



Unlock your potential and make the most of G-Cloud

An Alternative White Paper

Acquia[™]
ENTERPRISE SELECT PARTNER



Introduction:

Why an Alternative White Paper?

Deeson Online and Acquia attended the recent Civil Service Live 2013 in London (July 2-3). Given our position on the G-Cloud marketplace and expertise, we went to CSL 2013 expecting the following:

1. That buyers of services from G-Cloud would be well versed and clear on what their requirements were, and;
2. That we would be able to discuss how Deeson and subsequently Drupal would be able to fit those requirements.

However, a different landscape soon came into sharp focus over the two days. Instead of collecting leads to take G-Cloud solutions further, we gathered first-hand insight from potential buyers and identified two key barriers that preceded steps 1 and 2 as outlined above.

The barriers:

1. Some of those who would benefit from G-Cloud face challenges in *how* to identify their need and;
2. Some of those who would benefit from G-Cloud face challenges in *how* or *why* they *should* work with SME's (small and medium enterprises).

The above barriers led us to produce this document which will explore possible solutions. It's not quite a White Paper in the traditional sense, but an Alternative White Paper. We hope it will be the first in a short series released over the coming months to help educate you the buyer and associated stakeholders in a language and format you will understand.

Executive summary: G-Cloud and you

G-Cloud reflects a step-change in how Government and the wider public sector procure and deliver their Information and Communication Technology^[1]. At its core, it's about delivering a more economic on-demand model - and getting computing resources to users as needed.

“ When it comes to buying from G-Cloud, it's apparent that some of you are struggling to understand and identify your ICT needs, which in turn makes it difficult to know what service you need to even look for on G-Cloud. ”

Momentum behind G-Cloud is growing. Total spend through the CloudStore reached £25.3 million^[2] by the end of May 2013 with £3.5m recorded in that month alone. Transactions have been increasing: 280 purchases made in March, compared to 180 in February. But despite an upturn in use of G-Cloud there are still hurdles, some of which we highlight in this Alternative White Paper.

The aim of G-Cloud is to:

- Enable the public sector to purchase the services of SMEs
- Do away with lengthy and complicated contracts
- Create a marketplace to match your requirements with the providers of services in a streamlined way
- Be assured: every product and service in the G-Cloud catalogue has been accredited to Government standards, offering a more cost-effective scalability and procurement system.

The G-Cloud challenge:

When it comes to buying from G-Cloud, it's apparent that some of you are struggling to understand and identify your ICT needs, which in turn makes it difficult to know what service you need to even look for on G-Cloud. Compounding this challenge is that you're likely more comfortable and familiar with buying services in a particular way: Lengthy and expensive contracts with large companies, promising deliverables that are often spread over years, not months. We recognise the power of this barrier. Why should you change things when you've been working in a particular way for a very long time? And even if you did want to go the G-Cloud route how can you be sure you're going to be getting the right solution for your problem or need?

Yet the 'traditional' way of procuring services can also be a hindrance. Long-term projects carry the risk of

“Buyers and suppliers need to be encouraged to work together to make sure the cycle is refined and will in turn help the buyer, and associated stakeholders.”

becoming unwieldy with costs rising as the development of systems roll on and on, sometimes without delivering any real value. One such disastrous example was the NHS National Programme for IT^[3]. What's more, the speed of changes in technology mean that rigid, closed solutions can become prohibitively expensive to update, rendering them potentially useless.

The new alternative: agile and innovative

A more agile, bite-size approach to procuring ICT solutions will instead unlock capacity and innovation: the G-Cloud way is about creating lower-cost nimble systems over large budget, long-term programmes. This approach is best demonstrated through the work of Gov.uk. Here they not only had to take scores of government websites and put them into one simple, intuitive site, but also had to re-educate themselves to work in an entirely different way. Out were cumbersome and seemingly never-ending programmes with numerous stakeholders and contractors. In were short-term, quick-iteration projects lasting weeks or a few months. The result? An agile, contemporary, workable approach to ICT delivery. You can learn more about Gov.uk's ongoing journey by reading their blog^[4].

But perhaps there are deeper challenges which need to be addressed too. A large number of government departments may lack relevant IT buyers as well as the necessary technical integration skills that would enable them to exploit G-Cloud services effectively. Again, this is going to hinder your ability to take advantage of the excellent services on offer.

In the medium term, an evolutionary approach is required to get use of G-Cloud and it's associated marketplace, CloudStore, right: Buyers and suppliers need to be encouraged to work together to make sure the cycle is refined and will in turn help the buyer, and associated stakeholders. But what about the short term? How easy is it to shift your procurement attitudes towards using G-Cloud? We think the following advice will help.

Case study: Global NGO

The problem: We knew there were serious issues in communicating with a global audience who'd moved online before we had. We also knew there were a whole host of suppliers who could offer us various digital 'solutions'. Where we lacked knowledge was understanding which of the solutions suited our needs and more importantly how we'd implement them in a way that made sense for us as an organisation.

The solution: We commissioned Deeson Online to produce a strategy report which quickly brought us up to speed with a full range of options which were open to us. We then took part in workshops to delve deeper into our requirements and potential opportunities.

The outcome: Working with Deeson Online put us in a very good position to procure a cost-effective open source solution.

Getting the G-Cloud foundations right: the first steps

- 1. Be open and willing to try a different approach:** To take full advantage of G-Cloud, it helps to have a more 'open' attitude - and be open to experimentation. Difficult, we know. But not only is it possible, it's empowering.
- 2. Clearly identify and understand your user or audience:** This will drive what your needs are - what you want to achieve and what 'success' looks like. This in turn will identify the solution, and help you deliver a meaningful product.
- 3. Establish who your key owners are:** Make them central to the communication; they are the enablers, the advocates and the ones that will drive the projects forward.
- 4. Use a natural opportunity to try G-Cloud:** Got an IT service provider up for tender - or nearing that time? That could be the perfect 'break' for you and your department to test G-Cloud.
- 5. Be the early adopter:** Become the educator of G-Cloud from within and seek out those who 'get' the new way of procuring. Together you can champion the process.

Lay the foundations now: Requirements Gathering Toolkit for Procurement on G-Cloud

As this Alternative White Paper highlights, greater education and support is required to

help buyers understand not only the process, but also critically their needs. Which is why we developed a **Requirements Gathering Toolkit for Procurement on G-Cloud^[5]** solution.

Part of the Deeson approach includes in-house strategy workshops aimed at developing an agile specification and scope for your G-Cloud project. This means we not only help you get a better understanding of your pain-points but also can create solutions that we know you'll love. As a result we've created a practical, tailored toolkit rolled out on-site via a four-day workshop empowering decision makers and associated stakeholders to match your organisational digital goals with G-Cloud and Drupal solutions. The toolkit will eliminate time-consuming and potentially costly confusion. Result: G-Cloud process clarified, with pain-points identified enabling you to confidently procure G-Cloud solutions that match specific business needs and fit into your wider digital strategy. All this is delivered via our full-service, permanent Drupal team.

Benefits:

- Become better educated about G-Cloud
- Learn how to assess your pain-points and user/customer needs
- Develop an agile specification and scope for your G-Cloud project
- Empower decision makers and associated stakeholders to match your organisational digital goals with G-Cloud and Drupal solutions
- Eliminate time-consuming and potentially costly confusion.

What next? Unlock your G-Cloud potential now:

Deeson Online have a range of ways in which we can support you in getting to grips in identifying your G-Cloud needs. They range from the formal to informal, but as a taster we can:

- Run a fact-finding workshop on-site to identify your key pain-points
- Meet over a coffee to chat about top-line concerns on how to use G-Cloud
- Audit your digital presence.

Summary:

- A more agile, bite-size approach to procuring ICT solutions is required to unlock capacity and innovation
- The G-Cloud way is about creating lower-cost nimble systems instead of large budget, long-term programmes
- For some, purchasing through the G-Cloud poses problems: there are issues in understanding and identifying ICT needs. This in turn makes it difficult to know what service they need to look for on G-Cloud
- Try to be proactive in addressing the challenges: get educated and look for opportunities to test out the system
- Be open to a new way of working.

Sign up for the next White Paper:
hello@deeson-online.co.uk

Case study: Oil industry

The challenge: We had a good sense of what we wanted from our new digital projects thanks to feedback from stakeholders and staff, as well as suffering the consequences of the weaknesses of some of our outdated systems. However, we weren't really sure how to approach this as a project.

The solution: Deeson Online discussed various project approaches with us while investigating our business requirements. They continually pushed us to focus on our users and our capacity to deliver digital services before focusing on making recommendations for technical solutions.

The outcome: This strategic approach involved slightly more upfront effort, but paid off when we moved into the project itself - which was heavily focused on delivering value rather than a monolithic software solution.

Appendix

- [1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61950/One-Year-On-ICT-Strategy-Progress.pdf
- [2] <http://gcloud.civilservice.gov.uk/about/sales-information/>
- [3] <http://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-national-programme-for-it-in-the-nhs-an-update-on-the-delivery-of-detailed-care-records-systems/>
- [4] <https://insidgovuk.blog.gov.uk>
- [5] <http://govstore.service.gov.uk/cloudstore/drupal-support-5913>
- [6] <https://www.gov.uk>
- [7] <http://lambeth.coop>
- [8] <http://www.britishcouncil.org/>
- [9] <http://drupalsecurityreport.org/>
- [10] <http://www.australia.gov.au/>

About Deeson Online

We are G-Cloud listed. Our team has built some of the UK's biggest websites for e-commerce, community and the third sector. Deeson Online is Acquia's only Enterprise Select high tier partner in the UK. We foster a partnership approach where we lead clients to innovative solutions. Find us at www.deeson-online.co.uk or on @deeson_labs.



About Acquia

Acquia is a commercial open source software company providing products, services and technical support for the open source Drupal social publishing system.



What is Drupal?

- Drupal is a framework - this means you can build great online solutions
- At its core is a highly adaptable open-source content management system that allows you to easily organise, manage and publish your content - whatever the size of your site
- It's completely free to download, use, and modify: there are no purchase, licence or maintenance fees
- It's especially strong among major governments and used by hundreds of public sector agencies, NGOs and education establishments all over the world.



Why Drupal for government?

In an era of open government, agencies must continue to do what they are already doing — only better. In an era of tight budgets, agencies must reduce operating costs and become more effective. They must distribute digital information in innovative ways, using the open standards of the web. They must make their published content more useful to, and more broadly adopted by, key constituents, stakeholders, and the public-at-large. For government agencies and their constituents and stakeholders, Drupal makes it easy to deliver on the drive to go Digital by Default: digital services that are so easy to use, all those who *can* use them *will* choose to do so whilst those who can't are not excluded. Or in other words, given the choice between visiting an office, using the phone or using the web, people should prefer using the web.

In order to deliver usable digital services, you need a flexible content model and decent user information. Drupal is built around this central premise. As an open source platform, Drupal supports an information-centric approach for customer-centric solutions while enabling agencies to reduce operational costs. In conclusion, with Drupal, agencies do more with less.

The Drupal community:

Drupal is more than a technology. It is also a community of tens of thousands of developers. This huge, deeply invested and thriving community is an extremely powerful resource. Why? Because if you have a particular challenge regarding your build, it's likely this issue will have already been addressed and even solved by members of the community. Tapping into it helps keep expenditure low as you're not paying for expensive time-consuming in-house solutions to be built from scratch. Think of it as a vast well of knowledge: a global collaborative approach to problem solving using feedback and innovation, which in turn directly benefits to you.

How can you use G-Cloud for Drupal?

- Engage experienced companies that are expert at solving your pain-points
- Benefit from the world's most collaborative, innovative developer community
- Get to market quickly.

Examples of Drupal sites:

Why is Drupal the natural choice for the following sites? Because it provides the right tools for collaboration and transparency, without compromising on performance.

- UK Government: [GOV.UK^{\[6\]}](#)
- Local government: [Lambeth^{\[7\]}](#)
- Organisation: [British Council^{\[8\]}](#)
- Drupal Security Report: [White Paper on security in Drupal^{\[9\]}](#)
- Central Government: [Australia^{\[10\]}](#)



Acquia[™]
ENTERPRISE SELECT PARTNER

hello@deeson-online.co.uk
deeson-online.co.uk