

On comments, again

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Might I remind those commenting here for the first time [of this blog I posted in June this year](#):

Over 80% of all new commentators on this blog of late have turned out to be trolls. They offer comments that are intended to be disruptive, abusive, or both, from behind a veil of secrecy, wasting my time and that of other readers in the process. Even those who try to look reasonable at first are within three comments falling back on ad hominem attacks.

I have always reserved the right to refuse and edit comments received here. I don't use that option as much as I might. But I am getting bored by the trolling. So I will now be adopting a new policy. If I have any reason to doubt the credibility of a commentator when they first post their comment, or within a few thereafter, it will be deleted and will be replaced by this message from me to them, posted on the site:

Thank you for commenting. You have not done so before, or have only done so a few times, and the tone of your comment suggests that you might be trolling. As such please now email me providing evidence that you might be the person you claim to be with evidence of a persistent pattern of posting on other social media such as Facebook or Twitter using the name that you have now used to comment here so that I might decide whether I wish to let you comment on this site. My decision on whether to then accept comments from you will be final. The more information you provide the easier it will be for me to make a positive decision. Any disclosure you make will be voluntary. You do not need to respond if you do not wish to post again.

This will not affect those who are already established commentators or those who I think are genuine in their disagreement.

Over the last few weeks it has again become apparent that people try their hand here, offering comments on issues on which they rapidly make clear they know very little, with their soon very obvious intent of wasting my time becoming clear. A great many are, I suspect, inspired by the work of Tim Worstall, a man so detached from reality that

he has written about 4,500 abusive blog posts about me over the last 15 or so years, alongside his work as a fellow of the far-right Adam Smith Institute.

As I note above, I reserve the right to delete all comments from anyone who has not posted before, or who has done so only a few times, if it becomes in any way apparent that trolling is taking place.

I stress that new commentators are welcome if they arrive with good intent.

So too are comments that point out that I have made mistakes, because I do, and am happy to acknowledge it.

Similarly, please feel free to disagree with me: that is the way we learn.

But if I sense time-wasting or trolling, I will be deleting again, pretty ruthlessly. My day jobs are getting very busy right now and much of the management of this blog is done in what is effectively my spare time as a result, and I really do not have that available for time-wasters.

And if I think I have deleted you in error, please feel free to complain using the process noted above.