

Evaluation of the Development Gateway Final Report

**Prepared for
Bretton Woods Project**

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Executive Summary

The Development Gateway is an Internet portal that seeks to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction through knowledge and resource sharing. Initially conceived and designed by the World Bank, it commenced operations as an independent not-for-profit organisation in July 2001. However, its launch and operations have been dogged by controversy as civil society organisations have objected to the Gateway's links with the World Bank and its potential for disseminating the World Bank's vision of development at the expense of more diverse and pluralistic views. In particular, criticism has centred on the Topics and Country Gateway sections of the web site, as being ill-conceived and biased, leading to the further marginalisation of southern knowledge, and the crowding out of other knowledge aggregators.

This study evaluates the Topics and Country Gateway sections of the Development Gateway in light of the stated objectives, the initial criticisms and generally recognised principles for knowledge sharing. It combines an extensive review of documents and detailed analyses of the website to evaluate the governance of the Development Gateway, and the relevance and quality of the Topic and Country Gateway content.

The key findings of the study corroborate the civil society criticisms in finding that the Development Gateway remains closely linked to the World Bank at both operational and strategic levels, that the information is predominantly from northern sources, that its operations are not transparent or accountable to civil society, and that it does not have any criteria or systems for measuring the impact of its services. More surprisingly, given the stature of the World Bank and the level of investment, there is no clear identification of who the beneficiaries are and how they may be benefiting. The content is not comprehensive and it has a strong bias towards technological topics at the expense of social and political topics. Also, it is poorly organised and is not cost-effective in comparison with other existing Internet portals. In fact the other development portals, rather than being crowded out, are thriving precisely because the performance of the Gateway is so poor. As an example, the global civil society portal OneWorld has substantially more content, twice as much usage, and eight times as many partnerships as the Development Gateway, all achieved for about a quarter of the spending.

The Gateway has consumed more than \$30 million of funding since its inception and is seeking another \$40 million of public funding. This without having achieved many of the goals it set itself and with major question marks over its ability to deliver, as acknowledged, despite their limited scope, by the two evaluations of the Development Gateway undertaken or commissioned by the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department.

We urge a full, properly independent evaluation, expanding on the work in this study, before any more money is spent. In particular the evaluation should focus on the Topic and Country Gateway sections, and should explore the possibility of collaborating or integrating with other development portals or even scrapping these sections altogether. If these sections are found to be viable, there needs to be a comprehensive restructuring of the content to reduce the bias against social and political topics and to rationalise the taxonomy.

We also urge the Development Gateway to immediately diversify its Board of Directors, diversify its content managers, distance itself from the World Bank, improve transparency, and re-open dialogue with civil society and official development partners to redefine its mission and priorities. Only then may the Development Gateway gain the trust of those it attempts to target.

Introduction

Genesis of the Development Gateway

The Development Gateway was set up in 2001 as one aspect of the World Bank's desire to re-mould itself as a 'knowledge bank'. The single most expensive experiment in information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development, it was conceived of at the height of the dot-com boom when many people came to feel that new technologies would provide rapid solutions to long-standing problems (see Review of Knowledge Sharing Principles, page 6). At its inception, the broad aims of the Development Gateway, as stated in its draft business proposal,¹ were to use the Internet as "a tool to address development issues and increase the effectiveness of development assistance" (World Bank 2001a: 3). This would be achieved by mobilising the knowledge of the entire 'development community', bringing together for its target users what had hitherto been "inaccessible, fragmented.... [and] of unknown quality" knowledge (2001a: 4). Within this role, the World Bank outlined for the Development Gateway various objectives that are key to the analysis that follows: to "identify institutions and centers of knowledge, and then work with them" (2001a: 14), to fill the gap where there are "no comparable web sites with the same objective, breadth, and scope as the Development Gateway portal" (2001a: 16), to go "well beyond a simple aggregation approach to add significant value" (2001a: 7), and to market so as to achieve five million page views per month by 2003, "with a steadily increasing proportion of users coming from the developing world" (2001a: 13). Finally, though set up by the World Bank, the intention was for the Gateway to become an independent entity, governed by the Development Gateway Foundation, once it was up and running.

Within the website, the Development Gateway contains four sections of content, a summary of the initial aims which is as follows:

Section of website	Aims of section
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge-guided content, including links
Country Gateways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive local information and virtual communities
AiDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Database access to relevant information on development projects
DgMarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information for businesses working in development

Exhibit 1: Structure of the Development Gateway (summarised from Development Gateway Foundation, 2003: 14-16)

Critiques and Criticisms of the Nascent Development Gateway

While the criticisms levelled at the Development Gateway prior to its inception were numerous, it is necessary here to make reference to only a few key areas.² The primary concern was perhaps the likelihood that such an initiative, started and supported by the World Bank, would filter through a northern lens and thus bias the knowledge disseminated. The Bank, it was felt, would be "likely to impose editorial policies and structures which will further privilege the

¹ The Development Gateway does not appear to have had a final version of its initial business proposal. None appears to be available on the website, and Louise Walker Consulting, who completed an evaluation of the Development Gateway, cited the draft version as that which she used.

² <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/190911/overview>, 9th April 2004.

² For a fuller picture of the criticisms raised of the Development Gateway, see Bellanet (2000) www.edc.org/GLG/gkd and www.bellanet.org; SANGONeT and Jubilee South Africa (2001); Wilks (2001a; 2001b; 2002), Bissio and Abin (2001); McDougall (2003); Samoff and Stromquist (2001); Bretton Woods Project (2004a; 2004b).

perspectives of global development professionals and institutions” (Wilks, 2001a: 1), while the “World Bank as repository and distributor entrenches and enhances World Bank dominance” (Samoff and Stromquist, 2001: 641). Strengthening the position of northern institutions such as the Bank would concurrently marginalise southern knowledge and lead to a failure to accommodate local circumstances and alternative approaches. Along the same lines, there were concerns that “the assertion that generating knowledge is inherently a contested political process will be rejected in favour of the claim that knowledge generation and collection can be organized as largely technical tasks, governed by the rules of science, not politics. That in turn reinforces the roles of those who collect, categorize, manage and distribute information and further marginalizes those who are, as the World Bank advises, borrowers and importers, even when they were themselves the original source of that information” (Samoff and Stromquist, 2001: 647). Use of the English language was also expected to enhance the role of ‘official’ knowledge. In sum, this combination of concerns meant that many felt that “the Development Gateway initiative looks less like an attempt to encourage debate than a means to stifle, moderate and control dissenting opinion” (Voice of the Turtle, 2001).

There was also much concern that Bank support for such a knowledge initiative would serve to ‘crowd out’ other development actors. Wilks felt that, “the effort to cover development topics from all perspectives – from the Adam Smith Institute to the Zapatistas – has been condemned in civil society as naïve, impossible, and dangerous, as it will crowd out other actors” (Wilks, 2002: 6). Further, he argued that the Country Gateways would “represent unfair competition to existing country-oriented websites and portals.... [which] may draw advertisers and visitors away from existing sites” which may have a “richer and more diverse content” (Wilks, 2001a: 6; 2002: 12). Combining the control of knowledge and the crowding out arguments, the Voice of the Turtle declaration (2001) feared that the “most pernicious effect of the development gateway is to undermine alternatives. Instead of encouraging existing initiatives, the Bank has chosen to centralise Internet coverage of development issues in a bid to sift and control the flow of ideas”.

A third key concern was that of the Development Gateway’s lack of independence from the World Bank. Even once independent it was feared the Gateway would “still be able to publicise the Bank’s research as well as give opportunities for rewarding Bank allies with publicity, editorships and funding” (Wilks, 2002: 5), and there were concerns that the members of the Board would be of a certain ilk. “The foundation, established in the District of Columbia”, Wilks continued, “will provide a measure of independence from the Bank. But the only certain way to become a board member is to contribute \$5 million to the Gateway” (2002: 10).

There was also criticism of the Development Gateway’s targeted ‘beneficiaries’, with generalised targets for numbers of viewers but no breakdown of where these users might come from (Wilks, 2001a: 2). Further, it saw its target audience as a homogenous whole, failing to recognise the diversity that would make the aforementioned need to be responsive to local circumstances so acute. Wilks, again, felt that “Gateway literature makes frequent references to its site being built by and for ‘the development community’ as if this was a clear set of people, not a large proportion of the world’s population” (2002: 9).

Finally there were worries over the organisation of content. Categories covered by the site seem to “represent a donor’s taxonomy, and do not seem to anticipate how many others think” (Wilks, 2001a: 3). It was further felt that, “the Gateway’s 130-issue taxonomy ghettoises cross-cutting issues such as gender and climate change” (Voice of the Turtle, 2001). Wilks also noted a complacency about cataloguing information. “Asked why the Gateway’s taxonomy used classic official agency categories, Gateway content manager Nick Harrison told the

Bretton Woods Project: ‘development is a mature subject, I think we do know the classifications’” (Wilks, 2001a: 3; 2002: 8). This returns to the initial criticisms outlined, perceiving “perhaps a failure to understand that issues are constructed and perceived differently by different groups” (Wilks, 2001a: 3; 2002: 8-9).

Aims and Methodology of the Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct an independent investigation in light of the initial criticisms and also the generally accepted knowledge sharing principles. Due to the multitude of criticisms and the size and scope of the website³ itself, the study does not attempt to comprehensively analyse all possible aspects and impacts of the Development Gateway. Rather, the study is comprised of three key elements. First, the governance and institutional infrastructure of the Development Gateway are evaluated. Second, issues of the relevance and role of the Development Gateway in the context of the wider development community are analysed. Finally, the quality of knowledge is evaluated in terms of its comprehensiveness, uniqueness, diversity, organisation, usability, and cost-effectiveness.

Within the scope defined above, the study focuses on the ‘Topics’ and, to a lesser degree, the ‘Country Gateways’ sections, and highlights issues that provide constructive criticism for future policy. Three other Internet development portals have been taken as comparators to the Development Gateway: civil society portals ‘OneWorld’ and ‘Choike’ (the former based in the UK and the latter in Latin America), and research portal ‘Eldis’ (based in the UK).⁴ All four portals were shown the first draft of the report and responded with valuable comments that were taken into account in the final version.

The study is primarily based on a thorough review of existing documentation (from the Development Gateway and external sources) coupled with extensive analysis of the Development Gateway website and limited consultations with development professionals. For a full description of the methodology, see Appendix X, page 42.

Review of Knowledge Sharing Principles

With the proliferation of information and communication technologies and a recognition of the strategic importance of knowledge, many organisations embarked on knowledge management and knowledge sharing initiatives in the 1990s. Certain principles came to be recognised as crucial for success in knowledge sharing programmes. These have been defined in the Bank’s own literature (World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, 2003) as follows:

- ◆ Knowledge should not be viewed as an entity that exists independent of context, that can be engineered, and that can be automatically transferred through sharing. Rather it is intrinsic to processes, may often be tacit, and requires supporting tools and activities for transfer through sharing. Thus, there is a need for organisations to “move away from building knowledge repositories” towards “integrating knowledge sharing into core business processes” (OED 2003: 59). The focus needs to be on the application of knowledge and not simply the sharing.
- ◆ Implementation of knowledge sharing programmes requires a phased approach, from advocacy through to institutionalisation, and typically requires three years. It is not enough

³ <http://www.developmentgateway.org>.

⁴ <http://www.oneworld.net>; <http://www.choike.org>; <http://www.eldis.org>.

to provide the knowledge; there needs to be explicit definition of roles and responsibilities and provision of support mechanisms.

- ◆ Communities of practice – formal/informal networks with common interests or common work practices – are increasingly used for sharing knowledge. Three types of communities have emerged: communities of interest (common interests), communities of practice (common tasks), and intentional communities of practice (common specific goal). These communities have different requirements for management and support. Thus, organisations need to be very clear about the specific purpose of any communities of practice that they establish, and must provide resources and tools accordingly. Moreover, communities of practice do not automatically provide value, and must therefore be evaluated on an ongoing basis. While early efforts to monitor community performance focused on activities, newer approaches are oriented towards outcomes.
- ◆ Effective knowledge sharing depends on content being relevant, accurate, customisable, and up-to-date. Thus, content management needs to include content assessment, content aggregation, and content maintenance.

The principles outlined above may have originated in the context of large centralised organisations but they still offer a useful framework for evaluating the Development Gateway. Clearly the Development Gateway, like other development portals, is a repository of development knowledge. Also, like other portals, it utilises communities of practice – Topics and Country Gateways. Finally, it utilises a content management strategy built around topic guides, advisors, and cooperating organisations. In order to determine how well the Development Gateway implements the knowledge sharing principles mentioned above, the following questions need to be addressed:

- ◆ Does the Development Gateway support actual tasks that its users need to perform? Given that these are more diverse than those performed by users within a single organisation, has the Development Gateway clearly identified the different types of beneficiaries and focused on their explicit needs? For example, does it support an environmental officer needing to conduct an environmental impact assessment, or a public health official needing to develop an AIDS education programme?
- ◆ Do the topic/country communities lead to improved outcomes? Are there specific outcomes-oriented objectives for different communities? Are methods in place to measure outcomes against these objectives?
- ◆ How well has the institutional infrastructure been developed? Are the governance structures and evaluation mechanisms accountable, transparent and efficient?
- ◆ What is the relevance of the Development Gateway content in terms of comprehensiveness, uniqueness and applicability?
- ◆ What is the quality of the Development Gateway content in terms of accuracy, organisation and cost effectiveness?

Findings – Governance and Institutional Infrastructure

An analysis of issues of governance of the Development Gateway has been undertaken in terms of:

- ◆ Evaluations completed to date of the Development Gateway
- ◆ Relationship with the World Bank
- ◆ Institutional northern bias
- ◆ Accountability and transparency

Evaluations Completed to Date of the Development Gateway

To date, two evaluations of the Development Gateway have been published. The first was a broad evaluation of the World Bank's knowledge sharing policies and practices (OED, 2003) and the second was commissioned to Louise Walker Consulting by the OED (Walker, 2003). That both were both carried out under the auspices of World Bank body is in itself cause for concern, but a closer critique of their methodologies will serve to make clear the need for independent evaluation.

Walker's evaluation attempts to consider the Development Gateway in its entirety "to assess [its] design and start up... with a focus on its relevance and efficacy as an instrument of global and country-level knowledge sharing". It is immediately evident, however, that such a comprehensive evaluation is not feasible based on a "three week limited desk review" during which 14 Bank staff were interviewed along with "individuals involved with ICT and knowledge initiatives external to the Bank including Eldis, OneWorld and Bellanet" and the consultation of "a range of documents from the Development Gateway and the Development Gateway Foundation" (all 2003: 3). Furthermore, the interviewees include no one who could reasonably be considered detached from the global development knowledge scene or who could be said to have an independent position to determine the relevance of the Development Gateway.

Finally and most crucially, many negative points and important criticisms are raised in Walker's evaluation, but are masked behind the introduction and, in particular, the fact that the condensed and widely disseminated version of the evaluation (and that which appears on the Development Gateway's 'About Us' page) is entitled 'Accomplishments of the Development Gateway' and glosses over the fuller version's call for change.

The OED evaluation examines the World Bank's knowledge sharing as a whole, and the fact that this includes a study of the Development Gateway undermines any pretence at independence from the outset. Less than three pages out of the 108-page report are devoted specifically to the Development Gateway. The evaluation claims that the Development Gateway has delivered "credible and high quality content" (OED 2003: 31) without providing any basis for this conclusion. It does not refer at all to the organisation of the content, which suffers from various problems as outlined later in this analysis. It ignores the numerous criticisms by civil society organisations, preferring instead to simply claim that "the controversy that accompanied early plans for the Development Gateway has declined" (2003: 31).

While both these evaluations are limited in scope and of questionable independence, they do have some interesting findings, which are referred to throughout this report. It is also notable that both are critical of the World Bank's and Development Gateway's abilities to evaluate themselves. The OED states that, "the relatively heavy reliance on surveys and interviews reflects a current weakness in all of the Bank's knowledge-sharing programs and activities –

the dearth of monitoring and reporting of inputs and outputs, and self-assessment of outcomes against measurable objectives. Indeed a main finding of this report... is the low evaluability of the overall initiative and its component programs” (OED, 2003: 4). Turning specifically to the Gateway, Walker writes:

Currently, monitoring and measurement... has been largely confined to basic statistics such as site traffic, numbers of new partnerships, and subscriber rates for specific programs.... While measures such as [these] are appropriate in early stages, the Development Gateway is maturing. It will need to refine its performance measurement and evaluation capabilities in order to assess the efficacy of its services and provide a framework for decisions about future activities and investments. By breaking down high-level objectives into performance measures that reflect goals related to operational effectiveness, service value or beneficiary access and participation, the Development Gateway will be in a better position to analyze and evaluate its effectiveness (Walker, 2003: 6-7).

Finally she states that, “an independent evaluation is expected to be undertaken in fiscal year 2004 by the Bank’s Development Grant Facility to assess its own contributions, but no other reviews were uncovered during the preparation of this report” (Walker, 2003: 31-32). It is most concerning that this – another examination by an arm of the World Bank – is considered to represent an independent evaluation.

Relationship with the World Bank

The official independence of the Development Gateway Foundation from the World Bank has not led to genuine operational independence, as our own analysis and the Louise Walker and OED evaluations (Walker, 2003; OED, 2003), in particular, demonstrate.

As Appendix I shows on page 31, the Development Gateway’s governance remains heavily influenced by members with a past or present World Bank affiliation. Of the 20 Board of Directors members, six are currently employed by the World Bank (these being the President, a Vice President, a Managing Director and three Executive Directors), and a further two are former employees. A rate of 40% World Bank interest cannot possibly suggest a reasonable degree of independence.

Louise Walker’s 2003 evaluation of the Development Gateway sheds further light on its continuing lack of independence from the World Bank, as she devotes two whole sections of her report – out of just seven including the introduction and the summary of findings – to the relationship in general and to the Development Gateway Foundation’s Board and the services agreement between the Development Gateway Foundation and the World Bank in particular.

Walker states that of the current 17 board members (there are in fact 20 including the officers of the Development Gateway itself⁵), the majority are founding members and the Bank has three seats (as discussed previously, this figure should be doubled). Indeed, she says that “the Bank’s representation on the Board *is limited* to three individuals” (emphasis added; Walker, 2003: 24-25).

It is telling that the Bank’s undue presence on the Board is nevertheless one of her strongest criticisms. She suggests that there is a distinct need to rotate Bank staff out of their positions

⁵ See <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/190911/board>.

on the Board, but also recognises that “although donors have the option to pass over their representation to an appointed member from a developing country, this has only been done in the case of Mali” (2003: 28). Furthermore, “there are no civil society organizations or Development Gateway partners represented on the Board, but the Development Gateway Foundation has indicated that it is investigating opportunities to expand representation of groups from outside the Bank’s traditional partners” (2003: 28). Such a move needs to be swiftly made if the Development Gateway is not to become further discredited in the eyes of yet more of those it is supposed to serve.

The OED evaluation demonstrates that the Development Gateway is very much considered a part of the World Bank’s knowledge policy, because the evaluation covers knowledge management within the Bank as a whole yet refers specifically to the Development Gateway as one part of this system. Furthermore, the services agreement between the World Bank and the Development Gateway is an additional issue of criticism from Walker. The agreement, which comes at a cost of \$6.99 million, or 90% of the Foundation’s actual expenditure during 2003 (Development Gateway Foundation, 2003: 41) means that the Bank provides “*all* staff and services related to the operation of the Development Gateway” (emphasis added; Walker, 2003: 16). Moreover, “the services agreement is governed by a statement of work which outlines the main areas of activity but does not provide a detailed performance agreement between the Development Gateway Foundation and the Bank related to the Development Gateway’s operations” (2003: 25). Bissio and Abin (2001) point out that the Development Gateway Foundation

...is using Bank monies to contract services from the Bank without any bidding process like those the Bank usually requires from its grant recipients.... Any legitimate independent recipient of Bank funds is required to conduct an open bidding process before contracting services from third parties. Why was the foundation exempted from this rule? On what basis has the Bank decided to fund an entity even before it was properly created?

Not only, therefore, does the Development Gateway remain in its entirety an arm of the World Bank, but there seems to be little accountability in an agreement with no clear performance contract and no bidding process. In short, Walker describes the Bank as “steward... convenor... and technology and service operator” (2003: 32), a hefty role that defies the Development Gateway’s plans to gain its independence from the World Bank.

A final issue returns to the initial concerns, mentioned in our introduction (see page 4), that the Development Gateway would be detrimental to existing development Internet portals, while at the same time being less appropriate. Roberto Bissio, director of the Instituto Tercer Mundo in Uruguay and co-author of a 2001 anti-corruption claim against the Bank (Bissio and Abin, 2001), felt that this issue had, in fact, evolved. He wrote:

When the Gateway was created, many NGOs publishing in the Internet in different ways about development issues were afraid precisely of the potential ‘unfair competition’ that it could represent. In fact, since the Gateway exists we have not noticed such an effect, not because the Gateway has not tried to position itself as the major portal for development-related issues, but because they have not succeeded! But what the Gateway has done, in spite of not having met any of their original goals, is to attract and divert an enormous amount of funds intended to support development-related Internet activities from the content producers in the South to a highly centralized operation in Washington DC. What could have been done with all that

money? is a valid question. And the negative impact is even worse: the failure of the Gateway to show results may lead some donors to re-orient their funds to better designed projects originated in the South itself, but it also may lead many of them to believe that there is no point to support Internet activities for development. Thus, while we were not “crowded out” in terms of audience, we are probably being “crowded out” in terms of funding.⁶

Institutional Northern Bias

A further point considers the issue of northern bias addressed in more detail shortly in the findings on the quality of information, page 19. Appendix I shows that there are ten Board of Directors members from southern nations and nine from northern (one of whom is Ethiopian-born). While it may be argued that it is difficult to infer from these proportions whether there is an undue northern bias – although it would seem reasonable to expect that an initiative aimed at those from the south should have a greater number of its intended ‘beneficiaries’ in its governance structure – there is a further point to take into account. Five of the members from southern nations have a World Bank affiliation, and a sixth is the CEO of the Development Gateway Foundation itself. It is certainly, therefore, difficult to believe that there does not exist a northern bias in the institutional structure of the Development Gateway, and such a belief among those intended to use the Development Gateway, and the effect of this belief upon their trust of the Gateway, may be as important as the degree to which this bias does in fact exist.

Accountability and Transparency

A comparison of the information available from each of the four websites in question serves to demonstrate the level of accountability and transparency of the Development Gateway. Exhibit 2 outlines the availability of process documentation, performance indicators and costs, both online and by request, from each of the four websites. Each of the four was contacted by email to request any information that was not available online. The table should be consulted with reference to the explanation of information provided by each organisation below.

	DG		OneWorld		Eldis		Choike	
	Online	By email	Online	By email	Online	By email	Online	By email
Annual reports/ business plans	✓		✓					✓
Internal evaluations	✓		✓			✓		✓
User statistics				✓		✓		✓
Costs and budgets	✓		✓			✓		✓

Exhibit 2: Availability of Documentation (from respective websites and personal email communication, March 2004)

OneWorld’s website provides comprehensive information⁷. When emailed to request further information such as usage statistics and evaluations, they responded with their independently

⁶ Personal email correspondence, 09/04/2004.

⁷ See <http://www.oneworld.net/article/frontpage/2/2333>.

collated usage statistics from AWStats⁸. They were unable to provide user feedback since they had only recently completed a large survey, which is yet to be analysed and published.

Eldis does not provide documentation or information about its governance and organisation online. In response to email queries, they sent a published evaluation report based on the results of a user survey. They were initially unable to provide financial information due to technical difficulties related to data confidentiality, but did so following the initial draft of this report.

Choike responded quickly to each email request sent to them, and provided a document covering business plan and evaluation material and user statistics (Choike, 2003). They also provided cost and budget details in a separate email. Furthermore, they offered to provide any further necessary information that was missing from these documents.

The information provided by the Development Gateway comes from its 'About Us' page.⁹ The Gateway's initial draft business proposal, which was a stage in the setting up of the Development Gateway, is not available either on the 'About Us' page or through searching the site as a whole¹⁰, but there is a link to the Business Plan for Fiscal Years 2004-2006 (Development Gateway Foundation, 2003). Furthermore, there are no links on the 'About Us' page to the OED evaluation of the Development Gateway (World Bank OED, 2003) or to a separate evaluation completed by Louise Walker Consulting (Walker, 2003). While there is a link to a summarised version of the latter, its title ('Accomplishments of the Development Gateway') belies the content of the full version (Walker and Hay, 2003). The full version of the OED evaluation can be searched on the website as a whole, though the Walker evaluation cannot. There is only one key document on the 'About Us' page that dates back to earlier than 2003. The Development Gateway's costs and budgets are available only through the Business Plan. For nearly two months, the Development Gateway failed to respond to an email sent on 25th February 2004 requesting further documentation and information, despite the claim on the website that "we read every email message and attempt to respond within up to five business days".¹¹ When the response finally arrived on 20th April 2004, it offered no further information beyond that which is already on the website.

In addition to this lack of transparency, the Development Gateway does not appear to be accountable or responsive to civil society. While the Gateway set up consultations with NGOs and others prior to its inception – Walker states that "between February 2000 and August 2001 the Development Gateway team undertook over twenty... consultations to discuss the relevance of the initiative to civil society organizations, donor agencies and governments in each region" (2003: 5) – these consultations are no longer available on the website.¹² Walker suggests that these consultations were largely positive and that "to respond to concerns, the Development Gateway team re-evaluated its content management and editorial approach and endeavoured to reflect the feedback from consultations in the design and ongoing development of the DG and its services" (2003: 6).

⁸ See <http://awstats.sourceforge.net/>.

⁹ <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/190911/keydocs>.

¹⁰ Nevertheless, we were able to search this document on Google and received a Development Gateway web address for it – see www.developmentgateway.org/download/123051/gatewaybusinessproposal132001.doc.

¹¹ <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/190911/feedback>.

¹² Walker references these to www.developmentgateway.org/aboutus/consultationissues, but this link is now dead.

This is not the impression, however, that those involved in the consultations got. Following a World Bank meeting with a coalition of South African NGOs, the NGOs' letter to Wolfensohn stated that:

One telling reflection can be found on the Development Gateway's own website and its recent Newsletter: "The Gateway Team participated in a consultation meeting hosted by the South African NGO Network (SANGONeT) in Johannesburg on February 15. The meeting was attended by some 20 community service organisations, and was characterized by a lively and substantive discussion on the merits, challenges, and potential of the Information and Communication Technology field and the Gateway." The World Bank's use of the words "lively, substantive, merits, challenges and potential" suggests that the organisations present broadly agreed with the initiative. This fails to reflect the frank words of criticism and condemnation of the World Bank and the Gateway project expressed in the meeting. This represents yet another experience of World Bank misrepresentation of the content of meetings with civil society organisations and reinforces the growing perspective of the alleged information dissemination project as the Global Development "Information Gatekeepers" (SANGONeT and Jubilee South Africa, 2001).

Wilks also felt that there was no engagement with or replies to comments (Wilks, 2001a: 9). While John Garrison, the 'Civil Society Liaison' member of the Gateway team, responded to the criticisms of the Bretton Woods Project (World Bank, 2001b)¹³, Wilks, on behalf of the Project, felt that the Bank "dealt with [criticisms and consultations] in the form of vague statements, not substantive arguments or specific pledges" (2001c).¹⁴

It is unsurprising in light of these findings that, according to the OED survey, it was NGO responders who answered the most negatively (OED, 2003: 59-80). This is but one example of a continuing mistrust of the Development Gateway, which the OED believes the Development Gateway can rectify only by "distancing itself from the Bank in order to consolidate its credibility and encourage inclusive partnership and participation across the development community" (World Bank OED, 2003: 33). Of itself the relationship does not seem justifiable, but if it also serves to alienate those it needs to embrace, the need to reassess the situation becomes acute.

Findings – Relevance and Role of the Development Gateway

Relevance of the Development Gateway is reviewed in terms of the following three elements:

- ◆ Limitations of the Internet medium
- ◆ Comparison with other web portals focusing on development
- ◆ Applicability of knowledge

Limitations of the Internet Medium

The Internet has witnessed explosive growth over the last 15 years. In 1990 there were approximately 300,000 computers connected to the Internet, but by January 2004, the number of Internet hosts had grown to over 233 million (Internet Systems Consortium, 2004). Similarly,

¹³ See [http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/article.shtml?cmd\[126\]=x-126-15917](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/article.shtml?cmd[126]=x-126-15917).

¹⁴ See [http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/article.shtml?cmd\[126\]=x-126-15922](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/article.shtml?cmd[126]=x-126-15922).

the total number of Internet users has grown from under 5 million in 1990 (Internet Society, 2001) to around 650 million at the end of 2002 (Cyber Atlas, 2003).

This growth has made the Internet an extremely powerful and cost effective mechanism for sharing information. However, the utility of the Internet as the medium for development knowledge sharing is limited by the low usage in poor countries, as shown in Exhibit 3. Less than 1% of the African population has access to the Internet, and Africans make up only 1% of the total Internet user population. While Internet usage for Asia/Oceania and Latin America is somewhat higher (driven by a few high income countries), South Asia, the region with the greatest number of poor people, has an estimated Internet access figure of just 0.6% of the population.

	Population	Internet Users	% Access by Region	% of Total Users
Africa	794,922,900	6,736,400	0.8%	1.0%
Asia/Oceania	3,712,195,083	191,087,300	5.1%	29.6%
Latin America	537,516,031	33,168,100	6.2%	5.1%
North America & Europe	1,098,648,069	414,200,700	37.7%	64.2%
Totals	6,143,282,083	645,192,500	10.5%	100.0%

Exhibit 3: Internet Usage by Region – 2002 (Cyber Atlas, September 22 2003)

The distribution of Internet users reveals that despite its rapid growth, the Internet remains largely a rich country phenomenon. While this does not imply that the Internet should not be used for sharing development knowledge, it does suggest a need to incorporate other media as well. This is borne out by the World Bank's estimate that only 10-20% of usage of its Internet sites for 2000-02 was from developing countries (OED, 2003). Perhaps even more telling, the Development Gateway's business plan (Development Gateway Foundation, 2003) shows that only 2% of traffic for July 2003 was from Africa.

In its evaluation of the World Bank's information sharing strategy, the Operations Evaluation Department cited as a possible problem the "neglect of populations who currently lack easy access or are not responsive to new digital technology" (OED, 2003: 60-61). This was a concern that arose from an OED survey that was distributed to five less developed countries (OED, 2003: 59-80). Many OED respondents felt that an "excessive reliance on the Internet in countries where the majority of people still lack easy access.... inhibits the Bank's information dissemination" (OED, 2003: 68).

An additional concern is that within poor countries, Internet access is more likely to be available to 'official' elites than to civil society and the population at large. However, this should be viewed in the context of the World Bank's historical propensity of communicating primarily or exclusively with government officials, as indicated in the OED survey. Survey respondents agreed that in order to maximise the impact of its information, "the Bank must abandon its top-down government-focused approach to information dissemination and be more pro-active in its efforts to reach previously underserved individuals and groups" (OED, 2003: 75). The Internet may have limited reach in poor countries, but it does offer broader sharing of development knowledge than provided by previously used official channels of communication.

Comparison with Other Development Portals

A number of Internet portals focusing on development already existed before the launch of the Development Gateway, and a number have since been established. In order to assess the

relevance of the Development Gateway therefore, it is instructive to compare it with OneWorld, Choike and Eldis. While the portals have different aims, they are all involved in the sharing of development-related knowledge, as evidenced by their mission/goal statements shown in Exhibit 4a.

Portal	Mission/Aims
Development Gateway	An innovative and groundbreaking Internet portal to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction through knowledge and resource sharing.
OneWorld	OneWorld is dedicated to harnessing the democratic potential of the Internet to promote human rights and sustainable development.
Choike	Choike is a portal dedicated to improving the visibility of the work done by NGOs and social movements from the South. It serves as a platform where citizen groups can disseminate their work and at the same time enrich it with information from diverse sources, which is presented from the perspective of Southern civil society.
Eldis	Eldis is a gateway to information on development issues, providing free and easy access to a wide range of high quality online resources. Eldis aims to disseminate qualitative, evidence-based research and policy documents, and to publicise the organisations or individuals producing such research.

Exhibit 4a: Mission/Aims of Development Portals (as per websites)

The comparison of the Development Gateway with the other portals focuses on four parameters: content (volume), partnerships, usage (internal statistics), and external web ratings (from Alexa¹⁵). The information is summarised in Exhibit 4b (see methodology, page 42, for further explanation). It is evident that the Development Gateway and OneWorld provide a similar order of magnitude of resources, while Eldis consists of a quarter to a third the number of these first two. Choike is substantially smaller, although it should be kept in mind that it sees itself as being “on a ‘growth and development’ phase in terms of its recognition”.¹⁶

	Development Gateway	One World	Eldis	Choike
Content				
Number of resources	41,959	59,415	16,000	3,984
Partnerships/Links to Other Organisations	242	2,051	4,500	2,564
Internal Usage Statistics				
Number of visits/sessions	131,915	244,105	64,000	50,990
Alexa Web Usage Ratings				
Traffic rank (3-month average) [†]	51,487	19,537	151,979	48,624
Reach per million users (3-month average) [†]	26	97	9	17
Page views per user (3-month average)	4	2	3	11
Sites that link to this site	2,071	13,200	2,302	548

Exhibit 4b: Content, Partnerships and Usage of Development Portals

[†] See p.16 for explanation of ‘rank’ and ‘reach’

The resources on the different portals are of various types – for example, news articles, detailed reports, links to external websites, and discussion forums. Therefore, a simple count of resources only provides a broad, indicative comparison of the quantity of content on the websites, without directly commenting on the quality. The Development Gateway figure includes double counting of resources listed under multiple topics. The OneWorld and Eldis figures are directly reported on the websites, and the Choike figure involved manual counting

¹⁵ A division of the online bookseller Amazon - www.alexa.com.

¹⁶ Personal email correspondence, 26/05/04.

and may include some duplication. These figures show that the Development Gateway and OneWorld are roughly similar in terms of the volume of content that is included on their website.

Partnerships are defined differently by the different portals. The figures for Eldis and Choike (as stated on their web sites) represent development organisations to which they link, while for OneWorld and Development Gateway, the figures (counted from their web sites) represent organisations that contribute content. The figures clearly indicate that the other three portals each have between eight and 18 times as many partnerships as the Development Gateway. All partnership figures are for March 2004.

The usage statistics for Choike, Eldis and OneWorld are for March 2003, July 2003, and January 2004 respectively. They were provided on request by the respective organisations. The Development Gateway figure is for July 2003 and represents visits to Topics (123,134 visitors) and Country Gateway pages (8,781 visitors), but excludes visits to dgMarket and AiDA that total nearly another 300,000 visitors (Development Gateway Foundation, 2003: 33). The figures suggest that OneWorld has substantially more usage than the Development Gateway (Topics), but a complicating factor is that the usage statistics from the three portals are for different months. However, a consistent view can be obtained by looking at external usage statistics from Alexa and also from a user survey conducted by Eldis.

Alexa has been collecting web usage statistics since 1996, using a panel of web surfers that has grown to more than 10 million. Essentially, Alexa captures full details of all web sites visited by the panellists, and is able to rank websites based on traffic, which itself is composed of two elements, reach (number of users out of a million who visit a particular site) and page views per user. When considering the Alexa figures, it needs to be kept in mind that the Alexa panel represents average web users, not any specific constituency, such as researchers or government officials. The reach figure for Development Gateway, while higher than the figures for Eldis and Choike, is significantly lower than that for OneWorld. In fact, according to the Alexa figures, OneWorld receives almost four times as many visitors, and roughly twice as much total traffic, as does the Development Gateway. Likewise, more than six times as many web sites link to OneWorld than to Development Gateway.

Alexa also allows different web sites to be compared against one another. Appendix II (see page 32) shows two-year comparisons of the traffic rank of the Development Gateway with each of OneWorld, Eldis and Choike, as of July 2004. The Development Gateway has consistently ranked below OneWorld. Indeed, while the rank figures were close for several months at the end of 2002 and in early 2003, its competition appears to have lessened since. The launch of the Development Gateway therefore appears not to have contributed to a reduction in usage of OneWorld, suggesting that fears of crowding out have not been realised (as asserted earlier by Bissio – see page 10). While Choike's rank trend on average falls below that of the Development Gateway, there have been significant peaks, such as in early 2003 and autumn 2003. In comparison to Eldis, the rank figures do not converge often due to Eldis' relatively lower usage. What all three comparisons demonstrate, however, is that regardless of how the portals perform in relation to the Development Gateway, the rank of all three has remained fairly consistent over the years since the inception of the Development Gateway, suggesting that the Gateway has not broadly detracted from their usage.

Applicability of Knowledge

Opinions regarding the relevance of the Development Gateway were available from four sources - the Eldis user survey (2002), the OED survey (2003), the Louise Walker Evaluation (2003) and our survey (2004 – see Appendices III and IV, pages 33-35).

Eldis surveyed its users in 2002 with reference to sources of development information. When asked which other web sites they used for development information, the sample of 591 survey respondents named the World bank site most frequently, followed in order by OneWorld, UNDP, IDS, GDNet, Google, FAO, ID21, and the Development Gateway. Full results for the question are shown in Exhibit 5. Clearly, Eldis users in late 2002 did not consider the Development Gateway a very significant source of development knowledge. While Eldis users may not be representative of the development community at large, the Development Gateway fares very poorly.

Site	Number of Respondents	Site	Number of Respondents
World Bank	111	ODI	24
OneWorld	110	IMF	21
UN sites - excluding UNDP	55	DFID	19
UNDP	41	Reliefweb	16
IDS	39	Oxfam	15
GDNet	36	Livelihoods Connect	9
Google	31	IDRC	9
FAO	28	WHO	9
ID21	26	OECD	7
Development Gateway	25	CEPAL	6

Exhibit 5: Other websites used for development information by Eldis users (Eldis User Survey, August-September 2002)

The OED survey pinpointed the World Bank's "inadequate attention to local circumstances" as problematic (OED, 2003: 64). The results indicated that the information provided not only by the Development Gateway but by the Bank as a whole was considered unrealistic for local circumstances, and many were concerned that the Bank exhibited a "bias in favour of macroeconomic solutions and a general inflexibility in considering local circumstances – as well as a condescension towards the experience and expertise of country institutions and personnel" (OED, 2003: 65).

Likewise, Louise Walker, in her 2003 evaluation of the Development Gateway, criticised the Gateway for its difficulty in considering local circumstances. A failure to identify beneficiaries and define utility causes the Development Gateway to have "difficulty targeting beneficiaries, and [it] runs the risk of aspiring to be too many things to too many people" (Walker, 2003: 8). "In the Knowledge/Topics area in particular", she argues, "...Topic Guides post information based on perceived usefulness, but the Guides often receive little feedback on the relevance of their choices. Similarly, measuring the number of users in a given topic area is limited in its ability to inform decision making by the Knowledge/Topics team about the relative success of topic" (2003: 14). Thus, the end result is that the Gateway has tremendous difficulty differentiating its material according to utility, or even determining, with any precision, for whom the material is intended. Perhaps as a response to these criticisms, the Development Gateway Foundation has highlighted the transition from "global knowledge-sharing tools, services, and

methodologies” to “local implementation in developing countries” as the main objective in its business plan for fiscal years 2004-2006 (Development Gateway Foundation, 2003: 19).

To follow up some of the issues raised in the OED and Louise Walker evaluations and to explicitly compare the different development portals, we designed a new survey which is shown in Appendix III (page 33). While the scope of this study did not permit implementing the survey, we were able to test it using a sample of development professionals who were active on the Internet. The full results are shown in Appendix IV (page 35). Almost half of the respondents never visited the Development Gateway and none found it “very useful.” While the sample size was too small to draw any statistically significant conclusions, the results are certainly disappointing with reference to the Development Gateway, especially considering the nature of the survey respondents, who can be assumed to be well-connected and information-hungry. When asked about the applicability of the material to local circumstances, four respondents from our survey “agreed somewhat” that the Development Gateway is applicable to local circumstances, while the others did not venture an opinion. One respondent said that although the Development Gateway has been successful in “providing resources,” it needs to improve by “renovating its outlook”. More specifically, the same respondent felt the Gateway content was currently too complicated and “should be more user-friendly.” Another respondent thought the Gateway should include more “radical viewpoints, material in local languages, [and a] development marketplace for jobs and assignments.”

All of this can be seen as indicative of the Bank’s general failure to consider alternative viewpoints. While it may not be easily apparent to the casual user, our analysis has indicated that there is, in fact, neither diversity nor representation of alternative viewpoints, while there exists a distinct homogeneity in the base the OED felt had diversified (see page 21 on topic analysis and page 25 on topic guides). This propensity towards insularity was criticised by the majority of OED survey respondents because they felt that many possible solutions were excluded by the Bank’s tendency to present “best practices” as the only way to solve problems (OED, 2003: 65).

A lack of engagement with the wider development community could result in little value added on the part of the Gateway. As the OED states, “in the context of a landscape crowded with other knowledge aggregators that have a specific topical, regional or audience focus, Knowledge/Topics lacks strategic uniqueness” (OED, 2003: 25). Walker closely echoes this sentiment in her six-point scale summary of the Development Gateway: when faced with the statement “the [Knowledge/Topics] service is distinct relative to services provided by comparators”, she characterises the portal as ‘marginally unsatisfactory’ (Walker, 2003: 49). She does go on to suggest that, “where the Development Gateway has developed a distinct service and focused on a specific utility, it has carved out a space relative to comparators” (2003: 14-15). Yet her findings discussed above have already shown that the Gateway has immense trouble exactly in this task of defining specific utility and achieving differentiation. For the statement, “it is easy to find information that is on the Development Gateway elsewhere,” three of our survey respondents agreed somewhat, and none of the respondents disagreed.

Thus, as the OED concludes, the Development Gateway “has difficulty in differentiating its offerings from those of other development portals and in directing its limited resources to distinguish its value, and will need to sharpen its focus to increase its usefulness,” (OED, 2003: 25). The anecdotal results from our own survey support this position, as do Louise Walker’s findings.

Findings – Quality of the Development Gateway Content

Quality of the content of the Development Gateway, in terms of the general principles of knowledge sharing, can be thought of in terms of relevance, accuracy, comprehensiveness, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness. In particular, key issues include what content is available, how it is organised, how it may be retrieved, where it comes from, whether it can be applied, and whether it is better to get it from somewhere else.

The analysis of quality will therefore incorporate the following:

- ◆ Editorial policy
- ◆ Organisation and availability of content – Topics
- ◆ Detailed review of content - Topics
- ◆ Organisation and availability of content - Country Gateways
- ◆ Search capability
- ◆ Choice of content providers
- ◆ Cost-effectiveness and sustainability

Editorial Policy

A brief discussion of the Development Gateway's editorial policy¹⁷ will serve to put in context the following analysis of the content of the website. A key section of the policy states that "content submitted to the Gateway by users is subject to prior review by editors or guides... who determine its suitability. Any content offered to the site may be rejected by editors if, in the editor's opinion, it... is not relevant to the subject of that section of the site, or is otherwise inappropriate". Clearly this gives the editors a great deal of leeway to define the suitability of postings as they see fit. This was one of the initial concerns raised in the 2001 *Declaration from Concerned Knowledge Workers*, which said that

...the only reason to exclude items is if they fail to meet the site's 'quality' criteria, yet it remains extremely unclear as to how this quality threshold is determined. And given the volume and diversity of information posted on the Internet daily, it is unlikely that the guides' coverage will be comprehensive. With the best will in the world, then, topic guides' selections will be biased in favour of the intellectual tastes of themselves and their contacts (Voice of the Turtle, 2001).

A further point made in the editorial policy is that "selection of resources, issues, discussion topics, news, and technical data for the site is, to the extent possible, based on fact, careful analysis, and the needs of the Gateway audience". Yet the Louise Walker OED evaluation of the Development Gateway (already discussed in greater detail on page 8) makes it clear that the Gateway is having much trouble in defining who that audience is, which casts suspicion on the ability of individual guides, regardless of their personal beliefs and abilities, to be able to make the right decisions on every attempted posting. As will be seen, the background of topic guides and the provenance of postings on the Gateway does in fact suggest a bias in knowledge and a marginalisation of diverse voices.

Finally, the editorial aim of the Development Gateway is that of setting standards to suit all users on all topics, looking to serve "a diverse audience of development professionals, civic and cultural communities, international aid agencies, aid recipients, academics, professional

¹⁷ See <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/190911/EditorialPolicy>.

groups, product and service providers, the media and others”.¹⁸ Wilks feels that “such an editorial proposition will be impossible.... to implement. The issues covered by the Gateway are simply too contested, and the range of understandings of what constitutes bias and careful analysis are too broad” (Wilks, 2002: 10-11). To satisfy all of such a diverse range of actors would require the ‘development community’ to be the homogenous whole the initial aims of the Gateway sees it as, suggesting that a faulty premise has led to questionable policy. The concerns surrounding such a powerful actor making such a decision are echoed by Bissio (2001, quoted in Wilks, 2002: 7):

Nobody has argued in favour of the World Bank or the national governments (the main actors of the proposed Gateway) starting to publish newspapers, even in countries which badly need them. There would be a public outrage if someone proposed it, as the press is supposed to be ‘free’. Why isn’t there a similar concern about this proposal, web portals being, as newspapers, essentially an editorial activity?

In fact Bissio and Abin (2001) go still further in their anti-corruption claim when they say that “it is a gross violation of editorial ethics to misrepresent a propaganda operation as a genuine independent Internet portal about development in the Internet”.

Organisation and Availability of Content - Topics

One of the respondents to our survey felt that the Gateway had a “good collection of material.” According to our comparison of the portals based on an ‘ideal’ organisation of development knowledge, however, there are several areas in which the Gateway falls short (see Appendix V, page 36). On the vast majority of categories and subcategories, there is much more material available on OneWorld. Frequently the same is true for Eldis. With methodological caveats in mind (see page 42), we can see that OneWorld offers more resources for health, environment, economy, society and politics (all of the broadest categories). Even with reference to the subcategories, OneWorld has significantly more to offer on the issues of sustainable development, debt, trade, education, conflict, human rights, and governance, among many others. There are many issues in which Eldis has a clear numerical dominance as well, including the following: disease, agriculture, aid, the international financial institutions, children, and poverty.

When one looks at the categories in which the Development Gateway does have an advantage in terms of availability of resources, there are only six: population and reproductive health, foreign direct investment (FDI), privatisation, culture, urban development, and technology. The comparative advantage in FDI and privatisation fits into the Gateway’s broader trend of maintaining a disproportionately high amount of economic content, as is also evident when one compares the share of economic content across portals. Furthermore, technology dominates the Gateway, which has several topics devoted exclusively to ‘electronic’ themes such as e-commerce. While it might look like variation on the Gateway website, in the face of all the possible issues of development, topics like these fit into a very narrow space (in this case, the category of technology). If you were to add the topics e-government and e-learning, which are under governance and education, respectively, in our current organisation, to the category of technology, almost one third of the Gateway’s content would consist of technology, and the vast majority of that would be related to ICTs. In fact, even without those two topics, technology is still the largest contingent of the Development Gateway content, occupying 9,512 resources or approximately 22% of all content, and 7,120 of those resources are ICT-related.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Governance has the Gateway's next highest count for a subcategory, with 5,969 resources, but OneWorld, with 15,684 resources that fall under this category, makes its content on governance over 2.5 times more available than the Development Gateway.

Perhaps even more telling than the large number of technological topics and resources present on the Development Gateway, is what is omitted from the site. Health, Education, Debt, Energy, Environment, Rural Development, Migration, Labour, Conflict and Human Rights are all either absent or subsumed under other Topics. Clearly, the Gateway presents technology, and more specifically ICT, as being more important for development than these topics.

Detailed Review of Content - Topics

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of content, two topics, Privatisation and Trade, were selected for detailed analysis. As of 21st March 2004, the Privatisation topic listed 311 total resources, while on the 18th March Trade listed 844 total resources. The 100 most recent resources for both topics were reviewed (see Methodology, page 42, for further explanation).

The selected resources for each topic were first reviewed for language, usability and user feedback. The results are shown in Exhibit 6a:

	Privatisation	Trade
Language of Resources		
English	100	92
Spanish	0	5
French	0	3
Other Languages	0	0
Usability of Web Site		
Broken Links	6	3
Duplicate Resources	0	1
Resources Requiring Payment	1	2
User Feedback		
Number of Resources with Comments	6	6
Total Number of Comments	7	6

Exhibit 6a: Detailed Topic Analysis (Development Gateway website, March 2004)

Although the Development Gateway includes content in other languages, 96% of reviewed resources were in English. In terms of usability, 5% of resources could either not be accessed (broken links) or were duplicated, while 1.5% of resources required payment for access. Only 6% of resources had any user feedback, and in all but one case, this consisted of a single and brief comment.

The sample resources were further reviewed for institutional and geographic scope and for major themes. The two selected topics displayed significant differences in institutional sources for the sampled resources. While Privatisation was dominated by the World Bank and IMF (44% of resources), Trade had significant contributions from UN organisations and northern think tanks/academic institutions (40% of resources). However, both topics had a similarly low number of resources from southern sources (13% for Privatisation and 18% for Trade).

The Trade resources were varied in content and did not lend themselves to any significant categorisation by key theme. However, for Privatisation, 58% of the resources were about

promoting or implementing privatisation. In contrast only 10% of the resources addressed the social costs of privatisation, and 3% of resources were explicit criticisms of World Bank policy. These results are summarised in Exhibit 6b:

	Privatisation	Trade
Source of Resources		
World Bank	41	4
Development Gateway	9	9
IMF	3	0.5
UN Organisations	8	10
OECD	0	6
WTO	0	4
Other Northern Organisations		
Think Tanks/Research Institutes/Universities	11	29.5
Other	10	14.5
Southern Organisations		
Government Agencies	7	4
Other	6	14
Miscellaneous	5	4.5
Totals	100	100
Major Themes - Privatisation		
Criticism of Neo-liberal Economics/WB Policies	3	
Promoting/Implementing Privatisation	58	
General	31	
Water/Power Privatisation	2	
Telecommunications Liberalisation	17	
Bank Regulation	4	
Health Care/Insurance	4	
Evaluation/Impact of Privatisation	15	
Social Costs/Safety Nets for Privatisation	10	
Miscellaneous	14	
Total	100	

Exhibit 6b: Detailed Topic Analysis (Development Gateway Website, March 2004)

Search Capability

The ability to search for specific content is a key element of usability of any information-based system, since it supplements the user's ability to find what they need through navigation. In order to test the four portals, a set of 40 search terms was created. Full search results are listed in Appendix VI, page 37.

The 40 search terms gave a total of 22,543 hits on the Development Gateway, 56,663 hits on OneWorld, 30,478 hits on Eldis and 10,668 hits on Choike. However, in our comparison of the search engines on the four different portals, we found a high degree of variation. When searching for a phrase, the Development Gateway automatically searches only for places where the words are used together. Its advanced search also gives you the option of searching for the exact word or phrase, all of the words in the phrase, or any word in the phrase. On the other hand, OneWorld returns as hits the resources that use words in the phrase anywhere, whether together or separate. Choike returns resources that contain the exact search term if this term is enclosed in quotations. Eldis is perhaps the most useful, producing results in order of relevance, regardless of whether they contain the exact words in your phrase.

A review of the individual search term results demonstrated some interesting findings. In keeping with its technological focus, the Development Gateway returned 116 hits for the term 'broadband', arguably of less than urgent importance for the less developed, whereas all three other sites combined returned 88 hits. This is even more peculiar when you realise a term like 'remittances', meaning the money transferred by migrants which rivals both FDI and ODA in billions of dollars worth of international financial flows every year, only returned 15 hits for the Gateway. Similarly, a search on the Gateway only yields 52 hits for 'debt relief', whereas the OneWorld and Eldis search engines offered hundreds of results.

In fact, out of the 40 search terms, the Development Gateway returned the highest number of hits for just four – Broadband, ICT, Internet and Microfinance. Choike, by far the smallest portal, provided access to more resources than the Development Gateway for as many as 21 out of the 40 selected search terms. OneWorld and Eldis also provided more resources than the Development Gateway for 21 and 29 search terms respectively.

Another problematic issue was a matter of language:

	DG	OneWorld	Eldis	Choike
Globalization	563	230	334	367
Globalisation	138	349	946	290
Decentralization	210	15	154	147
Decentralisation	52	22	432	136
Marginalization	18	13	69	145
Marginalisation	1	15	62	146

Exhibit 7: Search Capability Language Problems (from respective websites, April 2004)

The British-based portals often have much higher hits for the British spellings, while the portals in the Western hemisphere tend to have significantly higher hits for the American spellings, a problem that occurs consistently with many different terms. The difference in results provides a barrier to content for many populations in the less developed world, who will frequently have to use a second language, probably English, to access these sites. It is not in following with the global, borderless spirit of the Internet to require these users to determine the nation in which the portal has its headquarters before he/she can access the maximum amount of material on a given topic. A more sophisticated search facility should be able to take into account variations in spelling for crucial terms. The only site that currently seems to at least partially address this issue is Choike.

Organisation and Availability of Content - Country Gateways

Analysis of the Country Gateways has proven to be a difficult task, for a number of reasons (for a fuller discussion, see Methodology, page 42). To begin with, it is very tricky to discern from the website and from existing documentation exactly how many Country Gateways exist, and at what stage of development they currently are. Different parts of the Gateway website give access to greatly varying lists of Country Gateways: one list, found in two different places, contains only 22 Country Gateways¹⁹, while another, found elsewhere, contains 57, including a number that are supposed to be fully operational.²⁰ To add to the confusion, on both webpages showing the former of these lists, a further list exists of countries for which any content at all is present on the Development Gateway – not to be confused with Country Gateways. All the lists on the website overlook the Costa Rican Country Gateway, which we

¹⁹ See list on <http://www.developmentgateway.org/> and that on <http://www.developmentgateway.org/countryprofile/intermediary>.

²⁰ See list on <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/137849/>.

discovered in the course of our analysis only because there are links to it from various other Country Gateways.²¹ On an organisational level, therefore, the Country Gateways seemed, from our first visit to the Development Gateway and therefore surely in the eyes of many a user, to be in disarray at the Development Gateway's end. Operational status and access details for all the Country Gateways that could be found (either through any part of the Development Gateway or through the individual Country Gateways) are summarised in Appendix VII, page 38.

After much exploration and a fair bit of confusion, 42 Country Gateways were identified as being operational or prototypes – in other words those that have accessible websites. Over a third of these - 15 out of 42 – are available only in English, while 28 have English as their default language. Yet of these 15, only two have English as their sole official language (Australia and Jamaica) and nine do not recognise English as one of their official languages at all.²² Seven Country Gateways, all in Latin America, can be accessed only in their main local language (Spanish/Portuguese) and do not support English. There are very few less-spoken world languages represented, with the notable exceptions of Azerbaijani, Luganda and Ukrainian. Language options are also summarised in Appendix VII, page 38.

The dominance of English and confusion about access are certainly problematic, but other concerns raised about the Development Gateway at an international level may also be relevant at the Country Gateway level. Wilks puts this most clearly, fearing that Country Gateways represent not local but national viewpoints. He writes that:

The terms national and local are falsely conflated: Country Gateways only appear local and comprehensive when viewed from the global level. Editors at the national level will face similar problems to their peers at a global level in trying to be as comprehensive as claimed. Officially endorsed Country Gateway committees will be unlikely to capture the nuances of all the differing views in their country and will very likely soon enrage particular constituencies who feel their views are being marginalised” (Wilks, 2002: 12).

The Voice of the Turtle declaration was also concerned about the make-up of the Country Gateway organising bodies: “these will be run by government officials, private business and civil society groups appointed without any clear criteria of representativeness” (Voice of the Turtle: 2001).

Furthermore, the figures discussed earlier (see page 15) regarding usage statistics show that in July 2003 the Country Gateway pages received only 8,871 visits, while the Topics, dgMarket and AiDA between them had 425,015 visitors (Development Gateway Foundation, 2003: 33). While these figures presumably do not include direct visits to the Country Gateway sites, they should still be cause for concern given that the Country Gateways in fiscal year 2003 cost \$1.21 million compared to \$2.57 million for the Topics, dgMarket and AiDA combined.

While it has been impossible, within the scope of this study, to assess these claims using a similar method to our analysis of the Development Gateway itself, there is clearly a need to do

²¹ The Costa Rican Country Gateway can be accessed directly at <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/94435/>, yet from the links on many Country Gateways a Development Gateway message claiming there is no such node appears – see <http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/322821/interpage/no-node?iso=cr> .

²² Language information comes from www.ethnologue.com, April 2004. Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Croatia, Georgia, Indonesia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Vietnam do not have English as an official language.

so in order to gain a clearer picture of the diversity of opinion expressed and the background of those involved. Who bids for, and who has won, the Country Gateway contracts? How transparent has the bidding process been? Do those accessing the Country Gateways do so via the Development Gateway or direct to the Country Gateways themselves? Have the Country Gateways served to crowd out other actors within their country that may work on a more local level? If analyses were run on the governance of each Country Gateway and the provenance of the content of the websites, a much clearer picture may be drawn.

Choice of Content Providers

Content providers/managers for the Development Gateway (Topic section) include topic guides and cooperating organisations. Topic guides are responsible for content management and also source some content themselves, while cooperating organisations also contribute content. According to the Development Gateway's response (World Bank, 2001b) to the issues raised by the Bretton Woods Project (Wilks, 2001a), the Gateway had initially proposed to use an individual topic guide for each of the topics. However, "in order to ensure greater diversity and attract greater institutional collaboration" (World Bank, 2001b: 3), the Gateway started collaborating with organisations from civil society and the donor community to manage content. This led the OED's 2003 study to claim that the Gateway has "widened the site's base of contributors, editors, and advisers" (OED, 2003: 25). In order to validate or counter this claim, topic guides and cooperating organisations were extracted from the website and analysed. The full list of topic guides is shown in Appendix VIII, page 40.

Topic guides were grouped based on the employer (for individual guides) or organisation. The results are shown in Exhibit 8.

Topic Guides /Organization	Number of Topics	Topics
World Bank	7	Aid Effectiveness, Environmental Law, Governance, ICT for Development, Judicial and Legal Reform, Knowledge Economy, Trade and Development
World Bank and International Agency	3	Capacity Development for MDGs, E-Learning, Foreign Direct Investment
Private Consultant - former World Bank Employee	3	Business Environment, Food Security, Privatization
Development Gateway	3	E-Government, Glocalization, Youth for Development
Development Gateway and International Agency	1	Population and Reproductive Health
Civil Society	9	Civic Engagement, Culture and Development, Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Rights, Microfinance, NGOs, Poverty, Urban Development
University	1	Innovations for Development
Private Sector	1	Argentina Challenges and Opportunity
None	7	Afganistan Reconstruction, Iraq Relief & Recovery, E-Commerce for Arts & Crafts, Gender and Development, HIV/AIDS, Water Resources Management, WSSD Follow-up
Total	35	

Exhibit 8: Topic Guides (Development Gateway Website, March 2004)

Seven topics out of a total of 35 do not have any individual or organisation designated as a topic guide, while another 17 topics have at least one guide who is employed by the World Bank or the Development Gateway, or is a consultant who was formerly employed by the World

Bank. To make matters worse, only three topics (Argentina Challenges, Poverty and Civic Engagement) have southern topic guides.

In order to evaluate the choice of cooperating organisations, these were also extracted from the website and reviewed for type of organisation and geographical location of organisation. Since these organisations were not classified in any manner, subjective judgements had to be applied in order to categorise them. Out of a total of 242 organisations, 150 were found to be civil society organisations. An additional 26 were UN agencies, 22 were teaching and research institutions, 14 were private sector organisations, and 14 were World Bank departments or agencies. Thus the Development Gateway has indeed broadened itself outside the traditional, official sources of information. However, only 10% of the cooperating organisations are from Africa and South Asia. It also remains hugely significant that OneWorld has eight times as many partnerships as the Gateway.

Cost-effectiveness and Sustainability

The final dimension of quality evaluated by this study is cost-effectiveness and sustainability. Cost-effectiveness is examined from two perspectives, within the Development Gateway itself and in comparison with OneWorld, Eldis and Choike.

Exhibit 9 provides a breakdown of costs by business area for the 2002-03 fiscal year from the Development Gateway business plan (Development Gateway, 2003). Roughly half the total expenditures are allocated to specific areas, while the rest represents general overhead. If the overhead is allocated back to the business area, we see that \$5.46 million out of a total of \$7.64 million annual expenses may be considered attributable to the Topics and Country Gateways. Applying the site visitor figures by business area (Development Gateway, 2003), it is possible to calculate average expenditures per visitor for each of the areas. For the July 2003 level of user access, the DgMarket is by far the most cost-effective business area, with an expenditure of 30 cents on the average for each visitor. In contrast the average spending per visitor is \$2.04 for Topics and \$23.21 for Country Gateways.

	Actual Expenses \$million	% Area Expenses	Allocated Expenses \$million	Visitor Sessions (July 2003)	% Visitor Sessions	Monthly Cost per visitor (July 2003)
Area Expenditures (Net)						
Topics	1.49	39.4%	3.01	123,134	28.4%	\$2.04
DgMarket	0.51	13.5%	1.03	284,090	65.5%	\$0.30
AiDA	0.57	15.1%	1.15	17,791	4.1%	\$5.40
Country Gateway	1.21	32.0%	2.45	8,781	2.0%	\$23.21
Total Area Expenditures	3.78	100.0%	7.64	433,796	100.0%	\$1.47
General Overhead	3.86					
Total Expenditures (Net)	7.64					

Exhibit 9: Cost-effectiveness by Development Gateway Area (Development Gateway Business Plan 2004-06)

A different view of cost-effectiveness can be obtained by comparing Gateway expenditures with those for the other three portals and is shown in Appendix IX, Table 1, page 41. Total Development Gateway expenditures up to mid 2003 were reported at \$23.36 million. Using the 2003 split in spending between Gateway areas as a guideline, it is estimated that the total cost attributable to the Topics and Country Gateways is \$17.11 million. In contrast, total costs incurred up to mid 2003 were \$4.58 million for OneWorld, \$0.92 million for Eldis, and \$0.42 million for Choike.

Dividing these costs by the number of resources created by each portal between 2000 and March 2004 (assuming that the relative number of resources for the portals has not changed significantly since mid 2003) provides a measure of total costs incurred per resource provided. This is found to vary between a low of \$57.50 for Eldis to a high of \$407.88 for the Development Gateway. An alternative view of cost-effectiveness can be obtained by looking at usage of each website. Dividing monthly costs by monthly number of visits gives the cost incurred per website visit. This ranges from \$0.26 for Choike to \$4.85 for the Development Gateway.

While the cost per resource and cost per visit calculations suffer from a number of limitations such as problems in counting resources, differences in scope and quality of resources, and differences in data month for usage data, the Development Gateway is clearly the least cost-effective portal of development knowledge. It is nearly seven times more expensive than the next most expensive site on a per visitor basis (OneWorld) and about four times more expensive than the next most expensive site on a per resource basis (Choike). In fact the unit cost figures for Choike are overstated since resources have only been counted from the English language site, not the Spanish site or affiliated NGO partner sites.

It is also interesting to note that while the World Bank has contributed a total of around \$15.5 million for the development and operation of the Gateway (OED, 2003), it currently receives more than \$6 million a year from the Gateway for the services contract. This represents a 40% annual rate of return in terms of business generated. While this is not the same as a 40% annual profit, it certainly creates work and incomes for World Bank staffers, whilst ignoring more cost-effective solutions such as cooperation or linkages with other development portals.

Finally, a review of the actual and projected cash flows for the Development Gateway from 2001 until 2006 (Appendix IX, Table 2, page 41) shows that even by 2006, the Gateway is targeted to self-generate less than 15% of its operating expenses. Coupled with the lack of any kind of endowment, this means that the Gateway will depend on donor funding on a permanent basis.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This analysis has evaluated the performance of the Development Gateway with reference to the criticisms levelled at the Development Gateway prior to its inception, and also to general principles of knowledge sharing as outlined by the World Bank itself. Specifically, the analysis has focused on the following six issues:

- ◆ Filtering of development knowledge reflecting bias towards northern and official sources
- ◆ Lack of independence from the World Bank
- ◆ Potential crowding out of other independent and southern portals for development knowledge
- ◆ Unclear definition of stakeholders and beneficiaries
- ◆ Focus on mechanics of knowledge sharing as opposed to the application of knowledge and evaluation of impact
- ◆ Comprehensiveness, organisation, and uniqueness of content

The concerns related to filtering and bias of knowledge have been borne out by many components of the analysis. The Internet usage statistics clearly demonstrate that the choice of the Internet medium limits access to the Development Gateway in developing countries. The editorial policy, under which Topic Guides select content and all content is evaluated for scientific methodology, clearly exacerbates the problem. This is demonstrated by the detailed analysis of the Privatisation and Trade topics that showed that more than 80% of the resources were from northern sources, and 96% were in English. It was also interesting that telecommunications liberalisation was the single most popular theme, reflecting perhaps the interests of northern providers rather than the southern poor. Both the OED and Louise Walker evaluations pointed to inadequate attention to local circumstances as a key concern. This concern was supposedly addressed by the Development Gateway through expanding the pool of topic guides and partners. However, the location analysis of the Topic Guides revealed that only three Topic Guides out of 35 are from the South.

The issue of independence from the World Bank was analysed in terms of choice of Topic Guides (for content) and Board Members (for governance). Out of the 35 current topics, 24 (69%) are managed by World Bank or Development Gateway staff. In terms of governance, six of the 20 members are current World Bank employees, while another two are former World Bank employees. Clearly, the Development Gateway has a long way to go before it could be considered 'independent' of the World Bank. This judgement does not even depend on the \$6 million a year service agreement that was won by the World Bank, apparently without competitive bidding, for providing operating staff and services to the Development Gateway.

Further results of the issue of independence have been that there are a lack of accountability and responsiveness to civil society, a lack of transparency more generally, and therefore a concurrent lack of trust among the Gateway's intended users and 'beneficiaries'. Key documents regarding the setting up of the Gateway are no longer available on the website, and nor are the two existing evaluations. Additionally, for almost two months, no response was received to direct email requests for such documentation. Furthermore, it was found that evaluation of the Development Gateway has, to date, been inadequate, and there appear to be no plans to commission an independent examination. Both evaluations carried out so far have been under the auspices of the OED, and while both had important criticisms, their methodology and scope have been limited.

A further corollary of the Development Gateway's relationship with the World Bank is that many of the criticisms levelled at the Gateway in fact echo those made of the traits and tendencies of the World Bank as a whole. In particular, the tendency to ignore local circumstances and alternative viewpoints in favour of 'best practice' solutions is a common criticism of the World Bank that manifests itself in much of Development Gateway policy as well. It is unlikely that these criticisms will be addressed if the Gateway continues to be run by World Bank staff and evaluated by the World Bank OED.

The concerns regarding crowding out of other development portals by the Development Gateway do not seem to be borne out. According to Alexa web traffic ratings, portals such as OneWorld have continued to expand usage despite the launch of the Development Gateway. However, at least one of these portals has claimed that while there is no crowding out of usage, there is certainly crowding out of funding available for development portals. This is especially significant given that the other portals are significantly more cost-effective in creating and managing content.

The issue of unclear definition of stakeholders and beneficiaries has been acknowledged by both internal evaluations of the Development Gateway. In particular, the evaluation by Louise Walker identifies this as a major problem in the context of customising the content for actual users. This is in direct conflict with the knowledge sharing principles espoused by the World Bank, that state clearly that the point of knowledge sharing programmes lies in the application of knowledge, not the mechanics of sharing. Unfortunately, the Development Gateway has built a de-contextualised repository of development knowledge, without any clear idea of how this knowledge will be used. This is also reflected in the fact the goals of the Gateway are framed in mechanistic terms such as achieving five million page views a month, rather than in terms of outcomes.

Finally, with regard to the quality of the content, it was found that despite expenditure of vast sums, the Gateway is not the most comprehensive web portal for development knowledge. The global civil society portal OneWorld has significantly higher usage and also seems to have more overall content than the Development Gateway. In general, both OneWorld and the research portal Eldis provide as much or more content than the Gateway for social, political, and environmental topics, while the Gateway tends to be strongest in economic topics, and more specifically information technology related topics. This is also reflected in the categorisation of topics, with five out of the 35 topics allocated to information technology, and none dedicated exclusively to Health, Education, Rural Development, Debt, Labour, or Conflict. On a different note, access to country specific information is chaotic, with different portions of the Gateway website giving access to wildly different numbers of Country Gateways. The OED may claim that the Gateway's content is credible and high quality, but our analysis shows that it is poorly organised and lacks comprehensiveness. Moreover, the Development Gateway is significantly less cost-effective than other portals, but (as acknowledged by both the existing evaluations), does not provide any strategic uniqueness.

In summary, the Development Gateway represents a repository of development knowledge, similar in scope and size to other existing knowledge bases, without any clear identification of users or processes that it supports. Moreover, it suffers from significant bias towards 'northern' knowledge, remains linked closely to the World Bank, suffers from numerous problems in the organisation of knowledge, and is not cost-effective in comparison with other portals for development-related knowledge. The Gateway is going ahead to raise substantial further money without having achieved many of the goals it set itself, without having done an independent evaluation and with major question marks over its ability to deliver. We urge a full,

properly independent evaluation, expanding on the work in this study, before any more money is spent. The more such a 'hard and fast' analysis probes into real, tangible performance and focuses on those living and working in the LDCs, the more robust and germane the results will be. It should focus on determining whether the Topics and Country Gateway sections are at all viable in light of the poor organisation, low cost-effectiveness, lack of comprehensiveness, and low levels of usage. Rather than simply continuing with the present strategy and practice, the Development Gateway needs to consider options such as collaboration/integration with other portals or even scrapping the Topic and Country Gateway sections altogether. It may well be that only by cutting back in some areas can the Gateway succeed in others.

In addition to commissioning an independent evaluation, the Development Gateway can take immediate action on several of the conclusions of this study in order to win the trust of civil society and others it has attempted to target. We recommend the following:

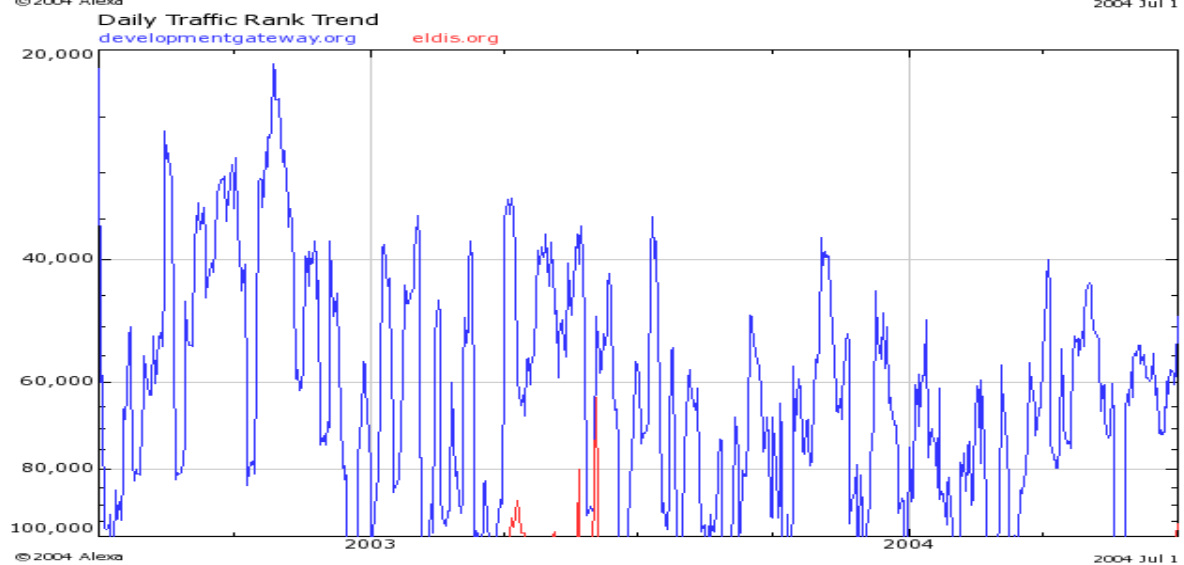
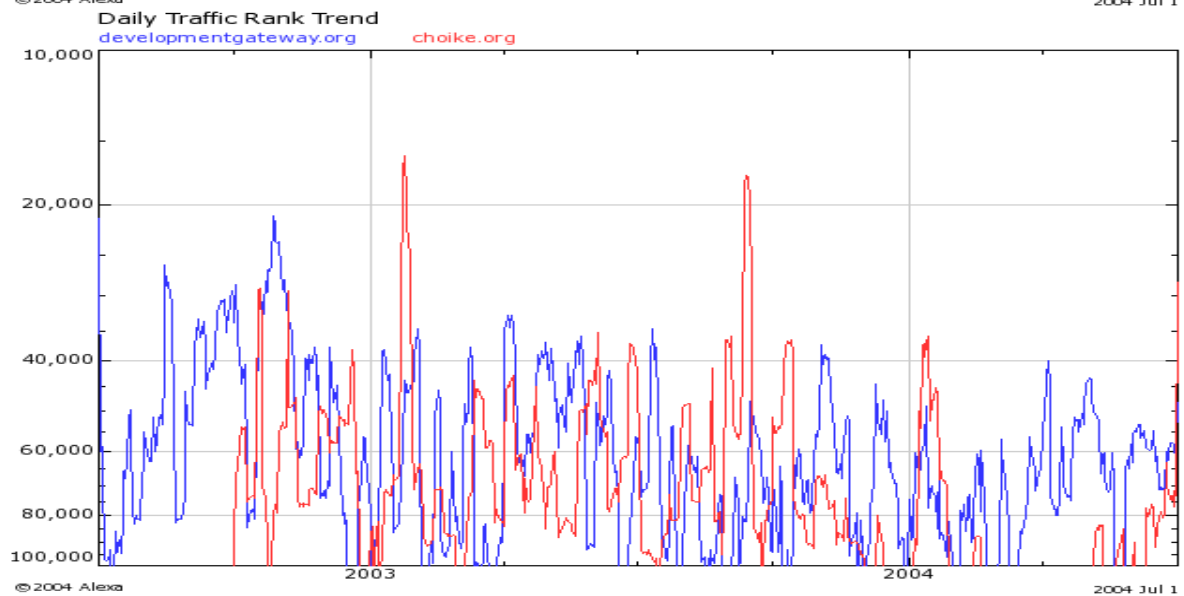
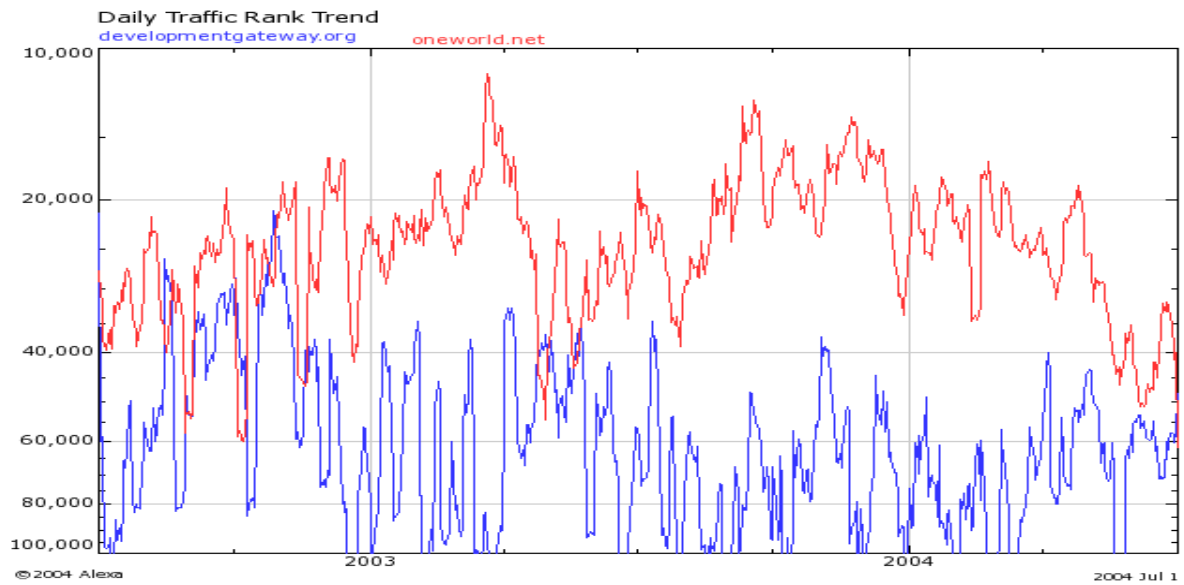
- ◆ Undertake immediate action to diversify the Board of Directors and Topic Guides in order to reduce the influence of the World Bank and reflect the many and varied views and needs of the intended users of the Development Gateway.
- ◆ Initiate planning and processes to work towards termination of the World Bank services contract and the development of alternative and diverse service partnerships.
- ◆ Launch an initiative to specifically increase the content sourced from the South, perhaps through increased partnerships with southern civil society organisations, universities, media, web portals or other knowledge aggregators.
- ◆ Improve transparency to all stakeholders in development, through provision of key documents, performance statistics, and consultation results on the website. Also provide a forum on the website for an open discussion of the Development Gateway itself – in effect creating a new community of interest.
- ◆ Re-open the dialogue with civil society and official development partners to redefine the mission and priorities for the Development Gateway, clearly identifying the distinct categories of users.
- ◆ Conduct a task analysis to determine what kinds of specific applications are needed by each category of users. Review and modify the current service design in light of this task analysis. Establish outcomes-based performance metrics and an ongoing evaluation system.
- ◆ Conduct a comprehensive restructuring of the existing content and taxonomy of the Topics section, in order to rectify the current bias towards technology at the expense of important social and political issues (possibly along the lines of the taxonomy conceived in the Draft Business Proposal of 2001, but abandoned subsequently).
- ◆ Review the technical usability of the web site, with reference to the chaotic organisation of Country content, navigation difficulties in the Topics content, broken links and duplicate resources.

Appendices

Appendix I: Development Gateway Foundation Board of Directors

	Name	Country of Origin	Current Job	Past Jobs
1	Mamphela Ramphele (Chair)	South Africa	Managing Director, World Bank Group	Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Town
2	Nawid Ahsan	Pakistan	Finance Secretary, Government of Pakistan	Civil Servant, Pakistan
3	K. Y. Amoako	Ghana	Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa (UN)	Director of Education and Social Policy, World Bank
4	Gouassou Drabo	Mali	Minister for ICT, Government of the Republic of Mali	Director, Mail Press & Media Agency
5	Yuzo Harada	Japan	Executive Director, The World Bank and Affiliates	Ministry of Finance, Japan
6	Michael Hofmann	Germany	Director General, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	Advisor to Chancellor Willy Brandt, Office Bearer of SDP
7	Anne Jones	US		Director Division of Investment Management, SEC (US Government)
8	Mark Malloch Brown	UK	Administrator of UNDP	Vice President for External Affairs and UN Affairs, World Bank
9	Wond Wossen Mesfin	US? Ethiopian-born	President & CEO, Transnational Computer Technology	Private Sector
10	Mohamed Muhsin (Treasurer)	Sri Lanka	Vice President & Chief Information Officer, World Bank Group	
11	Romain Murenzi	Rwanda	Minister for Education, Science & Tech. Government of the Republic of Rwanda	Professor of Physics, Clark Atlanta University
12	Mary O' Kane	Australia	Consultant - high tech, national research policy, higher education policy	Vice Chancellor, Adelaide University
13	Jerry Rao	India	Chairman & CEO, Mphasis BFL Ltd (Software company)	Private Sector
14	Alan Rossi (CEO, ex officio)	Peru	CEO, Development Gateway Foundation	Private Sector - Telecommunications
15	Lucio Stanca	Italy	Minister for Innovation and Technology for Italy	Private Sector - IBM
16	Chander Mohan Vasudev	India	Executive Director, World Bank Group	Civil Servant, India
17	James D. Wolfensohn	Australia	President, World Bank Group	Private Sector - Investment Banking
18	Jun-Cheol Yang	South Korea	Director General, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Information, Govt of South Korea	Civil Servant, South Korea
19	Jean-Paul Zens	Luxembourg	Director Media and Telecommunication Department, Prime Minister's Office, Luxembourg	Civil Servant - Luxembourg
20	Guangyao Zhu	China	Executive Director, World Bank Group	Civil Servant - China

Appendix II: Alexa Usage Statistics



Appendix III: User Survey

I. Background Information

1. What is your country of residence?	
2. What is your nationality?	
3. In which sector do you work? (Indicate one box.)	Academic / Private (firm) / Public (government) Non-profit (NGO) / Donor / Media Other (specify)
4. What is the focus of your work? (Indicate all that are applicable.)	Policy / Technical / Education/ Research Project management / Advocacy Other (specify)
5. What is the subject of your work? (Indicate all that are applicable.)	Health / Education / Social development Technology / Global economy / Governance Environment / Public administration/ Aid Other (specify)

II. Internet Usage

6. How often do you use the Internet?	Several times a day/ Once a day / Once a week Less than once a week / Never
---------------------------------------	--

If you answer “never” to question 6, you may proceed to question 20.

III. Usage of Development Portals

7. How often do you refer to the following websites for development-related information?	Frequently/Occasionally/Rarely/Never Choike Development Gateway Eldis OneWorld Other(specify)
8. How useful are the following websites to your work?	Very useful/Somewhat useful/Rarely useful/Never useful Choike Development Gateway Eldis OneWorld Other (specify)

If you answered that you “never” use the Development Gateway, you may proceed to question 20.

IV. Usage of the Development Gateway

For the following questions, please indicate whether you 1) agree strongly, 2) agree somewhat, 3) have no opinion, 4) disagree somewhat, or 5) disagree strongly with the statement provided.

9. My use of the Development Gateway has limited my use of other, similar sites (such as Eldis, Choike, and OneWorld.Net).
10. It is easy to find information that is on the Development Gateway elsewhere.
11. The Development Gateway has improved my access to development-related information.
12. The information on the Development Gateway is technically sound.
13. The information on the Development Gateway is applicable to local circumstances.
14. I find the Development Gateway easy to use (e.g. it is well-maintained, the organisation is easy to follow, the information is clear, etc.).
15. Information on the Development Gateway represents diverse sources (e.g. alternative views to development, a fair balance between “North” and “South” sources, a reasonable amount of local knowledge, etc.)
16. The Development Gateway is significantly improving my capacity to do my job.

Finally, please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

17. What, if any, are some subjects that you would like to see the Development Gateway address which are currently not on its list of topics?	
18. In which ways do you think the Development Gateway has been successful?	
19. What does the Development Gateway need to do to improve?	

Thank you again for your assistance. If you would like us to send you a copy of our results, please indicate so in the box below.

20. Would you like a copy of our results?	
---	--

Appendix IV: Survey Results

Question/Statement	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	3	2	0	4	4	0	0	9		
4	3	1	4	4	6	2	2	2		
5	4	5	6	4	3	3	3	4	5	
6	9	0	0	0	0	0				
7a	1	0	0	8						
7b	1	2	2	4						
7c	1	2	0	6						
7d	1	2	2	4						
7e	3	1	0	5						
8a	0	1	2	6						
8b	0	3	1	5						
8c	2	1	1	5						
8d	1	0	3	5						
8e	3	1	0	5						
9	0	0	7	1	1					
10	0	3	6	0	0					
11	1	2	5	1	0					
12	1	2	6	0	0					
13	0	4	5	0	0					
14	0	4	5	0	0					
15	0	2	5	2	0					
16	0	4	5	0	0					
17	7	2								
18	7	2								
19	7	2								
20	7	2								

Key

1. A=Ecuador, B=Peru, C=Uganda, D=Bangladesh, E=South Africa, F=Indonesia, G=India, H=Argentina, I=Poland
2. A=USA, B=Peru, C=Uganda, D=Bangladesh, E=Ireland, F=Indonesia, G=India, H=Argentina, I=Poland
3. A=Academic, B=Private, C=Public, D= NGO, E=Donor, F= Media, G= Other
4. A=Policy, B=Technical, C=Education, D=Project Management, E=Research, F=Advocacy, G=Other
5. A=Health, B=Education, C=Soc. Dev., D=Technology, E=Global Economy, F=Aid, G=Environment, H=Governance, I=Other
6. A=Several, B= Once a day, C= Once a week, D= <Once a week, E=Never
7. A=Frequently, B=Occasionally, C=Rarely, D=Never
8. A=Very, B=Somewhat, C=Rarely, D=Never
- 9-16. A=Agree strongly, B=Agree somewhat, C=No opinion, D=Disagree somewhat, E=Disagree strongly
- 17-19. A=No Opinion, B=Opinion (referred to in text)
20. A=Yes, B= No

Appendix V: Topic Comparison

TOPIC	SUBTOPIC	DG	ONEWORLD	ELDIS	CHOIKE
HEALTH		5,325	7,529	8,764	245
	General	0	2,528	4,142	245
	Disease	979	2,205	2,260	0
	Food security	1,552	1,681	1,352	0
	Population/Reproductive Health	2,794	1,115	1,010	0
ENVIRONMENT		1,978	13,121	2,099	644
	General	815	3,509	0	204
	Biodiversity	0	1,942	1,056	88
	Sust. Dev./Natural resources	1,163	3,858	1,043	293
	Pollution	0	2,344	0	29
	Energy	0	1,468	0	30
ECONOMY		14,043	18,861	10,542	426
	General	622	4,696	1,001	138
	Agriculture	0	1,572	2,190	0
	Aid	906	1,921	2,547	0
	Debt	0	2,062	403	0
	Finance	508	1,119	1,314	0
	Trade	842	2,640	1,164	150
	Tourism	0	234	0	0
	IFIs	0	0	1,078	0
	FDI	1,342	0	0	0
	Privatization	311	0	0	0
	Technology	9,512	4,617	845	138
SOCIETY		10,102	24,211	10,442	1,836
	General	0	66	0	875
	Children	700	2,977	2,212	114
	Education	2,252	4,040	1,768	101
	Gender	1,568	1,909	1,729	277
	Culture	1,593	1,178	0	0
	Poverty	1,671	3,215	4,733	0
	Urban development	763	222	0	0
	Migration	0	2,205	0	90
	Media	0	3,090	0	204
	Humanitarian Relief	0	1,032	0	0
	Religion	0	733	0	0
	Labor	0	1,325	0	0
	Transport	0	242	0	0
	Race/Ethnicity	1,555	1,712	0	130
	Sexuality	0	265	0	45
POLITICS		6,361	44,361	6,733	833
	General	0	3,506	0	0
	International Relations	392	7,576	2,029	328
	War/Conflict	0	11,706	251	205
	Human Rights	0	5,889	0	300
	Governance	5,969	15,684	4,453	0

Appendix VI: Search Results

Search Term	Number of Resources*			
	Development Gateway	One World (One World Sites)	Eldis	Choike (includes NGO links)
Agricultural Credit	8	562	244	28
Broadband	116	23	7	58
Child Poverty	73	2,807	444	19
Civil society	1,375	2,995	1,426	571
Conditionality	17	8	141	69
Conflict/war	1,456	4,848	2,031	555
Debt relief	52	1,704	372	102
Decentralisation	52	22	432	136
Decentralization	210	15	154	147
Digital Divide	690	920	74	99
E-mail	357	0	97	1,062
Empowerment	448	177	340	469
Ethics	128	86	883	333
Food Aid	164	3,332	416	98
Gender	1,750	661	2,411	614
Globalisation	138	349	946	290
Globalization	563	230	334	367
Good governance	206	1,187	481	232
ICT	2,976	679	344	175
Industrial policy	3	1,938	440	55
Industrialisation	17	9	225	105
Industrialization	16	4	89	118
Informal sector/informal economy	50	1,962	2,057	168
Internet	3,467	1,844	1,272	961
Land Reform	18	1,166	318	146
Marginalisation	1	15	262	146
Marginalization	18	13	69	145
Microfinance	373	18	181	56
Participation	1,327	436	2,737	737
Poverty	2,903	1,717	3,335	641
Privatisation	48	143	390	219
Privatization	430	144	192	224
Public services	99	2,966	1,869	228
Remittances	15	15	53	88
Rural development	236	5,075	1,561	319
Social Capital	144	3,914	448	100
Social Funds	35	3,384	715	19
Structural Adjustment	22	142	368	213
Water Resources Management	107	2,700	302	66
World Bank	2,435	8,453	2,018	510
Total Resources	22,543	56,663	30,478	10,688

* All search results for the Development Gateway, OneWorld and Eldis are from April 2004. Search results for Choike are from June 2004.

Appendix VII: Country Gateways: Access, Status & Language

Country	Available from "DG homepage" and "Countries" page ¹	Available from "CG Network" page	Status ²	Default Language ³	Choice between English and official language(s) ⁴	Any other spoken living language available?
Argentina		✓	P	Spanish	✓	N
Armenia	✓	✓	O	English	✓	N
Australia	✓	✓	O	English	n/a	N
Azerbaijan	✓	✓	P	Azerbaijani	✓	N
Bangladesh	✓	✓	P	English	x	N
Belarus		✓	I			
Benin		✓	I			
Bolivia		✓	I			
Brazil		✓	P	Portuguese	x	N
Bulgaria	✓	✓	P	English	✓	N
Cape Verde		✓	I			
Chile		✓	I			
China	✓	✓	O	English	✓	N
Colombia		✓	O	Spanish	x	N
Costa Rica ⁵			P	English	x	N
Croatia		✓	P	English	x	N
Dominican Republic		✓	P	Spanish	x	N
Ecuador		✓	I			
El Salvador		✓	P	Spanish	x	N
Georgia	✓	✓	O	English	x	N
Guatemala		✓	P	Spanish	✓	N
Guyana		✓	I			
Honduras		✓	I			
India		✓	P	English	x	N
Indonesia		✓	O	English	x	N
Jamaica		✓	O	English	n/a	N
Kazakhstan	✓	✓	O	Russian	English but not Kazakh	N
Kenya		✓	I			
Kyrgyzstan	✓	✓	O	English	x	Russian
Lebanon		✓	I		.	
Mali		✓	I			
Mauritania		✓	P	English	x	French
Mauritius		✓	I			
Moldova		✓	O	English	✓	Romana/ Russian
Mongolia	✓	✓	P	English	✓	N

¹ List available from "Countries" homepage does not include the list of countries on which there is DG content, as there are 219 of these

² I = initiation, P = prototype, O = operational. Status is according to initial page on DG. Many prototypes seem to be complete

³ Default language when accessed from Development Gateway

⁴ Official language as defined by www.ethnologue.com

⁵ Not available from/mentioned on the Development Gateway

Appendix VII (continued)

Country	Available from "DG homepage" and "Countries" page ¹	Available from "CG Network" page	Status ²	Default Language ³	Choice between English and official language(s) ⁴	Any other spoken living language available?
Morocco		✓	P	French	✓	N
Mozambique		✓	P	English	x	N
Namibia		✓	P	English	n/a	N
Nepal		✓	I			
Nicaragua		✓	I			
Nigeria		✓	I			
Pakistan		✓	P	English	x	N
Peru		✓	P	Spanish	✓	N
Poland	✓	✓	O	English	✓	N
Romania	✓	✓	O	English	✓	N
Russia	✓	✓	O	Russian	✓	N
Rwanda		✓	P	English	x	N
Senegal		✓	I			
Sri Lanka	✓	✓	P	English	x	N
Tajikistan	✓	✓	O	English	x	Russian
Tanzania	✓	✓	P	English	x	N
Uganda	✓	✓	P	English	n/a	Luganda
Ukraine	✓	✓	O	English	✓	Russian
Uruguay	✓	✓	O	Spanish	x	N
Uzbekistan	.	✓	P	?	?	?
Venezuela	✓	✓	O	Spanish	x	N
Vietnam	✓	✓	O	English	x	N
West Bank/Gaza	✓	✓	O	English	✓	N

Appendix VIII: Development Gateway Topic Guides

Topic	Topic Advisor (Organisation)	Topic Advisor Type
Afghanistan Reconstruction	None	None
Aid Effectiveness	Julius P Gwyer, World Bank OED	World Bank
Argentina: Challenges and Opportunities	Lucas Gorganchian, General Manager, Neptrom SA	Private Sector Consultancy-Argentina
Business Environment	Robert E Anderson, Private Consultant	Former WB employee
Capacity Development for MDGs	Anoop Swaminath & Govind Nair - World Bank Institute Bozena Blix & John Paterson - UNDP Capacity Dev Group	World Bank, UNDP
Civic Engagement	Fundación Arias, Interlegal International Public Foundation for Political and Legal Research, SAP-PK Irfan Mufti	Civil Society (Canada, South Asia, Costa Rica)
Culture and Development	Charles D. Kleymeyer, Center for Native Lands	Civil Society (US)
E-Commerce for Arts & Crafts	None	None
E-Government	Hmayak Arazyan, Development Gateway	Development Gateway
E-Learning	The Commonwealth of Learning, World Links	World Bank/Inter Govt Agency
Environmental Law	Charlotte Streck, World Bank	World Bank
Food Security	Jean-Charles Le Vallée, PhD Student Carleton University	Former FPA, WB employee
Foreign Direct Investment	Foreign Investment Advisory Service, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, Division on Investment, Technology and Enterprise Development	World Bank/UNCTAD
Gender and Development	None	None
Glocalization	Salvatore Nigro, Development Gateway	Development Gateway
Governance	Erin Hoffmann, World Bank Institute	World Bank
HIV/AIDS	None	None
ICT for Development	InfoDev - Intergovt Agency	Administered by WB
Indigenous Knowledge	Nuffic IK-Unit. (Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education),	Civil Society
Indigenous Peoples	Indigenous Peoples' Fund, Inter-American Development Bank	Civil Society/IFI
Indigenous Rights	Cultural Survival	Civil Society
Innovations for Development	Winthrop Carty, Harvard University, School of Government	Academia
Iraq: Relief and Recovery	None	None
Judicial and Legal Reform	Maria Dakolias, World Bank	World Bank
Knowledge Economy	Carl Dahlman, World Bank Institute	World Bank
Microfinance	Microcredit Summit Campaign, PlaNet Finance	Civil Society
Non-Governmental Organizations	Pact	Civil Society (US)
Population and Reproductive Health	Susan Pasquariella, UNFPA/Development Gateway	UNFPA/Development Gateway
Poverty	GRADE	Civil Society (Peru)
Privatization	Robert E Anderson, Private Consultant	Former WB employee
Trade and Development	Hager Ben-Mahmoud and Philip Schuler - World Bank	World Bank
Urban Development	Eduard Conti, Metropolis	Civil Society
Water Resources Management	None	None
World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Follow-Up	None	None
Youth for Development	Glocal Youth Parliament, Development Gateway	Development Gateway

Appendix IX: Cost-Effectiveness and Sustainability

Table 1: Cost-effectiveness of Development Portals

	Development Gateway	Development Gateway (Topics/CG)	OneWorld	Eldis	Choike
2000-2001 Expenditures (\$'s million)	7	5.01	1.00	0.21	0.12
2001-02 Expenditures (\$'s million)	6.19	4.43	1.64	0.30	0.14
2002-03 Expenditures (\$'s million)	10.17	7.67	1.94	0.41	0.16
Total Expenditures up to mid 2003	23.36 ¹	17.11 ²	4.58 ³	0.92 ⁴	0.42 ⁵
Total resources added 2000 to 3/2004		41,959 ⁶	52,786	16,000	3,984
Cumulative cost per resource ⁷		\$407.88	\$86.77	\$57.50	\$105.42
Monthly Visits ⁸		131,915	244,105	64,000	50,990
Estimated Monthly Costs 2003 ⁹		\$639,187	\$161,667	\$34,167	\$13,333
Cost per visit ¹⁰		\$4.85	\$0.66	\$0.53	\$0.26

¹Development Gateway Business Plan 2004-06

²Development Gateway Business Plan 2004-06. Unallocated expenses distributed by service area in the same ratio as allocated expenses.

³OneWorld Financial Statements, March 31 2003 and P. Armstrong (personal communication, May 20, 2004).

⁴G. Barnard (personal communication, May 25, 2004)

⁵Choike Audited Financial Statements 2000-02 and 2002-03

⁶Total resources for Development Gateway include double counting of resources that appear under multiple topics

⁷Cumulative cost per resource is calculated by dividing the cumulative spending (up to mid 2003) by the total number of resources created (up to March 2004). The discrepancy in time period is because financial figures for the 2003-04 year were not available at the time of this analysis.

⁸Monthly visits are as provided by each portal – March 2003 for Choike, July 2003 for Development Gateway and Eldis, and January 2004 for OneWorld

⁹Estimated monthly costs are calculated as 1/12th of the costs for the 2002-03 financial year

¹⁰Cost per visit is calculated as Monthly Costs divided by number of visits for the latest available month.

Table 2: Actual and Projected Cashflow from Development Gateway Operations (Development Gateway Business Plan 2004-06)

	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	Totals
Cash Inflows							
Donations	7	14.95	9.99	11.06	16.55	15.5	75.05
Service Generated Funds			0.12	0.97	1.48	2.24	4.81
Total Inflows	7	14.95	10.11	12.03	18.03	17.74	79.86
Cash Outflows							
Operating/Admin Exp.	7	6.19	7.77	9.77	10.51	11.02	52.26
Grants - Country Gateway			2.2	3.05	2.00	2.1	9.35
Grants – Other			0.2	1.7	2.70	2.75	7.35
Total Outflows	7	6.19	10.17	14.52	15.21	15.87	68.96

Appendix X: Methodology

Although we were familiar with the early critiques, we started our analysis without knowing what evidence of progress we would find, and what that would indicate for the Gateway's status vis-à-vis alternative websites. In order to obtain a general idea of how the various development portals matched up to each other, we compiled statistics for the Development Gateway, OneWorld, Eldis, and Choike²³ (see page 15). The website Alexa proved an invaluable resource, as it provides basic data on the daily usage of individual sites. We also referred to the aforementioned development portals for their own internal statistics, including usage statistics, number of partnerships, and content, the latter of which was measured in terms of number of resources (under development topics) as of March 2004. The figures for the portals were counted from the respective web sites, with the exception of Eldis, which stated the number on its home page. Although the figures for the Development Gateway and Choike include double counting since the same resource may be entered under multiple topics, the figures for the other portals represent unique resources. The varied nature of resources (press releases, research papers, web sites, announcements, news articles etc.) makes it difficult to make exact comparisons, but a broad picture can indeed be derived from these comparisons. We also compared the portals in terms of operating costs, where they were available (see page 26).

Secondly, in order to analyse the content of the Development Gateway, we divided development knowledge into six broad categories (health, environment, economy, society, politics, and 'other'), as well as many more subcategories. We placed each of the portals' topics and subtopics within our categories and subcategories, simultaneously recording the number of resources available for each topic (see page 20 and Appendix V, page 36). As all taxonomies, including our own, are based on subjective decisions and can be contested, we attempted to take the widest possible overview in order to avoid a categorisation that many of the diverse actors in the world of development might take issue with. In doing this, we also moved beyond a comparison of a site's competitors on its own terms and compared the organisation of content in a manner that allowed us to get past the artifice of the site's design to understand the true breakdown of its content and objectively evaluate what categories a site prioritises. This method is as much about the organisation and accessibility of content as it is about the actual amount of content a site holds for any given topic, and it is to be distinguished from evaluations of search engines (see below). Even though the organisation of content and searches are often used hand in hand, it is important to assess how well a site is designed for a user who does not know the exact term for which to search (as is necessary when using search engines). Often users might want to find information by browsing, a facility which the method described above is designed to measure. Thus some figures may appear as zero when in fact such content does exist. An example is that of Choike on reproductive health, as this is categorised by Choike under gender rather than health.

It should be noted that portals often place a resource under several topics, which results in a considerable overlap. Since a major aspect of user-friendliness derives from ease in locating one's desired information, without knowing exactly how different resources are categorised, a certain amount of overlap is actually desirable. This means, however, that the total number of resources listed in our table is likely to be larger than an official number, which would only count a resource once, regardless of the number of topics in which it is placed. All the topics were placed in only one of our categories or subcategories, however.

²³ The Choike analysis was conducted for the English language site only. The portal also has a Spanish language site which was not included.

Related to this analysis, we took several different words and phrases from the field of development and used the search capacity of each of the portals to see how many resources would be returned (see page 22). Also, within the Development Gateway content, we analysed two different topics to determine the distribution of content within the topic itself, in terms of language, amount of detail, type of resources, and source of the material (both geographic and institutional – see page 21). Also in this analysis was the geographic context of the resource, the subject matter addressed, how well the resource had been maintained, and whether or not it had any comments attached to it. Although several hundred resources were available for the two topics we chose – privatisation and trade – we recorded the details of the most recent 100 in order to select a reasonable sample. Thus, this sample may not be representative of the full universe of resources, but at the same time it is up to date, and since we avoided hand-selecting the specific resources, there is no reason to believe that there should be any systematic bias.

We have also taken steps to assess any institutional bias among the Development Gateway. We looked at each topic guide and recorded his/her institutional affiliation (such as employers; see page 25); we also referred to partners and any other contributing organisations to determine their geographic location, and any pre-existing relationships with other organisations, such as those associated with the World Bank, to see how wide a swath the Gateway was cutting in its search for cooperation and assistance (see page 25). Another indicator we used were the attributes of the Board of Directors, including country of origin, and current and past jobs (see page 10).

Within the scope of this research, it has proven very difficult to perform an adequate analysis of the Country Gateways of the scale at which the Development Gateway itself has been analysed. The Country Gateways are at varying stages of development, and each contains a different level of content. In order to analyse them adequately, it would have been necessary to run similar analyses to those performed on the Development Gateway on each and every Country Gateway. Performing such analyses is a crucial part of the extension of the work, which we have begun here, to better understand and attempt to improve the effect of the Development Gateway. For the purposes of this study, however, we have taken a broad overview of the current status of existing Country Gateways, and have compiled figures regarding their accessibility from the Development Gateway, their stage of development, and the languages they use (see page 23).

Finally, we wanted to get some feedback on the portals. Using an online list of development consultants²⁴, we sent out surveys to 180 people who were registered in a less developed country. Of those 180, we received nine responses, or 5% of the sample. As a result of the small number, there was not sufficient variation to get any statistically significant sense of opinions about the portals, nor were there enough responses to generalise to the rest of the sample (much less development professionals in general). We want to stress the limitations of our data and simply offer it as anecdotal evidence in the findings it produced.

²⁴ See www.idealists.org.

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