



HOUSE OF LORDS

Information Committee

2nd Report of Session 2008–09

Annual Report 2008–09

Report

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The Information Committee

The Information Committee considers the House's information and communication services, including the Library and Parliamentary Archives, within the strategic framework and financial limits approved by the House Committee.

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Full lists of Members' interests are recorded in the Register of Lords' Interests

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Information about the Committee

The report and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Officer by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee are available on the internet at:

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General Information

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Annual Report 2008–2009

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. This report informs Members and those outside the House about the activities of the Information Committee during the 2008–09 Session in advising and supporting the House’s information and communication services.
2. This is our second annual report. Our first annual report¹ was well received,² and we hope that this report will be found to be informative and interesting.

BOX 1

Background: The role of the Information Committee

The Information Committee is one of the domestic committees of the House. Its terms of reference are:

“To consider information and communications services, including the Library and Parliamentary Archives, within the strategic framework and financial limits approved by the House Committee”.

The House has agreed that the domestic committees should “function primarily as user groups, actively canvassing the views of Members and providing a forum within which they can make complaints or suggestions about services”.

The services that the Information Committee is concerned with are:

- The Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology service (PICT)
- Library services in the House
- Information services for Members, including Hansard
- Public information about the House and its work, including outreach
- Bicameral services, including the parliamentary website, parliamentary outreach, visitor services, the education service and the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings
- The Parliamentary Archives

The Committee considers current levels of services and makes recommendations for change. Any Committee recommendation that requires significant unbudgeted expenditure would also need approval by the House Committee. For further information, see our pages on the parliamentary website: www.parliament.uk/hlinfocom

¹ Annual Report 2007–08, published 25 November 2008 (HL Paper 202).

² See, for example, the minutes of the House Committee meeting of 4 December 2008.

CHAPTER 2: PEOPLE AND PARLIAMENT

Our inquiry

3. In January 2009, we decided to conduct an inquiry to investigate how the House of Lords, in the context of Parliament, could relate better to the public. The inquiry had two aims:
 - to evaluate progress made since the reports of the House of Commons Modernisation Committee (*Connecting Parliament with the public*, June 2004), the ‘Puttnam Commission’ (*Members Only? Parliament in the Public Eye*, Hansard Society Commission, May 2005), and the consequent first business plan of Parliament’s Group on Information for the Public (2006); and
 - to consider improvements as to how the House of Lords/Parliament can engage with the public and enable members of the public to communicate with it.
4. We focused our inquiry on three issues:
 - (1) outreach;
 - (2) online communication and engagement, including www.parliament.uk and channels such as social media sites; and
 - (3) press, media and broadcasting.
5. We held six public meetings between March and June, hearing from 39 people. In addition, we canvassed comments from people via the internet, by using a [web forum](#) on the parliamentary website and the [Lordsoftheblog](#) website. Furthermore, we were the first parliamentary committee to allow members of the public to submit their views on video via [YouTube](#). Our experience of these online communication tools was positive: they enabled us to hear from a wider range of people, and those views helped us in our inquiry.
6. In July, we published our report *Are the Lords listening? Creating connections between people and Parliament*.³ The report included recommendations on education, outreach, press and media, broadcasting, parliamentary data and online communication and engagement. The list of our recommendations, together with identification of who is taking them forward, is set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

The Government’s response

7. In the House of Lords on 3 June, the Leader of the House, Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, responding to a question about the newly-formed National Council for Democratic Renewal, said that the Government must “engage with the public. That is where the gap is and it is where we have been failing in our duty to date”.⁴

³ First Report of Session 2008–09, published 15 July 2009 (HL Paper 138).

⁴ HL Deb., 3 June 2009, col. 217.

8. The Government has responded in writing to those recommendations which we addressed to them, and we publish their response in Appendix 1 to this report.
9. We welcome the Government's response and acknowledge the similarities that exist between the themes that emerge from the Government's response and from the Government's approach more generally to digital communications. We refer in particular to the Government's report entitled *Digital Britain* (published in June 2009) and to the *Power of Information Task Force Report* (published in February 2009). We look forward to seeing the Government's commitment contained in the response being translated into a robust and costed action plan with a timetable for delivery, to which all interested bodies are committed. Without that, there is a risk of losing an important opportunity for change for the better.

Actions the Committee has taken since we published our report

10. Since we published our report, we have:
 - written to the Controller of BBC Parliament to invite him to bring forward proposals for the House to maximise synergies with the BBC's 'Democracy Live' website (paragraph 44);
 - written to broadcasters to invite them to propose how footage of House of Lords proceedings could be made more engaging for viewers (paragraph 83);
 - written to the Chairman of the Press Gallery to propose that the House of Lords offers information sessions to members of the press gallery (paragraph 99);
 - tabled a motion for a debate in the House of Lords Chamber on the language and terminology used in the House (paragraph 104);
 - tabled a motion for a debate in the House of Lords Chamber on the impact of the ceremonial aspects of the House on public understanding of its work (paragraph 109); and
 - examined the case for the House producing an accurate and impartial summary of debates (paragraph 111).

CHAPTER 3: OUTREACH

Use of the Chamber

11. Last year, the Information Committee and the Administration and Works Committee agreed that the House of Lords Chamber could be used for appropriate events with young people, up to once a year, as part of the House of Lords outreach and engagement programme. That decision was taken on the basis that advice on the events (including the choice of partners) would continue to be sought from the Information Committee.
12. In April 2009, we agreed that a debate by and for young people about the issues that affect them should take place in the Chamber on Friday 10 July. The debate, chaired by the Lord Speaker, was the flagship event for the leadership and community day of the SHINE week, the national youth festival celebrating talent in young people run by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
13. Two hundred young people aged 13 to 25 were selected to participate in the event via a range of youth organisations and networks. The event was filmed and broadcast on BBC Parliament, and a half-hour documentary following three of the participants was broadcast on the Community Channel. A 10-minute [clip](#) of the highlights was posted on the Parliamentary YouTube channel.

Releasing archive material for academic research

14. The Parliamentary Broadcasting Unit was approached by the British Film Institute (BFI) to take part in an academic resource project called InView. The project aims to make televised Parliamentary source material, currently held within the BFI Parliamentary Broadcasting Archive, available to academic students and staff as a learning resource for research and study over closed academic computer networks. Following our consideration of the proposal, the Clerk of the Parliaments, as Parliamentary copyright holder for the Lords, signed the licensing agreement with the BFI, and the project was launched in September.

Releasing archive film footage and filming in the future

15. In 1968 a three-day experiment in televising the House of Lords took place. The BBC and ITN both undertook filming, none of which was broadcast. BBC Parliament has now requested use of a brief extract of the footage in a documentary about broadcasting in Parliament, to which we have agreed. We considered broadcasting in the context of our recent inquiry and recommended (at paragraph 83 of our report *Are the Lords listening? Creating connections between people and Parliament*) that more could be done to make footage of parliamentary proceedings more interesting for viewers. We look forward to developments in this area.

CHAPTER 4: INFORMATION SERVICES

Visual aids

16. In our last *Annual Report*, we described how the Committee had examined a proposal that Members be allowed to use visual aids to support their speeches during Grand Committee proceedings in the Moses Room. The Committee's view was that visual aids might be useful in supporting debate during the committee stage of complex public bills by illustrating speeches on amendments. They might also be suitable for use during other proceedings in Grand Committee, such as questions for short debates and debates on select committee reports. Committee reports often include tables and charts; and it might prove helpful for these to be visually accessible during the debate.
17. Allowing Members to use visual aids in Grand Committee would have significant implications for the House's procedures, and so we referred the proposal to the Procedure Committee. In October 2008, that Committee concluded that, whilst the House should not resist the opportunities presented by new technology, the Grand Committee was not the right forum for introducing visual aids. The Procedure Committee invited the Information Committee to undertake further work on possible uses of visual aids, with a particular emphasis on Select Committees and other evidence-taking committees. Since committees already have the ability to take evidence presented using visual aids, in January we decided not to pursue the matter further for the time being.
18. We welcome the refurbishment of Committee Rooms 1 and 2, following the departure of the Law Lords to the Supreme Court. The horse-shoe tables in the rooms include built-in screens and data points for internet access, so the facilities are now available for Members and committees wishing to display and view visual aids. In addition, both rooms are equipped with the following, all of which will facilitate the use of visual aids:
 - webcasting facilities,
 - broadcasting facilities,
 - modern audio-visual equipment,
 - video conferencing facilities, and
 - wireless internet connectivity.

Developments to the online Hansard

19. We reported last Session that the Committee had asked for a pilot to be developed to link the online text of Hansard with the archived webcasts of the Chamber to enable users to watch, listen to and read a past debate on the same screen at the same time. In April 2009, we saw a pilot demonstrator linking the online text of Hansard with the archived webcasts of the Chamber. We were impressed with the demonstrator and decided that development should continue with a view to offering a full service to the public by summer 2010.
20. The parliamentary website has a trial version of a new presentation of the online Hansard text. The main difference is in the way in which the text is

split up. The current online Hansard is split into multiple pages on the basis of file size. This results in html page breaks happening in the middle of a debate or the middle of a speech, which can be inconvenient and frustrating for the user. In the new presentation, each debate has a separate page. This means that some pages are very long and others are very short. Further features are planned to be added to this new way of dividing the text, including indexes by Member, direct links from a Member's name to a list of other contributions that they have made, better links to relevant documents, and others. When the new pages are fully functional, they will replace the existing presentation rather than running alongside and duplicating it. The new web appearance can be seen via the following page: <http://services.parliament.uk/hansard/Lords/index.html>

CHAPTER 5: PARLIAMENTARY ICT SERVICES

21. The Committee considers regular updates from the Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology department (PICT). Each year, the Committee considers PICT's business plan and annual report and receives updates on developments in relation to Members' services provided by PICT.
22. We acknowledge that the work of PICT is complex, with a large number of customers many of whom often have divergent requirements. We acknowledge also that services to Members are improving markedly. We are aware however that there remains a level of concern and, as a result, in our view, services to Members is an area which continues to require attention.
23. In April 2009, the Committee was briefed on the effect of the conficker virus on the parliamentary network. The Chairman asked the Director of PICT to relay the Committee's thanks to PICT staff for their work in response to the virus.

CHAPTER 6: LIBRARY SERVICES

Collections Management Policy

24. The Library was established in 1826 primarily as a collection of English law books. Over the following century the collection expanded to include a range of parliamentary and legal material along with a fairly eclectic mix of general books—some by purchase and others as donations. In 1977 there was a review of Library services, which led to a more formal policy of conservation and selective purchase being taken with regard to the Library's collection. In recent years the Library has limited the subject range of the collection to areas related to parliamentary business—chiefly law, politics, history, economics, international affairs, education and social sciences.
25. In May 2009, the Committee discussed the Library's collection management policy with the Deputy Librarian. The primary focus of the Library's policy is to meet user needs by preserving texts relevant to the history and function of the House and by acquiring new material in a range of formats relevant to current Lords business. We welcomed the clear strategy the Library has for acquisition, retention, storage, conservation and disposal of stock.

Transfer of the Law Lords' Collection

26. The House of Lords Library maintained a largely duplicate collection of legal texts, periodicals and sets of key legal authorities for the Law Lords. In October 2003 we agreed that this collection should move with the Law Lords to the new Supreme Court building when it became available. The Committee received an update in May on the transfer of the Law Lords' collection of books and periodicals to the new Supreme Court. The transfer of the collection, which has since gone ahead smoothly, in no way diminishes the continuing role of the Library's main legal collection as a key resource for Parliament.

Research services

27. Members value the research service offered by the House of Lords Library. The two surveys of Members' wishes (in 2004 and 2008) and research commissioned by the Library in 2006 showed that Members rate the research service highly in terms of its importance in helping them to carry out their parliamentary work, and in terms of satisfaction. Members also indicated, however, that there could usefully be more capacity to carry out on-demand research, as well as providing briefing in advance of debates in the House. The Committee has been involved in planning how to respond to the increasing demand for research services from Members.
28. The Library is planning to increase the number of researchers when new office space becomes available at the 1 Millbank Island Site. In the interim, the Library has secured agreement to bring forward one of the additional new posts for a researcher in the 2009–10 financial year. With this additional post, we hope that the Library's research team should be able to continue to meet Members' needs for on-demand research, while also being better able to anticipate Members' needs by producing briefing materials proactively. The research team aims to anticipate major debates on the floor of the House (second readings of Government bills, Thursday debates, selected Private Members' Bills, etc.) and deliver one of its products to Members. The kind of product delivered depends on the nature of the debate and the material available, as well as on the capacity of the research team to balance this proactive work with on-demand enquiries at any given time.

CHAPTER 7: PARLIAMENTARY ARCHIVES

Annual Review 2007–08

29. In January 2009, the Committee discussed the Annual Review 2007–08 with Caroline Shenton, Clerk of the Records. Particular highlights had been the completion of the Portcullis II cataloguing project, the Parliament and the British Slave Trade website, and the Act of Union Exhibition in the Royal Gallery. The Committee congratulated the staff of the Parliamentary Archives on their work.

Digital Preservation

30. At the same meeting, the Committee discussed digital preservation and the challenge posed to Parliament's long-term digital information by technological obsolescence. For over 500 years Parliament has managed its information in various analogue (that is, hard-copy) formats, including parchment, paper, videotape and photographic film. It now needs to address the challenge of preserving Parliament's digital resources for the same length of time. Without access to the trusted digital information it needs to preserve (up to and including in perpetuity), neither House will be able to support the work of its Members or its administration, nor the requirements of the public for access to Parliamentary information wherever and whenever they want it in the future, including for archival research.
31. Digital Preservation is the process of ensuring that a piece of digital information remains authentic and accessible over time, despite changes to, and obsolescence of, the hardware and software which makes it readable. Since June 2008 the Parliamentary Archives has been implementing a digital preservation strategy
- to ensure that the long-term digital memory of Parliament is not lost or inaccessible, or compromised in any way which could damage either House's ability to do its work, or its reputation, and
 - to enable Parliament's mission to offer permanent public access to its online resources, for leisure, educational, academic or business use, and to support democratic accountability.
32. The Committee welcomed the digital preservation activities underway to counter the risks to Parliament's digital resources.

Connecting with Communities Exhibition

33. In January 2008 we agreed an outline proposal for a project entitled 'People and Parliament: connecting with communities' designed to generate interest in the History of Parliament and raise the profile of the Parliamentary Archives through web-based learning resources based around the idea of connecting with communities. Following that decision, plans were developed for an exhibition to link material held by the Parliamentary Archives with regional archives and thereby explore interactions between Parliament and communities, particularly over the course of the last three hundred years.
34. In January of this year we received a progress report on plans for the exhibition and associated events in regions around the country. The exhibition was open to the public, free of charge, in Westminster Hall from

July to September. Exhibits were drawn from the collections of the Parliamentary Archives and the regional partners and include archive film as well as documents. The exhibition launched a four-year outreach project which partners Parliamentary Archives with regional archive services in Birmingham, Kent, Glamorgan, Norfolk and Tyne & Wear. The aim of the project is to explore ways in which Parliament has affected people and communities and how in turn people have influenced Parliament.

Taking Liberties Exhibition at the British Library

35. In February, the Committee visited the British Library's exhibition *Taking Liberties: The Struggle for Britain's Freedoms and Rights* with David Prior, Assistant Clerk of the Records (Public Services & Outreach), for a curator-led tour. The Parliamentary Archives had lent four iconic constitutional records to the exhibition—the Petition of Right 1628, the Death Warrant of Charles I 1649, the Bill of Rights 1689 and the Great Reform Act 1832.

APPENDIX 1: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT: 'ARE THE LORDS LISTENING? CREATING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PARLIAMENT'

The Government welcomes this report: its focus on openness, transparency and communication are key themes in constitutional reform and democratic renewal.

As the Leader of the House of Lords told the House in the Constitutional Renewal statement on 10 June 2009, the Government believes that it should do more to spread the culture and practice of freedom of information and that government information should be accessible and useful for the widest possible group of people. The appointment of Sir Tim Berners-Lee as the Government's special advisor on opening up data highlights the Government's commitment to such values. Across Government departments work is underway focusing on developing innovative ways to improve information and communication flows to better meet the public's needs. The Cabinet Office's Digital Engagement team is encouraging use of new technologies to improve Government's engagement with citizens and The National Archives are applying both modernisation of licensing and new technology to make information more transparent and re-usable.

In the debate on 16 June the Leader of the House of Lords gave an undertaking on behalf of the Government to work with the House to share best practice and to ensure that where information passes from the Government to the House, and vice versa, it does so smoothly and in ways that support the objectives of the House to provide open information.

(1) We recommend that the Government should work with Parliament to implement common information standards so as to improve the flow of information between Government and Parliament and to enhance the public's ability to re-use that information.

The Government shares the view that common information standards and the use of digital data flows are fundamental to achieving not only public re-use of data, but also efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of Government and of Parliament. We will continue to work with Parliament towards implementing common information standards.

Initial discussions have already taken place between the Officers of the House and the relevant officials in the Cabinet Office and The National Archives. Discussions are continuing with the objective of agreeing an approach to each of the major data flows. Apart from the specific issue about Bills in Recommendations 2 and 3, the Government suggests that the first data flow to be addressed should be Written Questions.

The Government supports the principle of information re-use and sees close parallels with the remit of the newly established Digital Engagement team. A key theme of Digital Engagement is open information which focuses on publishing public information on public services in a reusable format. Sir Tim Berners-Lee and Professor Nigel Shadbolt are advising the Government on the implementation of re-usable data, and the Government will share the standards and approaches developed in this work with the House to assist its own work.

(2) We recommend that the Government produce its bills in an electronic format which both complies with "open standards" and is readily reusable.

The Government shares the view of the Committee that there would be advantage in streamlining the production and dissemination process of legislation. Also, electronic formats which use open standards and enable re-use should be used. The National Archives has developed an Extensible Markup Language (XML) Schema for Legislation. However the production and processing of Bills involves a complex series of data flows between Government and Parliament, which need to be of high quality and meet extreme time pressures. With current technology, achieving a fully Schema compliant version of an Act of Parliament, is a process-intensive operation.

Following a seminar which brought together Parliamentary Counsel, the Bill Offices, Parliamentary Information Communication and Technology (PICT) and The National Archives it was agreed that a group comprising of these different offices should be convened to take the work forward. This group would develop the standards, the revised processes, the requirement for updated technology and the implementation plan, as well as the case for the additional investment required.

(3) We recommend that, for each Government Bill that significantly amends an earlier Act, the Government produce as a matter of course an accompanying informal document to show the original legislation and how the Bill would change it.

The Government agrees in principle that it is important to be able to explain the effect of Bills on existing legislation, and notes that an explanation of the intended effect of an amendment should be given in the Explanatory Memorandum.

The Government also notes that, in due course, the use of open data standards both in the processing of Bills in Parliament and for the publication by The National Archives of Acts of Parliament should lead to the ability to develop a largely automated process to show directly the effects of Bills on existing legislation. This would not go as far as incorporating the amendments into the text of the affected legislation. However it would bring together, in one place, the effects contained in the Bill and the text of the legislation they will change. The same use of Extensible Markup Language (XML) would also potentially lead to reductions in time and cost of making amendments to the UK Statute Law Database once Royal Assent has been given. However, as noted in recommendation 2, the present technology in place does not enable this to be done in a cost effective manner.

Of course the Government would wish to explore with Parliament a number of practical considerations about implementation of the recommendation, including:

(1) Timing. Producing the document for Introduction would add a further task at a time when the work of Bill Offices, Parliamentary Counsel and Departmental Bill Teams is already at a peak. Furthermore it is likely to be most useful at Committee stage when the detail of the Bill is being examined.

(2) Status. The Committee helpfully suggests that this should be an informal document, but the Government would wish nevertheless to do the work to ensure that it was as accurate as possible.

(3) Revision. Consideration would need to be given to whether, and at what stages, the document would need to be revised if the Bill itself is amended during its passage.

(4) Amendments covered. The Committee suggested that the document should focus on "significant" amendments. Consideration would need to be given to

which amendments should be covered—in some cases a single amendment to an existing Act could be regarded as significant. A question would also arise about what unamended provisions providing context should also be produced with the amended text.

(5) Mode of publication. Initial investigations have shown that it could be possible to show the effect of amendments on a website using data from the Statute Law Database and colour; this could be difficult and expensive with a printed publication.

(6) Resources. Undertaking such work has significant resource implications for Parliamentary Counsel and for Departmental Bill Teams, as well as Parliament itself.

To allow these issues to be addressed in a practical way, the Government would like to explore with Parliament the possibility of a web-based “proof of concept”. This could be run in parallel with a suitable Bill, but essentially decoupled from the formal processes. The National Archives and Parliament would work together, combining technology and expertise and seeking help from the Bill team and Parliamentary Counsel, to link a Bill’s amendments to the latest available version of the text of Acts from the Statute Law Database. Amendments will not be incorporated into the text of affected legislation but will be brought together, in one place, to show the effects contained in the Bill and the text of the legislation they will change. The work would explore the technical and practical issues, and establish the feasibility and costs of a more systemic implementation. It would also be valuable to generate “user feedback” from Members and others to ensure that the information provided was useful to them.

APPENDIX 2: ARE THE LORDS LISTENING?: LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS

Recommendation	Progress and Issues
<i>Parliamentary Education, Visitors and Outreach Services</i>	
<p>1. The Committee is keen to see the completion of the national roll-out of the Parliamentary Outreach service. We look forward to the formal review of the three-year programme and ask that this be presented to the Committee in time to allow for appropriate long-term planning (paragraph 25).</p>	<p>The recommendations in this section are being progressed by the Parliamentary Education and Outreach Services.</p>
<p>2. We welcome the support that the outreach service offers to select committees wishing to meet outside Westminster, and we draw this support to the attention of other Lords Select Committees (paragraph 26).</p>	
<p>3. We recommend that the House Committee should continue the travel subsidy offered to state schools outside the South-East visiting Parliament through the Education Service (paragraph 17).</p>	
<p>4. We recommend that the Education Service should explore ways to encourage teachers and the relevant curriculum bodies to increase coverage of the House of Lords in the curriculum (paragraph 20).</p>	
<p>5. The Committee will consider plans for the necessary ICT equipment to be installed in the Parliamentary Education Centre in order to ensure that Parliament provides a modern learning space for educational visitors and has appropriate facilities such as video conferencing for distance learning (paragraph 15).</p>	
<p>6. Given our view about the limits of what is possible on the parliamentary website, we have invited the administration to explore the possibility of working with partner organisations to develop online pupil parliaments and spaces for themed topic-based discussions for young people (paragraph 56).</p>	
<p>7. We recommend that the House of Lords administration invite officials in the Commons to work with them to develop a Parliament-wide strategy for improving access for people with disabilities (including learning disabilities and mental health issues) to Parliament (paragraph 114).</p>	

<p><i>House of Lords Media, Broadcasting, Communications and Outreach Services</i></p>
<p>8. In our view, Members are the greatest ambassadors for the House. The Committee calls on more Members to participate in the 'Peers in Schools' programme and to talk to groups outside Parliament (paragraph 29).</p>
<p>9. We recommend that the House of Lords administration should draw up options for a shadowing scheme to allow members who wish to participate to have a range of people shadow their work (paragraph 32).</p>
<p>10. We recommend that there be a pilot exercise in which an online debate, promoted with a targeted section of the public, would be run in parallel with a debate in the Lords Chamber (paragraph 56).</p>
<p>11. The Committee welcomes the Lords of the Blog website. We encourage members to contribute to the website and suggest that Committee Chairmen consider posting a blog at the launch of a new inquiry (paragraph 37).</p>
<p>12. We recommend that the administration continue to build relations with regional and local media as well as national media (paragraph 97).</p>
<p>13. We recommend greater use of online media (paragraph 97).</p>
<p>14. We recommend that the House experiment with offering information sessions to members of the press gallery, and our Chairman will write to the Chairman of the Press Gallery to take forward this recommendation (paragraph 99).</p>
<p>15. We recommend that the administration explore possible links with journalism courses (paragraph 101).</p>
<p>16. We recommend that there should be greater access to the House of Lords for factual filming. The presumption should be that meetings and events to which the public are admitted without invitation can be filmed and that Members can be interviewed in public areas (paragraph 89).</p>
<p>17. We recommend that the administration revise the leaflet setting out the regulations governing filming photography, filming, sound recording, painting, sketching, mobile telephones and pagers so that the regulations can be readily understood. (paragraph 89).</p>
<p>18. We recommend that a more appropriate room be assigned for [media] interviews (paragraph 89).</p>

The recommendations in this section are being progressed by the House of Lords Information Office working with the Committee Office, Black Rod's Department and the Department of Facilities.

<i>The Website—Improvement Programme</i>
19. The Committee welcomes the many improvements to the parliamentary website and stresses the need for the improvement programme to continue (paragraph 34). Whilst Parliament does well at using its website to inform people, it needs continually to develop the way in which it uses the internet actively to engage with people (paragraph 48).
20. We recommend that the House of Lords administration invite officials in the Commons to work with them to develop a Parliament-wide strategy for improving access for people with disabilities (including learning disabilities and mental health issues) to parliamentary information (paragraph 114).
21. We recommend that the administration work in partnership with already established websites catering for interest groups (paragraph 46).
22. We recommend that from each Member's biographical page on the parliamentary website it should be possible to access directly a much greater range of information about that Member's parliamentary activities (for instance, through links to the Member's voting record, the questions and amendments the Member has tabled, and the Member's entry in the register of interests) (paragraph 73).
23. We have invited the Director of Information Services to bring forward proposals by the end of the year for establishing a database of members' areas of expertise and interest [for the website] (paragraph 119).
24. We have asked the Head of Online Services to examine whether the parliamentary website could include more links between parliamentary terms and the glossary (paragraph 104).
25. We recommend further integration of the various information sets (such as Bills, Hansard, records of divisions, the register of Lords' interests) on the parliamentary website (paragraph 73).

The recommendations in this section are being progressed by the bicameral Web and Intranet Programme.

<i>Legislation</i>	
<p>26. We recommend that pre-legislative scrutiny committees should invite the public to submit comments via the parliamentary website on the draft bill being scrutinised (paragraph 60).</p>	<p>The recommendations in this section are being progressed by the House of Lords Information Office, Committee Office, Legislation Office and the bicameral Web and Intranet Programme</p>
<p>27. We recommend that the presentation of Bills on the parliamentary website be developed so as to make the legislative process more transparent (paragraph 76).</p>	
<p>28. We recommend that it be possible online to look back and see how a Bill has been amended as it moves through Parliament (paragraph 76).</p>	
<p>29. We recommend that the House of Lords administration invite officials in the Commons and PICT to explore with them the feasibility of creating an online system where people can sign up to receive electronic alerts and updates about particular Bills or portions of Bills relevant to their interests (paragraph 77).</p>	
<p>30. The Committee will later this year examine how the House might best inform the public accurately and impartially about how the House amends particular items of legislation (whether by press release or by other means) (paragraph 111).</p>	
<p>31. We have asked the administration to provide information on whether other parliaments produce such press releases or summaries and to prepare samples to show what such documents might look like for the Lords (paragraph 111).</p>	

<i>Hansard and Proceedings</i>
32. People should be allowed to embed the House's proceedings on their websites, so that our proceedings can have as wide a distribution as possible on the internet. We recommend that a trial start as soon as possible (paragraph 44).
33. We have invited the BBC and the House of Lords administration to bring forward proposals for how the House can maximise potential synergies with the BBC's forthcoming 'Democracy Live' website (paragraph 44).
34. We recommend that the parliamentary website provide contextual information alongside webcast House of Lords proceedings (paragraph 92).
35. During our inquiry, we looked at a pilot demonstrator integrating video of Lords proceedings with Lords Hansard, which would enable users to watch, listen to and read a past debate at the same time. The Committee welcomed this advance and decided that development should continue with a view to offering a full service to the public by summer 2010 (paragraph 72).
36. The Committee is impressed with development in the printed Hansard and welcomes recent developments in the online presentation of Hansard. We stress the need for the online improvement programme to continue (paragraph 69).
37. The Committee will examine the case for the House producing an accessible accurate and impartial summary of debates and consider the various issues involved (paragraph 111).
38. Later this year, we will review the arrangements for broadcasting Lords proceedings to make the footage more engaging. As a first step, we recommend that there should be a trial period in the 2009-10 parliamentary session during which divisions in the Lords are recorded from within the division lobbies. The images could be broadcast accompanied by the atmospheric sound feed from the Chamber which broadcasters currently use when covering a division, so that specific conversations are not picked up (paragraph 83).
39. We recommend that all public meetings of Lords committees be webcast with video as well as audio (paragraph 92).

The recommendations in this section are being progressed by the House of Lords Official Report and Information Office, the Parliamentary Broadcasting Unit, Black Rod's Department and the Department of Facilities, House of Lords.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Open Data Standards and Streamlining Information Flows between Government and Parliament</i></p>	
<p>40. We recommend that information and documentation related to the core work of the House of Lords (including Bills, Hansard, transcripts of public committee meetings, evidence submitted to committees, committee reports, records of divisions, expenses and the register of Lords' interests) should be produced and made available online in an open standardised electronic format that enables people outside Parliament to analyse and re-use the data (paragraph 66).</p>	<p>The recommendations in this section are being progressed by the bicameral Procedural Programme working with the Cabinet Office on behalf of the Government.</p>
<p>41. The Committee welcomes the fact that officials in both Houses have agreed that parliamentary systems creating, holding or publishing data about the core work of the two Houses should be developed to deliver the information outputs required both internally, for the efficient working of members and officials, and externally for members of the public. The Committee stresses the high priority that should be given to this work and will periodically review its progress (paragraph 67).</p>	
<p>42. The Government should work with Parliament to implement common standards for data shared with or transferred from government, so as to improve the flow of information between government and Parliament and to enhance the public's ability to re-use that information (paragraph 78).</p>	
<p>43. We call on the Government to start producing Bills in an electronic format which both complies with "open standards" and is readily re-usable (paragraph 79).</p>	
<p>44. In relation to Bills, we also recommend that, for each Government Bill that significantly amends an earlier Act, the Government should produce an accompanying informal document to show the original legislation and how the Bill would change it (paragraph 80).</p>	
<p>45. We recommend that the Government produce these documents as a matter of course before the Second Reading of a Bill in the House of Lords and that the House make them publicly available via the Bill pages of the parliamentary website (paragraph 80).</p>	
<p>46. We ask the Government to explain how and within what timescale our recommendations will be incorporated into the work that Sir Tim Berners-Lee will lead on opening access to data (paragraph 81).</p>	

<i>Strategic and House Issues</i>
<p>47. We welcome the House of Lords outreach and engagement programme, championed by the Lord Speaker. It is three years since the House elected its first Lord Speaker. If the House at some point reviews the role of the Lord Speaker, we recommend that outreach and education remain priorities for the role (paragraph 28).</p>
<p>48. The Committee recommends that Lords members of All-Party Groups encourage those Groups to consider how they could contribute to the outreach and educational work of Parliament (paragraph 29).</p>
<p>49. We recommend a review of the parliamentary language used in the House of Lords to make it easier for people outside the House to understand our proceedings. Our Chairman will, after our report has been considered by the House, seek to initiate a separate debate in the Chamber on the language and terminology used in the House (paragraph 104).</p>
<p>50. We decided that our Chairman should, after our report has been considered by the House, seek to initiate a separate debate in the Chamber on the impact of the ceremonial aspects of the House on public understanding of its work (paragraph 109).</p>

The recommendations in this section are being progressed by the Chairman of the Information Committee (Lord Renton of Mount Harry).

