Designing better public services

GDS and GOV.UK

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LAB DESIGN

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Government Digital Service

A short review of 10 years

In 2006, the UK had a government portal for citizens

Directgov
www.direct.gov.uk
Public services all in one place

Search this site [ ] Go

Home | Directories | Guide to Govt | Do it online | Newsroom

Tuesday, 10 October 2006

Profile of health and well-being for England published

Connect to your council
Wide range of online services

Get safe online
Stop viruses, hackers and more

Greener schools
Do your bit for the environment

Straight to...

Education and learning
Early learning, Schools, 14 to 19, University and higher education, EMA, Student loans, Adult learning...

Home and community
Home buying and selling, Planning, Environment, Recycling, Water conservation...

Money, tax and benefits
Benefits and tax credits, Pensions, Taxes, Debt, National Insurance, Managing money, Council Tax...

Travel and transport

Motoring
Driver licensing, Learners and driving tests, Buy or sell a vehicle, Taxing and MOT, Online services...

Employment
Looking for work, Employees, Working hours and time off, Redundancy, Jobseekers...

Health and well-being
Medical records, Health services, Smoking, NHS Direct, Strokes, First aid, Emergencies, Seasonal flu...

Leisure and recreation

People

Parents
Having a baby, Childcare, Your money, Bullying, Maternity leave...

Disabled people
Disability Living Allowance, Rights, Home, Work, Money...

Over 50s
Working, Learning, Retirement and pensions, Health...

Britons living abroad
Working abroad,

Services from your local council

Renew your library books

Disposal of household waste

Paying and appealing parking fines

Top choices

Apply for EMA

Find a job

In 2006, every government agency had its own website

In 2010, we had a change of government

Martha Lane Fox did a review of digital government

14th October 2010

Dear Francis Maude,

DIRECTGOV 2010 AND BEYOND: REVOLUTION NOT EVOLUTION

You asked me to oversee a strategic review of Directgov and to report to you by the end of September. I have undertaken this review in the context of my wider remit as UK Digital Champion which includes offering advice on "how efficiencies can best be realised through the online delivery of public services." This means that I have not reviewed Directgov in isolation but as part of how the government can use the Internet both to communicate and interact better

Government Digital Service started in 2011

GOV.UK started in 2012

GOV.UK is one website for over 330 government departments and agencies

GOV.UK in 2016

👑 **GOV.UK**

Welcome to GOV.UK

The best place to find government services and information
Simpler, clearer, faster

[Search GOV.UK] 🔍

Popular on GOV.UK

Universal Jobmatch job search

Renew vehicle tax

Log in to student finance

Book your theory test

Employment and Support Allowance

Benefits

Includes tax credits, eligibility and appeals

Births, deaths, marriages and care

Parenting, civil partnerships, divorce and Lasting Power of Attorney

Business and self-employed

Disabled people

Includes carers, your rights, benefits and the Equality Act

Driving and transport

Includes vehicle tax, MOT and driving licences

Education and learning

Includes student loans, admissions

Money and tax

Includes debt and Self Assessment

Passports, travel and living abroad

Includes renewing passports and travel advice by country

Visas and immigration

The DVLA website is part of GOV.UK

'Tax your vehicle' is part of GOV.UK

Home > Driving and transport > Vehicle tax and SORN

Tax your vehicle

Tax your car, motorcycle or other vehicle using your reminder letter (V11).

If you don't have a reminder letter, you can use:

- a V5C registration certificate (log book) that's in your name - get a replacement if you don't have one
- your new keeper supplement (V5C/2) if you've just bought the vehicle
- your 'last chance' warning letter

Start now ❯

Other ways to apply

Vehicle tax and SORN

Check if a vehicle is taxed

Paying for vehicle tax by Direct Debit

Register your vehicle as off the road (SORN)

Calculate vehicle tax rates

Cancel your vehicle tax and get a refund

Tell DVLA you've changed address

More

Driving and transport

Getting an MOT

More

Over 330 government departments and agencies contribute to GOV.UK

Government Digital Service provides
- infrastructure
- tools
- guidance

Government Digital Service provides

- infrastructure

- tools

- guidance

Our design community grows
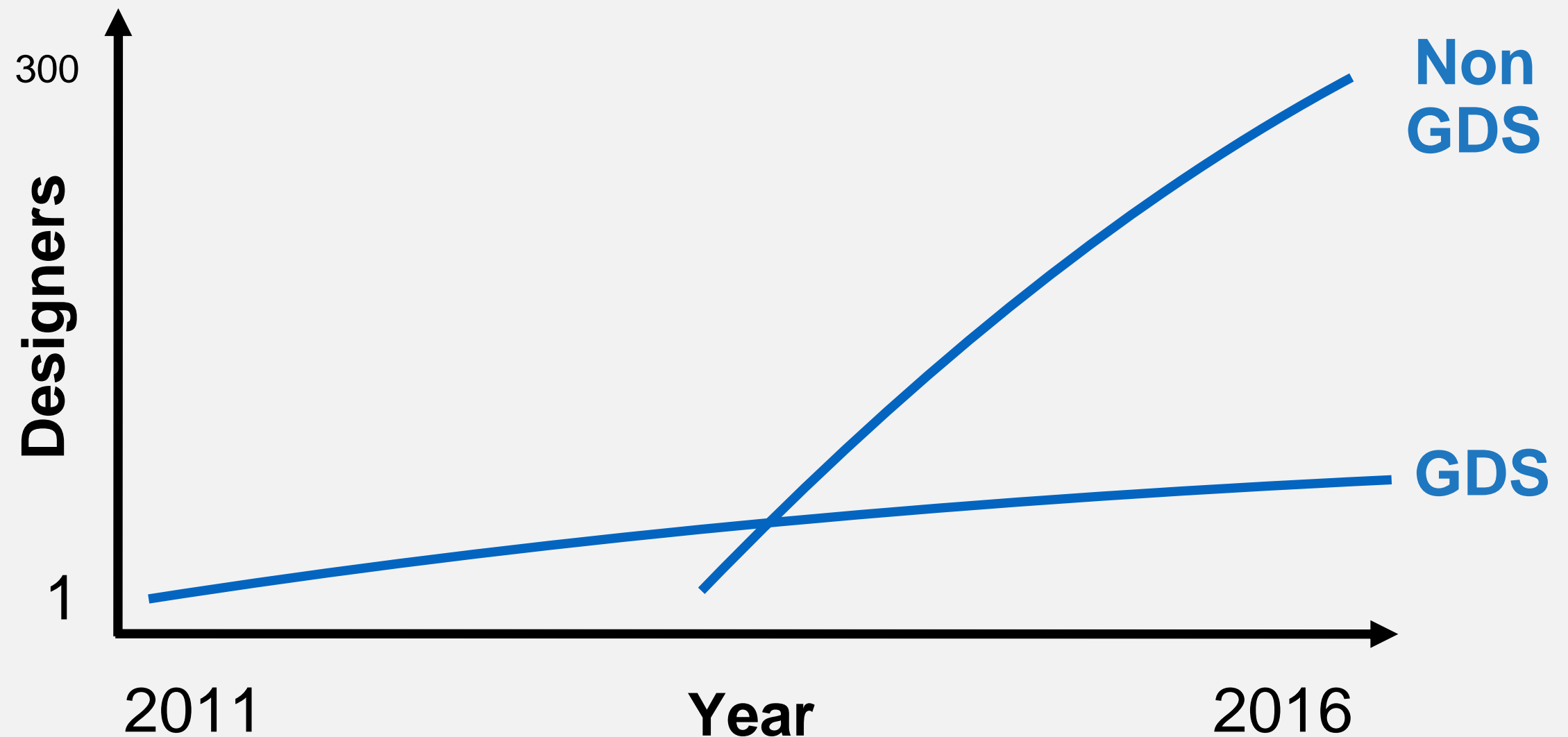
Government Digital Service
Design Principles

1 **Start with user needs**
2 **Do less**
3 **Design with data**
4 **Do the hard work to make it simple**
5 **Iterate. Then iterate again.**
6 **Build for inclusion**
7 **Understand context**
8 **Build digital services, not websites**
9 **Be consistent, not uniform**
10 **Make things open: it makes things better**

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GDS closed TransportDirect.info

transport direct.info

Connecting People to Places

| Homepage | Plan a journey | Find a place | Live travel | Tips and tools | Login / Register |

Find a train   **Find a flight**   **Find a car route**   **Find a coach**   **P Find a car park**

Plan a journey
Door-to-door journey planner
Find a train
Find cheaper rail fares
Find a flight
Find a car route
Find a coach
Compare city-to-city journeys
Day trip planner
Plan to park and ride
Find a bus
Drive to a car park

Find a place
Find a map
Find nearest station/airport
Find nearest car park
Network maps
Traffic levels

Live travel
Live Travel News
Departure boards

Tips and tools
Link to our website
Toolbar download
Mobile/PDA (opens new window)
Check journey CO2
Provide feedback
Related sites

Plan a door-to-door journey   More...

From [_____] Address/postcode ▼
To [_____] Address/postcode ▼
Leave [30 ▼] [Dec 2008 ▼] [14 ▼] [35 ▼]
Show ☑ Public transport   ☑ Car route
[Advanced] [Go]

Find a place   More...
Place [_____]
Address/postcode ▼
Show [-- Choose your preferred option -- ▼]
[Go]

Live travel news   More...

Disruption to train services to and from Glasgow Central due to signalling problem
M8 : Congestion Westbound at J18
B1381 : Road closed at Earith
A118 : Road closed at Forest Gate
A1151 : Road closed at Sprowston
A52 : Road closed at Stoke-On-Trent
A404 : Road closed at Northwood
A315 : Road closed at Kensington
M11 : Accident Northbound at J7
Disruption at Inverness Airport
A381 : Road closed at Newton Abbot
Status at: Tue 30 Dec 2008 14:19

Tips and tools   More...

Check CO2 emissions
Add Transport Direct to your website for free
Speed up your travel searches with our free toolbar

Latest...

⚠ Click here for details on concessionary bus pass schemes.
⚠ Please click here for the latest information on changes to public transport services over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

January Sales?

P Locate Park and ride schemes near your shopping destination or find a car park to make things a little easier.

Travel at your fingertips

Did you know that you can send your favourite journeys to you mobile? With a click on your mobile you can get live rail departures, bus schedules and travel news for car and public transport while you're on the move. Visit our mobile page

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Research continually

To [work in an agile way](), service teams must be able to quickly:

- update their understanding of users and their needs, including users who lack the ability or access to use digital services on their own

- test new design ideas, content and features to see if they work well for all users

- understand problems users are having and how they might be resolved

This means doing user research in every iteration of every phase - starting in discovery and continuing throughout live. You can't only do it at the beginning or end of development.

find
what
works
not
what's
popular

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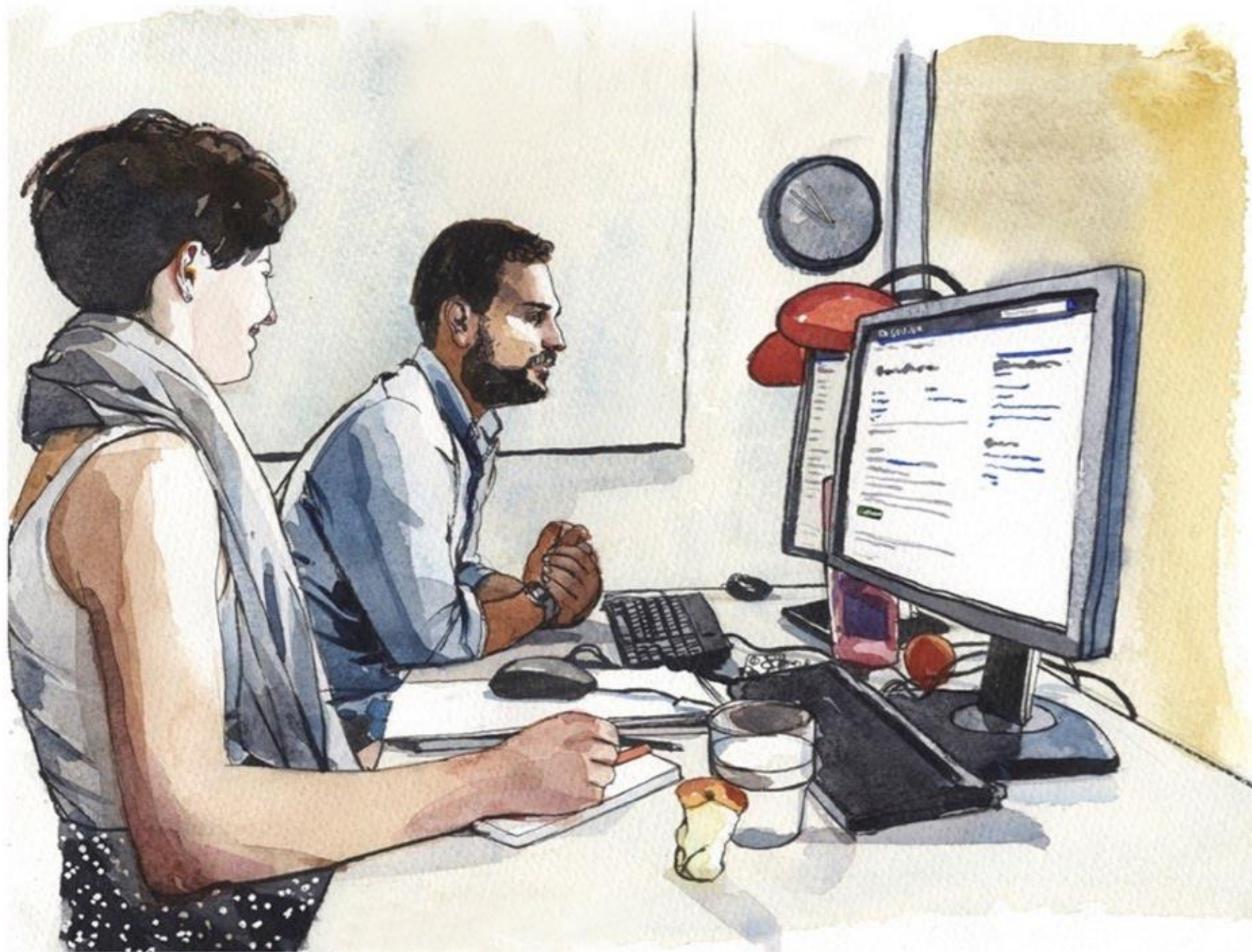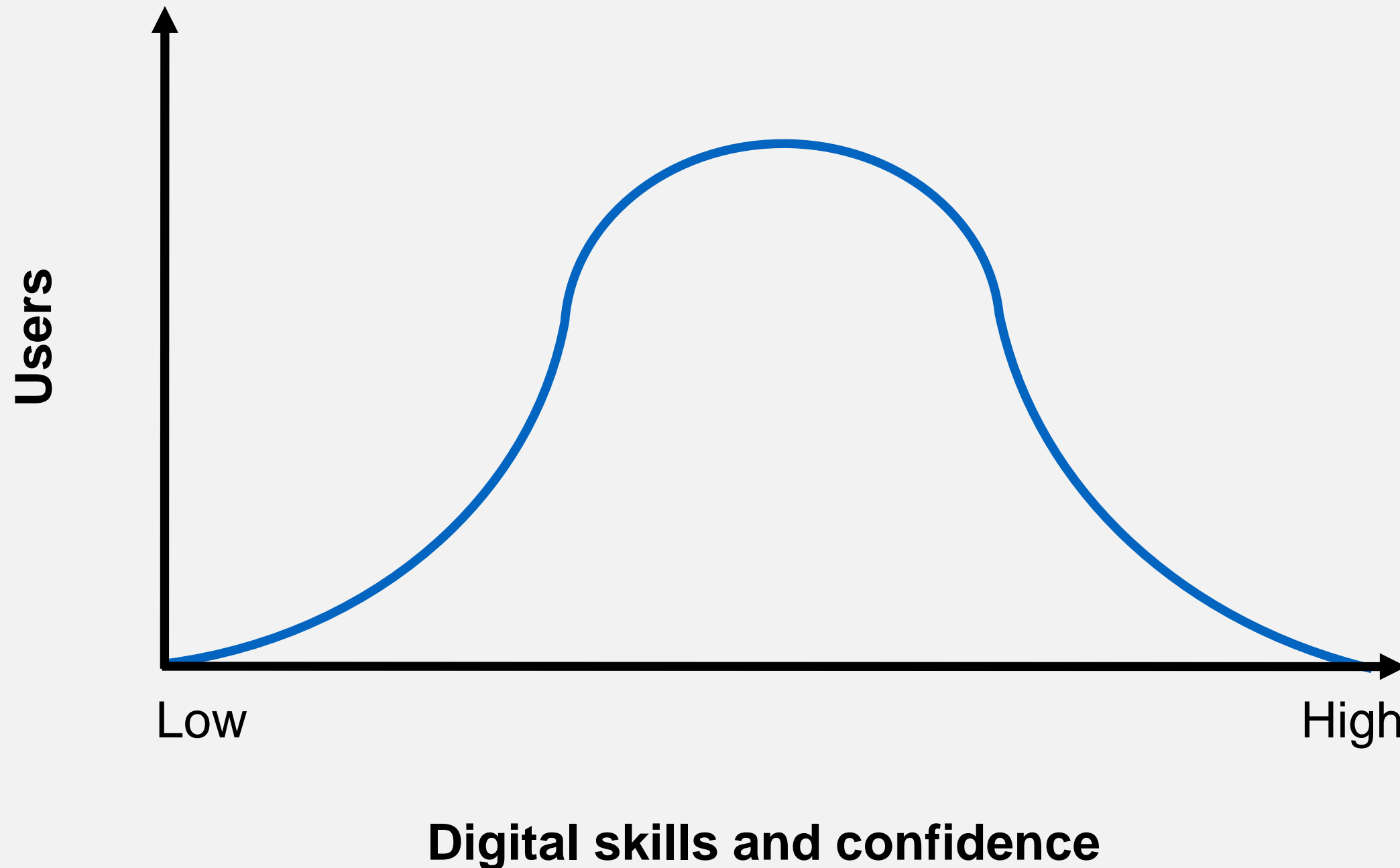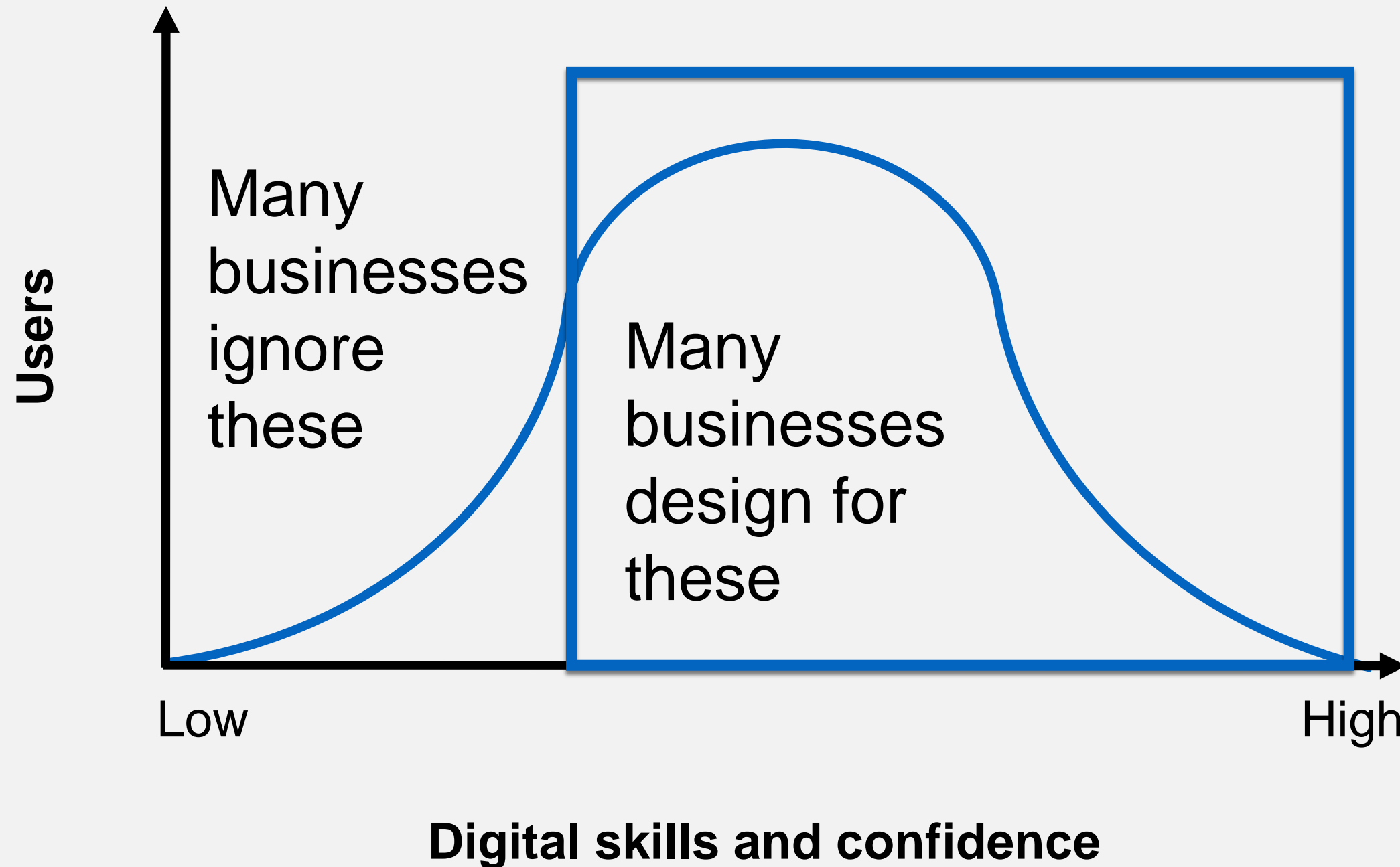10. Make things open: it makes things better

Most people have OK digital skills and confidence

Users

Low

High

Digital skills and confidence

Many businesses ignore people with low digital skills

Users

Many businesses ignore these

Many businesses design for these

Low

High

Digital skills and confidence

# Some skilled people have low digital skills

It's easy to assume that skilled people will all be IT literate, but what we found was that some skilled visa applicants (for example chefs, oil rig workers, small business retailers and church workers) lacked the skills, confidence or ability to get online.

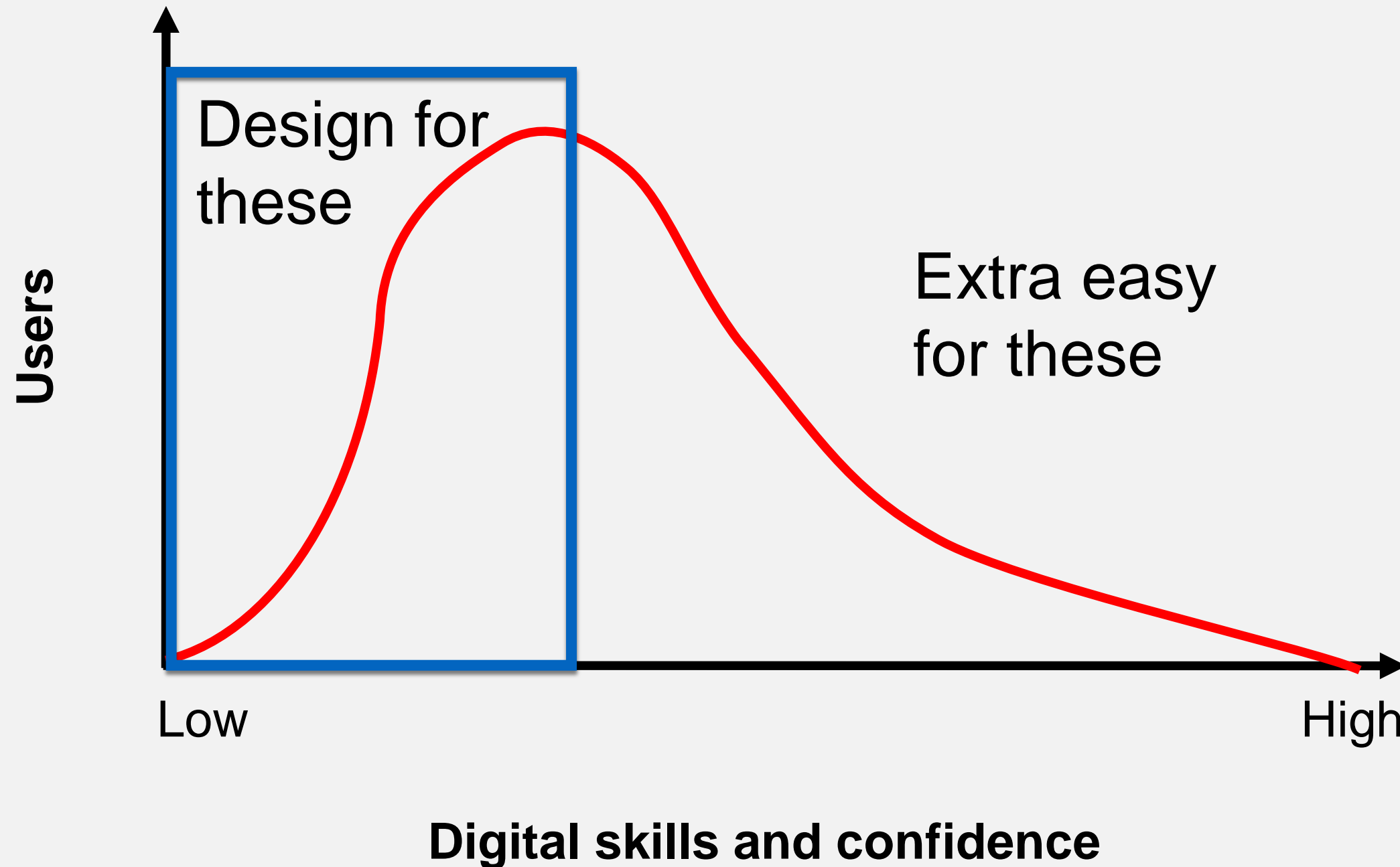# We must design for people who are stressed

Amygdala
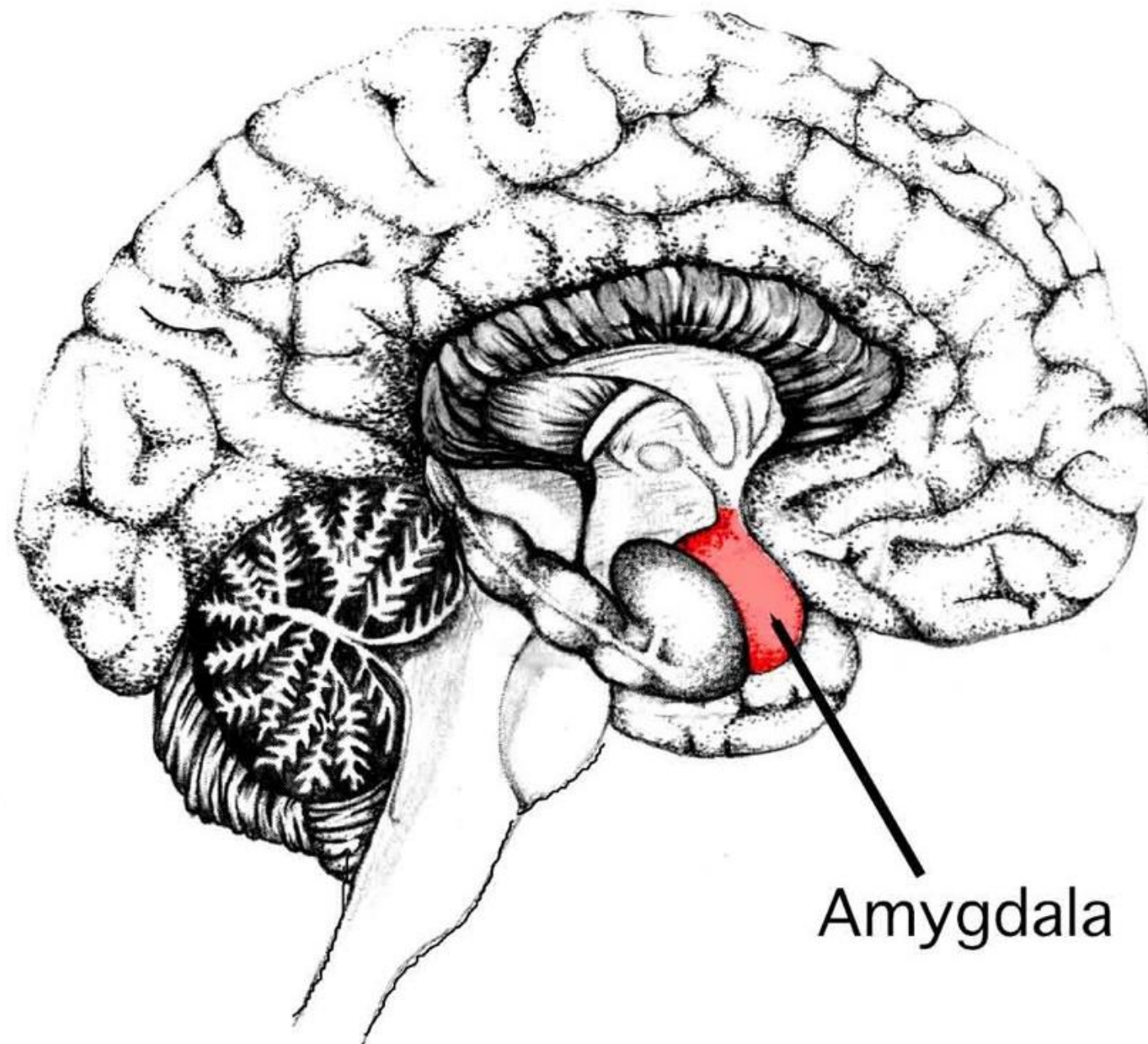
People who need government services have lower digital skills

Users

Low   High

Digital skills and confidence
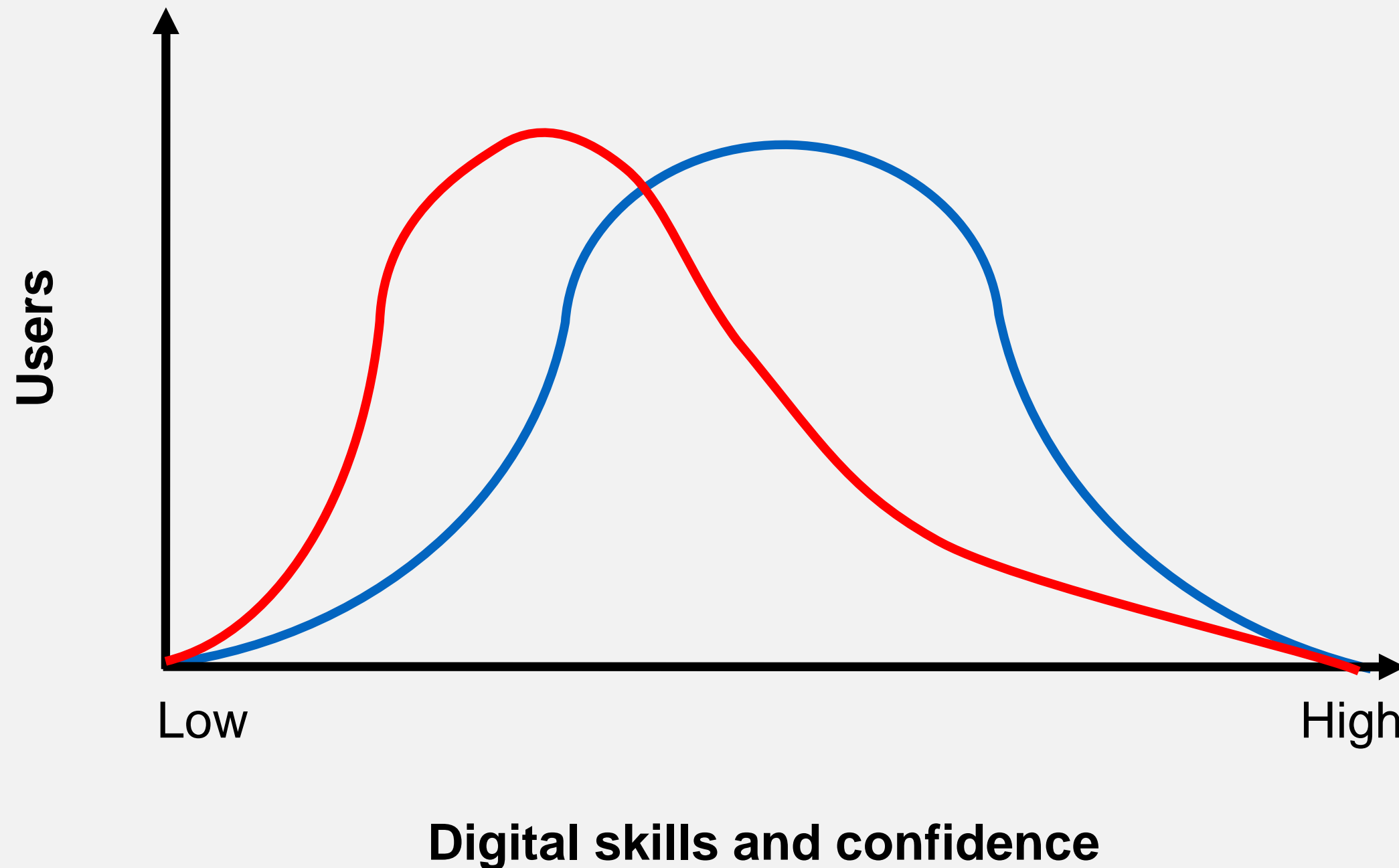
When we design for people with low digital skills, everyone wins

Users

Design for these

Extra easy for these

Low

High

Digital skills and confidence

Example

Dropdown lists / Select boxes

Which country do you live in?

Enter a country

- ✓ **Select Country**
- Afghanistan
- Åland Islands
- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua And Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba

There was a video

A woman in her 30s struggles to complete
a date-of-birth dropdown. She gets help from her boyfriend,
who is the person who usually helps her.

A dropdown needs several interactions:

- See the box where the answer will appear
- Click on the down arrow next to the box
- Scroll to the answer you want (may be out of sight)
- Click on the answer you want (away from the box)
- The answer appears in the box

The boyfriend keeps telling her to 'click', and she keeps trying
to click on box.

Many people struggle with dropdowns/select boxes

People with disabilities, such as low vision

People who are in a hurry

People who find it tiring or boring to look through a long list

People who have not yet become expert on computers – or who have no desire to do so.

Avoid dropdowns.
Bin your select tags.

Try these instead:

• Radio buttons

• Free text

(and we are experimenting with autocomplete and other formats)

We use three boxes for date of birth

Date of birth

For example, 20 3 1976

Day   Month   Year

People can ignore hints

- 7 3 1976

- 3 7 1976 (US format)

- 7 Mar 1976

- 7 March 76

Our developers write extra code to parse all the things people type

We use 'check your answers' pages

Check your answers before sending your application

These are your answers

Date of birth	7th March 1976	**Change**
Your full name	Mrs. Example Person	**Change**

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Two departments contribute to one service

Check your State Pension

Use this service to find out how much State Pension you could get when you reach State Pension age.

The amount is based on an estimate of what your National Insurance record could be when you reach State Pension age.

You'll also get information about how to increase your State Pension, if you can.

You can only use this service if you're under State Pension age.

Start now >

Other ways to apply

State Pension

The basic State Pension

Check your State Pension age

The new State Pension

Claim your State Pension online

Early retirement, your pension and benefits

More

Government Digital Service provides

- infrastructure

- tools

- guidance

We test our guidance with our colleagues

In 2015, we explained how to show errors

8. Errors and validation

Summarise validation errors in a box at the top of your page. Use jump links in the summary box to reach the errors in the form.

Ensure error messages make sense when read by screen readers.

Form validation

- use a red border on the box to visually connect the errors and messages in the form

Designers and developers like examples

Message to alert the user to a problem goes here

Optional description of the error(s) and how to correct them

Descriptive link to the question with an error

Check your personal details

Look at your name, signature and other details.

Are your personal details correct and up-to-date?
Error message about personal details goes here

○ Yes, my personal details are correct

○ No, some details are wrong or have changed

Continue

Our colleagues contribute to our guidance

Example

Fixing pale boxes
(the "Apple Effect")

Before…
These box borders are too pale

First name

Last name

Simon Hurst (DWP) and James Francis (Companies House) reported results from user research

Digital Service Designers ›
Colour contrast on borders
31 posts by 15 authors ⊙ G+1

Simon Hurst   05/10/2015

☆ Hi All

I'm one of the user researchers on Claim Personal Independence Payment. I recently tested the service with people with visual impairments and uncovered an issue with people not being able to see the borders on edit fields due to the low contrast of the grey used. This also actually caused issues on the background shading of radio buttons.

I've raised a story to change this for our service but was wondering if this is an issue for other services? If so should the elements toolkit not be suggesting a different colour?

Thanks

Simon

Click here to Reply

jfrancis   05/10/2015

☆ Hi Simon,

99+

Colleagues tested darker borders

GitHub

This repository Search   Explore Features Enterprise Pricing   Sign up   Sign in

alphagov / **govuk_elements**   ⊙ Watch 83   ★ Star 79   ⑂ Fork 40

<> Code   ⓘ Issues 10   ⌥ Pull requests 5   ⌁ Pulse   Graphs

Increase the width of the border and make the border color darker for form controls #104

⑂ **Merged**   **tombye** merged 1 commit into `master` from `increase-border-width-and-darken-border-colour-for-form-controls` on Oct 26, 2015

💬 Conversation 3   ⦿ Commits 1   📄 Files changed 1   +1 −1 ■■

gemmaleigh commented on Oct 6, 2015

Increase this to 2px and change the colour from a light grey ($border-colour) to a darker grey ($grey-1).

The current border style:

First name

Labels

None yet

Milestone

No milestone

Assignee

Before…
These box borders are too pale

First name

Last name

After…
These box borders are dark enough

First name

Last name

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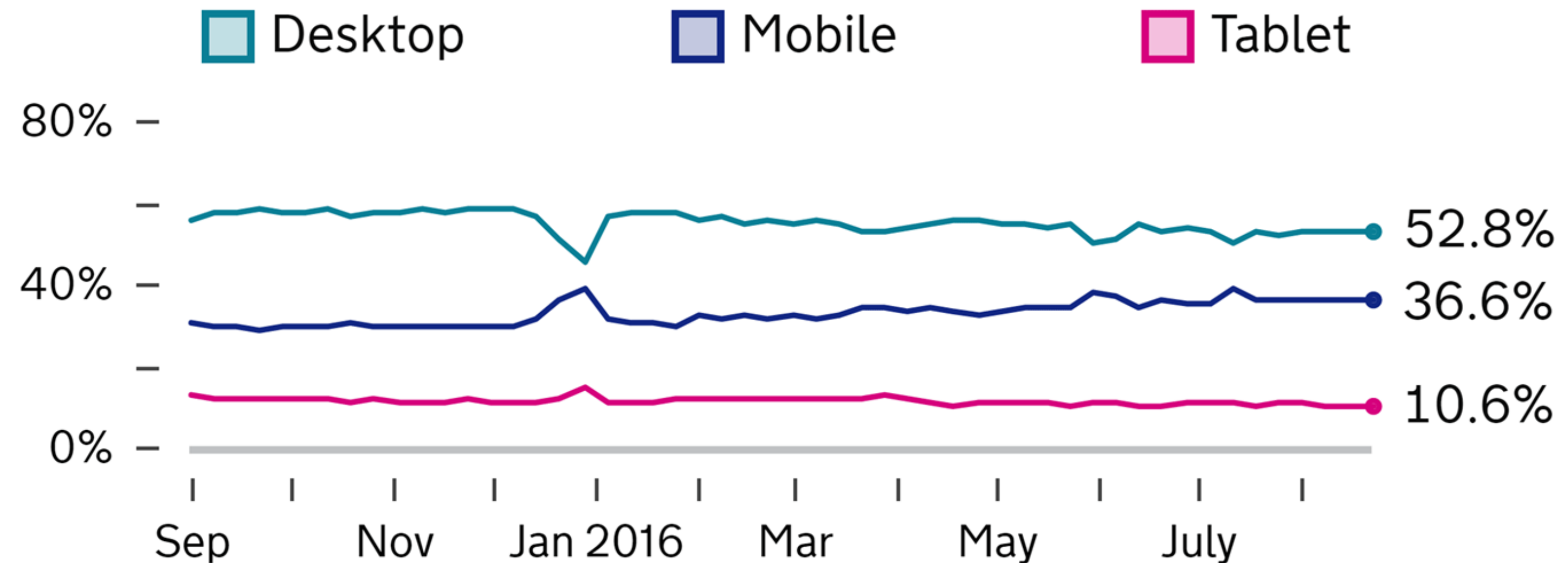10. Make things open: it makes things better

GOV.UK has a lot of users

GOV.UK
Visitors last month
45,430,026
Powered by www.gov.uk/performance

People use GOV.UK on mobiles

'Tax your vehicle' on a mobile

Farmers use GOV.UK

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We have many GDS blogs

https://gdstechnology.blog.gov.uk/

The GDS Service manual
https://www.gov.uk/service-manual

Follow GDS design notes:
https://designnotes.blog.gov.uk/

Follow GDS user research:
https://userresearch.blog.gov.uk/

Join in our discussion of patterns:
http://bit.ly/designpatts

find
what
works
not
what's
popular