

of people rebuilding the same IT project in one organisation at the same time. Anything that the Government gets wrong, the private sector excels at showing how much more wrong is possible.

Anyway, Government was still a shock. There were some weak measures of cost control but barely any concept of price per user or transaction or user needs or anything that I had started to take for granted. There was one project that Liam asked me to guess the price on, I responded around £300k after looking through the details. It was north of £50m. I had real trouble wrapping my head around such figures but then I've seen a billion dollars spent on no-hope, obviously doomed to fail from the beginning efforts in the private sector. I'd always assumed there was some greater wisdom that I wasn't aware of. It was becoming clear that this wasn't the case. In Government, however this tended to make me annoyed. I don't mind survival of the least incompetent in the private sector because eventually someone will come along and do a better job. In Government, there is no someone and getting things right is critical. I have family that live in social housing who would be horrified at the waste.

In between plotting Ubuntu's dominance of cloud, I started to spend my spare time working with this group on writing the "Better for Less" paper. It had rapidly become clear that not only did Government spend huge sums on individual projects but that those projects had deplorable rates of success. "Only 30% of Government IT projects succeed, says CIO" shouts the May 2007 edition of Computer Weekly. How was it possible for projects to spend such inflated sums and fail so frequently?