



Transformational Government

Enabled by technology

HM Revenue & Customs

Delivery experts working in HM Revenue & Customs have worked up, in their own words, some hypothetical examples that give a glimpse of what may be possible in the future. These scenarios are not policy statements of what will happen: they are illustrations of what might be possible in a simple pragmatic way when the principles of the strategy are delivered. These illustrations simply apply existing technologies to public sector delivery models, rather than trying to stretch the technology too far.

The themes of the Transformational Government strategy are reflected in the central organising principles behind HMRC's strategy of putting customers at the heart of the department's services, in order to drive its strategic objectives. Here is an example of what that might mean for one customer.

View from a customer (2010 – interview for programme “Ten years into the Millennium” via interactive TV with a UK citizen)

“I remember when – not so long ago – most people were scared of the tax people. Getting anything through the letterbox made you anxious, and sometimes angry because you didn't understand. You'd put off doing the forms. You felt that Revenue and Customs was full of clever, rather unapproachable, people – although when you did contact them they were actually pretty helpful. But it wasn't easy to find out what you had to do or who you should contact if you wanted to ask something.

“That's all changed. Now people don't think twice about contacting them – unless they're wanting to cheat the system I suppose. It's still a chore to think about your tax but now they will do much more of the thinking for you. And the speed they do things is transformed. I used to wait weeks for an answer. Now I can ring them, or email them or write or whatever, and I'll get an answer straightaway, and one I can rely on.

“I don't think my life is particularly complicated – I have two families with four kids all under the age of 16 and do a bit of consulting work alongside the company I run. But I can still remember how hard it used to be to get my head round what government wanted from me. What with PAYE for my employees, corporation tax, VAT and excise for my export business, self-assessment for my consultancy and claims for this or that tax credit – its no wonder I spent so much on my accountant!

“Now, whenever I want to, I can check things out online. Advice is tailored to my situation and I don't have to know anything about different taxes and allowances—it's all done for me when I key in my circumstances, with the links to things I didn't know I qualified for! A detailed audit report tells me precisely why I do, or don't, qualify for something.

“ And if I want to discuss something in particular I can book a time with one of their roving advisers and we can talk things through over a coffee; very civilised! Or I can have a virtual face-to-face discussion with their contact centre. The video isn't like those jerky numbers they used to be, they've really come on, it's just like being in the same room and saves messing about with appointments.

“ All of this – and the whole way in which public services are delivered these days – has made me feel better about the taxes I pay. I can see what I owe – or am due – online and I broadly know how the money is spent. I find I have no time at all for the tax cheats; so all power to catching them I say – keep up the good work.”

To deliver that vision HMRC recognises it has to meet some considerable challenges. For example:

- **matching the progress of the better financial services' providers who have spent the last ten years moving from fragmented account based records for a customer to a whole customer view.**
- **implementing rules based technology.**
- **addressing the skills and culture challenges and legacy IT business models.**
- **transforming the way we deliver new systems by capitalising on the opportunities offered by new technologies.**