

NEWS RELEASE

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Access to Electronic Records Focus of New Guidebook Center for Technology in Government Produces Practical Guidelines

Albany, NY - Many people and organizations need government information. Increasingly that information is being created and stored through electronic means.

The University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government (CTG) developed a new guidebook to help government agencies create affordable and effective programs that will allow researchers, engineers, activists, students, and others to access the vast quantities of government information that are stored electronically.

"Opening Gateways: A Practical Guide for Designing Electronic Records Access Programs" is designed to help organizations respond to the growing demand for information in electronic form and for direct access to these electronic records. The guidebook presents a series of tools that can help agencies develop affordable, manageable, and effective programs that allow people to access their information resources.

"The growing demand for information available in electronic form and for direct access to electronic records-including documents, images, and audio files-is changing the design and management of records access programs," said Theresa Pardo, CTG project director and the guidebook's lead author. "Programs are becoming increasingly focused on electronic records and electronic access models as the means of providing access to users."

"**Opening Gateways**" came out of a recently completed CTG project on how public and private sector organizations save, maintain, and retrieve electronic business records for primary and secondary uses. The two-year project, called Gateways to the Past, Present, and Future: Practical Guidelines to Secondary Uses of Electronic Records," involved dozens of experts from across the country. The project was funded in part by a \$350,000 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

The 45-page guidebook details four tools that organizations can use to create, or revise, electronic records access programs. The tools for assessment, diagnosis, program design, and cost estimation are explained and then shown at work in a case example. The hypothetical case follows a state government initiative to create a Web-based repository of information about the status of children. It involves a number of electronic records access issues, including data, meta data, technology, customer service, and interorganizational management. "**Opening Gateways**" is a valuable resource for electronic records managers, and program managers responsible for providing electronic access to government information resources.

The Center for Technology in Government (CTG) is an applied research center devoted to improving government and public services through policy, management, and technology innovation. Located at the University at Albany/State University of New York, CTG works with government, corporate, and academic partners to pursue new ways of applying computing and communications technologies to the practical problems of information management and service delivery in the public sector.