

Though the bulk of the work of the “triple helix” group was completed sometime beforehand, Liam published the resultant paper “Better for Less” in Sept 2010. Whilst the paper is certainly not as widely known as Martha Lane Fox’s letter on “revolution, not evolution” it had some small impact. The ideas and concepts within the paper were circulated within Government and provided some support to structures that were later created whether spend control or the development of in-house engineering capability in Government Digital Services or the development of training programs. I occasionally meet civil servants who have read the paper or used its concepts. I can feel comfort in knowing that the work was not in vain but helped tip the needle. But I also discovered that I had made a terrible mistake in the paper. That mistake was assumption.

## **A little too much of what you wanted**

With the transformation starting within Government IT, Liam had taken the role as CTO of HMG. I would occasionally pop in and discuss the changes, even meeting up with departments to review projects with part of spend control. I was often brutal, challenging the cost, the lack of customer focus and the endless attempts to specify that which was uncertain. It was during one of these discussions that I mapped out the space and used the map to show a particularly galling cost overspend and how a vendor was trying to lock-us in with ever increasing upgrade costs. Using the map, I pointed out to Liam how we could break this vendor’s stranglehold. He nodded and then said something very unexpected — “What’s that?”