

**Sent:** 30 January 2006 18:55

**To:** Watmore Ian - PMDU -

**Subject:** Transformational Government, Enabled by Technology

**Importance:** High

Mr Watmore,

The purpose of this email is to register my personal opinion on the above strategy document.

I have followed the debate on identity cards with increasing concern, and it seems to me that two objectives outlined in section 39 of the document strategy are inherently contradictory (see text in bold):

**4. Data Sharing:** data sharing is integral to transforming services and reducing administrative burdens on citizens and businesses. **But privacy rights and public trust must be retained.**

and

**7. Identity Management:** Government will create an holistic approach to identity management, based on a suite of identity management solutions that enable the public and private sectors to manage risk and provide cost-effective services trusted by customers and stakeholders. These will rationalise electronic gateways and citizen and business record numbers. **They will converge towards biometric identity cards and the National Identity Register.**

None of the arguments presented to attempt to justify the introduction of identity cards satisfactorily addresses the over arching issue of guarding and retaining the privacy rights of the individual.

. What is the purpose of an ID card and national identity register? Debate to date has already demonstrated that an ID card will NOT achieve, namely

1. reduce crime or catch criminals
2. prevent terrorism
3. eliminate benefit fraud
4. provide greater individual security

So what will it do? It seems to me that it will give the State (via the underlying database) the means to access, monitor and cross reference all the private, personal details of every citizen (irrespective of whether they have done anything "wrong" or not) forever.

Frankly I find the idea repellent. For what reason and to what end should the State have access to my biometric details and those of my family, my children? For what reason and to what end should the State be empowered to track my movements via RFID and contactless chips? The argument that if you have done nothing wrong you have nothing to fear is specious. Such information is personal and private and no business of the State whatsoever. There is in fact NO good reason for this or any State operating in a democratic political system to have access to this level of information on it Citizens.

The central issue in all this is the relationship between Citizens and State, succinctly captured in the old saying "Quis custodiet ipsos custodies?" - Who watches those who watch? In a modern democracy the State exists to serve the Citizenry, not the converse. In my view this strategy and proposed implementation tips the balance irrevocably in the wrong direction.

Regards

James Hilton