How practical is RACI, and is there a better alternative?

Recently I was drawn into a discussion over the use of the RACI system. With RACI, the killer question is: "Can accountability be delegated?". A stupid posting on a late Sunday afternoon, because I was immediately challenged to provide my alternative for the RACI system.

This RACI system, as you all will know, is a system where you distribute responsibility over staff in the format of four different levels of responsibilty: A=Acountability, R=Responsibility, C=Consulted, and I=Informed.

If one works with the paradigm that accountability is the ultimate form of responsibility, than accountability cannot be delegated. Instead, only smaller components of this "total responsibility" can be delegated.

If one works with the paradigm that there can be only one person or role in the position of highest in command ("the IT manager"), than this means that the IT manager has all the A's for all activities. The R of responsibility would then have to cover a smaller section of the "total", to be delegated to lower ranked employees.

If you create a matrix with the A's and R's ("the RACI matrix"), it will be very dull: all A's are with the IT manager and only the R's are distributed over various other roles.

All in all, this system doesn't provide the distribution of responsibility the way you had hoped for, in a granulated way....
Therefore I prefer a different system, that is more meaningful to practitioners, and easier to practice. It is described in the 5 Roles books TSO will publish after this summer. It separates process <u>management</u> roles from process <u>execution</u> roles, supporting a matrix organization as we know it in practice. This will be in line with PMM ("The Process Management Matrix, variations in process management") as published in IT Service Management Global Best Practices, Volume I (free download from http://www.ismportal.nl/en/downloads).

The process management roles used here are:

- **Process owner** - *responsible* for the process results
- **Process manager** - *responsible* for operational management of the process
- **Process controller** - *responsible* for the quality of process execution and the reporting on progress and results

As you can see, all three roles determine some typical element of *'responsibility'*.

All roles can be taken by one person (e.g. I am all of them for my simple home IT infrastructure). There is only one Owner. The Manager and Controller <u>can</u> be distributed over multiple staff, but I personally wouldn't advise that.

All other roles are process execution roles, to be found in the line managememnt dimension. These can be distributed as much as you want, most often dependent upon the size & complexity of the organization.

The TSO books will describe the approach in much more detail, and in a practical format, with a general Introduction book, a book on Service Level Management and Service Management roles, a book on Incident Management roles, and a book on Application Management roles. ETA: Q3 2011.