The Impact of Federal Policy on Local E-Government

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Direct and Indirect ICT Policies

Direct ICT Policies

- Infrastructure development
  - Eg. The National Broadband Network.
- Enhancing adoption and use of new technologies
  - Eg. Public access terminals, educational programs.

Indirect ICT Policies

- Using ICTs to achieve broader policy goals
  - Eg. Data collection and organisation, increasing information dissemination, using ICTs to provide spaces for deliberation of issues.

(see Cohen, van Geenhuiizen & Nijkamp, 2005)
Civic engagement with political representatives through participatory e-government practices will require combining direct and indirect ICT policies.

- Improve existing infrastructure
- Enhance online service delivery
- Encourage online civic engagement

Principles for ICT-Enabled Citizen Engagement – designed as a best practice guide for governments at all levels to use when developing and implementing participatory e-government practices.
Principles for ICT-Enabled Citizen Engagement

1. Commitment;
2. Community Focus;
3. Community Capability and Inclusiveness;
4. Mutual Respect, Confidence and Trust;
5. Interactivity and Flexibility;
6. Responsibility and Accountability;
7. Security and Privacy; and
8. Evaluation and Efficiency.

(Department of Finance and Administration, 2007)

- Australian Government Entry Point Website – australia.gov.au

  - The entry point is meant to provide the context where the Federal Government can address the priority areas outlined in the e-government strategy and offer a space for civic connection with government.

  - However, the site remains service delivery driven with minimal opportunities for two-way citizen consultation and engagement.
Australian Local E-Government

- Australian local e-government is also largely service delivery focused as this offers the greatest benefits to governments (e.g., information dissemination, online payments, minimised staff hours).
  - Development is occurring in an ad hoc manner.

- This service delivery focus is to be expected given the substantial size of many local governments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government</th>
<th>Population:</th>
<th>Number of Councillors:</th>
<th>Number of Residents per Councillor:</th>
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<td>Brisbane City Council (Qld)</td>
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(ABS, 2010)
UK E-Government Policy

- Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA)
  - 20+ direct and indirect policies aimed to broadly develop local government operations.
  - E-government viewed as a key instrument to achieve policy goals and enhance local democracy.
  - Backed by federal resources - £350 million towards local e-government (Martin & Bovaird, 2005).
UK E-Government Policy

LGMA – 10 year vision:
- Our vision is: greater participation by people in the decisions that affect them locally, leading to services which better match the needs and preferences of communities. This requires: building trust that engagement will make a difference, and offering new opportunities to engage, particularly for those who have not felt empowered.
  
  (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in Leach & Pratchett, 2005: 321)

- Local authorities are encouraged to use their own priorities to drive implementation (Morphet, 2009).

- 32 percent of UK local governments have implemented online discussion forums (Pratchett, Wingfield & Karakaya-Polat, 2008).
E-Government: A Cohesive Policy Approach

- The frameworks to facilitate participatory local e-government are already in place in Australia.

- To make the most of these frameworks, a more integrated policy approach is needed that combines federal guidance and local knowledge while using ICTs to support policies and using policies to support ICTs.