

**Sent:** 01 February 2006 11:19  
**To:** IT Strategy Project Team  
**Subject:** Response to Strategy

I confess to wondering what sort of response you are going to get to this paper. After reading it through, I had a wonderful fuzzy warm feeling that lasted as long as it took me to fire up my email system to respond. How can anyone not want to make the world a warmer, nicer and kinder place?

Then grim reality intervened. Your paper assumed that most interactions between citizens and the government consist largely of delivering benefits to citizens out of its enormous bounty. I should be delighted to share in this bounty, in view of the large sum of money I have just paid over to Gordon the Spendthrift. For some reason, my duties to finance government are not matched by my rights to benefit from government services.

In practice, my transactions with government are more of a commercial nature, supplying information demanded by various departments, permits of various sorts that have to be paid for (car tax, television tax, council tax) and payments of money to various departments. Increasingly I deal with government because I have to. Occasionally I choose to, but those occasions have tended to be distinctly painful. There was our family's expensive, time-consuming and damaging involvement with state education. There are my attempts to get effective treatment for my teeth and my back problems from the NHS and adequate support from the local police. All these now abandoned, since I have learnt that although I pay my taxes, even assuming I have the patience, persistence and persuasive skills to claim my "rights" from state departments, I might just as well save my pains, and pay up a second time to get something that is actually worth having, i.e. schooling, dentistry and back care that is actually available and truly effective. My intended solution to the regular and repeated failings of piss-poor local policing is to acquire a suitable weapon.

I suppose it is a good strategy that you have come up with in some ways – for example I can see no point in my having different numbers identifying me to the NHS, the Passport Office, the DVLA, and three different branches of the Revenue and Customs. On the other hand, indifferent service need not be a consequence of varying identification of individuals. I would much prefer it if you turned your attention to the former rather than the latter. I have always attributed it to poor management, and see no reason yet to change my view.

Some of you may be aware of a desktop toy that was popular a dozen or so years ago. It purported to be a device for helping people make decisions and consisted of a spinner that could be flicked around. When it came to rest, it might end up pointing to one of the following:– "Yes", "No", "Maybe" and "Re-organise!" You have evidently chosen the last option, but I can tell you from experience that it is not a sure route forward.

So my comments may be summed up as follows: -

Play around by all means, try not to waste too much of the money I contribute, and, as far as possible, keep your incompetent noses out of my affairs!

Yours, most sincerely,

Philip Cresswell