

SYSTEM FAILURE!

A Private Eye special report by RICHARD BROOKS

How this government is blowing £12.4bn on useless IT for the NHS



CLUELESS: Tony Blair, who can barely use a computer himself, naively believed that a grandiose IT project could transform the NHS

“Waste and inefficiency in the NHS is intolerable”, declared Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt one year ago amid mounting deficits. “A penny wasted is a penny stolen from a patient.” This is the story of the theft of 1,240,000,000,000 pennies from patients through an IT project that wasn’t wanted and doesn’t work. It tells how political vanity, official incompetence and vested interests have wreaked havoc on the health service – and calls for a halt to the ultimate in a long line of New Labour computer cock-ups before it’s too late.

IT WAS never going to grab the headlines at the time, but a “seminar on information technology in the NHS” one February morning in Downing Street five years ago was soon to unleash the most ruinously expensive civil technology programme in British history.

£12.4bn WOULD PAY FOR...

26,000 doctors for ten years