

CTG Online News

Fri, 20 Sep 2013 14:20:00 EST

Governor Cuomo Appoints Theresa Pardo to Serve as the State's Open NY Policy Advisor

In a press release today, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced that Andrew Nicklin, Dr. James Hendler, and Dr. Theresa Pardo, three experts in improving government transparency through technology, will join the Open NY team to assist with the State's efforts to improve government performance and enhance citizen engagement. Andrew Nicklin will serve as the Director of Open NY, Dr. James Hendler will serve as the State's Open Data Advisor, and Dr. Theresa Pardo will serve as the State's Open NY Policy Advisor.

The press release, continued with the following:

"New York State has been on the forefront of using technology and innovation to open the doors of government, and Andrew Nicklin, Dr. James Hendler, and Dr. Theresa Pardo will play important roles in continuing our efforts to help better engage New Yorkers with their government," Governor Cuomo said. "I thank Andrew, Dr. Hendler and Dr. Pardo for taking on these positions in state government and their continued commitment to making New York a leader in data access and transparency."

Andrew Nicklin, Director of Open NY

Andrew Nicklin will serve as the Director of Open NY, where his responsibilities will include helping expand the open data website, engaging with the developer and research community through Open Data events, and helping to oversee the design of a model website for municipalities to share their information. Mr. Nicklin will coordinate with the Office of Information Technology Services to evaluate and provide recommendations concerning the management, design and structure of Open NY.

Mr. Nicklin most recently served as the Director of Research and Development at the City of New York's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT). He brings with him nearly two decades of government experience overall, during the last 14 of which he has managed a multitude of City technology initiatives. In his role at DoITT, Mr. Nicklin managed the City's open government initiatives, including the NYC OpenData platform, engagement strategy, and multi-city collaboration efforts. In this role, he helped with the passage and implementation of Local Law 11 of 2012 that mandated that all public data sets be catalogued and scheduled for posting to the Internet for use by developers, researchers, reporters, entrepreneurs, and the public. As part of Local Law 11 of 2012's implementation, Mr. Nicklin helped design New York City's Open Data Policy and Technical Standards Manual, which helps City agencies deliver their public data in machine-readable formats and embed best practices into their regular data management. Prior to his role at DoITT, Mr. Nicklin was the Deputy Director of Information Technology at the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Barbara Cohn, NYS Chief Data Officer, said, "We are very excited Andrew is joining Open NY. Andrew's background and experience at the local level will be a great asset as we continue to advance New York State's Open Data initiative."

John Kaehny, executive director of Reinvent Albany and Co-Chair of the NYC Transparency Working Group, said, "We heartily applaud Governor Cuomo for appointing Andrew Nicklin to lead New York's Open NY, open data initiative. Andrew is an all-star in the national open data world --- he's an innovative thinker and skilled technologist, and is greatly respected by leading transparency and civic groups. Nicklin's selection is another sign that Governor Cuomo is intent on making Open NY the top open data initiative in the country."

Dick Dadey, Executive Director of Citizens Union, said, "Andrew Nicklin's strong record of public service and achievements as a civic technologist make him truly the perfect choice to lead Governor Cuomo's Open NY initiative. At the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, Nicklin led efforts to make the City's open data initiative a model for other jurisdictions, and one of the most successful in the world. We're excited to work with him to continue great innovation at the state level."

Andrew Rasiej, Chairman of NY Tech Meetup and Founder of Personal Democracy Media, said, "With the selection of Andrew Nicklin, New York State is taking a major step forward in establishing itself as a leader in the Open Government movement which is one of the foundation stones of a 21st century democracy. Andrew has the

experience and the expertise to utilize new technology tools to move our state from the era of E-Government to the promise of We-Government.”

Professor James Hendler, State’s Open Data Advisor

Dr. James Hendler will serve as Open Data Advisor for Open.ny.gov. As part of the Governor’s commitment to advance public sector performance and government transparency through technology, Professor Hendler will assist New York State by strengthening the State’s open data technologies. He will also assist the State in building relationships with the developer communities, exploring opportunities in Big Data and developing innovation labs in the State.

Dr. James Hendler is the Head of the Rensselaer Department of Computer Science at RPI, and was recently announced the Director of the new Rensselaer Institute for Data Exploration and Applications (IDEA) a new university-wide initiative to advance Open Data at the nation’s oldest technological research university. His research has included robotics, artificial intelligence (A.I.), the agent-based computing, high performance processing and Big Data. He is helping to change how computer programming is taught nationally. He is one of the inventors of the “Semantic Web,” a collaborative movement that promotes converting the current web of mixed data formats into a “web of data,” or data that appears in common data formats. Dr. Hendler was named an “Internet Web Expert” for the Federal Data.gov project, and acted as an advisor to the Data.gov team. He helped create the “Semantic Web” community featured on the Data.gov homepage, and his team ran the first ever Data.gov “Mash-a-thon,” an event in which participating developers, programmers, and government workers engineered innovative new ways to interpret government data. Dr. Hendler has also previously consulted for the Department of Defense on information sharing and technology enhancements for government data systems.

Kishor Bagul, New York State Chief Technology Officer, said, “Professor Hendler is known for innovative and strategic thinking as it relates to releasing value out of data. Governments worldwide have sought his advice on using this rich, unmined resource – data – to overcome social and economic challenges and provide new meaningful services to their citizens. Professor Hendler and Andrew Nicklin will help New York State advance the Open NY initiative tenfold. By forming this expert team, Governor Cuomo continues to demonstrate his commitment to making New York State a leader in open data and the creative use of technology for the benefit of citizens.”

Jeanne Holm, Evangelist for the U.S. Government’s open data portal, Data.gov, and Chief Knowledge Architect at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory said, “Professor Jim Hendler has been a part of the Data.gov team since inception. He is a valued expert in open data, the semantic web, and advanced technologies for putting the power of open data in the hands of developers and governments. The thought leadership Dr. Hendler brought to Data.gov has been invaluable in our planning and implementation. As Adviser to Open NY, he will bring this thought leadership and world-class experience home to the efforts of New York State to set a new standard in open data usability and interoperability.”

Dr. Theresa Pardo, State’s Open NY Policy Advisor

Dr. Theresa Pardo will serve as Open NY Policy Advisor for Open.ny.gov. As part of the Governor’s Open NY initiative, Dr. Pardo and her staff at the Center for Technology in Government will assist New York State by strengthening the State’s open data policies and practices.

Dr. Theresa Pardo is the Director of the Center for Technology in Government (CTG), at the University at Albany and on the faculties of the University’s Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy and the College of Computing and Information. CTG is a global leader in digital government research and practice, partnering with people and organizations to address complex problems and inform innovative strategies. Under her leadership, the Center has worked with governments in the US and around to world to develop open data strategies, programs and policies. Dr. Pardo is recognized as one of the most prolific and cited authors in her field. She is a co-developer of the University’s Government Information Strategy and Management program, which is ranked 3rd in the nation by U.S. News and World Reports, and is president-elect of the Digital Government Society, a global, multi-disciplinary organization of scholars and practitioners interested in the development and impacts of digital government. She has received numerous awards for her work including best paper awards for her published work and the University at Albany’s Excellence in Teaching Award. Dr. Pardo’s research focuses on information and communication technology innovation in the public sector including opening government data, information sharing and integration in areas such as public health, criminal justice, financial market regulation, research data sharing, open government, and smart cities service integration.

Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor of the State University of New York, said, “SUNY shares the Governor’s

commitment to openness and transparency and Dr. Theresa Pardo is a strong addition to the 'Open NY' team as this important initiative moves forward. Dr. Pardo is a leader and innovator in her field, and under her guidance The Center for Technology in Government has become renowned for helping governments develop policies for sharing information in order to maximize value for the public. She is well prepared for this new challenge on behalf of the people of the state and I commend Governor Cuomo on his selection."

Robert J. Freeman, Executive Director of the Committee on Open Government, said, "The appointment by Governor Cuomo of internationally recognized experts in open data as advisors to Open NY will continue the rise of New York State as a pathfinder in opening government data," said Robert Freeman, Executive Director of the New York State Committee on Open Government. "Theresa Pardo, Director of the Center for Technology in Government, has demonstrated time and again that she has the vision and expertise to bring government technology innovations to fruition to the great benefit of governments and citizens worldwide."

Mr. Nicklin, Professor Hendler and Dr. Pardo will be working with a strong team of technology professionals at the New York State Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) to continue to release public data that will facilitate greater government transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency. They will report to the Governor's office, working closely with Barbara Cohn, the state's Chief Data Officer (CDO) and principal information management advisor to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) Brian Digman, and Kishor Bagul, the state's Chief Technology Officer (CTO), the principal technology advisor to the CIO with more than 20 years of experience in both the private and public sector as a strategic technical expert. Together, this team brings the necessary expertise in data management, data policy and technology to enable New York State to lead the nation in centralizing state government data to make it most accessible to the public.

Since the launch of Open.ny.gov, the website has made millions of state, local and federal government records available to the public. On Jan 23, 2013 the state launched OpenBudget.ny.gov, a new website that provides unprecedented access and transparency to the Budget. On March 11, 2013, the state launched the central Open NY site, Open.ny.gov, and the Governor signed Executive Order 95, directing all agencies to participate in Open NY. On June 13, 2013, New York became the first state in the nation to publish its provisional open data guidelines and seek public comment on GitHub, an open source platform that allows for open collaboration and sharing. ITS is charged with structuring the release of data to allow for continual updating and expansion of the open data portal, to ensure robust and timely disclosure that will lead to meaningful public use of the data. Progress is ongoing and the site continues to include new datasets requested by the public, like revenue and school aid information from the Division of the Budget (DOB), public integrity data in the wake of recent scandals in Albany, and more than 100 transportation datasets, maps, and charts of high utility to the public. Today, the federal government and more than 48 state agencies and localities, including counties, cities, towns and villages are partnering with the state to share their data with the public through our site.