

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Testbed Project at UAlbany's Center for Technology in Government Examines Using XML for Web Site Management

Albany, NY - The Center for Technology in Government (CTG), in partnership with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO), is conducting a new project to assist New York state and local agencies in examining the benefits as well as the challenges of Web site management using XML technology.

"As Web sites have grown in size, complexity, and prominence, Web site management, content management, cost, and accessibility have become growing concerns for government agencies," said CTG's XML Testbed project manager Donna Canestraro. "Consequently, they are losing the ability to be responsive and flexible in providing new content or structure."

CTG found itself facing similar difficulties in 2001, as it struggled to get an increasing amount of new content up on its Web site. In addressing the problem, CTG director of technology services, Derek Werthmuller, found that XML technology provided an excellent document and content management framework. By streamlining and simplifying its workflow process by only having a single source XML document, CTG was able to reduce its Web management time by 80%. "We realized that XML could be a tremendous benefit to many government agencies facing the same issues," said Werthmuller.

However, despite the clear advantages of XML, after its own experiences CTG knew that there would be many obstacles to overcome for government agencies to adopt and implement XML-based Web site management. According to Canestraro, through the framework of the Testbed, it allows CTG to work with government agencies on not just technical training and infrastructure readiness, but more importantly, the need for solid business case justifications, understanding the impact of organizational change, leadership buy-in, and a firm understanding of where to begin.

Through an open selection process, CTG offered New York State and local government agencies an opportunity to participate in the Testbed project. The five agencies chosen were NYS Department of Civil Service, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal, NYS Higher Education Services Corporation, NYS Office of Cultural Education, and NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.

The structured 18-month investigation, which began over the summer of 2005, will study best practices, work toward agency-defined practical goals, and build organizational capacity for better use of the Web. During the first 12 months, the five agencies will participate in hands-on workshops, organizational analysis, and development activities. In addition, this phase will involve the collection of data through multiple research methods such as semi-structured interviews, surveys, and analysis of relevant documents. It will culminate in the production and presentation of working XML-based Web site prototypes and business case analyses for the organizational and the policy changes that would be needed to fully develop and implement a new Web site management approach.

During the last six months, drawing on the testbed activities and the agency results, CTG will produce a set of practical guidelines and case studies that draw on the experiences of testbed participants to provide guidance for others trying to improve the management, performance, and value of their Web sites. In addition, the testbed will produce a sharable library of XML technical resources.

More information on the XML Testbed Project can be found at: <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/xmltb>

The Center for Technology in Government is an applied research center devoted to improving government and public services through policy, management, and technology innovation. The Center, located at the University at Albany, works with government to develop well-informed information strategies that foster innovation and enhances the quality and coordination of public services. For more information visit www.ctg.albany.edu.

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