

Beacon Hill Byline: Mary Rogeness June 15, 1997

Interacting with the Registry of Motor Vehicles

I have seen some articles about it in Springfield, and I have heard some comments about it in Boston, so it seemed like a good idea to try it. License renewal on the internet. When my car registration renewal notification arrived last week, I decided to try out the Registry's internet website for the renewal transaction. Here is a report on the cyberspace experience.

Here are the qualifications that I brought to the computer connection. I am a longtime user of my home computer. Each column for the Beacon Hill Byline is a product of my Macintosh, and most are faxed from the computer to the Longmeadow News. However, the internet has not been part of my daily experience.

My office computer is part of a network that is linked to the state's e-mail service. You can write to me with the address Rep.MaryRogeness@house.state.ma.us, and I will get your message any time my computer is turned on. The computer is not linked with the internet. My home computer is linked to America Online, address MRogeness@aol.com, and I use the service for e-mail and to check the latest news. This was my first attempt to do business with a website. The renewal application from the Registry lists the registry's website, <http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/rmv>, and I worked my way to the site. I was reminded that each character in the address must be absolutely correct in order to complete the connection, and after a couple of missed connections, the Registry greeted me online.

Since I was not changing insurance companies or altering any of the information on my current registration, I was eligible to renew my registration. I supplied minimal identifying information, primarily my name, registration number and license number. With the additional information of credit card number and expiration date, the job was complete.

I now have a transaction number and a confirming e-mail from the Registry stating that my registration has been successfully renewed. The certificate and decal will be mailed. It goes on to say, "If your old registration has expired, your vehicle cannot legally be operated until you receive your new registration certificate, unless you print and carry this e-mail in the vehicle."

For an experienced internet user, the process would have taken a couple of minutes. As a novice, I completed it in 15 minutes. I was able to take care of it on a Saturday afternoon and get a receipt on the weekend, an added bonus if I had been late in renewing. I also saved \$5.00 from the standard \$35 cost.

The Registry has a reputation of being a difficult bureaucracy to conduct business with. Indeed, my office receives a substantial number of requests for assistance with Registry problems. That perception makes it important for me to report that the internet service was excellent. It's worth a try, and it might be the beginning of an entirely new relationship between drivers and the state agency that regulates us. Give it a try, and send me an e-mail of your experience.