

NEWS RELEASE

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Center for Technology in Government Publishes Guide for Analyzing IT Investments

Albany, NY - A new guide released by the University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government is designed to help public sector managers reduce the risks of their next information technology (IT) investment.

"Most new government IT projects require a return on investment (ROI) analysis before they get that needed line item in the budget. Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of models out there that show public sector managers where or how to begin that analysis. That's why we put this guidebook together," said CTG Deputy Director Anthony Cresswell, author of "Return on Investment in Information Technology: A Guide for Managers. "

According to Cresswell, (IT) systems are serious, potentially risky investments for government agencies and nonprofit organizations. They often require substantial funding and personnel time. What's more, the failure of a high profile, high cost IT system in a government agency is bound to make headlines.

The book provides a general overview for the types of ROI analyses most often conducted for government IT projects, and includes case studies for each.

Before investing in any IT project, the guide suggests considering a number of questions, including the following:

- Is the proposed project critical to the business objectives to your agencies or government?
- What are the risk factors associated with the investment?
- Who will be impacted - positively or negatively - by the proposed project?

Answering these questions will help determine the type of ROI analysis that should be conducted. Any ROI analysis requires making many choices among the ideas and methods available and conducting an analysis appropriate to the decision situation. The different choices are discussed in the guide.

"Considering an ROI analysis for an IT project is a little like saying you want to live a healthier lifestyle. It's easy to say, but it requires a collection of factors, methods, skills, tools, activities and ideas. The guide helps to understand what those factors are and how they may best be combined for certain projects," Cresswell said.

The guide can be downloaded at www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/roi. To request printed copies, call (518) 442-3892.

The Center for Technology in Government (CTG) works with government to develop information strategies that foster innovation and enhance the quality and coordination of public services. They conduct applied research and partnership projects on the policy, management, and technology issues surrounding information use in the public sector.

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