

healthcare service provisioning. These requirements were derived from Enterprise models capturing the community invariants of the healthcare service provisioning processes. The proposed approach has the benefit of making ubiquitous quality healthcare services available and helps in addressing the rural-urban healthcare service provisioning inequality.

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Community-Based Performance Management in Local Government

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NOTES:

I have finished all program coursework and am enrolled part-time in the doctoral program. I am in the process of constructing the proposal. I would expect to have the proposal ready in May for comment and discussion, and plan to have the thesis completed in 18-24 months after that.

SUMMARY

Performance management occurs where performance measurement intersects with organizational action - and the ambit of accounting has extended to cover significant parts of this cycle. The best value reforms to local government in the UK and Australia valorize performance measurement and community engagement as necessities for effective governance, and so we must now cope with the interaction of action, performance measurement and community engagement. This research will investigate current practice in community engagement within service delivery areas of Australian local governments. In particular the research will explore the gap in the literature about how the engagement impacts on decision-making.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

"Citizen participation in the decisions that affect their lives is an imperative of contemporary society", and since the latter part of the twentieth century we are witnessing a shift away from reliance on public officials and administrators to frame objectives and action (Roberts 2004, p. 369). The trend towards public involvement in decision-making should "... grow as democratic societies become more decentralised, interdependent, networked, linked with new information technologies, and challenged by wicked problems" (Roberts 2004, p. 316).

Kathi and Cooper (2005, p. 559) categorise the central arguments for citizen participation in governance under moral and instrumental normative grounds. The moral normative argument is that citizen participation in the work of government is a basic right in a democracy. The three instrumental normative arguments hold that community participation: promotes efficiency and effectiveness; is a vehicle for community empowerment and change; and bolsters political stability.

The 'Best Value' performance management framework in Victoria requires local governments to provide, and continuously improve, 'value for money' services that are relevant to community needs. This requirement has three important implications for performance management in government. Firstly it calls for rational

decision-making by local government politicians and managers, where action must be driven by good performance information. Secondly, it calls for robust accountability mechanisms, where good performance information needs to capture the results of action. Thirdly, because the nature and impact of services must reflect community needs, the performance information which drives action and captures results must be the subject of community input. So Best Value in Victoria, and similar reforms in Sweden, the UK and New Zealand have challenged traditional practice by requiring a three-way linkage between institutional action, performance measurement, and community engagement. In the midst of such initiatives by governments to increase the level of community engagement, there is a gap in our understanding about the impact of community engagement on decision-making (Kathi & Cooper 2005) (Department of Justice Canada 2001).

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

The aim of this study is to investigate the nature of community engagement in local government and its impact on performance measurement and organizational learning. This study seeks to identify: the forces that shape community engagement; the levels and mechanisms of engagement; and how engagement drives changes in performance measurement and management. From the research results, we should gain a better understanding about the effect of community engagement on decision-making and specify critical success factors for sustainable and effective community-centered corporate governance in local government.

OBJECTIVES

- identify: the forces that shape community engagement; the levels and mechanisms of engagement; and how engagement drives changes in performance measurement and management
- gain a better understanding about the effect of community engagement on decision-making and specify community informatics success factors and other CSFs for sustainable and effective community-centered corporate governance in local government

Note: community informatics is the design & application of information and communication technologies to enable community processes and the achievement of community development objectives (Denison et al. 2003).

This study will examine and contrast the perceptions of local government managers and politicians in Victoria and Sweden about the interaction between community

engagement and the five key decision-making elements in performance management: identifying and measuring objectives; determining and measuring actions to meet these objectives; setting targets; determining accountability and reward mechanisms; and adopting information flows and learning processes. The findings will highlight commonalities and differences that managers and politicians have experienced with the interaction of community engagement, performance measurement and action – and highlight critical success factors. The study will inform policy and implementation initiatives by governments and community stakeholders by examining how and why engagement has occurred, and its impact on current decision-making and organizational learning. The study may be extended to UK and New Zealand depending on access and resourcing.

A MODEL FOR EXPLORING COMMUNITY-BASED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance measurement can improve the civic discourse through more specificity and facts, and also stimulate public interest and participation in matters of service quality, which can in turn encourage the work of government employees (HM-Treasury 2001). In normative literature performance measurement provides a mechanism to reconnect the community and services (Talbot 2002, p. 3) and the performance information is a catalyst for adaptation and innovation and thus the ‘cornerstone’ of government modernization activities (HM-Treasury 2001) but there is a gap in understanding about how it can be operationalised as ‘performance management’ with the necessary community emphasis.

Otley (1999) proposes a model of performance management that addresses five key elements:

1. What are the key objectives that are central to overall future success, and how does the organisation evaluate their achievement. How does the organisation determine key objectives and methods for evaluating the results achieved?
2. What strategies and plans has the organisation adopted to achieve key objectives, and what activities are necessary for plans to deliver expected results. How does the organisation assess and measure the performance of these activities?
3. What performance standards are required to achieve success with key objectives (Q1) and activities (Q2), and how are performance targets set?
4. What rewards – in the widest possible sense – or penalties will accrue to managers from success or failure in reaching performance targets.
5. What formal and informal information flows (feedforward and feedback) and learning processes are necessary for the organisation to adapt?

Otley contends that each issue is not new and has been addressed in the management control and wider management literature. However the integration of the five areas to provide a description of the overall performance management systems of an organisation is relatively novel as it provides a way of redressing the dearth of information on current practice through “...a structure for examining extant practice in a more holistic way than has previously been the case...” (Otley 1999, p. 377). The framework provides a vehicle within which the “...features of an overall control system can be assessed and evaluated” (Otley 1999, p. 369).

Whilst Otley’s (1999) model gives us a less grainy view of the important decision elements facing management, the notion of how to measure the level of engagement for each of these five elements must be operationalised. Here the International Association for Public Participation provides a useful model for categories of community engagement. Community engagement varies along a spectrum of increasing public impact ranging from ‘informing’ to ‘consulting’ to ‘involving’ to ‘collaborating’ to ‘empowering’ (IPAA 2003). Informing provides the public with balanced and objective information to assist understanding of problems, alternatives, or solutions. Consulting gains public feedback. Involving ensures that community concerns are consistently understood and considered. Collaborating partners with the public in decision-making. Empowering places final decision-making in the hands of the community.

So to explore the effect of community engagement on decision making, we can combine Otley’s (1999) five major elements of performance management system with the five IPAA categories of community engagement to provide the sort of matrix recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) that facilitates in-depth research studies. We have developed this matrix (Figure 1) as tool for further research into the nuances of community-based performance management.

This model will form a point of departure in exploring how community engagement impacts of the different facets of decision-making that occurs within performance management. The matrix lists Otley’s (1999) five key decision issues vertically down the left column. For each decision element, the matrix considers: the levels of community engagement; the mechanisms by which the engagement takes place, the forces (barriers and enablers) for engagement; and the outcomes of that engagement. In particular, we will highlight the mix between community informatics and other factors at play.

RESEARCH STAGES

A review of relevant literature has comprised the first phase of the project, and study will proceed in two stages using mixed methods. These stages involve the

Figure 1. A matrix for exploring community-based performance management

Performance management/ engagement	Level of engagement:					Engagement:		
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower	Mechanisms	Forces	Outcomes
Determining key objectives & their measurement								
Identifying activities & their measurement								
Setting performance standards								
Determining rewards (implications) for success or failure								
Adopting information flows and learning processes								

collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from government managers and politicians by interview and questionnaire. Stage 1 is about identifying themes and variations around the experiences of managers and politicians with community engagement and its affect on decision-making. These perceptions will be explored using the case study method and operationalised by applying semi-structured interviews as the data collection technique. The themes and variations uncovered in Stage 1 will form the basis for Stage 2, which will further explore findings from the case research. Stage 2 will employ the survey research method, and utilise a questionnaire of closed and open questions as the data collection technique. Data analysis of variables will be in terms of frequency of states and relationships between variables.

The study uses what (Creswell 2003) terms a sequential exploratory design - where quantitative data and results assist in the interpretation of qualitative findings. Here the primary focus is to explore a nascent phenomenon. This design is appropriate to: test elements of an emergent theory; generalize the qualitative findings to different samples; and determine the distribution of a phenomenon within a chosen population.

CASE STUDY RESEARCH USING INTERVIEWS (STAGE 1):

The Interview participants will be politicians and senior government managers recruited from Australian and Swedish entities as a convenience sample (Maylor & Blackmon 2005). The convenience sample may be extended to UK and New Zealand depending on access and resourcing. Prior studies have shown the utility in benchmarking public sector management experiences in Australia against countries with similar reform agendas (Solli, Demediuk & Sims 2002; Solli, Demediuk & Sims 2005). Participants will be interviewed in order to gain their perceptions as professionals, and not as spokespersons for their organization. Only potential participants from Sweden who state that they are comfortable to be interviewed in English will proceed into the Stage 1 of the study, but these participants will also receive a copy of the semi-structured questions in Swedish and English. Protocols for qualitative research using in-depth semi-structured interviews as outlined in (Miles & Huberman 1994) and (Maylor & Blackmon 2005) will be strictly adhered to. These protocols involve issues such as: invitation to participate informed consent; permission to record the interview; confidentiality; avoidance of bias; and security of recorded and transcribed data. A list of semi-structured questions has been derived from the literature. Semi-structured questions provide an opportunity to compare perceptions about common issues across the subjects interviewed. In the course of the interview the researcher also has the opportunity to probe responses to get clarification or more detail, or to examine new relevant issues brought up by participants.

SURVEY RESEARCH USING A QUESTIONNAIRE (STAGE 2):

The in-depth semi-structured interviews (Stage 1) will be followed by a survey to further investigate the generalisability, distribution, and inter-relationships of phenomenon that are identified in the fieldwork. The survey questions will be developed with reference to the themes and variations found in the interviews from Stage 1. Final survey questions will be robustly pre-tested. Potential subjects for the survey will be politicians and senior managers from a sample of entities with active engagement policies from Sweden and Victoria in Australia. An e-mail survey will be employed, and it is expected that the subjects would have ready access to technology. Participants can alternatively request a printed copy of the questionnaire to complete. Protocols for survey research outlined in (de Vaus 2005) will be followed. Potential participants will receive an invitation letter to participate in the survey by E-mail with the electronic questionnaire file. Participants from Sweden will receive E-mail attachments of the survey in Swedish and English.

NUMBER, TYPE AND AGE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS:

Stage 1 interviews: The group in each location will comprise of 20 to 30 senior managers and politicians in public sector entities from Victoria (Australia) and Sweden with an age range above 21 years. Depending of progress with this data collection, resourcing, and access issues, interviews may be extended to such participants in the UK and New Zealand The proportions from each country will be an artefact of the opportunities presented through professional contacts and networks.

Stage 2 surveys: 250 individuals who are senior managers and politicians in Victorian and Swedish public sector entities with an age range above 21 years.

SOURCE OF PARTICIPANTS, AND MEANS BY WHICH PARTICIPANTS ARE TO BE RECRUITED:

Interview participants (Stage 1) will be recruited as a convenience sample from local governments in Sweden and equivalent institutions in Victoria (and possibly New Zealand and the UK) using publicly available listings of politicians and senior managers. Experience has shown a high level of interest by politicians and senior managers in Australian, Swedish, UK and New Zealand local governments to be voluntarily involved in research around performance management (Solli, Sims & Demediuk 2000). All research participants in Stages 1 will be informed at the outset about the voluntary nature of their participation, and that they may opt to back out at any time to wish to. A list of possible questions for these semi-structured interviews are:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS – STAGE 1

What happens with community engagement?

Scenario: Think about a typical program (project, function, service etc) with which you are involved – and what happens with community engagement.

Questions:

1. For each performance management element (see figure below):
2. What is the level of engagement?
3. What are the engagement mechanisms that you use?
4. What enablers/barriers have been at play in reaching these levels?
5. What are the outcomes (costs & benefits) from the engagement

STAGE 2

For Stage 2, a sample of managers and politicians will be drawn from local governments in Victoria and Sweden using publicly available databases. Letters of support for the survey will be sought from influential bodies such as the Goteborg Research Institute in Sweden and FinPro and VLGA (Victorian Local Governance Association) in Victoria. This stage will explore themes and variations uncovered in Stage 1.

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Collaboration Models or What Does It Take for Collaboration to Become a Common Asset?

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1. INTRODUCTION

The UN E-Government Author team has been assessing the readiness of the 191 UN Member States with respect to their E-Government readiness (Nation, 2005). The analysis of more than 50.000 features on their website has been used as a first indication how ready and serious a country is applying E-Government, including E-Government related procedures and processes. It also focuses in the second part on the interaction of information technology and the role of governmental and industrial institutions with the human being, the citizen itself.

This range of the study expresses the desperate need of more advanced E-Government applications and as a consequence the ability, accessibility and ease of use of advanced technology from a Governmental perspective. (Nation, 2005), see page 16. The fifth recommendation is expressing the need of the *formulation of a development strategy based on effective and indigenously appropriate utilization of the information and communication technologies (ICTs) in each sector is required so that the market, the government and the citizen have a mutually beneficial and equitable role to play.*

It is also pointing the value-add eGovernment should provide to the entire community.

2. RESEARCH AREAS

Traditionally academic research in collaborative topics started with a specific focus on the individual elements of collaboration. The relevant elements that have been investigated are Enterprise Architecture Frameworks, Business Process Management and Modelling Techniques and eCommerce, namely B2B and eGovernment standardization initiatives.

The dissertation will explore the shift from the traditional context of eCommerce towards collaboration. Collaboration takes place in areas where business and governmental institutions meet. Historically, collaboration research analysed the nature of networks (internal and external networks), business as well as cultural relationships. Through the introduction of local networks like the *keiretsu* phenomenon in Japan (Satoshi Hamaya, 2004) eCommerce and collaboration moved towards IT enabled collaborative scenarios for many to many relationships and away from the one to one focus in eCommerce. As *keiretsu* is specifically linked and limited to the Japanese cultural and business environment, the dissertation will introduce the term ecosystem. The ecosystem illustrates participants and contributors in a pre-defined business environment such as the trade environment and their interactions.

The research is linked to ITAIDE (ITAIDE, 2006) and further activities in Europe focusing on facilitation global trade across business partners and governmental institutions. ITAIDE is an integrated project funded by the IST 6th Framework Programme of the EU which started January 2006 to address some of the key issues

related to cross-border trade. Further activities are related to the standardization initiatives at UN/CEFACT where I will be a team member of a steering group for customs specific process, data and form standardization.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

What Subject Am I Discussing?

The topic that will be subject to the dissertation is the standardization and interoperability of Enterprise Architecture Frameworks with respect to cross-border and cross-country trade in selected EU member states. The topic fits into the EU wide initiative of the European Commission to implement electronic customs. The expected outcome is the reduction of the administrative burden for governmental authorities and business partners, the compliance of logical, data and product flows as well as assuring secure trade lanes.

The question I am discussing and answering is the following: Why is electronic collaboration still not a common asset to support daily business operations? A hypothetical answer might be that semantically correct, interpretation free contractual and negotiation agreements are not covered yet in the area of information exchange and information standardization.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Indicators of Relevance

Why are still substantial efforts being made in spending time, money and resources to analyze the effects of eGovernment – when will they pay forward?

Accompanied by literature review, the research will use business-oriented indicators of the relevance of eGovernment such as the analysis of Lévy (Lévy, 2005), and the case of Denmark (NIELS BJØRN-ANDERSEN, 2004). These indicators will be empirically extended and categorized along my participation in the ITAIDE project.

There is a number of studies such as the e-Business Watch (Commission, 2005) and UN Report on E-Government and E-Inclusion (Nation, 2005) that point out the need of focusing on the core roles of eGovernment. The current focus goes beyond publishing web sites and providing electronic media to download documents.

Modern business-oriented research is always urged to address the need of providing financial or any other measurable evidence to get an open ear in the commercial and governmental community. The need is to proof that a concept works in real life environments. As one part of the research will be an academic driven research on governmental business cases and applying eGovernment applications within companies and legal authorities, this will be taken into account.

The expected outcome hereby is the definition and the concept of cost and process implications on transformation from customs to eCustoms as well as the definition

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