

[Back to index](#)**The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Website**
<http://www.fco.gov.uk>**by****Kirsty Buckthorp****University of Birmingham and Historians, Foreign and Commonwealth
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Winner of several awards including the London International Advertising Awards 1998 and Highly Commended by the Financial Times as a Business website 1998, the FCO's site can justifiably claim to be interesting, informative, easy to use and pleasing to the eye. This applies to those browsing the Internet out of curiosity, those interested in foreign affairs and people who are looking for specific information about Britain. The site includes information such as (i) Latest News, (ii) Key Foreign Policy Issues, (iii) Speeches, (iv) Spotlight Britain (v) Travel Advice, (vi) Visa Information, (vii) About the FCO, (viii) British Diplomatic Missions, and (ix) Recruitment. For those who are looking for specific information on current affairs (i) to (iii) are regularly updated sites containing old and new Government speeches (including the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence), press releases, information about Ministers, and trade information. 'Spotlight Britain' deals with broader issues of British life, government and society and is particularly useful for those who are studying modern Britain and want to gain a more detailed insight into its workings. Two aspects of the site are especially useful: the ability to personalise it and the links which are provided. The latter include International Institutions (UN, NATO, Commonwealth Secretariat, and EU), other British Government Departments, the Houses of Parliament and British institutions such as the BBC World Service and the British Council. The option to personalise the site is a must for regular users. The only 'criticism' of this site is just how much information is available on it, thus being able to specify the foreign affairs or travel issues that meet your particular needs obviously saves time. This system works by completing the application form on-line which enables you to receive email alert messages (free of charge) when new items are posted.