

CTG Online News

Mon 10 Feb 2016 17:00:00 EST

Students working to enhance shared service, open government

Students from UAlbany's College of Engineering and Applied Sciences have been busy interning at the Center for Technology in Government, working on CTG's project with Digital Towpath to help small and medium local governments throughout New York State operate more efficiently, easily comply with records management laws, increase public records access for citizens, and be more open.

Digital Towpath, a nationally recognized digital government shared service comprised of small and medium local governments throughout New York State, sought CTG's expertise in addressing the challenges many of their member governments are facing in managing records created in digital form (known as 'born digital records'). Many small governments are currently forced to rely on paper records and manual processes that consume staff time, slow down operations, increase costs, and ultimately affect citizens' ability to access government services and information. This is where CTG and the skills of four UAlbany students come in.

With the participation of Computer Science students Sneha Jain, Reena Sharma, Rahul Srivastava, and Kumar Borse, CTG is embarking on a project funded by the NYS Archives' Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund, to provide DTP's member governments with the functionality to manage their records in a cost and time effective manner. Beginning in January the students, overseen by CTG's Director of Technology Innovation Derek Werthmuller, began analyzing the current DTP electronic records management system (ERMS). As evidence of their strong work ethic and enthusiasm, the students hit the ground running using an agile software development technique called the SCRUM method, which entails working together as a team to achieve a common goal.

Experiential learning opportunities such as assisting with the code mapping component of this project are designed to have lasting effects on students' future career by providing real-world, practical experience to supplement their classroom education. Rahul says, "Being a part of this project team with CTG is providing a foundation for my career. I'm gaining a lot of experience using technologies that are becoming more popular and that I know I'll have to use in the future."

As CTG has found time and time again, new and improved technology alone is not enough to be truly transformative. As such, CTG's work does not stop with the ERMS system. CTG will work with DTP and its member governments to take a comprehensive look at their government information by addressing the policies and management practices that will help them to be more transparent and open. The records that this project addresses are valuable public resources that are critical to the running of government and the provision of core services to communities.

For more information about Digital Towpath, visit www.digitaltowpath.org