



Public eProcurement in action

Policies, Practices and Technologies

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Structure of presentation

- Introduction/background
- Purpose
- Significance
- Research design
- Case illustrations
 - Italy
 - Scotland
 - Western Australia
- Conclusion and implications

Introduction/background

- Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)
 - Evidence based strategy
 - Nominated case studies
- Case study project one of three projects initiated by AGIMO.

Introduction/background (cont)

- Public eProcurement underrepresented in the eProcurement literature.
- Limited attention to and perspectives on eProcurement policy
 - Role of policy itself in shaping eProcurement practice
 - Policy as a purposive course of action provides a limited view of its implementation

Introduction/background (cont)

- Need for an alternative perspective that assists in addressing:
 - How policy is constructed?

Purpose

- To examine how abstract governmental eProcurement policies are translated into public procurement practices through adopting:
 - Colebatch's (2002) social constructionist approach to the analysis of policy; and
 - Theoretical concepts from Actor Network Theory

Significance

- Analysis makes visible the role(s) played by key actors in different settings, which assisted in translating eProcurement policy into practice
- Analysis provides us with a starting point for critically engaging with the notion of policy in eProcurement.

Research design

- Case studies - Three cases drawn from the series of cases prepared for AGIMO
- Data collection (May - Sept 2004)
 - In depth interviews
 - Documents (eg. Policy documents, annual reports, consultancy reports)
- Data analysis
 - Thick descriptions
 - Interpretive analysis

Case illustrations

- Emerging designs
- Inscription
- Translation
- Intermediaries and mobilisation
- Irreversibility

Emerging designs of public eProcurement

- Italy
 - eShops (electronic catalogues), online reverse auction, electronic marketplace
 - purchases only (no payments)
- Western Australia
 - Electronic tendering, electronic marketplace, electronic contract development and management
 - purchases only (no payments)
- Scotland
 - PECOS (electronic catalogues), e-tendering, online reverse auction
 - Purchase-to-pay

Inscription

- Italy
 - MEF inscribed the “rationalisation of public administrations program” into its eProcurement initiative
- Western Australia
 - Transparency, online agenda & buy local policy inscribed in initial interpretation of electronic marketplace
- Scotland
 - Gershon report - efficiencies, developing skills & practices and exploring e-commerce
 - Little “e” big “P”

Translation - Problematisation

- Italy
 - MEF through CONSIP “defined” eProcurement as an instrument of reform
- Western Australia
 - Transforming CAMs core business of managing contracts and “reengineering” itself
- Scotland
 - eProcurement service for the whole of the Scottish public sector - ePS project

Translation - enrolment

- Italy
 - CONSIP (DARPA) - obligatory passage point to begin aligning interests and provide IT platform
- Western Australia
 - Enrolled Sun Microsystems for providing the IT platform - obligatory passage point
- Scotland
 - National eProcurement Scotl@nd Project - obligatory passage point for enrolling the service provider

Intermediaries and mobilisation

- Literary inscriptions
 - Italy - Financial Act, Frame contracts
 - Scotland - eProcurement strategy, methodologies, EASEbuy
 - WA - Gem, media releases, SunTone Architecture methodology
- Technical artefacts
 - Italy - portal, electronic catalogues
 - Scotland - supplier database, document repository
 - WA - FMIS immutable mobile

Irreversibility/stability

- Italy & Scotland
 - Convergent network - an influential centralised agent constructing mutual understanding and common objectives with supplier and buyers - crystallised conceptions of eProcurement
- Western Australia
 - Did not stabilise in the form expected and different outcomes emerged
 - Limited users
 - Changing agencies, CAMS, DoIT, DTF - identities and activities continually changing

Conclusion

- eProcurement was viewed more desirably where policies were based on broader government reform.
- eProcurement is constituted of different images and designs
 - Designing policy in terms of a single concept may be misleading
- Business designs evolved differently
 - suggesting the need to take into account the temporal context when designing policy tools
- Theoretical perspective gives visibility to the policy processes which lead to the varying images of eProcurement
 - Multiple designs of eProcurement systems and practices are reflected in rules and procedures that persist over time and are both a shaper and an outcome of policy processes.