

The more I looked, the more I uncovered. This wasn't a problem of civil servants and a lack of passion to do the right thing but instead a cultural issue, a desire to not been seen to fail which inevitably ended up in failure. The skills had been outsourced to the point that outsourcing was the only option with few left that could effectively mount a challenge. There was a severe lack of transparency. Getting the IT spend in Government to the nearest billion was nigh on impossible. The words "How can you not know this" seemed to constantly trip from my tongue. Shock had become flabbergasted.

Of course, the reasons why we were building things often seemed even more ludicrous. Most of the systems were being designed badly to fit legislation and policy that had barely considered their own operational impact. Any concepts of what users (i.e. citizens) might want from this was far removed. Interaction with citizens felt more of an inconvenience to achieving the policy. You should remember that I had spent five years running online services for millions of users. This policy driven approach to building IT was the antithesis of everything I had done.

To compound it all, the silo approach or departmentalism of projects had meant that groups didn't even talk with each other. Whitehall had somehow developed an approach of creating and maintaining expensive, often duplicated IT resources that often failed but also didn't interact with each other in effective ways. In 2003, I was used to web services providing discrete component services that were consumed by many other services. In 2005, I was used to mapping out environments with clear understanding of user needs, components