

INNOVATIONS

The Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany/SUNY

An Innovations in American Government Award Winner

Center Stage in Research

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Cultivating a Government IT Research Community

It is important to take a step back and absorb your surroundings when you feel history in the making. Sensing it doesn't come naturally to some, so being on your toes is crucial. There isn't a banner that flies across the sky to point it out but only a sixth sense that tells you something grand is happening. This is what most CTG'ers felt when they worked with over thirty of the world's most advanced scholars in government information policy, technology, and management. Invited for an unprecedented workshop, "A Step Beyond Research: Fostering IT Innovation in Government," the participants converged in Rensselaerville, New York on October 26-28. This gathering, hosted by the Center for Technology in Government (CTG), brought researchers together to focus on how research conducted at universities and research centers throughout the world has supported, and can continue to support, the innovative application of IT in government. The workshop, the capstone activity of a two year grant from the Ford Foundation which accompanied CTG's Innovations in American Government Award, was launched by University at Albany President Karen Hitchcock. President Hitchcock expressed her excitement for the event, stating that "IT innovation has become a cross-sector initiative where multidisciplinary research is required," and she was thrilled to see so many countries joining forces.

The main goal of the workshop was to cultivate an international community of government information technology scholars and to collectively analyze the range of applied IT research. Participants, representing several countries including Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, Canada, Norway, United States, and Germany, were eager to discuss similarities and differences among their governments. Dr. William Dutton of the University of Southern California stated, "The international component was the strength of the workshop." Dr. AnnaLaura Cubello, from the Institute RSO in Rome, Italy asserted, "The most important idea that I will take away from this workshop is that I am dealing with the same issues as others in different countries and my concerns are validated here. I feel added support knowing that other researchers are dealing with service delivery issues." The workshop offered several formats for group work. Some sessions remained structured while others allowed for give-and-take dialogue which many participants found insightful. Dr. Patricia Fletcher, University of Maryland, expressed "this gathering established an intense network of researchers in a stimulating fashion. I would not have had the opportunity to meet people who are interested in what I am, and engage in such insightful discussions."

The workshop was preceded by several activities that identified issues of current importance to government practitioners as well as the types of research that has been conducted by the workshop participants. Kristine Kelly, CTG's Project Research Manager, set a foundation for the workshop activities by presenting the preliminary framework for research and providing an overview of the Workshop objectives. Using the categories from the framework as a basis, the participants broke into five small groups to identify and discuss ideas for future research related to each of the following categories: Service Delivery, Technology, Public Management, Strategic Models for Change, and Information Infrastructure and Society.

The participants identified the need to conduct research that crosses programmatic areas and disciplines. Within each of the topic areas several specific ideas for research were developed.

In the Service Delivery group attention was directed toward identifying the development and implementation of effective self-services. Components of self-service were discussed including models, support systems, infrastructure, and cost-benefit analysis. The Technology Group focused on the topic of emergency management and identified programmatic areas for research based on the critical need for communication and information sharing. Evaluating the impact of IT in government was the emphasis of the Public Management group, where understanding the cost effectiveness and cost benefit relationships in the IS/IT domain was the focus for discussion. The Strategic Models for Change discussion group generated several research topics including identifying and realizing the benefits of cross-boundary collaboration, researching collaborative management styles through case-based research, and identifying resources and cost factors in support of cross-boundary collaboration in organizations. The Information Infrastructure and Society group looked at ways to use networks to integrate information and service to citizens and explored topics related to government accountability and oversight.

The discussions around each of the research topics allowed for the sharing of ideas about how to increase the value of applied research to practice. Subsequently, each group further developed one or more ideas for research including specific research questions, appropriate practitioner participants and audiences, methods, and data sources that might be employed. Additionally, barriers and enablers to conducting the various types of research were identified in terms of gaining institutional support, getting funding, and effectively transferring the results to practitioners.

More informal segments of the workshop provided participants with an opportunity to identify and discuss other issues of importance to the government IT research community. Jerry Sheehan of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications stated, "I am glad to have the opportunity to discuss these issues with a collective community of research and academic professionals that focus on government computing and how IT can support government initiatives." Some participants indicated a need for increased international comparative research and ideas for moving forward with this type of research. A possible International Consortium of Government Research

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IT Community

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Centers was also discussed and options for an ongoing dialogue among government IT researchers were identified. Another area of importance to the participants was the identification of those IT issues that are distinctly government issues. This was deemed critical to developing research priorities for government IT researchers and funders.

Several participants had the opportunity to discuss their own research including strategic planning for IRM, process reengineering, local governments and IRM, workforce planning and effective government use of information technology. Dr. Jerry Mechling, Director of Strategic Computing and Telecommunications at Harvard University, has done substantial work in the area of reengineering in the public sector. He says that in the public sector reengineering focuses primarily on the redesign of business processes and is viewed as both a goal and an approach to a goal. He believes that organizations that take the time to reengineer will be more successful than those who do not. Dr. Klaus Lenk, who studies factors that affect the use and effectiveness of information and information technology, described a high level of intergovernmental coordination and cooperation as a notable feature of information technology as it is used in German public administration.

The workshop was only the foundation for future collaborations. The first step was to identify and gather the scholars, the second will be to meet again and get down to work. Numerous ideas were offered at the workshop to build upon the established framework, and there was much agreement in maintaining mechanisms that connect the research organizations, such as the CTG workshop Web site and listserv. Many commented that they would like to participate in a similar event next year. One suggestion that has come to fruition, is a meeting to discuss an international research project focusing on service to citizens. In January, several workshop participants got together to discuss the feasibility of doing such a project. Other working relationships that have emerged from the workshop include CTG's work with the National Science Foundation to develop the Digital Government research program. The community is cultivated and the offspring of the relationships are ready to grow. Dr. John King, of the University of California at Irvine, summarized the workshop very well when he declared, "The most important idea I will carry away from the workshop is that the role of IT in government is gaining visibility and support. Important issues are being brought to the table and dealt with and the interaction provided here has shown that the audience is far reaching."

A summary of the workshop is available on the CTG Web site at <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/workshop/index.html>.

Partnerships for the Future

CTG and NCSA

In the future the computers we use in the office, at school, on the run, and at home will become even more common and powerful than they are today. High performance computing tools that give us the ability to organize, analyze, and understand huge volumes of complex information will influence our public, private, and commercial lives as never before. They will help us understand the environment and the economy, respond to natural disasters, protect public health, plan cities, and much more. To achieve this level of advancement in the United States, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has established the National Computational Science Alliance (the Alliance) to build a National Technology Infrastructure. Coined the "Grid," the infrastructure will integrate high-performance computers, advanced visualization technology, remote instruments, and massive databases through high speed networks to create the most powerful problem-solving environment ever assembled.

The University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government (CTG) has been selected as a partner in developing the Grid. Funded by the National Science Foundation, the Alliance will oversee the development of the Grid and organize the efforts of more than 50 research centers across the United States including top-notch research partners from educational institutions, national laboratories, industry, and supercomputing centers. Peter Bloniarz, Research Director at CTG says, "This opportunity to work with other research and supercomputing centers is tremendous. CTG will work with the finest research and development professionals in the world."

Illustrating the need for a large scale collaboration, the Alliance is separated into three primary efforts: the Application Technologies team (AT), the Enabling Technologies team (ET), and the Education, Outreach and Training team (EOT). CTG, playing a dynamic role as the government EOT team leader, will unite with hundreds of educators, scientists, engineers, computing experts, and information specialists to focus on the use of these technologies within government, communities, schools, and businesses. Awarded \$100,000 for the first year of the five year program, CTG will help identify, develop, and disseminate innovative applications of technologies to the practical problems of federal, state, and local government. Using its award-winning methodology that encourages and reduces the risk of technology supported innovation, CTG will promote, apply and evaluate new tools and technologies for government.

Making Connections

September 1997

Sharon Dawes, Director of CTG, represented CTG at an international conference in Quebec City organized by CEFRIO, a nonprofit research consortium sponsored by the Province of Quebec. The Conference theme was "Public Services and the Information Highways: Benefits on the Horizon."

October 1997

Theresa Pardo, CTG Project Coordinator, served as a panelist at the State University at New York, Association of Council Members and College Trustees Annual Conference. She, along with SUNY College of Technology President Mary Ellen Duncan and SUNY's Christine Haile, Associate Provost for Advanced Learning and Information Initiatives, discussed the impact of new technology and the changing curriculum for global participation.

Theresa also hosted an informational program at CTG for the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Six Malaysian educational professionals learned about CTG projects and the interdisciplinary collaboration that takes place within the project process.

Additionally, Theresa presented the findings of the State-Local Information Systems Project in an audio-conference entitled Local Government and Citizens Connecting to Network ETN Series sponsored by the Local Government Center at the University of Wisconsin Extension-Madison.

Sharon Dawes moderated a debate and audience discussion at the NYS GIS Conference of proposed changes to the NYS Freedom of Information Law that would allow agencies to charge fees for certain GIS data sets. Presenters were Bob Freeman, Executive Director of the NYS Committee on Open Government and Austin Fisher, President of Applied GIS.

Sharon also served as a panelist at the Federal WWW Consortium FedWeb97 Conference. The session included presenters from six government IT research centers including the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the National Institutes of Standards and Technology, the Charles County (MD) Community Development Institute, and CTG.

November 1997

David Connelly, CTG graduate assistant, presented a paper entitled "Contracting Relationships between Governments and Nonprofits" at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) Conference in Washington DC.



December 1997

Peter Bloniarz, Research Director and **Kai Larsen**, graduate assistant, presented a paper, "Evaluating a Cost/Performance Model for Supporting Web Service Investments," at the 1997 SIM Academic Institutional Member Workshop in Atlanta.

Peter also served as a panelist discussing, "The Future Impact of the National Partnerships in Infrastructure on Education," SC'97 in San Diego.

Theresa Pardo and Sharon Dawes presented findings from "Tying A Sensible Knot" at the 1997 SIM Workshop on Practice-Oriented Research on Information and Technology Management.

David Connelly, CTG graduate assistant, presented a paper entitled "Using Theory to Understand Government and Nonprofit Contracting Relationships" at the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) conference in Indianapolis.

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... an applied research center devoted to improving government and public services through policy, management, and technology innovations.

CTG Awarded Electronic Records Grant

Celebrating A Research Opportunity

When a football fan watches his team win the Superbowl, he jumps and shouts for joy, when a candidate wins an election, she throws a party and celebrates success. When the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) is awarded one of the largest grants ever issued by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), they applaud loudly, smile brightly and get down to work!

CTG was recently awarded over \$380,000 from the NHPRC for a two year project entitled, *Gateways to the Past, Present and Future: Practical Guidelines to Secondary Uses of Electronic Records*. CTG and the New York State Archives and Records Administration are set to expand their existing partnership to develop a set of practical guidelines to support and promote secondary uses of electronic records. Through a combination of best practices and project-based research, the project will address recordkeeping requirements in the context of the broad spectrum of historical and other secondary uses. The project will promote long-term preservation of public electronic records and increase accessibility to those not directly related in the creation of the records. Some examples of secondary users include researchers, historians, scholars, students, statisticians and various other parties who are interested in specific government information. The project is designed to produce robust records management processes and models to ensure that the data maintained by government agencies will be available and useable for the widest variety of contemporary and future public needs.

The "Gateways" project will explore methods for ensuring long-term access to electronic records of social, cultural, and informational value for secondary use. It will investigate the use of innovative and emerging technologies for accomplishing this goal. Understanding the complexity of the project and the need for input from the public, private and academic sectors, Joyce M. Ray, former Assistant Program Director for Technical Evaluation of the NHPRC stated, "Reviewers found CTG to be exceptionally well qualified to carry out the project because of its neutral focus on practical solutions to management problems; its technological expertise; and its organizational infrastructure that enables it to draw on third party agencies as test cases, as well as its ability to involve a wide variety of technical and policy advisors from the private sector, academia, and government." The project will directly address the cost and benefits of preserving and making available electronic records of social and cultural significance. Most

importantly, this project will conduct applied research that will yield practical tools with wide applicability across both public and private sector organizations.

A call for agency participation in the project is scheduled for May 1st. For more information about the "Gateways" project, visit our Web site at <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/gateways/gatewaysmn.html> or call the Center at (518) 442-3892.



Information, Technology & Government

What You Wanted To Know About Government But Were Afraid To Ask!

If you want to learn how to work with government, save this date — March 11-12, 1998. The Information, Technology and Government seminar, offered by the Center for Technology in Government (CTG), will help you understand critical elements of information management decisions in the public sector. This seminar, designed for private companies that do business with NYS government, is a unique opportunity for corporate representatives to become immersed in the decision-making environment of their government customers. While many fine executive training programs focus on generic technology topics and on using information resources competitively in the private sector, they fail to address the distinct characteristics of the government marketplace. This unique seminar directly addresses the demands, opportunities, limitations, and processes which characterize public management.

The two-day seminar incorporates a variety of topics including the power of government information, the role of the government information manager, technology as an agent of change, information as a public resource, and government information policy. Representing NYS government, Camaron Thomas, Director of the New York State Office for Technology (OFT) provides participants with an overview of the OFT, its role in NYS government and the state's future initiatives in information resource management. The course format includes lectures, case studies, small group and plenary discussions. This seminar is free to all CTG corporate partners - it's our way of saying thank you for their involvement in our program. Other interested companies may call for the course fee schedule. For more information about the upcoming 1998 Information, Technology and Government seminar contact Winsome Foderingham at (518) 442-3983 or wfodering@ctg.albany.edu.

Project Updates

Using Information in Government Program

The enthusiastic audience at CTG's "Using Information In Government" kickoff indicated that many people inside and outside government are concerned with access to and use of government information. Over 90 state and local officials were present at the November 6 session to help establish the framework of the program by discussing problems and issues public managers face when using government information. Set to begin in late winter, the program will focus on issues and opportunities related to using information in government. The two-year program will include investigations into a new class of information management technologies, including "data mining" and "data warehousing," as well as more traditional information management and analysis tools. It will also incorporate a full appraisal of the policy, organizational, management, and financial factors that shape government's ability to get full value out of the information it collects, creates, and maintains.

During the kickoff event participants made "wish lists" of desired project products, emphasizing materials and services that would help them better use government information to do their jobs. Some desired results include:

- ◆ Recommended policies or policy templates to guide public officials in using information in government
- ◆ Data standards, inventories, and quality assurance tools
- ◆ Cost benefit models and other measures of information value
- ◆ An inventory of information use skills necessary for government professionals and recommended ways to acquire them
- ◆ Assessments of the cost effectiveness of various technical tools and techniques

A call for proposals was issued in mid-November inviting state and local agencies to submit proposals addressing a wide variety of problems and issues related to using government information. Selected projects will begin shortly.

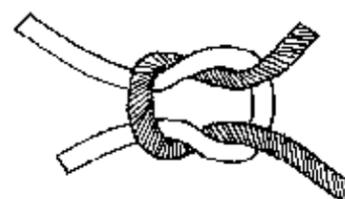
State-Local Information Systems Project

Almost six months after the completion of the State-Local Information Systems project, the public sector is still buzzing about its findings. The project, which investigated best practices in eleven state-local information systems, produced several products including an executive briefing, a guidebook for development of state-local information systems, and a final project report. Following the initial mailing of these documents, they continue to be ordered and downloaded through the CTG Web site. Many state and local government officials are encouraging their staff to read and implement the principles set forth in the project's guidebook, "Tying a Sensible Knot: A Practical Guide to State-Local Information Systems."

The State-Local Information Systems project is one of the first attempts in the US to analyze information systems that connect state and local governments. James Natoli, Governor Pataki's Director of State Operations, said that this project provides "invaluable insight and practical advice to successful partnering between state and local governments."

As part of a statewide effort to help state and local officials design effective state-local information systems, CTG, the New York State Office for Technology, and the New York State Forum for Information Resource Management have developed a half-day seminar in which presenters will share project results. The event will include a panel discussion with state and local officials sharing their techniques and offering advice for building and sustaining state-local partnerships. The events, scheduled for Albany (2/5/98), NYC (2/10/98), and Rochester (2/24/98), will help educate state and local officials in building intergovernmental information systems. For more information about the presentations, call CTG at (518) 442-3892 or send e-mail to info@ctg.albany.edu.

Gaining recognition in IT magazines and journals, the State-Local Information Systems project has also made an impact on a larger community of government professionals. The *Government Finance Review* featured an article summarizing several sections of "Tying a Sensible Knot." The December issue of *civic.com* highlights the State-Local Information Systems project, discussing the need for public managers to read the guidebook and implement changes in the way they integrate and streamline information systems.



New Corporate Partners



META Group

A presentation by John Ladley, Program Director of META Group at CTG's Using Information in Government program kickoff, ignited a partnership between CTG and META Group. META Group, an information technology consulting organization, helps IT professionals make better strategic and tactical IT decisions. Providing organizations with real-world technology guidance, META Group is providing CTG with a variety of research information in the form of CDs, reports, teleconferences, and presentations on topics such as application delivery strategies, advanced information management technologies, and global networking strategies.

Audio Visual Sales & Service

If you have ever attended one of CTG's Project Demonstration days then you are familiar with Audio Visual Sales and Service. This local corporate partner is no stranger to CTG. For the past several years they have been providing technical and presentation support for our public presentations and education programs. Showing state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment, Audio Visual Sales and Service carries high-quality equipment such as: computer LCD panels and projectors, slide projectors, overheads, PA systems, wireless microphones, multimedia services, rear and front screen projection and conference audio/video recording and duplication equipment.

CTG - GSPA

Partners in Public Sector Performance

In today's information-laden society, people want to receive information that is conveniently packaged just the way they need it, when they need it. In other words, just in time, and just the facts! This is the mission that a partnership between the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) and the University at Albany's Rockefeller College for Public Affairs and Policy Graduate School of Public Affairs (GSPA) provides for the busy professional who needs to keep up with the fast changing information technology environment in the workplace.

CTG and GSPA recently formed an educational partnership in which GSPA offers courses designed and developed by CTG as well as other GSPA partners. This past fall, GSPA selected a number of one-credit courses for its Information Management Certificate program. The certificate program includes two broad categories:

- ◆ Information Resource Management
- ◆ Program Evaluation Methods & Analytic Tools.

Students may take courses to fill a requirement in either category. They have the opportunity to enroll for a single one-credit seminar or to design a full graduate course from the menu of seminars. Assistant Dean of GSPA, Sydney Gatto-Cresswell, and other partners, designed the Information Management Certificate program to be responsive to the emerging needs of the public sector. CTG and GSPA understand the role of the public manager is evolving and both are dedicated to developing educational programs to meet changing needs.

A course developed by CTG differs from most graduate programs that do not provide practical applications to support the concepts and theories presented in the classroom. CTG courses meld concepts, models, and research results with a constant awareness of mission-critical, real-life problems to teach students practical IRM principles and applications.

The seminars cost \$234 per credit hour (in state tuition rate) and are open to everyone. For more information, call Karen Baum at (518) 442-5396 or visit the GSPA Web site at <http://www.albany.edu/gspa/seminar.html>.

CTG Web News



Join the List!

Sign up for the CTG Web site update distribution list. CTG Web News is an electronic service to notify subscribers of periodic updates to CTG's Web site and other news and events at CTG. Our goal is to provide short descriptions of new information and features that we have added to our Web site. CTG will deliver updates via the distribution list. Unlike a listserv where discussions take place, our service is one-way. Go to CTG's Home page (<http://www.ctg.albany.edu>) and subscribe today!

Public Official of the Year

An Academic First

In *Governing Magazine's* eleven years of awarding "Public Officials of the Year" only one person has ever been named from an academic institution, CTG's very own Dr. Sharon S. Dawes. As Director of the Center for Technology in Government, Sharon was recognized for her collaborative strategy for encouraging innovation in New York State's use of information technology for improving service to citizens. University at Albany President Karen Hitchcock said, "Sharon Dawes is a leader in fostering change in New York State's information technology climate. Her organization leads the way in research for practical government applications. We are proud to have her representing the University."

Each year *Governing Magazine*, a publication for state and local governments, names ten public officials from throughout the United States who they feel are "leaders who have mastered an office or an organization, brought it to a level of outstanding performance, and kept it there." On December 3, 1997 *Governing Magazine* hosted a formal reception in Washington DC where Sharon accepted her award along with nine other officials from throughout the United States, including Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. At a gathering closer to home, Sharon was honored by her colleagues, friends and family at a reception held at the University at Albany. Thomas Donovan, from the NYS Department of Family Assistance, spoke eloquently on Sharon's behalf stating, "With Sharon as the leader, CTG has shown government agencies how not to become an IT Titanic."



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