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Moving towards relational services: the role of digital service environments and platforms?

Mike Martin, Rob Wilson and David Jamieson

Introduction

The Co-creation of Service Innovation in Europe (CoSIE) project's many explorations of co-creation in the context of public service development, which have been discussed in the chapters of this book, exhibit underlying commonalities and themes which became visible in cross-cutting work packages, particularly those associated with modelling pilot processes and contexts. In this chapter we will explore the sources – and observe some consequences of – what could be considered to be the 'theory of service' that emerged.

Our focus in this chapter is on the communicational and information related aspects of service development and the concept of the 'service platform'. The CoSIE project was initiated on the assumption that social media and web-based publication services provide opportunities for innovation in participation and co-creation in the public service domain (Jalonen et al, 2019; Jalonen and Helo, 2020). We will examine this assumption and explore some of the limitations and barriers that current commercial service practice places on the use of existing channels and media in some of the more sensitive contexts explored in the project.

The term 'service' is used in many different disciplinary settings and is treated from a number of quite distinct perspectives. It is an example of a sociotechnical concept which, to be explored with any thoroughness and rigour, must be examined in terms of empirical observation and also in terms of human experience and interpretation. In the following sections we will explore these dichotomies and present some models and conceptual

framings that have proved useful in interpreting and understanding the work undertaken in the project.

An important conclusion of this discussion is that, in the case of wellbeing service environments, whether place-based or need/aspiration-based, co-creation is not simply a socially or morally desirable approach but rather a logical and practical necessity in responding to and coping with the inevitable complexity and emergence of the types of contexts presented by the CoSIE pilots.

Services and information and communications technology systems

In the face of complex health, care and welfare needs across Europe, there is a widespread appreciation that the information and communications systems ought to be a fundamental part of supporting service delivery. The question that remains seems to be the ‘How?’. Vast amounts of political capital and national resource has been put into solving the ‘problems’ from the perspective of governments who have procured from vendors ‘solutions’ (ranging across simple to elaborate or from the institutional whole to the discrete task) with little real long-term impact or effect. It has become increasingly clear that the basis of digital government integration approaches has failed to deliver transformation of services, instead either arriving at ‘disaster faster’ or increasing the complexity, not reducing or even helping to manage it (Ciborra, 2000; McLoughlin and Wilson, 2013).

One rarely proffered explanation for the continuing issues of information and communications technology design and implementation in public service environments is that there is a fundamental contradiction in the architectural assumptions of current practice, in particular when applied to multi-agency, public service contexts. This chapter seeks to explore some hidden aspects of current information systems paradigms and sets out a third, architectural approach to the creation, operation and governance of collaborative sociotechnical information infrastructures and platforms for service innovation. This ‘relational’ approach explicitly supports mixed economies of provision in which public, private and third sector agencies coordinate to meet multiple and evolving objectives and interests in the delivery of services for and with people and communities.

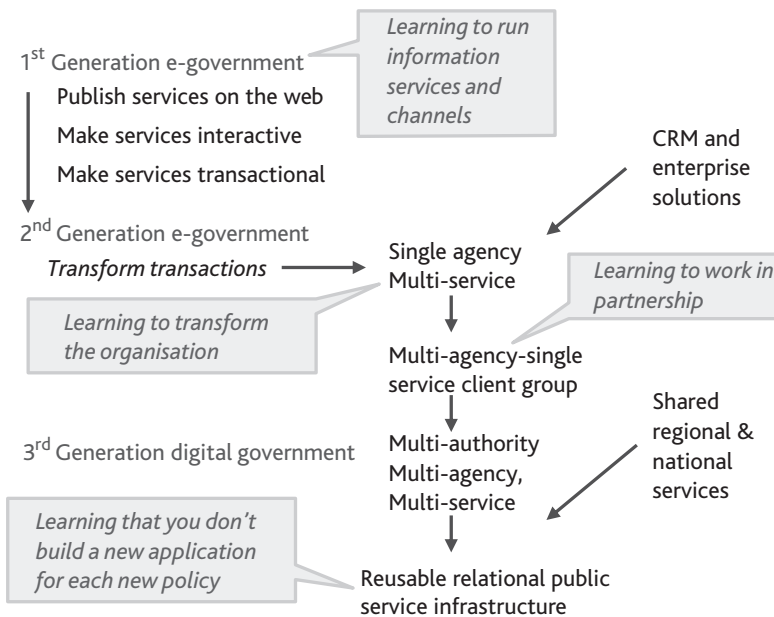
The assumption of what we will call an ‘integrationist’ approach, which draws upon ‘enterprise solution’ practices, treats social relationships as transactional and creates silos which homogenise interaction, reducing it to workflow and data-points. This approach produces failed interactions for citizens, and a corresponding failure for organisations unable to cope with dynamic complexity beyond the boundary of the ‘silo’ they have created in, for example, health, or social care, or financial support.

As a result of some of the established problems of what we term the integrationist approach, there has been an understandable turn to the idea that Web 2.0 or social media could be used as an alternative vehicle for providing the means for mobilising citizen engagement with complex societal problems. After all, on the face of it, the platforms are apparently democratic with low barriers to entry and highly accessible through a range of devices including mobile phones. Moreover, they have attracted a critical mass of people and communities who have appropriated the tools for their own purposes. However, the values of what we term the ‘universalist’ system paradigm have been subverted for extractive and parasitic purposes, and there are significant difficulties in signalling the provenance of information and the identity and credentials of those publishing it. In highly sensitive contexts, it has become regarded as unsafe and ungovernable with limited utility beyond marketing services and initial invitations for engagement.

We now turn to propose and detail an alternative holistic, ‘relational’ approach to the information and communications infrastructure to support care and wellbeing service ecologies. In doing this we build on analysis of the problems of digital government in our previous research monograph (McLoughlin and Wilson, 2013) as well as the recent work of Lips (2019) on digital government and of Mohr and Ezra (2021) on integrated care. The approach proposed here involves a new form of ongoing sociotechnical ‘conversation’. It represents an explicit recognition that innovation involves learning at the systems level which can often result in the creation of new conceptual frames and new shared language. Thus, it allows a more sophisticated and responsive approach to be applied to the negotiation (and renegotiation) of shared visions and intentions, closing the loop between design and implementation and replacing it with a system of ongoing collaborative evolution and governance. Adopting this approach affords new opportunities for the governance of practice and information, in tandem, fusing the hitherto distinct and usually poorly coupled activities of organisational culture change and development and technical systems design and development, making them mutually reinforcing and sustaining processes.

A digital government maturity model

The background to these assumptions has been a long and complex evolution of the relationships between public administration and electronic platforms and media in general. As an introduction to this discussion, we will outline the evolution of e-government over the last couple of decades. McLoughlin and Wilson (2013: 165) quote Martin’s (2006) maturity model for e-government services (Figure 11.1). This represents the different strands of increasing complexity in the adoption of electronic media and

Figure 11.1: Digital government maturity modelSource: [Martin, 2006](#)

channels to support the spectrum of interactions between the citizen and public administrations and services. This process of channel and media shift from paper and postage or direct contact to the electronic publication of information, which subsequently became interactive and then transactional, was initiated around the turn of the millennium. It was first applied to basic registration, licensing, taxation and reporting processes associated with single administrative departments of local, regional and national government.

The background and spur to these developments in the public sector was the progress that had then been made in the appropriation and adaption of the emerging internet technologies and services as a channel for e-business in the private sector. Initially, commerce rejected the Universalist Internet concept of every computer being connected to every other computer in a best effort network, as, at best, an academic toy. The fundamental tenet of the established, integrationist, enterprise solution approach was firmly maintained. This is the principle that, in all legal, physical and technological systems terms, there must be an explicit and clearly maintained boundary between the inside and the outside of the enterprise: the inside represents a domain of rational control with a single point of truth and recourse which is demarcated and separated from an external environment of opportunity and competition. The ability to physically, as well as contractually, manage the interface between these two domains was traditionally regarded as a mission critical aspect of doing business.

Very quickly, however, entrepreneurial opportunities were recognised and business innovators and technologists evolved the concepts of the intranet, the firewall and the portal, making the World Wide Web the channel to market which generated the possibility of globalised e-commerce, while maintaining perimeter demarcations of ownership and control, and redefining internal versus external risk-benefit relationships. What emerged were new information value chain business models of customer access and of market making, intermediation and brokerage.

This approach to e-commerce was associated, from political perspectives, with the concepts of modernisation, efficiency, convenience and effectiveness. Many projects and programmes were initiated in the first decade of this century at all levels of public administration to promote the first generation of e-government. At the simple, transactional level, services are defined in terms of sets of rules, regulations and preconditions, followed by a recorded process which establishes a defined set of post-conditions. A typical public administration example would be the completion of a form, payment of a fee, issue of a licence and the settlement of an account valid for a defined period. But individual citizens have multiple transactional service relationships with different departments within and across administrations. The obvious follow-on requirement, which represents the transition to second-generation digital government, involved identity and relationship management. With this, the citizen can avoid the need for separate credentials and access procedures for each electronically mediated service and the administration can correlate information across different service relationships. This entailed the adaptation and adoption of commercially derived customer relationship management tools and facilities and of a 'single front-office – multiple back-office' model of public administration. It entailed the creation of identity management schemes which operated principally as national level initiatives.

In the second generation of digital government evolution, an additional dimension of complexity came into play. This involved the progressive incorporation of electronic communications and coordination in the management and delivery of relational, as opposed to simple, self-contained, transactional services. At the operational level, the distinction between a transactional and a relational service is that the former is defined, as we have described, entirely in terms of pre- and post-conditions whereas the latter typically involves sequences of encounters as part of an ongoing, outcome-oriented relationship. These relationships may be delimited in the concept of an episode, with an explicit beginning and end, but they may persist over extended periods of time. This description of relationality, at the operational level, is only partial, however.

To be defined completely, a relational service must also be expressed in terms of the definition of the purposes and expected experiences of the providing and receiving parties: relationality implies shared intentionality;

the lived experiences of outcomes are essential in the definition, evaluation and governance of such services. This further implies that we are no longer exclusively in the world of empirical observation and measurement and have entered one where interpretation, social co-construction and culture are also significant. We will explore the implications of these added complexities the next section of this chapter.

Second generation service developments usually took place in the context of partnership working initiatives focused on the needs of particular client groups defined in terms of the experience of specific combinations of situation and of complex, long-term needs. Such needs often demand different combinations of specialist and generalist care, wellbeing and developmental services. These services, in practice, have varying capacities and availabilities, interact and interdepend on each other (sometimes detrimentally, sometimes synergistically) and have sources that represent multiple, independently governed agencies.

The initial attempts at supporting multi-agency working in the context of complex needs were essentially integrationist in approach. They involved the design and deployment of instruments, such as common assessment frameworks and shared electronic records, service directories and booking and referral systems. In these contexts, each multi-agency working initiative tended to generate its own, local 'integrated solution' and in effect, its own new silo, often unconnected even to its own members' existing integrated systems, and seldom, if ever, to each other. Alternatively, one member system, and service relationship, became dominant while others became subsidiary to it.

An observation that emerged clearly in this period was that the 'complex long-term condition' represents a universal problem shape: it applied to such diverse contexts as an individual with complex health and social care needs, the long-term unemployed, a family or household, a small or medium business or social enterprise organisation attempting to survive and grow in a regional economy or even a deprived community trying to improve its amenity and resilience (see [McLoughlin and Wilson, 2013](#)). In each case, any progress involves coordinated activities between different combinations of specialisms and resources, generating the need for creative improvisations, with dynamic learning and adaptation. These characteristics were strongly at odds with the predefined criteria of assessment tools and the standardisation of care pathway approaches, which are deeply embedded in the integrationist paradigm.

To summarise the argument so far, we have observed that in the complex social, economic, cultural and political contexts we are considering, services should be understood as components of wider service environments supported by development and delivery platforms that render them governable. While it is necessary that perhaps many of these service

components are packaged as simply transactional, the individual, complex 'case', whether individual, familial or wider community, should not normally be exposed to the individual transactional service components but these should be intermediated and facilitated in the context of relational services. This is, in effect, a requirement on the development and delivery platform that it supports the process of 'joining thing up for others'. The joining up role may be formal or informal, some individuals are able to navigate and join up for themselves, but the outcome must always be a bespoke combination of service components constructed on the basis of presenting needs, preferences, availabilities and community experience and wisdom.

This structural requirement implies an infrastructural one: that all services exist as live publications, that their identity is registered within the community and that infrastructural brokers and intermediaries maintain catalogues that actively support the structural brokers and intermediaries (the human relational joining up service providers) in their care coordination activities.

A corollary of the infrastructurally supported service intermediation and brokerage communications platform is that each item of content it mediates must maintain a dependable link to a provenance which represents the means of linking data produced at the system level as an instance of a specific service process model, with the corresponding conversational model which indicates the norms and rules under which it was produced and is intended to be used

While the first set of attempts to support relational multi-agency services were based on the integrationist paradigm and/or the concept of shared applications, social media and exclusively monopolistic platforms have come to dominate global communications and personal information and relationship spaces. The optimistic interpretation of the emerged situation, embodied in the original conception of CoSIE (and in much policy around the role of information and communications technologies), is that the existing organisation-based integrationist enterprise systems and proprietary social media platforms can coexist and be mutually supportive in the delivery of better outcomes for society and the people and communities who live in it. The pessimistic interpretation is that the silo-based over-integration of the organisational systems and ungoverned, parasitic and exploitative underpinning of current social media renders it incompatible with the need for a relational public service which must be delivered in appropriately hybrid governable information spaces and contexts.

Through our involvement in the deployment of platforms (both technical and organisational) to support the evolution, delivery and governance of multi-agency relational public services and through the experiences of the

CoSIE project in the many different national contexts, we now have a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the need for change. In order to address the ongoing issues that are raised about safety, privacy and governance of the relationship between public administration and community-based relational services and the wider public information spaces we turn to the development of an emerging theory of service which conceptualises the relationality needed to address these challenges.

Towards a theory of service – conceptualising the relational

Now, we will consider more detailed aspects of the distinction and implications of the transactional and relational concepts of service. This will lead us to consider the concepts of service environments, infrastructures and platforms. We start with the concept of a simple individual service to address a specific need. Complex needs will always require a multiplicity of such servicers to be assembled and appropriately coordinated, on demand, so what we are considering is a service as a component to be incorporated in ongoing and evolving care plans. This idea of dynamic service coordination is a concept of integration that is quite different from that of data integration associated with integrated enterprise solutions which is achieved by amalgamation and homogenisation in the concept of the ‘single point of truth’. It represents dynamic, situated integration as opposed to static pre-emptive integration. While the latter can, on occasion, respond to complication, only the former can respond to complexity.

While some of the CoSIE pilots, such as the UK initiative or the Swedish pilot, directly map onto this multi-service, complex and evolving problem solving and care planning approach, others, such as Spanish, Polish and Greek pilots, were more focused on the creation of community facilities. But even in these cases, the included activities and relationships complexify and evolve, numerous service elements emerge, combine and recombine in response to need and demand that is, itself, constantly evolving.

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, we start our definition of a service component at the engineering or empirical level where it is defined in terms of a set of verifiable preconditions, a transactional process and a set of verifiable post-conditions. Service events, from this perspective, involve the verification of the preconditions, the performance of the transaction and the establishment of the post-conditions. A side effect of this may be a record or log which can be compared to the specification defined in a process model. In this analysis, we are not criticising transactional services as such. In complex service environments, many service elements are appropriately packaged as transactions. The challenge comes from the resulting need for intermediation and brokerage as a relational service.

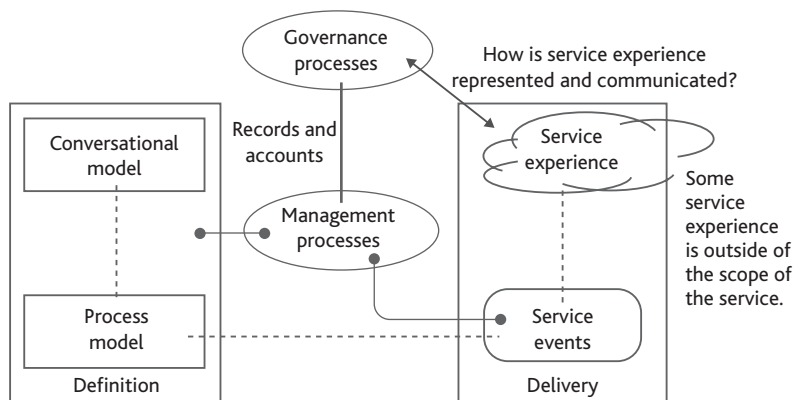
Of course, the people who are actually involved in the delivery, reception and management activities of a transactional service experience feelings and reactions and the instigators of the service had certain purposes in mind in its definition, design and provisioning. Nevertheless, at the strictly transactional level, these remain implicit and, for transactional service definition purposes, irrelevant. Making a customer satisfaction survey part of the service protocol does not make it relational: it simply introduces another element of observation and measurement. This corresponds to the principles which are associated with the New Public Management approach: if you can't measure it, it cannot be performance managed and therefore you can't control or improve it (Lowe and Wilson, 2017). This entails an entirely empirical-realist stance that treats real-world processes simply as mechanisms. The objective of management, in this context, is to ensure that sequences of service events conform to the mandated process model by which the service has been defined. Whether the service process is fit for purpose or, indeed, what that purpose is, belong, as we have observed, to a different scope – the domain of policy not of service.

A relational service definition, in contrast, is not limited to the identification of observably verifiable conditions and processes but also includes the interpretation of proposes, intentions and experiences, both at the level of the individual participants in instances of service delivery and also of the wider service community. The intended experience is part of the definition of the service itself. This means that we must extend (not replace) the transactional service definition with a set of elements which belong to a different epistemic stance: they are idealist-constructivist rather than empiricist.

A consequence of this distinction is that an organisation that delivers a transactional service can only be held responsible for its operation – *what* it does – not for the consequences. A relational service provider accepts responsibility for both its operation and its outcomes, that is to say its effects and affects, costs and benefits, for all relevant stakeholders.

In Figure 11.2, we have called this extension to the service definition a 'conversational model'. The term 'conversation' is being used in a specific technical sense here as a definition and allocation of explicitly defined sets of rights and responsibilities between roles involved in the delivery and reception of a service, or any other human organisational context.

A conversational model captures the norms, rules and expectations which have been agreed and committed to as part of the governance processes of the service context. It thus represents the intentions and purposes of the service community. The flexibility and responsiveness of relational service contexts means that their process models must reflect this adaptability and cannot be defined with the same procedural strictness of a purely transactional model. It is as a result of these different approaches to the determination of the relational service that governance itself becomes an

Figure 11.2: Specifying a relational service

ongoing conversation which is addressing the relationships between what was intended, both at the level of the individual case and at the community level, what was experienced by the parties, and what was observed to happen and has been recorded.

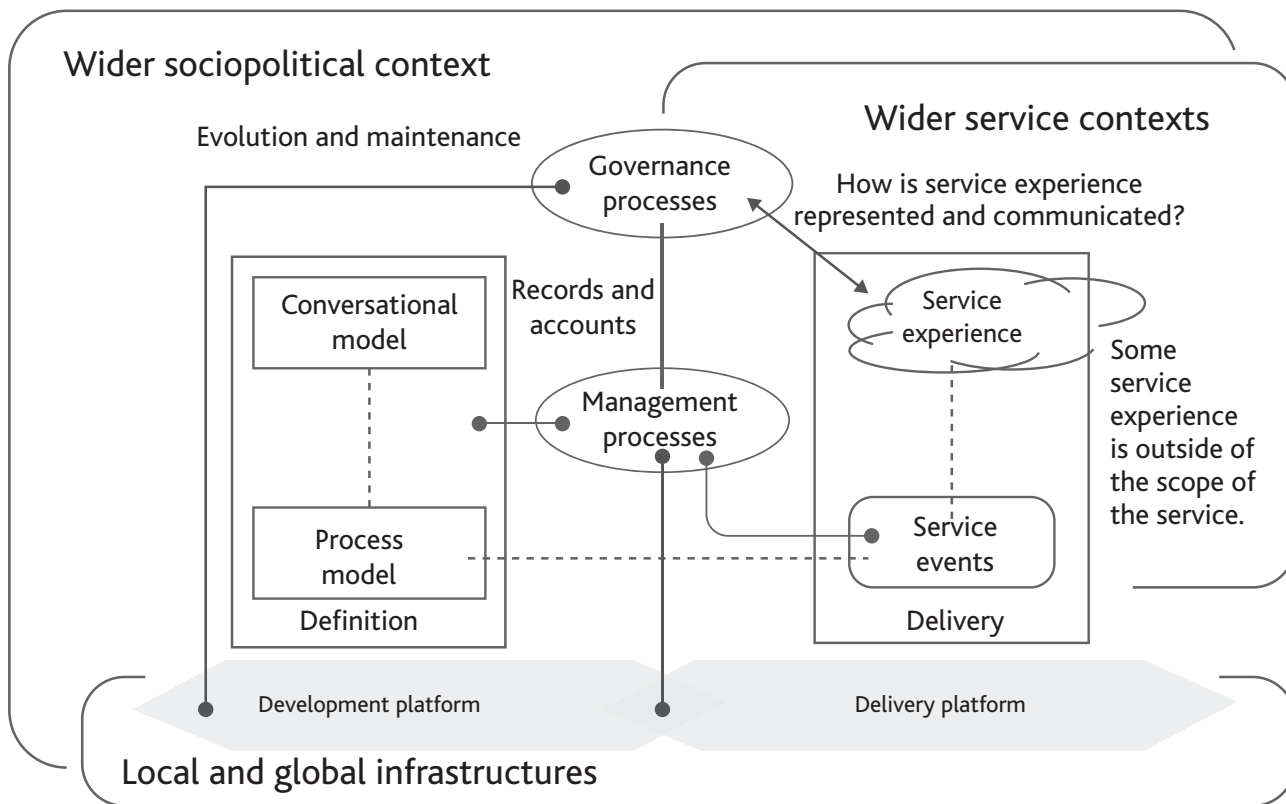
Service definitions, in terms of both conversational and process models, are constructed and maintained on a development platform which supports the design, evaluation, maintenance and evolution of the service definitions while a delivery platform supports all aspects of service publication, access and qualification, delivery and recording. Both platforms support management, the purpose of which is to inform governance. Services also operate in a wider service economy, while platforms operate in the context of wider networks and infrastructures. Both of these operate in an inclusive sociopolitical context, as illustrated in [Figure 11.3](#).

We are using the term ‘platform’ in the widest possible sense of infrastructure. Note that, in most circumstances, services are not delivered in isolation and that service coordination and brokerage is itself a necessarily relational activity especially for complex long-term situations and conditions.

To conclude this discussion about relationality, it is the fact that interpretation of the lived experience of the service is an essential element in its identity and evaluation that service user/client participation in governance is a logical and practical necessity. It is the participative, co-productive principle, extended to the whole life-cycle of the service that underpins and justifies the co-creative approach adopted in CoSIE.

The following section introduces a model which seek to represent a generic service creation process. It outlines of the theory of the architectural discourse of sociotechnical systems which underpins the Living Lab modelling methods and frameworks we used in [Chapter 10](#) to facilitate the co-creation processes of the local innovation pilots.

Figure 11.3: Relational services and their contexts



The service life-cycle

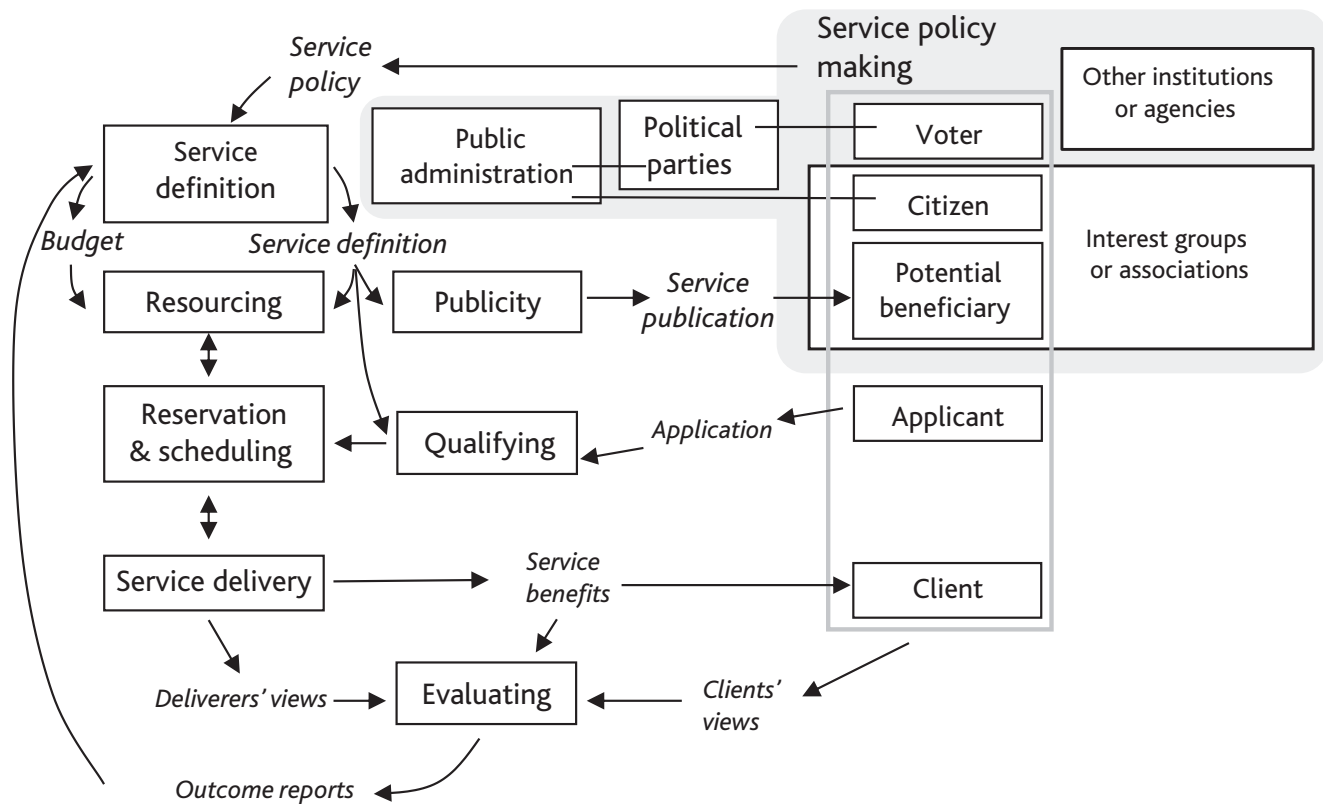
In any service there is, whether implicit or explicit, a service development and delivery life-cycle. We observed this in each of the CoSIE pilots. The model we are using here is an adaptation and extension of a service life-cycle model originally developed through a series of projects on multi-agency collaborative working from 2000 to 2008 involving the authors of this chapter (reported in [McLoughlin and Wilson, 2013](#)).

This model ([Figure 11.4](#)) is initially articulated as a series of logically interdependent processes, each of which makes use of inputs and generates outputs to and from other processes. A consequence of this formal structure is the tendency to think that the actual processes are performed in logical sequence and that each is completed before the subsequent, logically dependent processes are performed. This is seldom the case in the lived experience of the stakeholders involved in the co-creation of the service. The articulation of a logical life-cycle model provides, on the one hand, an inventory of milestones and way points as an indicator of progress and completion and, in the case of a context in which participation and co-creation are important considerations, a template of the activities and processes which represent the ‘what?’ of the situation against which questions of participation, ‘who?’, can be posed. In a co-creative approach, each of the stages in the life-cycle is considered to be realised through a set of deliberative processes and the key question becomes who gets the right to participate in these conversations?

In the following section we define the stages of service creation abstracting from issues of who undertakes them and whether they are conducted co-creatively or not.

The definition of the service policy and objectives: it is at this level that many aspects of the intended ethos of the service itself and its mode of delivery are established. The intentionalities of wellbeing services can be categorised as palliative, rehabilitative, remedial, developmental and transformational. We must also include restorative and behavioural services (from the probation service pilot) to this list to cover the range considered in the set of CoSIE pilots. This is directly applicable to services with clients who are people and also applies, by analogy, to communities and locations as service innovation beneficiaries. Note that this classification includes both asset-based and deficit-based interventions and the different pilots exhibit a range of selection and combinations of these types of service and service component in their approaches. A core requirement on a service policy statement is that it identifies both the intended outcomes or benefits and the intended beneficiaries of the service. The envelope of financial and other generic resources, allocated for the delivery of an expected service capacity, are also an aspect of the service policy.

Figure 11.4: The (public) service life-cycle



Service resourcing and design: this activity is concerned with the conversion of the generic resources (budgets) into specific capacities to govern, manage and deliver a service design or plan.

Service publication/recruitment: this activity is concerned with establishing the relationship of awareness and accessibility between the service and its intended audience of potential beneficiaries.

Service qualification: the service policy has identified the intended beneficiaries of the service and a consequence of this is that any request or application for the service must be checked against these criteria, which may be narrow and specific or may be loose and inclusive.

Service reservation and scheduling: it is a characteristic of services that they require a balance between capacity and demand, which, in extreme cases, may amount to triage or rationing. In other situations, there may be a requirement for relaxation flow management in which a sufficient cohort is accumulated over a period and, when a threshold is reached, a collective delivery is initiated. There are many other modes of reservation and scheduling appropriate to different classes of service.

Service delivery: this also varies with the nature of the service from a simple transaction, collective occasions or series of events to an extended relationship making use of human and physical resources and facilities.

Service evaluation: this is a multilevel activity in which we distinguish between the evaluations of management and those of governance. The former involves a comparison between observed procedures and the rules, budgets and plans of the service design, while the latter involves the evaluation of the outcomes of the service with respect to the intentions and objectives articulated in policy. Both of these imply access to evidence in the form of data recorded as a part of the service delivery processes.

Service development and delivery platforms

All of the initiatives of the CoSIE pilots were, in one way or another, place-based and, inevitably, the situated facilities and amenities (or their lack) provides a key element of their respective 'platforms'. In this discussion, it is not these local contexts, critical as they are to the shape and outcomes of the pilots, that are the focus of our attention. Rather we are concerned with the communicational and informational aspects of the service development and delivery platform and, in particular, the identification of the common structures, resources and facilities which may be reusable and repurposable in the evolution or even redesign or replacement of the services that were the focus of the CoSIE pilots.

The rational and justification of this focus is the final learning stage in the maturity model (Figure 11.1), which is that the response to each new policy, priority or identified need should not be to build a new complete

and specific ‘application’, in the conventional, integrated enterprise solution sense. The more effective and efficient alternative would be to repurpose, reuse and extend existing resources. This further implies that this reuse is not simply of the basic and lowest level infrastructural elements but should include relatively high-level structures, capacities and relationships.

In adopting this approach, we must remain aware that the processes we are dealing with are embedded in political cycles and processes. To survive and be effective in these contexts, the sunk investment in reusable and repurposable infrastructure must, itself, be depoliticised as far as possible. As long as the purpose of service investment is perceived as the maintenance of political power and influence of voters, then that investment becomes the symbol and monument of that policy and its makers, to be swept away and replaced by successors. Each of the CoSIE pilots exhibited elements of these political dimensions and tensions, to different extents and over different timescales.

Conclusion

At a fairly concrete and explicit level of abstraction, all the CoSIE pilots (and in fact any relational services) can be described in terms of a sequence of communication activities involving convenings, encounters and deliberations as seen throughout this book. Evidence-gathering and decision-making can be bureaucratic, participatory or a hybrid process where top down and bottom-up approaches are brought together in harmony or collision. The activities, in turn, were supported and mediated by a range of publication and communication channels and media, depending on the context, as well as locally available physical amenities and facilities.

In the conduct of all human affairs, whether social, political or economic, we have a need and propensity to demarcate and navigate spaces and memberships that create and maintain distinctions between internal and external relationships and participations. The more internal or intimate a conversation is perceived to be, the more it is expected to conform to norms, expectation and plans, in other words to be trusted. Thus, we are better able to conduct relational associations internally and tend to engage in transactional associations with what we regard as external. We all have roles, and participate in, many such overlapping and nested social and organisational spaces which we operate on a spectrum from the highly private and privileged to the entirely public and ungoverned. Participation in the co-creation of relational service is a clear example of this need to partition our communication spaces: some contexts may be quite public while others may exhibit high privacy and sensitivity.

So, in the case of care and wellbeing services, addressing complex need and demanding flexible responses from combinations of specialisms, the ability to configure and manage the information and communications aspects of

dynamic relational and transactional ‘spaces’ becomes acute. They involve the creation, coordination and management of information flows across multiple formal and informal boundaries in the collective negotiation and pursuit of shared intentions of care wellbeing and development.

The structuration processes in which these associations and memberships are instigated and maintained are necessarily dependent on infrastructures. As we have observed in the case of the CoSIE co-creation pilots, these involve mechanisms and capacities for encounter, rendezvous, synchronous and asynchronous communications involving channels and media and the persistence of information, all configured to implement and maintain purposeful and evolving patterns of conversation and relationship. But infrastructure implies a horizontal boundary which demarcates ‘below versus above’ rather than ‘inside versus outside’, and, at all scales and distributions, our current information and communications infrastructures have come to be increasingly mediated by technological platforms and processes rather than by the more natural and instinctive affordances of our built environments and artefacts.

The core issue for a relational infrastructure to support relational services is governability, that is to say, the provision of all the facilities needed to ask and answer the following questions of governance, on the basis of reliable evidence:

- Have the activities and their outcomes that have been enabled and supported by the relational platform conformed to our expectations and intentions?
- If they have not, or our expectations and intentions have changed, what changes should we make to the platform and the activities it supports?

As indicated in the second query, the concept of governability being developed here requires that the implementation of the response must be a matter of the internal administrative actions and not require recourse to external technical support. So, the critical factor becomes one of participation in governance processes because, in the relational platform, it is through governance processes and publications that norms and expectations are conceived, defined, maintained and shared within the system.

So, our key conclusion in this chapter is that, if we are to support co-creation and participation in wellbeing services, whether these are aimed at individuals and families, communities or environments and ecosystems, we require information platforms that are trustworthy and governable in the interests of the whole service community. While the functionality implied has become familiar, the current contexts for the governance and use of social media render it inappropriate and, at times, positively dangerous in the more sensitive care and wellbeing contexts.

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