

Cragg Ross Dawson

Identity Cards

**Qualitative research on
perceptions of cost**

Findings

Prepared for:

COI Communications
Hercules Road
London SE1 7DU

On behalf of:

Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1A 9AT

28th August 2003

Contact at Cragg Ross Dawson: Tim Porter

498 db

Cragg Ross Dawson
Qualitative Research
18 Carlisle Street
London W1D 3BX

Tel +44 (0)20 7437 8945

Fax +44 (0)20 7437 0059

research@crd.co.uk

www.craggrossdawson.co.uk

CONTENTS		Page
A.	BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES	1
B.	METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE	2
C.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	3
D.	FINDINGS	6
1.	Awareness and perceptions of identity cards	6
2.	Perceived advantages and disadvantages	7
3.	Information on the cards	9
4.	Response to card options	10
5.	Unprompted perceptions of costs	11
6.	Response to suggested cost options	12
7.	Other cost issues	15

APPENDICES

A. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

- the government is considering introducing identity cards to help combat illegal immigration and working, reduce identity fraud and other crime, and improve access to services
- if identity cards are introduced, it is likely that members of the public will be asked to pay a fee for them, as they currently do for passports and driving licences
- a range of possible price levels is being considered, along with different options in relation to type of card and variations in pricing for people on low incomes
- qualitative research was commissioned to explore expectations of prices and response to different price levels
- specific objectives were to examine...
 - awareness and perceptions of identity cards in principle
 - response to basic information about how they might work
 - unprompted expectations of the price of identity cards
 - response to possible price levels, in isolation and in light of potential benefits of identity cards
 - feelings about free or reduced-price cards for people on low incomes; and about the option to pay by instalments

B. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

- 60 qualitative interviews lasting c20 minutes were conducted with members of the public
- 20 interviews each were carried out in Bexleyheath (Kent), Central London and Leeds
- sample structure was as follows:
 - **gender:** 30 men, 30 women
 - **social class:** 31 ABC1, 29 C2DE
 - **age/lifestage:**
 - ~ 12 aged 16-20, single
 - ~ 12 aged 21-30 single/partnered, no children, own home
 - ~ 11 aged 31-45 partnered, children under 16 at home
 - ~ 13 aged 46-60 partnered, teenage children at home
 - ~ 12 aged 61-75 empty nesters
 - **employment status:**
 - ~ 31 in employment
 - ~ 5 working age, non working partners of those in work
 - ~ 6 working age, out of work and claiming benefit
 - ~ 6 in full time education
 - ~ 12 retired and receiving pensions
 - **ethnicity:**
 - ~ 48 white British
 - ~ 7 Asian
 - ~ 5 African or African-Caribbean
- fieldwork was conducted 20th, 21st and 27th August 2003 by Lisa Malangone, Ali Percy, Tim Porter and Catherine Woolcott

C. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. **Perceptions of identity cards**

- awareness and acceptance of identity cards appears to be growing: the idea is becoming familiar and members of the public are becoming more receptive to the prospect
- there is still a rejecting minority who will be difficult to convince: they feel strongly that there are moral and social problems with the idea, and they are a highly vocal sector
- there was a wide range of knowledge and opinion about the potential benefits of identity cards
- those with greater knowledge tended to focus on the social benefits, particularly issues relating to illegal immigration and asylum; they tended to be among the most enthusiastic
- many others had not and did not consider anything other than the personal advantages identity cards might bring, but were quick to acknowledge the wider benefits
- the rejecting minority objected to identity cards on principle but also complained that there would be risks in ensuring that the information was not abused, either by hackers or by government itself
- even among the more accepting public there was much concern about the logistics of setting up and maintaining the system, and about security: ensuring that the system cannot be hacked, and preventing forgery and fraudulent use of cards

2. **Paying for identity cards**

- the issue of card holders paying for their identity cards prompted very mixed views: some accepted it without question; many had not thought about it but did not object; and a small minority strongly rejected the idea

- among the great majority who accepted the principle of paying, estimates of reasonable costs also varied widely but tended to be uninformed and unconsidered
- the key issues in coming to a view on reasonable costs are:
 - expected benefits of identity cards – to self or society
 - precedent, particularly prices of passports and driving licences
- except among the most enthusiastic, it is crucial to remind people of the likely gains, personal and social, and to inform them of passport and driving licence prices
- when people were fully informed, price expectations were as follows:
 - 10 year identity card combined with driving licence or passport:
 - ~ about half - £30-£50
 - ~ most of remainder – under £30
 - ~ small number – over £50
 - ~ handful – no fee
 - 5 year identity card combined with driving licence or passport: approximately 60%-70% of 10 year card
 - 10 year identity card only:
 - ~ about one third - £20-£30
 - ~ about a quarter - £10-£20
 - ~ about one third – no fee or under £10
 - ~ small number – over £30
- **NB Figures should not be treated as statistically valid**
- given the typical response and behaviour in relation to costs, publicity on this issue will need to consider very carefully how to inform the public about the rationale for proposed charges

3. Other cost issues

- the offer of concessions for those on lower incomes was largely accepted, especially for pensioners and disabled people on benefit
- most who were not on low incomes thought it reasonable to pay a little more to fund concessions
- the option of paying in instalments was considered useful, though not necessary for most
- if offered, the general preference was for cash-based instalment payment or deduction from benefit
- concerns were expressed about several aspects of ID cards, given the likely card options:
 - losing value of existing passport or driving licence
 - having to renew ID card/driving licence; cf existing driving licence
 - need to carry passport or driving licence in addition to combined card

D. FINDINGS

1. **Awareness and perceptions of identity cards**

1.1 Knowledge and understanding

- awareness appeared widespread: most people had heard something about identity cards in the news in the last year
- understanding of the proposed nature and logistics of identity cards was typically limited: most assumed a simple card with name and date of birth, and possibly other information
- a minority who were more informed expected the cards also to feature fingerprints or other means of confirming identity
- unprompted perceptions were often that the idea had arisen from concerns about growing numbers of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants
- there were also beliefs that the idea was motivated by the need to tackle other problems – football hooliganism, under-age drinking and smoking, identity fraud and credit card fraud
- some respondents assumed that identity cards would definitely be introduced in the near future; others, especially the more keen, were more sceptical and did not anticipate them being launched soon

1.2 Attitudes and feelings

- overall, awareness was higher and attitudes more positive than in previous research (Nov 2002), probably as a result of growing news coverage
- before any specific aspects of identity cards were explored, the general feeling about them seemed to be broadly favourable, though a minority had definite reservations

- among the more positive, a minority immediately embraced the idea: they felt it would play an important part in tackling current social ills, and that it was overdue
- those most likely to express positive views were younger (up to 30) or older (50+), C2 and DE
- younger people tended to focus on benefits to themselves; older ages were more inclined to consider potential social benefits
- those with the most negative perceptions were typically aged 30-50, B or C1 social class, white
- people from ethnic minorities seemed no more nor less positive in their views than the white sample; a few seemed especially keen on measures to combat illegal immigration
- awareness of identity cards in other countries, particularly mainland Europe, was high, and tended to enhance receptiveness to the idea
- two with experience of ID cards in other countries (Spain, Austria) regarded them as unremarkable, not an issue for concern, though effective and useful

2. **Perceived advantages and disadvantages of identity cards**

- the principle perceived benefits of ID cards (unprompted) were:
 - a means of controlling asylum and illegal immigration and working
 - a means of keeping a check on people in more general terms, with the probable outcome of reducing crime
 - a way for young people to prove their age (in both directions); and for retailers and transport operators to check young people's ages
 - quicker, easier financial and retail transactions, if the card were a foolproof and accurate record of identity

- on prompting, other potential benefits and gains of identity card were also accepted and often welcomed:
 - quicker, easier access to public services by means of easier proof of identity
 - a means of reducing benefit fraud
 - simple updating of information in the event of changing circumstances

- the main reservations about identity cards were:
 - concerns about security and forgeries, given apparent ease of stealing and forging passports
 - difficulties in setting up the system – gathering information on the entire 16+ population and keeping it up to date
 - problems policing the system and making sure it achieved its aims (eg how could employers be checked to ensure they did not take on illegal workers?)
 - the cost of setting up and running the system – though no references to the cost to individuals
 - among the rejecting minority, worries about...
 - ~ about invasion of privacy ('Big Brother government')
 - ~ threats to civil liberties
 - ~ discrimination against minorities, all immigrants, legal or illegal, and asylum seekers

3. Information on the cards

- the general expectation was that information on the cards would be fairly limited
- most assumed the cards would carry the holder's name and date of birth, probably supplemented by a photo and unique identity number, possibly also the holder's signature
- those who knew more about the idea, or thought it through, assumed there would also be a separate record of information on all card holders – a database
- when explained, this was acceptable to almost all and considered a logical way of storing and accessing information:
 - card would carry basic information
 - database would contain fuller details, accessed by swiping card or giving key details over the 'phone
- a few assumed the card would feature the holder's address, given that driving licences featured addresses
- some said unprompted that they would be uneasy with their address being on the card
- on consideration most rejected the inclusion of their address:
 - general worries about security in event of lost or stolen cards
 - specific concerns among women about burglary if handbag stolen containing ID card and keys
- many assumed addresses could be encrypted and thought this would be acceptable

4. Response to card options

- respondents were told there might be three card options: ID card combined with driving licence; ID card combined with passport; ID card only
- most felt they would prefer the option of ID card combined with passport; but ID card/driving licence and ID card only also attracted support
- those who were most enthusiastic tended to prefer option of ID card combined with driving licence or passport
- the ID card only option was preferred by the few without a passport or driving licence, and those who were least receptive to ID cards in principle
- response to different options had significant implications for perceptions of cost: paying for cards was much more acceptable if they had a dual function
- several suggested unprompted that the options should include an ID card combined with both driving licence and passport, to maximize functions and reduce number of documents carried
- against this, some queried the idea of combining the ID card with either driving licence or passport:
 - worries about security if card carried routinely, esp re passport: much hassle and potential risks if lost or stolen; more prepared to carry driving licence
 - would the card really function as passport or driving licence, or would existing passport or driving licence, or other supporting document, be required, as currently with driving licences?
 - how could the ID card/passport function as a passport outside Europe, assuming it would need to be stamped when receiving visas and arriving/leaving other countries?

5. Unprompted perceptions of costs

5.1 Initial reactions

- first responses varied widely:
 - some were entirely accepting of the prospect of paying for a card – already assumed there would be a charge
 - many had not considered the cost issue but thought they would be prepared to pay something, depending on what the card offered
 - a minority were strongly against paying, including a few who were in favour of identity cards in principle
- precedent is important: when people were told the costs of passports and driving licences, the idea of paying for an identity card became more acceptable and estimates of acceptable costs increased
- some immediately raised the issue of those on low incomes: would they have to pay, and if so, how could this be regarded as reasonable?
- among the minority who rejected the idea of paying, the issue of cards being compulsory was significant: if they are introduced without choice, why should we pay?
- related to this was a feeling that the benefits of ID cards were largely to the government; if the government was the principle beneficiary, should it not fund the cards (even if this funding came from taxation)?
- some also suggested that ID cards might well save the government money through reduced benefit fraud and easier prevention of illegal immigration, and felt that this saving could fund the cards

- some respondents felt that parallels with paying for passports and driving licences were not necessarily valid, because these are not compulsory
- in a few instances the prospect of paying for cards seriously undermined prior acceptance:
 - if people had to pay, this made the idea as a whole considerably less palatable
 - some were indignant, angry and felt almost cheated at the thought of having to pay

5.2 Unprompted expectations of cost

- among the majority who were prepared to pay for the cards, expectations of cost, without reference to length of validity or card options, were typically between £20 and £40
- at the extremes, a few thought they would pay up to £70; and a few others said they would pay no more than £10 or £15
- the rejecting minority said they would not be prepared to pay at all, assuming the cards were effectively compulsory
- in some cases low cost estimates were influenced by beliefs about the costs of producing the cards themselves – cards are freely available, so must be cheap
- some of those who made low estimates increased these when it was made clear that the cards could be combined with driving licence or passport
- several said the cards should be free or subsidised when first introduced, to encourage acceptance

6. **Response to suggested cost options**

- respondents were asked what they would pay for a 10 year card combined with driving licence or passport, or a 10 year ID card only

- these reactions were given in the knowledge of the cost of a 10 year passport (£33, rising to £42 in October 2003) and full driving licence converted from provisional (£41 in total)
- higher estimates tended to come from over 45s and B and C1 social classes; lower estimates came from younger people and DE social classes
- initial estimates were often lower than the final figure given: when the potential benefits of identity cards were revisited, estimates tended to increase
- the most compelling potential benefits in this context were combating illegal immigration and easier access to services and products (these needed to be spelled out)
- **NB Figures should not be treated as statistically valid**
- a **10 year ID card combined with driving licence or passport** was generally expected to be between £20 and £50; some assumed it would be the same fee as for passports or driving licences, or slightly more
- expectations were:
 - £50-£80: 7 respondents
 - £40-£50: 18 respondents
 - £30-£40: 13 respondents
 - £20-£30: 11 respondents
 - under £20: 8 respondents
 - no fee: 3 respondents
- a **5 year ID card combined with driving licence or passport** was typically expected to be more than half the cost of a 10 year combined card (60%-70% of the 10 year cost), given likely administration costs

- a **10 year ID card only** was widely expected to be considerably less than a 10 year combined card:
 - it would have minimal benefit for those with a passport or driving licence
 - those with no desire for a passport or driving licence often had limited funds
 - some felt strongly that it should be free, given the perceived limited benefits it would offer
- expectations were:
 - £30-£50: 7 respondents
 - £20-£30: 19 respondents
 - £10-£20: 14 respondents
 - up to £10: 10 respondents
 - no fee: 10 respondents
- several respondents wondered about the implications of paying to replace a combined ID card and driving licence or combined ID card and passport:
 - a driving licence was valid until age 70, and a passport might have up to 10 years still to run
 - they thought it would be reasonable to expect a refund for unused time
- there was also some resentment at the prospect of having to pay renewal fees for a combined ID card and driving licence up to age 70, given that current driving licences do not have to be renewed until age 70

7 Other cost issues

7.1 Concessions for people on low incomes

- this was largely accepted in principle, with a few exceptions
- some had already raised the issue of how the less well off might be able to afford ID cards
- a few who were not keen in principle thought it unreasonable that people with little money should be made to pay for the cards
- a minority who were enthusiastic about ID cards felt there should be no concessions: all should pay in full, regardless of income
- most of those who accepted the principle of concessions for the less well off also accepted the idea of others (including themselves) paying more to help fund concessions
- sectors of the population who were regarded as most deserving of concessions were those who most commonly receive concessions on other services:
 - pensioners, especially if only receiving the state pension
 - disabled people on benefits
- this was endorsed by those who were themselves in one of these categories, especially pensioners
- there was less agreement about concessions for other low income groups:
 - young people felt they should be given concessions; some in older ages were less convinced
 - those on benefits thought they should receive concessions; some felt they should not, especially if unemployed and with prospects of working in the future

7.2 Paying by instalments

- this option was considered sensible, though few of these people imagined they would take it up
- for most people, the likely cost involved would not make it worthwhile paying by instalments
- for those who might want to pay by instalments the preferred options were saving stamps or deductions from benefit, spread over six months

APPENDICES

Contact questionnaire

Topic guide

Stimulus material

CONTACT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Address:

.....

Tel:

Sex: Male () Female ()

Occupation (HoH):

SeS: A () B () C1 () C2 () D () E ()

Age: 16-20 () 21-30 () 31-45 () 46-60 () 61-75 ()

Children living at home: No () Yes (write in ages).....

Ethnic origin: White British () Asian () African/African-Caribbean ()

GOOD MORNING/AFTERNOON, I WORK FOR AN INDEPENDENT MARKET RESEARCH COMPANY CALLED CRAGG ROSS DAWSON. WE ARE CARRYING OUT A RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT CURRENT AFFAIRS. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF I COULD ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS.

QA Do you, or any of your close family or friends work in any of the following occupations now, or have you or they ever done so in the past? (SHOWCARD A)

Advertising	() CLOSE
Marketing	() CLOSE
Market research	() CLOSE
Public relations	() CLOSE
Journalism/broadcasting	() CLOSE
Police Force	() CLOSE
Armed Forces	() CLOSE
Civil Service	() CLOSE
Local council	() SEE QUOTA
Customs and Excise	() CLOSE

IF ELIGIBLE GO TO QB. OTHERWISE CLOSE.

QB Have you ever attended a market research group discussion or interview?

Yes	() QC
No	() Q1

QC And have you attended such a discussion or interview in the last 6 months?

Yes () CLOSE
No () QD

QD What was/were the subject(s) of the discussion(s)/interview(s) you attended? WRITE IN BELOW.

.....
CLOSE IF RELATED TO THIS RESEARCH TOPIC. OTHERWISE GO TO Q1.

Q1 Thinking about your income, which of the following applies to you?

I am in full time paid employment ()
I am in part time paid employment ()
I am unemployed and receiving benefit ()
I am not in paid work and I am supported by my partner ()
I am retired and receiving a pension ()

SEE QUOTA. GO TO Q2.

Q2 Would you mind telling me if you are a member of, or work for, any of these organisations?

Labour Party ()
Conservative Party ()
Liberal Democratic Party ()
Green Party ()
British National Party () CLOSE
Citizens Advice Bureau () CLOSE
Liberty () CLOSE
Welfare rights organisation () CLOSE

RECRUIT IF APPROPRIATE.

Topic Guide – Identity Cards

Background

Age, make-up of household, employment status (if relevant).

Awareness of identity cards

Have respondents heard about any current plans to introduce an identity card scheme? If they are aware of any proposed scheme, what is their understanding of it?

Identity cards idea in principle and in detail (using boards)

What are people's reactions to the idea in principle? What do they imagine would be its uses and benefits?

What are their reactions to the idea in detail (Use boards to describe functions and benefits – access/entitlement to services, combating illegal immigration and working, identity fraud, updating of information)?

Use previous board nos 1, 2 and 6

Information on the cards

What information would they expect to be on the card? What do people feel about addresses being on the card? Would they feel happier if it were encoded on the card, or on a separate database?

Cost of the card - unprompted

Assuming the cards were combined with passports or driving licences, were valid for ten years, and offered the benefits described above, what would they expect them to cost in total? What do they feel is a fair price to pay? What price would make them good value?

Suppose the cards were valid for five years, what would be a reasonable price to pay?

What would be a reasonable amount to pay for an identity-only card (ie not combined with driving licence or passport), that was used to give people access to services?

Cost of the card - prompted

What is their response to the following possible costs, assuming combined with driving licence or passport and valid for ten years (show possible cost levels individually)?

Assuming combined with driving licence or passport and valid for ten years:

Bearing in mind that a passport currently costs £33 (and this will rise to £42 in October) and also thinking of the benefits we have discussed, Which of the following costs of an identity card, do you think sounds reasonable?

£20-£30

£30 - £40

£40 - £50

£50 - £60

£60 - £70

Over £70

Q: Which of the following do you think is a reasonable cost of an identity - only card, not combined with a passport or driving licence?

£20-£30

£30 - £40

£40 - £50

£50 - £60

£60 - £70

Over £70

How do they feel about these possible costs given that identity cards...

- could help reduce illegal immigration and working

- would help people obtain access to services, including health care and benefits
- could be updated automatically, eg if they move house, so they can have continuous contact with service providers?

(COVER EACH ISSUE SEPARATELY)

Q: What do people feel about the cards being free (or lower in cost) for those who are less well off

Q: If cards were to be free or lower in cost who should qualify for them? (select as many as wish)

people on state pension only,

people on benefits,

young people

Other (specify)

Would they be prepared to pay more to help fund this?

Paying by instalments:

Q: How do you feel about paying for cards in instalments eg over one year?

Q: If you had the option of paying in this way would you do so?

Q: What would be your preferred method of paying installments?

Cover – weekly, monthly, quarterly and also by stamps, Direct debit etc if time.

Summing up

What do they feel about identity cards now? How much would they be prepared to pay for them?