

## HERITAGE GATEWAY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Section One: Going Online – Methods and Timescales

	Issue/ Comment	Response
1.1	How does being online via the Heritage Gateway relate to being online independently?	<p>For those not already online, going online via the Heritage Gateway is a step towards getting online independently since it builds web service technology which is used to query data held on a web-enabled server hosted by the parent Authority. This web service is 'open-source' technology that can be queried by more than one mechanism and, combined with the HER's IT development of an interface, can provide an independent online HER. The advantage of being on the Heritage Gateway is that it provides generic cross-searching across a wide range of data. HERs can configure their own linked web service to return optimum results according to their own data structure.</p> <p>For those already independently online, the added incentive of also being searchable via the Heritage Gateway is increased access for users to the HER information and the ability to view that information across boundaries and within the context of other HERs and national records. In addition, the Heritage Gateway benefits from the audience research and high-profile marketing undertaken by the National Monument Record's Access Programme, of which the project is part.</p>
1.2	How long is the timeframe between embarking on discussions with exeGesIS, ADS or the Heritage Gateway project team and appearing online?	<p>Once an HER expresses interest with the Heritage Gateway, the project team can work out the best method of joining up to the website for that HER. For development work with either exeGesIS or ADS, we can put you in touch with them directly, to discuss capacity and timetabling. As an example, once the work is scheduled, exeGesIS can often perform installation itself within 3-4 days. Time for any specific configuration work within the HER itself also needs to be factored into timescale calculations.</p>
1.3	Is this a good time to broadcast our data through the Heritage Gateway when the term 'access' as it used in the White Paper has yet to be conclusively defined?	<p>The White Paper was produced by DCMS following consultation with English Heritage, ALGAO and Local Authorities. From inception, the Heritage Gateway Project has been closely linked with the vision of online public access to digital historic environment records. HERs providing access to their data via the Heritage Gateway are actively participating in that vision of a reformed system of Heritage Protection.</p>

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### Section Two: Costs

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2.1	What are the costs for linking up to the Heritage Gateway?	<p>There are several options for linking to the Heritage Gateway, depending on the current set-up of the HER database.</p> <p>Estimated costs (excl. VAT) of some of the options are given below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) For HBSMR v.3.5 Users to connect via HBSMR Gateway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For text-only: c.£3,500 one-off charge + annual support and maintenance fee of £750</li> <li>• For image option: additional £500 one-off charge + variable configuration charge + additional annual support and maintenance fee of £150</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) For HBSMR Users to send data to exeGesIS for hosting and web service querying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £1,000 p.a. + variable configuration charge + £100 per export</li> </ul> </li> <li>3) For any HER to deposit a copy of their data with ADS for web service querying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-2 days for depositing data + 2-3 days for web service attachment @ £325 per day. Annual upload included – more frequent upload chargeable.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4) For HERs who already have online presence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be discussed with Heritage Gateway Project Team – development shared between Heritage Gateway Project and local ICT provider; costs dependent on Local Authority IT set-up.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5) For HERs using bespoke systems who do not fall into any of the above categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be discussed with Heritage Gateway Project Team. exeGesIS or ADS hosting options are also possible for bespoke systems; costs dependent on Local Authority IT set-up.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
2.2	Can English Heritage cover any of the costs for linking HERs to Heritage Gateway?	<p>English Heritage has already invested heavily in facilitating links to HER data through the Heritage Gateway, developing the infrastructure and a web services toolkit for .net platforms. We have invested over £150,000 in development work and pilots with exeGesIS and ADS to enable HBSMR users to link to the new 'HBSMR Gateway' compatible software and to build links between ArchSearch and the Heritage Gateway, by developing a Java-enabled web service toolkit. Unfortunately we do not currently have the financial capacity to fund the linking of all HERs to Heritage Gateway.</p>

2.3	Given the many calls on LA budgets we might have to look to timescales in excess of those suggested – are there opportunities for external funding?	We will continue to look into alternative sources of funding for help with HERs' set-up costs but HERs are advised to investigate whether they can draw on e-government funding within their Local Authority.
2.4	Is there any thought of national discussion with the HLF for funding as a 'bulk bid'?	It may well be advantageous to LAs or HERs already making (or planning to make) their own broader HLF bids to stipulate that they will be making any online development cross-searchable via the Heritage Gateway, since this will broaden audiences for their information.
2.5	Does the Heritage Gateway envisage professional access being free to contractors? If so, there may be revenue implications for the HER and the HER is under strong pressure to keep up the revenue stream.	There is currently no restriction on access to information for any user. The only restrictions that we could envisage imposing may relate to levels of access to national register information in line with forthcoming Heritage Protection Legislation. The website terms of use state explicitly that the information found on the Heritage Gateway is not to be used for planning or other management advice or recommendations and the relevant local HER should be contacted in all cases.

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### Section Three: Data Quality

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3.1	<p>Our main issue is data quality, as highlighted by our recently completed HER Audit. The amount of data cleaning needed is significant, and we would not want to put poor quality records on the system.</p>	<p>Very few datasets are likely to be perfect and there are caveats and wording on the site to reflect this. The generic cross-searching mechanism has highlighted differences in our own datasets but we still believe it is better to make this information available. Staged or modular delivery of records is possible, enabling an HER to participate whilst simultaneously undertaking an enhancement project. The Gateway will only query what the web service is configured to return, so the HER can choose to suppress certain fields or records that can be made available by reconfiguring the web service at a later date. This type of work will be dependent on the method chosen by the HER to join the Gateway and will be costed on a case by case basis.</p>
3.2	<p>We're concerned at the use of 6 figure NGRs – surely users will start to question the precision of the database as a whole?</p>	<p>At this stage, pilot HERs are only putting up data that they are prepared for all audiences to see, which may only be 6 figure grid references. We have not imposed a minimum for grid reference accuracy although this may be something that ALGAO may want to consult its membership on in the longer term.</p>
3.3	<p>In terms of the relationship between HERs and the NMR, HERs would welcome enhancement using English Heritage data – are there any plans for releasing the full PastScape records rather than just the summaries?</p>	<p>The NMR Access Programme is currently running an enhancement project on the PastScape website; addition of the full text record is being considered as part of this.</p>

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### Section Four: Current Functionality

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4.1	From a user's point of view it is frustrating to get a range of overlapping sources – could duplicate results be narrowed down?	Whilst there is overlap between some of the datasets, each has different strengths and developed in different ways. Concording overlapping records is an immense task and not one within the current scope of the Heritage Gateway project, given the burden it would place both on English Heritage and local HERs. We have undertaken usability testing of the website to try and ensure that the site is laid out so that users will understand why there may be more than one source of similar information. This will be vital for datasets such as Images of England and the forthcoming LBOonline, which may contain differing versions of list descriptions (IoE uses 'point in time' list descriptions from Feb 2001, whereas LBOonline contains the up-to-date listings).
4.2	Are there plans to make contextual material available through the Heritage Gateway?	Providing a layer of data which mediates the material returned through searching the Heritage Gateway is not something within the scope of the current project.
4.3	Is there a restriction on the information that people can download?	There is currently no restriction on the number of records returned from any single search. Should HERs feel strongly about restricting number of records returned, it is certainly something we could consider. We have not developed any facility to physically download records from the website, nor are there any plans to do so. Additionally, the website Terms and Conditions of Use make our position on bulk downloads clear.
4.4	Does the website conform to w3C accessibility guidelines?	Whilst the website was initially designed with the w3C guidelines in mind, there is still more work to be done before we apply for independent confirmation of w3C compliance. Accessibility functions such as colour and font-size changing, will be added in 2008/9, when the website is enhanced for public launch.
4.5	How does the PAS fit in with the Heritage Gateway and its datasets?	PAS data certainly fits with Heritage Gateway objectives; we have passed the PAS team our technical documentation in order for PAS developers to scope potential collaborative development work.
4.6	Why has a unitary authority not been included as a pilot?	Within the time and funding constraints of our pilot development it has not been possible to include a unitary authority thus far. We recognise the need to work with a unitary authority in the near future and are taking steps to see if this may be possible.

4.7	If the server of one of the participating datasets 'goes down', how does this affect the Heritage Gateway?	Heritage Gateway's technology operates by sending the end user's query to web services attached to its underlying datasets. Each web service converts the original query into a form that can be understood by its attached dataset. Results from the dataset are then sent back to the Heritage Gateway. The web service responds with a number of results, 0 results (no match for the query) or no response from the dataset (server time out error). This means that any single dataset not returning results will not impact on response speed of other search results and will be flagged as experiencing server problems.
4.8	Surely the results page will become unwieldy when more datasets come on board?	We have already been thinking about ways to overcome the need for users to scroll through numerous datasets' results blocks. An interim page is planned which will simply list the resources and number of results returned so that users can see all the information on one screen. This additional screen will be added within the planned redesign of the site from April 2008.

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### Section Five: Future Enhancements

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5.1	Could users be made to accept a user agreement before accessing full results as on ADS? This might be a way of alerting developers to restrictions.	This is something we are considering for the next phase of development in 2008/9 as it would present the opportunity to alert users to both the nature (local or national/ statutory or non-statutory) and use of the information.
5.2	Might it be possible to make it explicit what sources are <u>not</u> available through the Heritage Gateway?	We could certainly add this information in to our Help text or in the 'About the Project' section which is due to be expanded in more detail soon.
5.3	Will the Heritage Gateway be reporting back to LAs/ HERs regarding web stats?	The Heritage Gateway's technical infrastructure currently logs all user queries submitted and which datasets respond with results. We are investigating ways of developing an area of the website for contributing dataset owners to view these stats in report format. To this end we will shortly be consulting our pilot HERs on which stats they would find it useful for the Heritage Gateway to report.
5.4	How will registration operate? What will the policies be?	Currently registration exists on the site for the purpose of allowing registered users to save their search strings and freely access other English Heritage websites. When, as suggested in the White Paper, Local and National register information is disseminated through the Heritage Gateway, there is a possibility that registration may be adapted as a tool to differentiate between audiences.
5.5	Can we expect a full map interface on Heritage Gateway? This would better reflect the way our data is recorded/managed.	We recognise that people will soon be demanding better GIS material than a simple Google interface can provide and are looking to address this as part of future development. The Heritage Gateway is working with English Heritage's Corporate GIS Team on a project to build a public access GIS toolkit which can be adapted for use on English Heritage's various web resources. The aim is to develop this capability in 2009/10 through Heritage Gateway in the first instance. The scope and nature of this mapping capability is currently being defined and an internal Business Case submitted for resource allocation to the project.
5.6	What about linking into the MAGIC website where geographic information is already available?	We have no plans to link into the MAGIC website since this is a discrete project in its own right and due to its rural scope, would only be partially relevant to the Heritage Gateway with both its rural and urban coverage. As mentioned above, we have development plans in the pipeline for our own GIS interface which will draw on the English Heritage data which is already currently supplied to MAGIC.

5.7	Is there any prospect of the Heritage Gateway linking to natural environment data in the future?	The Heritage Gateway Project Board is currently devising a set of criteria for the inclusion of datasets on the website. Obviously our priority in the short to medium term is working with ALGAO, HERs and IHBC to link to local archaeological and historic built environment datasets. Once we are well on the road to achieving widespread coverage of local HER data, we can start to look at other natural environment datasets which may complement the existing data well.
5.8	Is there a vision of incorporating HLS and NMP? And surely HLC should be provided as a discrete dataset as HERs are somewhat bewildered as what to do with it?	As above, we will be considering additional datasets in the longer term, and certainly appreciate the sense of providing access to discrete detailed datasets such as HLS and NMP alongside local records within a single search mechanism. Regarding the HLC data, this is something that we will be discussing with the English Heritage Characterisation Team.
5.9	Is it intended to expand Heritage Gateway searching to bring back source and events information?	Where source and events information is linked to monument records, this can currently be returned as a static record. There is certainly the capability within the search mechanism that we have developed to include source and events searching in the future. We would like to get widespread local HER coverage on the Heritage Gateway first and then prioritise further development work.
5.10	Is there likely to be the facility to download material through the Heritage Gateway – particularly OASIS reports.	Currently we do not have plans to include the OASIS reports within the Heritage Gateway, although it is likely that there will be a link to search them on the ArchSearch website.
5.11	In terms of 'critical mass' at what point do you say we have enough HERs to build the bigger picture? There is already a critical mass in the eastern region – perhaps this could be used to Heritage Gateway's advantage?	Critical mass is being defined in project terms as 40-50 HERs across England as a whole. The project aims to achieve this by 2010/11. The comprehensive coverage of the East of England will be extremely useful in both demonstrating and assessing cross-border advantages.
5.12	Is user interaction foreseen as a future development for the Heritage Gateway website?	We are observing with interest the experience of other sectoral websites, such as CBA's Community Archaeology Forum, which invite user-generated content. It is not currently within the project's scope to include this in planned iterations of the website, but is something that we will consider if there is demand for it in the future. There is, of course, a feedback mechanism on the site at the moment which can be used as a basic way of relaying updates from users back to dataset owners via email.