, and organised enough to do so efficiently.

Overall

It seems as though the site available in Spanish is considerably more developed than the English one, including audio visual content, a more coherent layout and extra features and information. The English site is mainly geared towards tourism and casual information-hunters rather than the practical needs of Chileans or investors. However, there is a prominent link on the homepage to www.chileinfo.com, which is much more attractively laid out and helpful to potential investors. It should be noted that the visitchile.org link is outdated and doesn't work.

Government website: www.chileangovernment.cl

![Woodnewton logo]

Fiji   **62%**

Information

Score: 7/7

Engagement

Score: 5

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

There is a very coherent colour scheme and layout; it is easy to navigate and return to the homepage quickly. Not many images are used in the site proper (though the homepage is well illustrated) but those that are in use are colourful and carefully chosen to give a flavour of the country's natural beauty. The homepage is very 'busy', and has a lot of text.

Favourable impression

Impressively laid out; it's clear from the homepage that a lot of the required information will be available easily, and the site inspires confidence in the first-time user.

Reputation of country

It certainly gives the impression of a modern and efficient country; good English and the site is very quick. The blue and yellow colour scheme gives a slightly tropical flavour that builds on the idea of Fiji as an island paradise.

Overall

The Fijian site comes across as well maintained and regularly updated, as well as making Fiji seems an attractive and modern place to visit. Most information required is readily available but could be easily pushed on by adding more video/audio content and more creative presentation of news updates. The homepage could also be toned down with less text. Overall, though, the site is impressively thorough.

Government website: www.fiji.gov.fj

Hong Kong   **79.6%**

Information

Score: 5/7

Engagement

Score: 8

Reliability and Access

Score: 7

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

This is a very coherent website with links to different government departments which reveal government departmental websites. Each separate departmental website all have the same fonts, layout and design. Fairly text-heavy but well spaced out enough, and in sufficiently large font, for this not to be a pain on the eye.

Favourable impression

The site definitely gives the impression of being well thought through and of having a large and well qualified team behind it, with some good ideas. There's a wealth of helpful information for residents, including on relatively obscure matters such as sewage treatment statistics, though some information requires over 5 clicks to reach, often because there are so many sub-menus dividing it all up.

Reputation of country

The site certainly builds on the idea of Hong Kong as a business centre, with comprehensive information on trade and investment, but is also very good on tourism, with some colourful and sophisticated illustration and video content. This isn't necessarily immediately available though, as it has to be found via the main government portal, which is more formally set out.

Overall

A busy homepage, with perhaps slightly too much text, but giving the impression of an important country with plenty to say for itself and plenty of information. A choice of text sizes means that choosing a large font can make all the text appear less jarring on the eye. There is a useful version for mobile phone users. The site is generally gearing itself up well for business, residential and touristic users, with a wealth of well-managed and updated content.

Government website: www.gov.hk/en/residents

![Woodnewton logo]

Iceland   <u>**39%**</u>

Information

Score: 2/7

Engagement

Score: 4

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

Very well co-ordinated with a simple and clear layout replicated on all linked government departmental websites. The colour scheme is based on the blue, red and white of the Icelandic flag. There is little illustration except a colourful logo at the top. The site appears professional and serious; it's very easy to navigate, perhaps because of relatively small information content (most on linked external sites.)

Favourable impression

There is a very good sense of 'branding', because of the coherent layout. The homepage didn't feel promising in terms of content but proved to have links to much of the information required, albeit after quite a lot of link-following. It looks very professional but sparse.

Reputation of country

The pared down design, without much illustration or text, appears suitably Nordic and minimalist. It also seems very well organised, and not too complex (there are, for example, no long lists of every tiny government department- this is instead broken into sections.) The uniformity across the site makes it appear very slick but it could do with quicker access to some features such as water supply, which generally have to be accessed through the website of the relevant ministry.

Overall

This is a seemingly bare-looking website concealing a useful amount of information. It works quickly and is obviously efficient, but doesn't radiate the business-mindedness of some sites such as Hong Kong's or Chile's. There are some links to tourism sites, but the link buttons only show the address, without giving away any info on what the site itself is about, which involves some 'experimental' navigation to work out what they are for.

Government website: http://www.government.is/

![Woodnewton logo]

Ireland   **50%**

Information

Score: 6/7

Engagement

Score: 3

Technical:

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

Appears coherent at first on the homepage, but in fact there is very little consistency in presentation, with separate pages being laid out in different ways. This may be because the site essentially lists a number of links to other services, but even its own pages are not designed coherently. The colour scheme (green and beige) isn't used consistently in the rest of the site.

Favourable impression

The homepage does give the impression of having lots of links to different departments and areas, but is quite difficult to navigate and return to, as most information required had to be found on separate departmental websites, which didn't necessarily have an obvious link to the main govt. homepage. The layout is somewhat cramped but there is some effective use of illustration. There is quite an emphasis on 'e-government' but this doesn't seem to have made the site much easier to navigate overall.

Reputation of country

The choice of pictures on the homepage plays up to the traditional image of a rural, Celtic island with beautiful seascapes and countryside inns. There is a prominent link to 'photographs of well known locations', to enhance this feeling further. It does have a modern feel but could do with some more internal consistency and perhaps a clearer sidebar that remained in place even when one navigated away from the homepage.

Overall

There is plenty of information for Irish citizens, but it's harder for international visitors to navigate, especially given a relative lack of obvious links to tourism websites (it's necessary to go through the foreign office/tourism office link.) These could be displayed on the homepage without any problem. There is good use of illustration and colour scheme, though government departments all had differing layouts.

Government website: www.irlgov.ie

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The Maldives   <u>**39%**</u>

Information

Score: 3/7

Engagement

Score: 3

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

The site is coherent in colour scheme and has a really helpful, well divided sidebar which stays in place throughout navigation, making it easy to move backwards and forwards.

Favourable impression

The Maldives' beauty needs no selling, and the site manages to look attractive without swamping itself in photos (of which there is probably room for a few more, though there is a very good photo gallery.) However, there are not many obviously placed links for tourists, and none at all for potential investors, who would have to look for the finance ministry website for statistical info, and probably have some difficulties finding what they wanted even then. There is some good basic info on the country itself, its history and geography, culture etc. This could probably be better illustrated but there's a nicely judged amount of text on each page.

Reputation of country

The site has a surprising number of errors (e.g. 'dowload') and these could give the impression of a less than professional outfit. Overall, the site shows there's more to the Maldives than pretty islands, with plenty of information on its government. The main problem is the lack of website listing for some government ministries and departments - if they don't have them, it doesn't reflect well on the Maldives as being technologically up to date. The failure to give the names of any ministers in a systematic way, or any contact details for them, is another big drawback; it's hard to find out who does what.

Overall

A good first impression; a clear and professional looking layout. The lack of a separate list of ministers' names makes it less navigable than it could be. Good, detailed general information about the country via links on the top bar, and a well sized sidebar which remained constant throughout navigation. Good attempts made to use the indigenous language prominently on the site. Overall, the site is helpful to residents of the Maldives but less so for any potential investors or tourists.

Government website: http://www.maldiveisle.com/

![Woodnewton logo]

Mauritius **<u>62%</u>**

Information

Score: 5/7

Engagement

Score: 4

Technical

Score: 6

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

This website is very coherent; not only within the main govt. portal but also in its linked ministerial websites, all of which had the same colour scheme, organisation and sidebars. Colourful and well illustrated but not too cluttered (though there is still a lot of content on the first page); good use of side bars and top bars for links. There's a very useful 'How do I find...' dropdown menu which saves space.

Favourable impression

The site definitely creates a good first impression, but crucially, one that lasts further into the site. Most information was reached relatively quickly and presented in a coherent format- this was mainly because of the very useful four main links ('Citizen, Business, Government, and Non-Citizen'.)

Reputation of country

Given that Mauritius is known primarily as a tourist destination, the website does well to maintain this impression as well as ensure just as high a profile is given to business, investment and the needs of individual citizens. Because of the helpful links to the four 'sub portals', there is a great deal of info presented but none of it crowds out anything else too much. There could probably be more use of illustration (photos, video, audio etc) to highlight the natural beauty of the islands

Overall

Rather a crowded homepage on first glance, but it is bright, well illustrated and gives the accurate impression that it contains a wide range of information. The typeface is quite small. More use could be made of illustration, both to attract tourists and businesses, but the site generally gives the impression that this is a fully developed, well organised nation. Some features, such as the PDF map and the visa application forms, were extremely easy to find. The site's internal coherence also makes it particularly easy to navigate.

Government website: www.gov.mu

![Woodnewton logo]

New Zealand

46%

Information

Score: 4/7

Engagement

Score: 4

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

This website is very coherent, with a single colour scheme used throughout. It was very easy to pick up where the main navigation points were and where things might be. There is, however, little use of images - which may well be because they were thought not to work with the layout as it is (it's clearly designed in a pared down, simple, no frills manner.)

Favourable impression

The site gives the impression of simplicity, but doesn't make you immediately confident that the information you require will be readily available and indeed, sometimes it isn't. There are plenty of useful links but the colour scheme does make the site come across as rather dull and institutional.

Reputation of country

The tone of the text works well with the design- very simple, direct and clear; for example, links are usually in the form of a question or 'I want to…' style phrase. The lack of illustration is disappointing though, for a country renowned for its beauty.

Overall

The site comes across overall as having been designed almost exclusively for an internal, New Zealand-based audience. There's no attempt to lure people into the country with seductive photographs or impressive design. This works well for finding some information, and the clear layout was certainly appreciated, but it makes for perhaps a more boring surfing experience than necessary. More links were needed on the homepage to avoid reliance in the 'search' facility.

Government website: www.newzealand.govt.nz

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Norway   54%

Information

Score: 1/7

Engagement

Score: 9

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

Extremely coherent and well laid out, in an unusual manner. Sidebars stay the same throughout the site which is helpful in returning to the pages of interest, and there are enough photos to clearly illustrate the points being made.

Favourable impression

Colour scheme of white and blue fits in with Norwegian flag and traditional stereotypes of fjords and ice! Content seems more geared towards Norwegian citizens, with virtually no tourist content (this must be found via a link on the foreign affairs ministry's section of the site - once found, this site was excellent but takes some looking for and there's only one link to it.) The site doesn't feel too corporate or overloaded, as the layout is innovative, prioritising news releases.

Reputation of country

The site does build on the idea of an environmentally aware country (prominence given to a press release about climate policy, entitled 'The Big Issues'), with all subsidiary press releases also climate-related. It does have an efficient air, and the webcasts enhance the idea of a technologically advanced nation and thus website (only site so far to have any form of proper video/audio content). Nonetheless, more run of the mill info such as basic stats about the country, or a map, does lose out.

Overall

A very clear homepage, with the government's main news story (environmental policy) taking centre stage. No sidebar as such, until you click on the relevant ministry, when there is a good coherency of sidebar links. On the whole, though, one doesn't get the feeling that the site is aimed at all at an international audience, and is mainly for Norwegians wanting to find out more about what their government is doing. Even for foreign investors, it's hard to know which 'ministry' link to click on and thus access information quickly.

Government website: www.regjeringen.no/en.html?id=4

Singapore   <u>**50%**</u>

Information

Score: 5/7

Engagement

Score: 3

Technical

Score: 5

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

Different ministries, though easily linked from the main portal, have entirely different layouts-there's no real coherence in style. The main page feels cluttered without the benefit of having lots of information easily to hand. It would be useful to have drop down menus from the links so it's clear what each one leads to. There is quite a lot of clicking backwards and forwards. The division at the top showing the four different categories (business, citizens, non-citizens and government) works well, as it does on the Mauritius site, but could be more clearly marked and probably means there's less need for such a cluttered front page, as most things fall within these categories.

Favourable impression

The cramped style isn't the best way to greet the visitor, but there is quite a lot of information once the user has worked out which of the many links is which. Plenty of links to tourism sites which have a greater pictorial content. No use of audio or video on these, though, unlike Hong Kong. There could be clearer links to business info for potential investors as one has to dig for these - especially for statistics on the economy. It looks well updated and especially useful for Singaporeans.

Reputation of country

Because of the lack of coherence, there's no real distinctive flavour about the site; every other page links to a different site with an entirely different design. Nonetheless, it functions well and, to some extent, builds on views of Singapore as modern and dynamic.

Overall

Feels a little bit cramped and overloaded on first glance. Colourful without being garish though, and nice use of a few well selected photos on the top bar. Needs more coherence in different ministries' sites, as this can become rather confusing with lots of different windows open from different places. Overall, it comes across as efficiently updated and informative, but could be more streamlined to project a slicker, less 'busy' image.

Government website: www.gov.sg

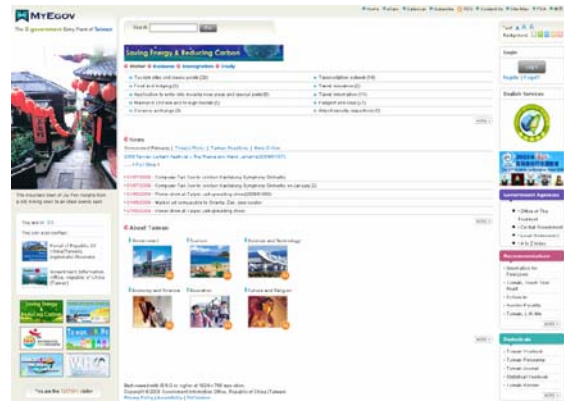# Taiwan   54%

Information

Score: 4/7

Engagement

Score: 6

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

A coherent colour scheme and format, maintained throughout the site. Could do with a consistent link to its homepage to save pressing the 'back' button quite so much. Some of the subsidiary pages are sparse on information, simply containing yet another link to click in order to reach a certain point. Homepage heavily news based.

Favourable impression

Useful news-story style format, with 'pull out' boxes in a news story format giving links to various different pages ('Taxes', 'Doing business with Taiwan' etc)- but there's seemingly no pattern to these, and they change often. Prominence given to Taiwan's bid to join the U.N, giving the impression of a proactive campaign.

Reputation of country

The site is colourful but lacks much illustration of the country itself, so little sense of what Taiwan is like as a place. It gives the impression that it's keen to attract investors and tourists, though, with some colourful links to tourist information and business-related sites.

Overall

The site is initially impressive with promising looking features. Finding some pieces of information proved more difficult than others. It lacks a clear list of government ministers for each department, which makes finding information on the name and contact details of specific ministers, as well as ministries, more of a challenge than perhaps is necessary. Some features also take time to load and appear not to be functioning at first, making the site's navigation a sometimes frustrating process! Access to inward investment and tourism pages is very easy, though, and these external sites are well maintained and seem to work quicker. Their layouts don't cohere to the main government portal at all. There were occasional mistakes in the English as well.

Government website: http://english.www.gov.tw/e-Gov/index.jsp

![Woodnewton logo]

Thailand   <u>**35%**</u>

Information

Score: 3/7

Engagement

Score: 3

Technical

Score: 3

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

The site is initially somewhat off-putting because of its basic looking layout. There isn't a great deal of information beyond the main government names and positions, so it isn't cluttered, but is poorly laid out.

Favourable impression

First impressions don't inspire confidence and this isn't changed on further inspection. It takes a lot of time to navigate through and quite often doesn't seem to have the information required. Nonetheless it is helpful for basic facts. The link to its 'non resident' section isn't prominent (hidden away in the top right hand corner of the homepage) but this is more helpful for tourists or potential investors.

Reputation of country

There could be some more use of illustration, particularly in the non-resident section. Some of the English is rather stilted and the blank pages are frustrating.

Overall

On first impressions, a rather haphazard layout with little sense of a coherent design. The English is also slightly idiosyncratic. There appear to be several pages with nothing on them which is frustrating when searching for specific information. There's also a lot of blank space on pages and not a great deal of illustration. It seems that there is potential and they've got the right idea of what's necessary, but haven't implemented it at all.

Government website: http://www.thaigov.go.th/eng/index.aspx

![Woodnewton]

Trinidad and Tobago   <u>**46%**</u>

Information

Score: 3/7

Engagement

Score: 5

Technical

Score: 4

Coherence of images and layout; ease of navigation

A very good layout and design, with vibrant pictures and colourful, attractive presentation. The design is coherent throughout the site, except in the news section, which appears to be part of an older version of the site (On the toolbar there is a link to 'review 2003'...). The site is slow to load making navigation frustrating at times when searching for information.

Favourable impression

The slow load time doesn't detract too much from the site's generally helpful nature; however, it could feature more information on the site itself, rather than simply details of non-web based communication available, e.g. various ministries' phone numbers. There is a well designed kids' section with some nice audiovisual content.

Reputation of country

The colourful pictures are used to good effect and certainly highlight the touristic possibilities of the islands; again, more audiovisual content would make this point even better. For a potential investor, the lack of information available then and there (to find out much of it, one would have to pick up the phone) could be a turn-off. Often the site comes close to the required information but doesn't quite manage to provide it- although, for example, there's no map, there's a detailed account of the country's geographical features.

Overall

A good first impression; the site is divided into three key sections (citizens, businesses and non-residents) which make navigation easy and inspire confidence in some success in finding required information. However, the site doesn't entirely live up to the expectations placed upon it, being in the main a place for finding out contact details rather than information itself. However, it is a good starting point and clearly has the framework in place to develop further.

Government website: http://www.gov.tt/default.aspx

Annex 1

Performance of Main Government Portal
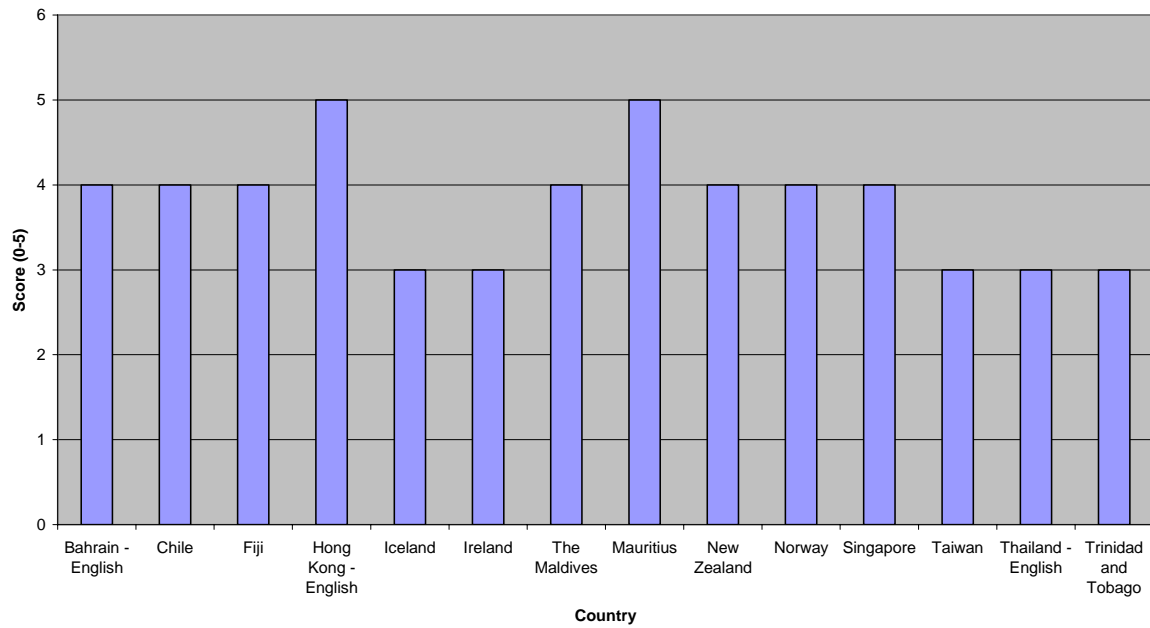
Government News Provision Score

Woodnewton
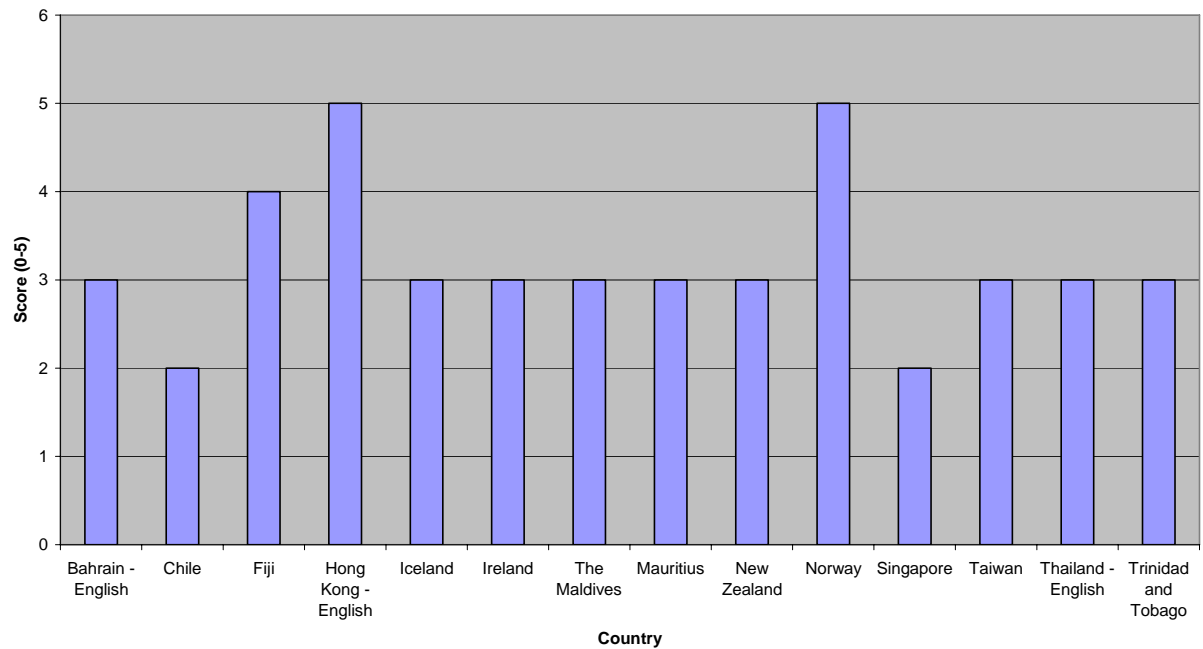
Score for use of Audio Visual Content
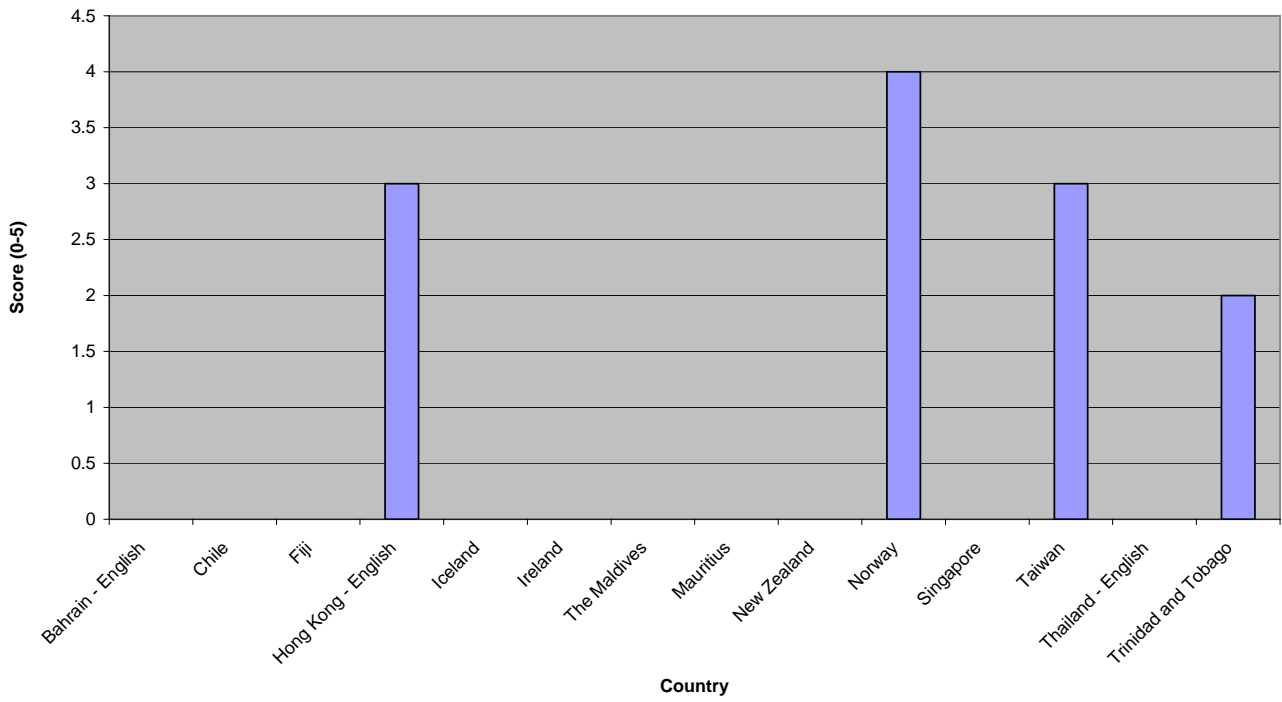
Most featured functions

Legend:
- Water supply ministry
- Investment minister details
- Visa Requirements
- Airport Name and Code
- National Debt as GDP percentage
- Downloadable Map
- Text Only Version
- W3C Version
- Procurement Bulletins
- Downloadable Visa Application Form

Woodnewton
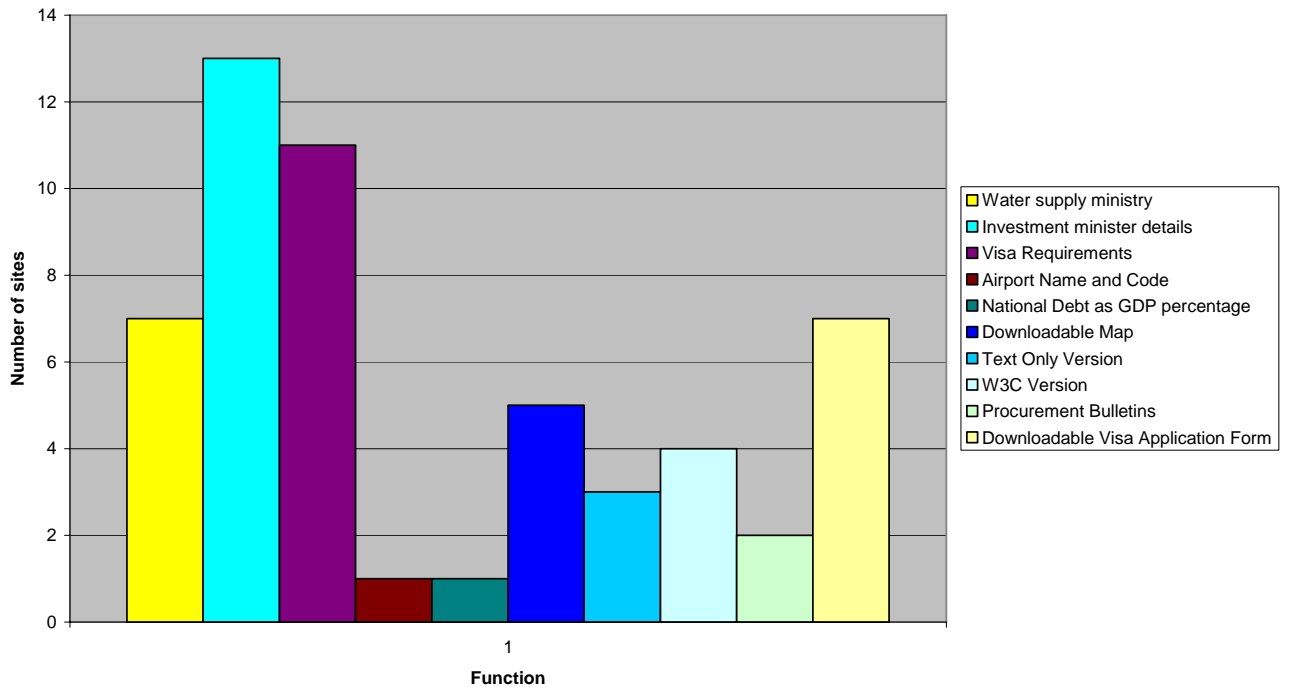
Annex 2

Criteria

Inward Investment Information (Interrogation)

In working out a country's overall score, each was given 1 point for a 'Y' and nil points for 'N'. This was then totalled, added to the numerical score and made into a percentage.

1. The name and contact details of the Ministry or Agency responsible for water supply, with a Yes/No response (Y/N)

2. The name and contact details of the government minister responsible for inward investment; (Y/N)

3. The availability of a separate website for inward investors (Y/N)

4. The visa requirements for visitors from the United States; (Y/N)

5. The country's current national debt as a percentage of GDP.   (Y/N)

6. The possibility of signing up for government procurement bulletins by email (Y/N)

7. The availability of a downloadable visa application form (Y/N)

The Country (Engagement)

There was a score for AV of 1-5, with 5 being the highest. The following were the criteria used:

0 = no provision;
1 = provision but not working;
2 = audio only and/or Youtube or similar external host only;
3-5 = video available of modest (3), good (4) or excellent (5) quality, range, and reputational benefit.

The provision of accurate government news and press release service was scored as follows:

0 = No provision;
1 = Provision but not working
2 = Working but over three weeks out of date
3 = Working but up to a day out of date and with a limited range of stories
4 = Working, up to date, text only
5 = Working, up to date, with audio visual material

Woodnewton

Reliability and Access (Technical)

The following guidelines provide the numerical score given for the function of the government portal:

0 = No portal
1 = Portal exists but not working
2 = Portal has basic functionality but is very slow with minimal detail
3 = Portal works adequately but there are some 'dead' links
4 = Portal works quickly with a few minimal delays
5 = All links work quickly and the user is not delayed

Some of the main guidelines for 'W3C Accessibility' are laid out below:

1. Images & animations**:** Use the alt attribute to describe the function of each visual.
2. Image maps. Use the client-side map and text for hotspots.
3. Multimedia. Provide captioning and transcripts of audio, and descriptions of video.
4. Hypertext links**.** Use text that makes sense when read out of context. For example, avoid "click here."
5. Page organization**.** Use headings, lists, and consistent structure. Use CSS for layout and style where possible.
6. Graphs & charts. Summarize or use the longdesc attribute.
7. Scripts, applets, & plug-ins. Provide alternative content in case active features are inaccessible or unsupported.
8. Frames. Use the no frames element and meaningful titles.
9. Tables**.** Make line-by-line reading sensible. Summarize.
10. Check your work**.** Validate. Use tools, checklist, and guidelines at http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG

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See http://www.w3.org/WAI/quicktips/Overview.php for more information.

Annex 3

Country Breakdown of Results

Bahrain

Inward Investment Information

Water	[Y]
Minister	[N]
II web site	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[Y]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[N]
News	[3]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[4]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[N]

Fiji

Inward investment information

Water	[Y]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[Y]
Procurement	[Y]
Visa Application	[Y]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[Y]
News	[4]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[4]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[N]

Chile

Inward investment information

Water	[Y]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[Y]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[N]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[N]
News	[2]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[4]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[N]

Hong Kong

Inward investment information

Water	[Y]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[Y]

The Country

AV	[3]
Map	[N]
News	[5]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[5]
Text Only	[Y]
W3C	[Y]

![Woodnewton]

Iceland

Inward investment information

Water	[N]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[N]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[N]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[Y]
News	[3]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[3]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[Y]

Ireland

Inward investment information

Water	[Y]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[Y]
Visa Application	[Y]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[N]
News	[3]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[3]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[Y]

The Maldives

Inward investment information

Water	[N]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[N]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[N]
News	[3]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[4]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[N]

Mauritius

Inward investment information

Water	[Y]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[Y]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[Y]
News	[3]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[5]
Text Only	[Y]
W3C	[N]

Woodnewton

New Zealand		**Singapore**	
Inward investment information		**Inward investment information**	
Water	[N]	Water	[Y]
Minister	[Y]	Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]	II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]	Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]	National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]	Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[Y]	Visa Application	[Y]
The Country		**The Country**	
AV	[0]	AV	[0]
Map	[Y]	Map	[Y]
News	[3]	News	[2]
Reliability and Access		**Reliability and Access**	
Portal	[4]	Portal	[4]
Text Only	[N]	Text Only	[N]
W3C	[N]	W3C	[Y]
Norway		**Taiwan**	
Inward investment information		**Inward investment information**	
Water	[N]	Water	[N]
Minister	[Y]	Minister	[Y]
II website	[N]	II website	[Y]
Visa	[N]	Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]	National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]	Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[N]	Visa Application	[Y]
The Country		**The Country**	
AV	[4]	AV	[3]
Map	[N]	Map	[N]
News	[5]	News	[3]
Reliability and Access		**Reliability and Access**	
Portal	[4]	Portal	[3]
Text Only	[N]	Text Only	[Y]
W3C	[N]	W3C	[N]

Thailand

Inward investment information

Water	[N]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[Y]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[N]

The Country

AV	[0]
Map	[N]
News	[3]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[3]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[N]

Trinidad and Tobago

Inward investment information

Water	[Y]
Minister	[Y]
II website	[Y]
Visa	[N]
National debt stat	[N]
Procurement	[N]
Visa Application	[N]

The Country

AV	[2]
Map	[N]
News	[3]

Reliability and Access

Portal	[4]
Text Only	[N]
W3C	[N]