

Crowdsourcing and regulatory reviews: A new way of challenging red tape in British government?

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Abstract

Much has been said about the appeal of digital government devices to enhance consultation on rulemaking. This paper explores the most ambitious attempt by the UK central government so far to draw on “crowdsourcing” to consult and act on regulatory reform, the “Red Tape Challenge.” We find that the results of this exercise do not represent any major change to traditional challenges to consultation processes. Instead, we suggest that the extensive institutional arrangements for crowdsourcing were hardly significant in informing actual policy responses: neither the tone of the crowdsourced comments, the direction of the majority views, nor specific comments were seen to matter. Instead, it was processes within the executive that shaped the overall governmental responses to this initiative. The findings, therefore, provoke wider debates about the use of social media in rulemaking and consultation exercises.

Keywords: consultation, crowdsourcing, red tape, regulatory review, UK government.

1. Introduction

Much has been said about the potential transformative appeal of e-government, “digital era governance,” and new “apps” that are going to alter the relationships between government and its subjects (Peled 2001; Margetts 2003; Chadwick 2006; Dunleavy *et al.* 2006), as well as between political and bureaucratic actors (Ahn & Bretschneider 2011). Potential areas for change range from the provision of online and interactive services, the publication of data and other comparable forms of information, directed local authority messages to celebrate “cracking down on crime,” to new media utilization for the encouragement of consultations and dialogue (Balla & Daniels 2007; Farina *et al.* 2011). This interest relates directly to the wider attraction of crowdsourcing, for example, the view that by decentralizing decisionmaking to a “crowd,” they will adjust and come up with their own preferred viewpoints, solve problems, and offer insightful views (Afuah & Tucci 2012).

This paper explores the most ambitious attempt so far in the United Kingdom government to utilize crowdsourcing as a consultative device in order to encourage the intelligent removal of supposedly burdensome regulation, that is, “red tape.” In contrast to views that expect intelligent and constructive commentary about burdensome regulation, the result of the UK’s Red Tape Challenge (RTC) encouraged calls for more regulation, was mostly driven by political dynamics and not by consultative inputs, and the outcome was not necessarily different to previous attempts at cutting red tape.

Crowdsourcing’s potential has attracted a number of enthusiastic advocates ever since the coining of the crowdsourcing phrase in a 2006 *Wired* paper by Jeff Howe (Howe 2006, 2009; Brabham 2009; Clark *et al.* 2013). In its original form, crowdsourcing is about decentralized decisionmaking. For central governments, one attraction of crowdsourcing is its potential for information gathering and consultation: a reliance on the “wisdom of the crowds” (Surowiecki 2004) is said to generate so-called cognition advantages. Using crowdsourcing in this limited way promises to overcome the problems of consultation exercises in an age when expert status and views are often

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challenged, where “national” views are increasingly transnational, and where doubts exist about the value of listening to traditional stakeholders that are suspected of defending the status quo. In addition, the reduction in cost for access to data allows for an army of third party checkers to conduct their own monitoring of compliance. And the potential for naming and shaming via online fora may be seen as an extra way to modify behavior.

Thus, crowdsourcing in government also has implications for improving regulatory quality and changing power imbalances in the regulatory process: politicians and ministerial advisers can claim to be surfing the wave of contemporary fashion by relying on a low-cost tool to source popular opinion and solutions, whilst doing away with costly consultation exercises with entrenched stakeholders and change-resistant bureaucrats. Citizens, businesses, and other affected parties can directly voice their concerns and consider different aspects of the problem. Crowdsourcing has been employed for “peer to patent” schemes, for the reporting of unsafe products, and the voluntary contribution of information. The only losers in the “wiki-world of government” (Noveck 2009) are bureaucracy and entrenched interests, which cannot rely on the high costs of participation and information asymmetry to impose their own agenda (Ahn & Bretschneider 2011). Nevertheless, bureaucracy might gain additional resources to gather information and to exercise compliance-monitoring functions by relying on blogging citizen-armies.

This sense of a growing reliance on digital innovations for government has not escaped scholarly attention (Coglianese 2004a, 2006, 2011). Open software codes are said to encourage innovation, while “smart mobs” deliberate and advance the quality of decisionmaking. Crowdsourcing has deliberative appeal (Schlosberg *et al.* 2008). Crowdsourcing (in the limited “wisdom of the crowd” sense) is seen as both complementing and substituting existing means of gathering evidence. This attention has focused on rulemaking and the use of the electronic docket system across federal regulators in the United States (Benjamin 2006). The interest in this system is varied, ranging from those who explore the potential for enhanced participation and deliberation, to those who explore the quality and potential of online deliberation. The shift toward encouraging electronic submissions in the notice and comment stage is said to open up rulemaking, traditionally conceived as a model where regulators propose and informed parties highlight potential side effects and, thereby, lead to informed decisionmaking. Of course, this vision of learning via deliberation during the notice and comment stage has been challenged (Beierle 2003; for wider analysis of notice and comment adjustments, see Yackee 2006; Yackee & Yackee 2006).

In light of these studies, this paper analyses the most ambitious attempt so far to use the wisdom of the crowd in UK central government for consultation and information gathering purposes, namely the Red Tape Challenge. It looks at the underlying machinery of the RTC, the attempts at translating demands for “red tape cutting” into actual change, and the tone of the crowdsourced commentary.

The intention of the RTC was to review the whole stock of existing legislation. This initiative was widely praised as a front-runner for crowdsourcing and was endorsed by one leading US scholar on crowdsourcing, Noveck, in its early stages. It was launched in April 2011 and was seen, at least in part, as the brainchild of “blue sky thinker” Steve Hilton (the controversial adviser in 10 Downing Street who departed on sabbatical to Stanford University in May 2012). It also attracted considerable support from elements among Conservative cabinet ministers who had identified red tape, especially in the workplace (i.e. health and safety, employment legislation, equality legislation), as an impediment to economic activity. The overall exercise was to last until April 2013 (but was ongoing at the time of final drafting, November 2013). It was also used by then Cabinet Secretary (i.e. the head of the UK civil service), Sir Gus O’Donnell, as a key example of the innovative powers of the civil service to adjust to the signs of the times (BBC 2011). This innovation was seen as a direct response to an outspoken attack by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron that the civil service was an “enemy of enterprise” (Adetunji 2011).

The research for this paper covers the first year of the RTC. It considers areas that witnessed crowdsourcing up to July 2012 and government responses until December 2012. It offers insights into the origins and processes during a period when political and bureaucratic attention was arguably at its peak. Apart from exploring the politics of the RTC on their own, this paper has wider ambitions. First, it argues that it is critical to link crowdsourcing to political and bureaucratic processes that are supposed to transform the crowdsourced input into observable regulatory change. Second, this paper contributes to wider discussions regarding the quality of different social media consultation devices that are supposed to inform policymaking.

Existing work on e-rulemaking has largely focused on the type of input (Balla & Daniels 2007). In contrast, this paper explores the extent to which and how the crowdsourced content was utilized (or not) within the

decisionmaking process. This paper also contributes to the burgeoning red tape literature in public administration that explores the link between perceived organizational red tape and performance (Bozeman 2000; Moynihan 2012). Measuring crowdsourced responses about regulation could potentially offer one way to accompany more survey-based studies on perceived burdens of rules (Feeney 2012). While the design of the RTC made such an undertaking unfeasible, it, nevertheless, underlines the wider point that red tape is a matter of perception and a “subject dependent concept” (Brewer & Walker 2010a, b). To explore these issues further, the next section examines in more detail the link between crowdsourcing and consultation in the context of red tape initiatives. The paper then explores three questions: What was the administrative machinery of the RTC? Second, what happened to the existing stock of regulation? Third, what was the tone of the crowdsourced comments? It is argued that the political and administrative dynamic was far more important than crowdsourcing, that the extent of regulatory change as a result of the RTC is difficult to assess, and that the tone of online commentary offered limited support for “deregulatory” measures.

2. Consultation, crowdsourcing, and red tape

Running consultation exercises via online platforms does not represent much of a change to traditional rationales for consultation (see Shulman *et al.* 2003; Cuéllar 2005; Farina *et al.* 2012). In both digital and analogue forms, four broad public interest and related rationales for consultation can be distinguished. Firstly, consultation adds to the *evidence base* that underpins particular proposals. Secondly, consultation seeks to encourage *participation* so that particular biases or even capture might be avoided. Thirdly, consultation can be seen as a means of *controlling bureaucracy* by imposing particular deck-stacking type provisions onto their procedural routines. Fourthly, consultation might be seen as means of *legitimizing* the decisionmaking process.

Crowdsourcing exercises that draw on the wisdom of crowds might be seen to facilitate each one of these four rationales for consultation. However, the particular attraction of this low-cost reliance on smart mobs is arguably its potential support for gathering evidence from those parties that are usually excluded from consultation exercises. Its low-cost access basis supposedly facilitates broadened participation beyond the usual suspects, thereby adding to the legitimacy of the process and sidelining the supposed privileged position of bureaucracy as custodian of institutional memory. Admittedly, advocates of crowdsourcing will regard the RTC as a poor cousin of a “true” crowdsourcing exercise that functions as an “online, distributed problem-solving and production model” (Brabham 2012). To function in this way requires certain prerequisites, namely, trusted institutions and active and motivated crowds. Nevertheless, sourcing the wisdom of the crowds for consultation purposes does rely on an open call format and addresses a potentially large network of potential contributors (Brabham 2008, p. 76).

Whereas the above four rationales for consultation are largely uncontroversial, the way to achieve them is contested. Equally, a diversity of views exists as to why more evidence, stronger control via deck-stacking, greater legitimacy, or more participation is more desirable. Similarly, support for crowdsourcing is based on a diversity of justifications. For some, crowdsourcing advances rationality in decisionmaking by adding additional information to the existing channels for information gathering. Governments can, therefore, be “smarter” and “leaner” by relying on new technologies. A different view sees crowdsourcing used largely as a tool to advance deliberation and conversation. Rather than having organizations and individuals in privileged positions exercise discretionary judgment, crowdsourcing allows for an open exchange of views and a potentially transparent insight into different viewpoints that may, over time, adjust in the light of ongoing online conversations. A third view sees crowdsourcing as a means of articulating individual concerns about poorly performing government, thereby offering one way to challenge bureaucracies and turf-conscious politicians to bust red tape. Finally, a fourth view would argue that crowdsourcing offers an ideal way to attract individual, whistle-blower type insights that would otherwise be excluded in more institutionalized forms of decisionmaking.

Each one of these justifications for such types of consultation exercises has also attracted a matching skeptical viewpoint. One doubting view fears that expertise and reasoned judgment will be undermined by regulatory populism in the light of heated online campaigns. Crowdsourcing invites campaigns, moral panics, and subsequent political or bureaucratic knee-jerk responses. A different skeptical view emphasizes the likely absence of any form of online deliberation. Individuals’ time is scarce and they would rather play online games, drink alcohol, or otherwise engage with social media (such as exchange views about football tactics, the quality of hotels or other service

Table 1 Contrasting views about crowdsourcing in consultation exercises

Pro: Encourages whistle-blowing and surprise findings through low-cost accessibility	Pro: High tech, low-cost intelligence that improves decisionmaking
Skeptic: Mass of low-quality submissions drowns out potential quality information	Skeptic: Encourages uninformed mob rule and ill-informed responses
Pro: Encourages low-cost participation among those usually excluded from consultation, thereby reducing collective action problems and advancing “reform” agenda	Pro: Advances decentralized viewpoints and encourages deliberation by sidelining established interests
Skeptic: Mobilization will only take place among the potential “losers,” thereby hardening the status quo	Skeptic: Deliberative potential limited given lack of interest and time resources

industries) than deliberate about the benefits and costs of particular legislation in any informed way (see Moffatt & Peters 2004). Indeed, as Balla and Daniels (2007) found, there was no major difference in terms of online and analogue participation in e-rulemaking.

A third skeptical view is downbeat about the likely diversity of views that are going to emerge through crowdsourced activities. Instead of attracting a more diverse audience, crowdsourcing may only draw well-organized, highly concentrated, and change-resistant crowds that are likely to lose benefits, rather than those potential beneficiaries of regulatory change who might be highly dispersed. The final skeptical view points to the likely problems of analyzing conversations about regulation without knowing the identity of individuals and when faced with large amounts of messages of various types of quality. Pearls of wisdom cannot be identified among the large number of submissions.

None of these arguments are unique to crowdsourcing. They match long-standing debates about consultation in government. Nevertheless, crowdsourcing exercises provide a unique window of opportunity to study such processes in real time. Furthermore, crowdsourcing allows us to explore whether digital technologies are able to alter the perceived quality of consultation exercises and whether they reduce the inherent trade-offs and problems of consultation exercises. Table 1 summarizes this argument, which is mapped broadly into a framework inspired by grid-group cultural theory as put forward by Hood (1998).

To explore whether the wisdom of the crowds offered a novel way of cutting red tape in UK government, this paper looks at three key issues. First, it looks at the processes and institutional machinery that was supposed to support the RTC. Second, it assesses attempts at cutting regulation in response to received comments. Third, and finally, it analyses the tone of the crowdsourced comments.

3. Methods

The empirical basis for this study consists of three elements. One is the published documentary output on the RTC (especially its website). This study further builds on 15 non-attributable interviews with civil servants involved in the exercise (at the organizing and the “receiving” end). These semi-structured interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and explored the individual experience with the RTC. The overall pool of individuals closely involved in the RTC is relatively small (i.e. those in the Cabinet Office and those coordinating responses in departments), and, therefore, protecting non-attributability is problematic as comments can easily be traced back to particular experiences and, hence, individuals.¹

The third empirical part of this study involves the coding of crowdsourced online comments. The website containing these comments was organized according to particular themes (“spotlights”). For each of the discussions (101), one hundred random entries were selected where there were more than 120 comments. In those 72 areas with fewer than 120 comments, all were coded.

The key interest was to establish the tone of the message, to look at the specificity of the proposals or comments, whether there was any evidence of a deliberative character in the messages, and where there was a response, to assess whether these were supportive or hostile in character (for a similar exercise and scheme, see Cuéllar 2005). Thus, a comment was coded as “keep it/strengthen it” when it expressed support for the provision (such as “They should be

left as they are”) and/or demanded a tightening, an extension, or a tougher sanctioning regime. A comment was coded as “weaken it” where there was a demand to remove provisions in general or in particular aspects, and as “simplify it” where there was a commitment toward existing standards, but with demands for reduced paperwork and the like. Mixed messages were coded as “neutral,” and enforcement-related concerns were also coded separately. The coding also noted whether contributors explicitly stated their institutional status. Furthermore, the coding also separately accounted for the few instances where moderators or “champions” sought to animate or direct the discussion, and with what effect. Some contributions could not be assessed according to their tone, given their content or lack of direction.²

Such coding exercises are open to biases on many dimensions. The authors of this paper conducted the coding of the comments. Coding was conducted independently, followed by moderation. A relatively high degree of inter-coder reliability was achieved (0.75). It is impossible to assess whether particular comments were useful or not. Any judgment would require specific knowledge in the various subject areas and about the information basis that was already in existence in these areas. Furthermore, the initial coding scheme proved too sophisticated for the comments on the website: online commentators rarely offered detailed views about specific regulatory provisions or effects and they rarely identified themselves. Instead, comments were largely restricted to signaling a “strengthen,” “weaken,” or “simplify” position. Finally, it is unlikely that a computer-generated tone detection system (such as *wordfish*) would have offered many advantages given the highly heterogeneous nature of submissions and the diversity in verbal expressions.

Having set out the background and the methods applied in this paper, the following looks at the institutional machinery and processes, the responses to received crowdsourced input, and, finally, at the tone of the contributions themselves.

4. The Red Tape Challenge

Political disappointment with the wider better regulation agenda lies at the origin of the UK’s RTC. Initially, the incoming Conservative/Liberal Democrat government had announced in 2010 that its “better regulation” policy would seek to deal with the regulatory flow problem by insisting on the “one-in, one-out” principle (Gibbons & Parker 2012). In other words, new regulation could only be added if another regulation was being eliminated. This idea received limited enthusiasm among Whitehall departments and the Better Regulation Executive (BRE). It was argued that such a method would only attract hostility from those organized interests affected by the “scrapped” regulations. Others dismissed the one-in, one-out rule as a primitive tool to assess regulatory quality. It was, therefore, opposed by economists and others who believed in the importance of cost–benefit analysis-based impact assessments. Nevertheless, the policy was adopted, executed, and, subsequently, reported on an annual basis. Indeed, in late 2012, the UK government moved to a “one-in, two-out” approach so as to launch another “blitz on bureaucracy” (BIS 2012). More broadly, the BRE was situated, somewhat uncomfortably, in the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS), having been moved there in 2007 after being part of the Cabinet Office under various names since the mid-1990s. Additionally, the BRE was affected by considerable staff redundancies and cut down to a third of its earlier size.

Once the initial commitment to the one-in, one-out approach had been secured, interest moved from the flow to the stock of existing regulation. Political interest was particularly animated by a suspicion that ministerial departments were hiding scrappable regulation in order to have spare regulation available to sacrifice for future one-in, one-out occasions.

To initiate the process, the National Archives were requested to deliver a list of all legislation in the UK. The reply was so complex and extensive that ministers decided to ask the BRE to come up with a way of systematizing the existing legislation into a set of manageable components. These subsequently became so-called “spotlights” under the RTC. Furthermore, the interest in the stock of regulation led to a growing institutional interest within the Cabinet Office to engage with the better regulation agenda. The interest in reviewing the regulatory stock was primarily driven by Cabinet Office minister Oliver Letwin (Conservative). Over time, the process became increasingly dominated by the Cabinet Office, rather than the BRE in BIS, although most interviewees insisted that this was a functional coexistence in which the Cabinet Office was a natural lead (in terms of web presence) given its cross-government brief. This dominance was largely reflected by the political interest of Letwin who was

accompanied by his ministerial equivalent from BIS, (initially) Mark Prisk (also Conservative). It was from within 10 Downing Street that the initiative was taken to start an online challenge process, leading to frantic efforts to set up an appropriate web presence. The overall intention from Downing Street was to challenge all regulation; only those pieces of red tape were to be continued where a good justification could be given. Crowdsourcing would be used to counter bureaucratic resistance to abolishing regulation and legislation.

The RTC process relied on a number of stages, which highlight the importance of looking both at the crowdsourcing component and the underlying administrative and political processes. Firstly, during a defined time window of variable duration, select themes were put onto the spotlight and comments were invited. The vetting of comments was outsourced to a private company. During the early spotlights, civil servants themselves were vetting the website on their smartphones and desk computers to avoid the publication of racist or otherwise libelous comments on the website. The website was closed during the night. The importance of vetting inhibited the possibility of encouraging online discussions. Those interested parties that did not want their comments to be revealed were granted the possibility of submitting their comments via a private channel. Some interviewees stressed the helpfulness of this channel, others saw no real difference in the generally poor quality of information received via public or private channels; others noted that the number of privately received messages had been low.

Specific “champions” (usually from the business sector) were appointed to accompany the process. These champions were also used to generate wider interest in the exercise. Once the spotlight window had been closed, the responsible departments were required to respond to the received comments by coming up with a spreadsheet of suggestions that would primarily reduce the burden on business (“scrap, reduce or improve”). This set of proposals was then submitted to various challenge settings. These included meetings with so-called “tiger teams” (internal challenge meetings that brought in specifically chosen individuals from other parts of departments or even from other parts of government),³ meetings with members from the “red challenge team,” and finally, the ministerial “star chamber” itself. In this star chamber, departmental responses were scrutinized by the two responsible ministers, Letwin and Prisk (although other members of the government and special advisers were said to wander in and out of particular spotlights’ star chambers). In addition, the champions were employed to challenge existing provisions, but none of the interviewees pointed to a prominent role played by these individuals.

The ministerial star chamber stage revealed the real emphasis of the RTC, which was the “cost to business” by “removing regulatory burdens” unless they could be justified. This emphasis shaped preceding conversations within departments. Constitutionally, the star chamber was seen as problematic, as one minister from one department directly questioned and challenged civil servants from a different department. Most officials, however, saw no de facto constitutional implications in this as they argued that ministers were reasonable, but this was less the case when particular special advisers were present. The modified list of proposals was then submitted to a cabinet subcommittee, the “Subcommittee on Reducing Regulation” for final approval. This procedure constitutionalized the review process. At the time of writing, the monitoring of proposals was conducted by listing departmental promises and documenting activities. This monitoring, however, proved complicated as the measurement of mergers and amendments in regulation was not necessarily particularly insightful in terms of indicating quality or burden reduction. It was argued that some measures were very easy to measure, but that ultimately, less attention would be paid to less visible or measurable initiatives. However, the political emphasis was mostly on counting numbers of regulations that had been scrapped or improved.

In terms of governing crowdsourcing exercises, a number of features stand out. As noted, the primary emphasis was on burden reduction (to business) with very little interest in deliberation. This was reflected in the language on the website, with its suggestion that the growth of regulation had increased burdens on business and had also done societal harm by reducing individual responsibility.⁴ Given this emphasis, crowdsourcing was viewed as a way to (from the viewpoint of the initial designers) unleash popular frustration with regulation and legislation.

The second key issue was the level of required political attention to support the overall process. This was driven by one minister’s agenda in particular (Letwin), leading to the rise of a “better regulation” group in the Cabinet Office. The involvement from Downing Street on crowdsourcing declined, as a result of considerable interdepartmental conflict over the value of social regulation and overall frustration with the initial results of the process that did not lead to the hoped-for general scrapping of regulation at large. Whether political attention could be divided into challenging departmental responses in the star chamber, and into monitoring implementation, remained an open question.

The third key issue was the actual agenda itself. Apart from moving through various areas of existing regulatory provisions,⁵ the RTC was also used to deal with cross-cutting issues that were not directly related to particular pieces of regulation/legislation, but with “practices,” namely enforcement, and later, “disruptive business models.” In the case of enforcement, the RTC was to feed into much wider reviews, including ongoing ones. One controversial cross-cutting theme dealt with equality legislation. The inclusion of the Equalities Act was notable as this involved recently consolidated legislation under the previous Labour administration (in 2010), rather than regulation, orders, or statutory instruments. It, therefore, was an unlikely candidate for a review of regulatory stock. Rather, it was an attempt by certain aspects of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat administration to challenge the social policy status quo. The same applied to the spotlights on environment, health and safety, and enforcement. The idea was to roll back the presence of protective provisions at large. In addition, political dissatisfaction in Downing Street with the lack of deregulation triggered by the RTC led to the commissioning of further reviews to advocate more far-reaching measures.⁶ Disappointment with the lack of widespread deregulatory appeal at the center of government was particularly noticeable in the conflicts between Downing Street guru Hilton and the Business Department. The former was accused of provoking interdepartmental strife when commissioning further reviews of workplace regulation with further stories being leaked, an example included his wish to abandon maternity provisions (Winnett 2011).

Finally, the institutional set-up upset departmental sensitivities. Most of all this related to the growing role of the Cabinet Office in this exercise at the expense of the BRE. Interviewees sought to dismiss this claim, as well as the more general question on where “better regulation” units should be located in government (in a cross-cutting department near the prime minister or at “the heart” of business regulation). The chief trigger for this growth industry was a perceived lack of enthusiasm within BIS in the better regulation work and the heightened attention paid to this process by one particular minister in the Cabinet Office. A second issue related to the way in which the star chamber cross-examined civil servants outside the usual departmental channels.

In short, the institutional arrangements to support the RTC relied on a variety of political initiatives that were largely skeptical of earlier attempts to reduce regulatory burdens. It was initially assumed that the overwhelming weight of crowdsourced comments would provide for support for such red tape cutting. However, it was the internal process, in particular mechanisms of cross-examination, which proved to be the key drivers of the agenda. Furthermore, it was the commitment of one minister who animated this bureaucratic commitment toward a review of regulatory stock. But what about the outcomes of the RTC? The next section explores the number of regulations and provisions that were culled before moving to an analysis of the actual crowdsourced comments.

4.1. Red tape – scrapping, reducing, or improving?

Interviewees generally pointed to a primary ambition to reduce regulation, although some of the official documentation continued to signal a commitment toward the crowdsourcing component of the RTC. The May 2012 mid-term report produced by the Cabinet Office noted not just the various commitments toward scrapping/improving regulation in various areas, but the supposed popularity of crowdsourcing. According to the Cabinet Office, the website had attracted “over 227,000 visitors,” “over 28,000 comments,” and “over 950 private submissions” (RTC 2012). In an earlier account by the lead civil servant in the Cabinet Office (Cavendish 2012), it was claimed that 12 percent of all website submissions and 43 percent of the inbox submissions had been “useful.”⁷ Accordingly, the RTC had attracted a “wider range of people to contribute,” “promoted transparency,” generated further “evidence,” “promoted objectives and successes,” and had “driven better and faster decisionmaking” (Cavendish 2012). That earlier presentation also noted that in the future care should be taken to deal with campaigns, carefully consider pre-moderation, and to encourage more deliberation.⁸

In addition, the “One-in, One-out: Third Statement of New Regulation” document (BIS 2012) highlighted a number of areas where the British economy would be revived as a result of the RTC, in particular by scrapping or improving over 50 percent of regulations that had been reviewed. Comments included “over 1,200 regulations,” “greatly reduce the amount of paper required to run a car,” “simplify the ineffective and burdensome poisons licensing system for low risk products such as fly spray and toilet cleaner” (BIS 2012, p. 15). It also noted how the RTC had fed into wider considerations regarding health and safety regulation (Löfstedt 2011) and, in child protection, earlier reviews into the safeguarding of children (Munro 2012). The Equalities spotlight was striking as its reform announcements were delayed. The eventual announcements in May 2012 largely contained measures that required

Table 2 Reform announcements

Theme	Scrap	Improve	Keep	Regulations	% of total regulations that are (scrapped/improved)
Retail	114	56	87	257	66
Hospitality	12	69	33	114	71
Health & safety	31	144	32	207	84
Manufacturing	47	18	63	128	51
Employment-related law	12	57	91	160	43
Environment	53	132	70	255	73
Equalities				1	
Rail transport	60	28	129	217	41
Children's services and independent schools	13	8	81	102	21
Water & marine	22	84	62	168	63
Energy	86	48	215	349	38
TOTAL	508	728	1,098	2,334	53

Sources: RTC (2012) plus own calculation based on subsequent announcements.

further consultation, reflecting wider governmental tensions about this particular area, and measures that would throttle the Equality and Human Rights Commission via financial and structural cutbacks.

The mid-term report announced regulatory changes and potential cost savings (“up to £1 billion over 5 years” [RTC 2012, p. 1]), though the calculations were difficult to trace. Reflecting the political interest in announcing success in terms of the number of scrapped regulation, the report stated that those areas that had already cleared the overall process had achieved a number of regulatory reductions. These are illustrated in Table 2 (adapted from RTC 2012); the Equalities Act relates to one piece of legislation and, therefore, could not be counted. Similarly, given the cross-cutting nature of the “disruptive business models” spotlight, announcements linked to that theme were not counted (such as the announced repeal of the Property Misdescriptions Act 1991 [PMA] whose provisions were already covered under subsequent consumer protection provisions elsewhere).

It is difficult to assess the extent of regulatory reform activity by looking at the numbers in Table 2 alone. For example, among the number of specific regulation scrapped in the retail spotlight (114), the vast majority originated in the removal of orders relating to “Trading with the Enemy” statutory instruments, rules and orders (98) (BIS 2012, pp. 17–18; the listed provisions largely dealt with territories where the Act no longer applied in the post-1945 world). Other regulations that were to be scrapped included the “Children’s Clothing (Hood Cords) Regulations 1976” and the “Bunk Beds (Entrapment Hazards) (Safety) Regulations 1987.” A total of 56 measures were supposed to be improved and this was defined as “by simplifying regulation, by merging, improving domestic implementation or changes to the EU rules” (BIS 2012, p. 17, note 15).

Elsewhere too, a closer look at the various spotlights reveals a mix of improve and scrap responses. However, non-standardized information provision made it difficult to assess the number or nature of the provisions designated for the scrapheap. In some areas, as with the retail spotlight, the scrapheap of regulations was constituted by “zombie” regulations that seem to have been long forgotten by government and business alike. In Environment, the official response which also affected a number of government departments and agencies, suggested that among the 255 regulations under review, 132 would be improved, 53 removed, and 70 kept, all of which were subject to further consultation, for example, work on “Dog Control Orders.” The listing separated out types of “to be scrapped” regulation (zombie, or in official language: regulations “no longer being used so have no impact on anyone”) and actual cost-reducing measures, as well as six variations of “improved” regulation. This decision was taken to allocate sufficient resources to those regulations that were seen as potentially being able to reduce “cost to business.” For example, in Environment, a zombie regulation included the “Rabbit Clearance Order no. 148 (England and Wales).”⁹ In Rail Transport, it included the Railway Clearing House Scheme Order 1954 that dealt with a 19th century arrangement that no longer existed.¹⁰ Examples for costly regulations included a number of “Wild Bird (Sundays) Orders” from the mid-1950s which restricted wildfowling on Sundays in certain counties. In this case, proposals were made to rely on non-regulatory mechanisms.¹¹

Table 3 Spotlights and aggregate number of comments

Spotlight	Number of comments
Retail	8,299
Hospitality, food & drink	477
Regulatory enforcement	104
Road transportation	1,506
Equalities	5,437
Environment	2,307
Employment-related laws	2,049
Health & safety	739
Children services	51
Maritime & rail	870
Manufacturing	37
Medicine	699
Water & marine	248
Housing	279
Sports	44
Energy	28
Pensions	109
Company & commercial services	148
Legal services	16

Other provisions were seen as “easy pickings” that were used to please the ministerial star chamber. Interviewees, however, warned of the potential side effects of concentrating on supposedly zombie regulations, rather than on those that actually incurred cost to business. This was because the actual removal of provisions that nobody knew about did incur a certain opportunity cost (one civil servant estimated that the “full economic cost” to remove a “zombie” was approximately £1,000). For some interviewees, the confrontation with particular provisions and the demand to assess them in the light of cost to business raised issues about evidence base and existing justifications for particular interventions or institutional arrangements.

The way in which different spotlights reported on their intended changes varied considerably. The retail spotlight offered a spreadsheet of all considered regulations. In Hospitality, some information was available that pointed to areas of “improvement” (Energy Performance Certificates, alcohol licensing), “clarification” (food labeling, private water supply), and “scrapping” (smoking signs, specific entertainment licenses). Elsewhere, the website provided links to press announcements. For example, the Manufacturing response noted that 128 regulations had been reviewed. Among the non-EU domestic provisions, 47 regulations were to be scrapped, 18 improved, and 22 would remain unchanged. Among other things, it also announced that the British Proof Authority¹² would work on consolidating the 1868 Gun Barrel Proof Act.

In sum, despite announcements based on a number of provisions that were to be altered or scrapped, it is difficult to come to an assessment as to whether the RTC led to a noticeable change in the regulatory burden to business (or others).

4.2. The tone of the messages

What about the actual crowdsourced information? In terms of method, all comments on the website were downloaded. Table 3 illustrates the aggregate number of submissions by chronology of spotlight. (See Table 4 for the number of regulations under discussion and submitted comments by sub-theme.) What is noticeable is a decline toward the end of the period of interest that cannot be clearly linked to whether a spotlight was directly related to cost to business. The spotlights attracted different levels of interest from zero to 5,437 (Equalities), and contained a range of provisions from single Acts and discussion papers to a large number of Acts, regulations, statutory instruments, and orders.

Table 4 provides a summary of those spotlights that have been completed and the sub-areas on which comments were being sought. It illustrates the ratio of comments supporting a strengthening, a weakening, or a simplification in relation to the total number of claims investigated. Where the individual bars do not aggregate to 1, this means that comments could not be categorized (e.g. the argument in “general pensions” that “sharing skills and bartering ought to be encouraged”),¹³ or were “neutral,” or related to enforcement activities. The analysis contains 101 sub-themes, drawn from 19 completed spotlights, reflecting the halfway state of the RTC.

Table 4 offers a number of insights. Most of the comments generally indicated that more regulation was needed, rather than the hoped-for calls for eliminating red tape (e.g. the near 100 percent support for restricting sales on Sunday as part of the Sunday Trading provisions). Those topics that attracted demands for scrapping regulation were often occupied by concentrated interests (road racing clubs, supporters of herbal and homeopathic medicine). Other sub-themes saw clashes between concentrated interests, such as that in inland waterways between canoeist and angling interests. The strong scrap views evident in the legal services theme is driven by very low numbers of comments.

For some interviewees, these patterns came as a surprise. Others expressed no particular interest in the received comments, but pointed to the usefulness of the comments through the private channel. The Children Services’ spotlight received fewer than 100 comments in total (and was hardly a theme that resonated with cost to business). More surprisingly, the energy, the company and commercial services, and legal services-related spotlights also attracted very little attention.

Most of the received comments were about protecting or enhancing regulation or, in the case of taxis, complaining about local authorities’ inconsistencies and demanding centralized regulation; the actual content of the messages was also a problem for assessment. Some of the messages reflected on specific regulations, while others, if not most, put forward more generic commentary (“keep them all”), attacked unrelated issues (metrication or EU membership), and seemingly marginal issues (should paddling pools be included under the hose-pipe restriction provisions of the 2010 Flood & Water Management Act?), or demanded changes that would violate the terms of UK membership to the EU. Surprisingly, it was not difficult to allocate a distinct tone; hardly any messages offered a mix of proposals to keep certain provisions and to scrap others.

Somewhat ironically, despite the opposition to change in Sunday Trading legislation, the subsequent limited relaxation of Sunday shopping hours for the 2012 Olympics was seen as an indicator of a more wide-ranging attempt to liberalize shopping hours further. Especially in the earlier rounds, some comments sought to criticize the suspected normative basis of the exercise at large. Furthermore, there was, according to interviewees at least, no direct relationship between the number of comments received and apparent regulatory burden. A particular example of this issue was the widespread concern expressed in submissions regarding “hallmarking” (which was an organized campaign). Overall, the comments, with some exceptions, were regarded as neither particularly informative nor specifically angry.

It was also difficult to identify who was actually commenting on the various regulations. Many comments were provided on a first-name only basis (e.g. “John” offered five highly specialized comments regarding taxi and vehicle regulations; “elephant never forgets” appeared on road transport issues on regular occasions, mostly offering critical comments on the contributions of others; and “Barrie Youde” offered some poetry in the maritime safety spotlight). Some identified their professional background (seafarer, carer, taxi firm owner). Few firms submitted their comments in public. There were examples of organized campaigns (road bicycle racing or hallmarking) where numerous individuals submitted near identical comments. Similarly, fire brigades were very active in the Equalities spotlight, as were, in this particular domain, other advocacy groups. Among trade unions or business associations, only the Unite trade union submitted various views across early spotlight themes, most of which were of a similar nature by attacking the perceived overall intention of the RTC.

In light of these problems, interviewees stressed the importance of internal challenge activities that encouraged civil servants to reflect on their particular regulatory stock. Thus, the quality and quantity of crowdsourced comments proved to be of little importance to the actual deliberations.

Overall, it is difficult to assess whether the RTC did invite new correspondents and who those individuals were, and it was impossible to find out if the same individuals reappeared on the various spotlights or in one spotlight. This apparent lack of interest from identifiable businesspeople, who were assumed to be too afraid to comment, led the Cabinet Office to encourage departments to use alternative ways to assess business opinion, including specific

Table 4 Number of regulations, online responses, and tone of messages

Spotlight	Number of regulations	Number of responses	Tone Keep/Strengthen	Tone Kill/Weaken	Tone Keep & Simplify
Retail					
Dangerous & restricted goods	24	57	0.11	0.54	0.05
Consumer information & labelling	37	129	0.36	0.21	0.14
Premises & trading requirement	13	47	0.15	0.36	0.06
Selling vehicles, parts & fuel	20	31	0.26	0.45	0.03
Trading with the enemy	83	37	0.11	0.3	0.27
Sunday trading laws	3	2,646	0.86	0.08	0.01
Weights & measures	42	98	0.36	0.15	0.11
Hallmarking	11	5,254	0.99	0.01	0
Hospitality, food & drink					
Food labelling & composition	32	76	0.49	0.11	0.09
Hotels & holidays	15	85	0.02	0.65	0.01
Licensing Act	1	131	0.15	0.37	0.08
Food & drink	44	79	0.32	0.26	0.24
Wider hospitality	20	106	0.58	0.23	0.06
Regulatory enforcement	Discussion Paper	104	0.22	0.18	0
Road transportation					
Buses & taxis	63	297	0.11	0.28	0.36
Freight	33	101	0.16	0.53	0.07
Highways	66	360	0.18	0.28	0.19
Road safety & cycling	15	607	0.22	0.72	0.06
Transport workers	86	28	0.39	0.29	0.07
Parking	21	113	0.21	0.19	0.07
Equalities	1	5,437	0.86	0.05	0.01
Equalities at work		216	0.6	0.03	0
Equalities (buying goods & services)		124	0.35	0.01	0
Equalities (enforcing the laws)		161	0.89	0.04	0.01
Positive action		208	0.34	0.14	0
Environment					
Noise & nuisance	25	112	0.53	0.13	0.05
Waste	40	147	0.4	0.23	0.22
Biodiversity	163	1,725	0.84	0.03	0.02
Chemicals	5	31	0.13	0.03	0
Energy labelling	2	59	0.8	0.12	0.03
Air quality	14	121	0.38	0.03	0.06
Permit	3	112	0.55	0.11	0.21
Employment-related laws					
Compliance & enforcement	15	868	0.79	0.14	0.04
Letting people go	8	697	0.76	0.07	0
Managing staff	130	422	0.85	0.06	0.02
Taking people on	11	62	0.21	0.58	0.15
Health & safety					
Major hazards	21	50	0.68	0.04	0.1
General H&S in the workplace	51	689	0.48	0.28	0.19
Children services					
Adoption services	34	0	0	0	0
Looking after children	25	6	0.17	0	0.3
Safeguarding	13	5	0	0.2	0.4
Childcare & early years	20	32	0.19	0.03	0.37
Independent schools	26	8	0	0.38	0.13

Table 4 *Continued*

Spotlight	Number of regulations	Number of responses	Tone Keep/Strengthen	Tone Kill/Weaken	Tone Keep & Simplify
Maritime & rail					
Maritime industrial safety	89	111	0.81	0.04	0
Maritime safety passengers	11	14	0.5	0	0.21
Maritime safety seafarers	60	41	0.85	0.02	0.02
Maritime environment	39	15	0.53	0.07	0.13
Maritime navigation safety	17	12	0.83	0	0
Rail transport – fares & licensing	31	281	0.45	0.36	0.18
Rail transport – rail planning & infrastructure	31	11	0.9	0.01	0.03
Rail transport – rail safety & standards, security	84	20	0.4	0.1	0.3
Rail transport – workers & organizations	52	365	0.82	0	0.01
Manufacturing					
Product & equipment	83	13	0.04	0.35	0
Weights & measures	17	8	0.46	0	0
Intellectual property	4	0	0	0	0
Export control	23	16	0	0.44	0.31
Medicine					
Medicine	203	181	0.2	0.27	0.24
Clinical trials	4	44	0.11	0.16	0.07
Good laboratory practice	3	0	0	0	0
Blood	7	15	0.27	0.07	0.4
Pharmacy	2	92	0.09	0.49	0.3
Fees	15	9	0	0.04	0.05
Traditional herbal medicine	13	206	0.14	0.31	0.02
Homeopathic	6	152	0.35	0.46	0.02
Water & marine					
Water	128	27	0.63	0.07	0.11
Flood & coastal erosion	48	13	0.69	0.06	0.15
Inland waterways	10	100	0.55	0.03	0.03
Sea fisheries	131	28	0.57	0.07	0
Freshwater fisheries	22	11	0.63	0.18	0
Marine environment	20	69	0.58	0.13	0.29
Housing					
Private & rented sector	106	59	0.36	0.2	0.17
Social housing	8	75	0.05	0.04	0
Construction related regulation	9	15	0.14	0.27	0.33
Building regulation & related legislation	19	130	0.5	0.2	0.14
Sports & recreation					
Sport	86	9	0	0.44	0
Gambling	67	32	0.19	0.53	0.09
National lottery	32	2	0	0	0
Other cultural regulations (including heritage & museums)	99	1	0	1	0
Energy					
Coal industry & miner welfare	48	0	0	0	0
Energy efficiency	19	20	0.35	0.2	0.3
Energy security nuclear	69	3	0	0	0
Gas & electricity supply	66	5	0.6	0.2	0
Offshore infrastructure	29	0	0	0	0
Onshore infrastructure, sites, pipes & wires	36	5	0	0.8	0

Table 4 *Continued*

Spotlight	Number of regulations	Number of responses	Tone Keep/Strengthen	Tone Kill/Weaken	Tone Keep & Simplify
Pensions					
Private pensions	119	32	0.5	0.22	0.13
Pensions protection	40	14	0.79	0	0.07
General pensions	0	63	0.48	0.14	0.13
Company & commercial services					
Working of companies & partnerships	49	22	0.09	0.45	0.27
Accounts & returns	24	73	0.08	0.56	0.18
Business names	9	23	0.3	0.6	0.08
Disclosing of information	38	30	0.17	0.53	0.1
Legal services					
Claims management regulation	4	3	0.6	0.3	0
Regulating the legal professions	41	3	0	1	0
Registering a legal interest in land	26	4	0	0.75	0
Data protection	19	0	0	0	0
Transforming bailiff action	22	6	0.23	0	0
Arbitration	4	0	0	0	0
General justice regulations	54	0	0	0	0

panels, visits to some businesses, or traditional consultation mechanisms. However, even where small businesses identified themselves on the website, it was difficult for officials to assess whether the message was an indicator of a wider problem or simply a singular grievance.

There was very little evidence of deliberation, which is defined here in the minimal sense of someone responding to another message. This is a far cry from the more demanding conditions that have been identified for deliberation in the wider literature, namely an exchange between views that relies on persuasion and where actors are willing to be won over in order to achieve a joint position. As noted, civil servants suggested that deliberation was impeded by the required delay in putting submitted comments online. However, even where there was some deliberation, these comments were rarely directly related to the initial comment. Rare efforts by champions or moderators to encourage further comments or more detailed contributions were mostly ignored (the observed subset contained 93 RTC interventions, 12 comments received a response). In short, there was no evidence that the RTC encouraged deliberation.

Does the “heat” of the crowdsourced opinion provide for indications as to where we can find movement in terms of official announcements? Again, given the level of commentary, it is very difficult to identify a direct linkage between the kind of arguments made on the website and the specific proposals to scrap or improve regulation, with the exception of the “Trading with the Enemies” provisions. At a separate level, the heat generated by different contributions and its overall direction was at times used in the internal deliberations within departments and in the ministerial star chamber (the champions sat on the side of the challengers, not the department). Again, however, neither online comments nor the RTC’s contribution were seen as critical in tipping particular arguments or concerns. Indeed, in some cases, according to interviewees, the extent to which particular parties identified themselves was used by government actors to argue that the crowdsourcing information should be ignored, because it supposedly did not reflect business interests.

In sum, looking at these spotlights does not suggest that there was much influence of the crowdsourced element. The RTC became an ever wider exercise that combined, not just the discussion of particular provisions, but also included cross-cutting themes, such as enforcement. In many ways, the crowdsourcing exercise resembled more traditional consultation exercises in that they attracted diverse inputs, some of which were based on organizational interests (which, however, remained largely unidentifiable). Thus, in some ways, the RTC exercise proved to be worse than analogous consultation exercises as views were largely anonymous and ill targeted. Traditional consultation may just involve the usual suspects. However, such an outcome, to some extent at least, facilitates a professional

exchange of viewpoints. What really seemed to matter for the RTC in terms of actually challenging red tape were the processes within departments and in the ministerial star chamber.

5. Conclusion

Much has been said about the potential of digital government in terms of transforming individuals' lives and changing the relationship between citizen/subject and the state (Dunleavy *et al.* 2006). Crowdsourcing, understood here as the "wisdom of the crowd," is no different: it was supposed to promise intelligent commentary by those burdened by red tape. Why then did the RTC offer a near-opposite experience? The dominant bias was in favor of more regulation, the overall process appeared not less costly than traditional consultation processes and was driven by processes within the executive, and the outcome was not necessarily different to previous red tape bonfires. The reason for this disappointing outcome (for enthusiasts of crowdsourcing) is in part the design of the RTC itself, in part the political priorities seeking to scrap burdens to business, and in part the inherent value conflicts underpinning better regulation activities more generally. This conclusion addresses these three points – and they have implications for the use of social media in rulemaking more generally.

The hope that dispersed intelligence can be accessed via low-cost means for the use of politicians to suppress "regulatory creep" (Coglianese 2004b) seems to be disappointed in practice, at least in the case of the RTC (but see Farina *et al.* 2012). If crowdsourcing was supposed to bring about deliberation and consultation, then the exercise was a disappointment. Instead of any of the four "benevolent" views noted in Table 1, the evidence points to all four skeptical views. Some may argue that just placing a large number of regulations on a website and hoping for an informed debate is highly naive in the first place. This dumping effect was further facilitated by the rushed nature of the early spotlights. In general, it is questionable whether any "crowd" would be interested in exchanging views about highly niche regulations, such as the "Control of Dogs on Roads Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1995."¹⁴ Instead, designing crowdsourcing around more structured and themed discussion may have provided for more informed responses. Thus, a more restrictive focus, rather than an "all regulation" (and legislation) ambition, would possibly have invited a different type of commentary; equally requiring "identification" might have supported more informed commentary.

Thus, as earlier US-based assessments of the e-rulemaking process have noted, the actual contributions seem to suggest no major qualitative difference to analogous consultation exercises (Balla & Daniels 2007). The innovative device of the RTC was the extensive challenging within and across government departments. This was largely driven by the strong presence of one key minister (Letwin) and the wider coalition's agreement on the importance of red tape reduction as a way of facilitating economic recovery, and not by crowdsourcing. In other words, the political dynamic and the administrative response to this political priority soon became pre-dominant, it had an impact in terms of actual challenging provisions within ministerial departments, its "pro-business" emphasis, and the attempt to extent the agenda to broader regulatory themes than specific regulations and legislation (see also Peled [2011] for argument how US bureaucracies incorporated "open data" provisions into their standard operating procedures). Officials did suggest that the high political attention to the process and the focused nature of the spotlight episode had facilitated a review of regulations within departments that otherwise would not have been possible given entrenched interests and policy team views. The RTC was seen as a good facilitator to align departmental plans with the cost to business agenda of the Conservative/Liberal Democrats' better regulation motive.

Moreover, a procedure that was supposedly "cost-lite" as information was freely sourced from the crowd, turned into a high-cost device. Costs included the running and monitoring of the website, analyzing the comments, and seeking to develop some form of response to please the various star chambers and tiger teams. So, even if the benefit of the RTC was to provide for a focusing event to concentrate minds on ways of reducing burdens to business, then any costing of the internal review processes was likely to outweigh the immediate achieved reduction in costs to business that were directly related to the RTC. Of course, any costing of the future savings was inherently difficult and speculative, whereas the full economic costing of the internal processes was and is politically infeasible.

More broadly, the contemporary attraction of crowdsourcing in government reflects an uneasy coalition of those who advocate a deregulated economy and society, and those who seek new ways of connecting individuals to new participatory problem-solving networks (see Linders 2012). Whether such activities are well suited to tackle more far-reaching problems of power asymmetries within society is a wholly different matter.

More generally, the problems of the RTC affected all better-regulation initiatives over the years, especially in the UK. One problem was related to the inevitable life cycle of reform initiatives (e.g. administrative simplification exercises) that were over-reliant on ministerial enthusiasm and invited difficult trade-offs and gaming by departments (Lodge & Wegrich 2009). A second problem was that the RTC reflected the inherent contestability about what such initiatives were supposed to achieve (e.g. more informed regulation, less regulation, or more conversation about regulation). Both of these problems are at the heart of any attempt at developing better regulation (as also noted in the wider red tape literature that highlights different perceptions among stakeholders), and the RTC's approach could not escape them either. In fact, it might be argued that it displayed these characteristic problems to a great extent.

The RTC initially sought to combine ideas of decentralized information gathering and, therefore, heightened intelligence with strong views about the perverse effects of all regulation that could be scrapped. However, the underlying administrative process revealed the dominant political view that the RTC was about scrapping above all else. It, therefore, violated competing logics, such as inviting for "more intelligence" and for "more deliberation." It was not crowdsourcing that offered the legitimacy for widespread scrapping, but the political agenda within the coalition government that drove this process.

In sum, this paper has considered the use of crowdsourcing as a consultative device by looking at the political and administrative processes, scrap announcements, and the tone of comments. Taking such a three-pronged approach facilitates an understanding of the way in which input (the crowdsourced comments) is filtered through a political and administrative process into a political product, that is, reform announcements. While this paper does not claim that all crowdsourcing attempts will be similarly limited, the RTC reveals the not untypical case of a problematic design, a particular political agenda that limited the effectiveness of any crowdsourcing initiative regardless of design, and an administrative logic that needed to accommodate political imperatives and domain-specific requirements, including value trade-offs. Thus, the case of the RTC suggests that crowdsourcing neither succeeded in escaping the constraints of the old world of consultation and value trade-offs, nor did it arrive in a new world of near costless informed public (or business) commentary or red tape busting.

Notes

- 1 Indeed, one interviewee reported that an email exchange between civil servants had taken place as to whether and what kind of access should be granted.
- 2 For example, from the "freight" spotlight (spelling in the original). Victor Gonzalez said on 23 May 2011 at 11:52 am "STOP FOREIGN HGV DRIVERS FROM DRIVING IN THE UK, UNLESS THEY CAN PAY EXHORBITANT ENTRY FEES. ALSO, STOP EU DRIVERS FROM TAKING ALL OF UK DRIVERS HGV JOBS – HAD MY HGV LICENCE FOR 5 YEARS, STILL NO JOB – UK BORN AND BRED."
- 3 The term "tiger teams" was introduced in the Department of Transport. Most other departments did not adopt this term.
- 4 <<http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/about/>>.
- 5 For example, whether, in the "Seafisheries" sub-theme, the Lobster and Crawfish (Prohibition of Fishing and Landing) Order and Undersized Edible Crabs, Spider Crabs and Velvet Crabs Orders could be merged.
- 6 Most prominently, the businessman and Conservative party donor, Adrian Beecroft, whose May 2012 report was described as "insane" by "sources close to" the Business Secretary and Liberal Democrat, Vince Cable. In response, Beecroft termed Cable a "socialist" in a newspaper interview. See Inman and Milmo (2012) and Watt and Jowit (2012).
- 7 Howe (2009, p. 226) points to the relevance of Sturgeon's Law in this context ("90 per cent of everything is crap").
- 8 Elsewhere, the RTC also attracted considerable interest from the wider fan base of crowdsourcing advocates, including the use of various types of visualization techniques. <<http://governingpeople.com/edemocracyblogcom/21886/visualisation-red-tape-challenge-comments>>
- 9 The Order which had not been enforced for some time consolidated provisions in the Pests Act 1954, giving ministers the power to make rabbit clearance orders requiring occupiers to control rabbits on their land. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/2-3/68/contents>. Last accessed 18 November 2013.
- 10 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1954/139/contents/made> Last accessed 18 November 2013.
- 11 For example, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1954/30/pdfs/ukpga_19540030_en.pdf> (last accessed 18 November 2013).
- 12 The British Proof Authority was constituted by the "Worshipful Company of Gunmakers of the City of London" and the "Guardians of the Birmingham Proof House."

- 13 Elizabeth Robillard, 7 April 2011, 10.13 a.m.
- 14 This order grants Councils the power to specify the length of road on which dogs must be kept on a lead. <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1995/2767/contents/made>> Last accessed 18 November 2013.

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