

INNOVATIONS

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

An Innovations in American Government Award Winner

Using Information Issue

May 1998

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Using Information in Government - Two Year Program

What do government technical staff, support staff, program managers, analysts, and commissioners all have in common? All need specific information to perform their jobs. They need information that is internal and external to the organization to make decisions which support their missions. Very often the information they need comes from many different sources. It is in both paper and electronic forms. Some information isn't even collected and if it is, it may be filed on various storage mediums and difficult to integrate and use.

Many public sector organizations are finding that data itself can also be a problem. Simply knowing what data already exists, and then locating it among various databases and organizational sources can add unwanted time and frustration. In many public sector organizations there is very little, if any, formal meta data that accurately describes data holdings, giving information about how the data was collected and defined. In short, information quandaries plague most government functions. Efforts to manage these factors have produced an environment that is complex and costly in terms of data management and often generates less than satisfactory results. Implementation of effective data management tools and strategies would enable public sector organizations to have better access and integrate this information for the crucial tasks of policy and decision making, strategic planning, long-range forecasting, and program evaluation.

The **Using Information in Government Program** at the Center for Technology in Government is addressing these management, policy, and technology issues. Five lead agencies will head up the program and involve participants from approximately nine NYS agencies, 33 NYS local public sector organizations, and one federal agency. Each of the five lead agencies (New York State Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), Office of the State Comptroller (OSC), Town of North Hempstead, and Central New York Psychiatric Center) will develop strategic business plans using CTG's *Making Smart IT Choices* methodology. Partaking in a series of workshops to assess and prioritize their programmatic goals, the participants will set performance measures, explore technology approaches, identify the needed resources, and produce a detailed project development and implementation plan.

Project Descriptions

The Bureau of Shelter Services of the OTDA is pursuing program management and evaluation goals. Their project will address the need for information to track services for homeless, at-risk adults and families to determine the multiple factors that impact NYS's homeless population. A comprehensive plan will be developed to evaluate whether desired outcomes such as fostering self sufficiency, reducing or preventing recurrence of homelessness, reducing public assistance, and improving overall life skills is a positive result of their services.

SEMO, reacting to life threatening crises throughout the state, has a strong need for up-to-date, accurate information. The SEMO project will develop a plan for an emergency management information and needs assessment system that

includes information on local government land use and development and documentation of past emergency decisions. This optimal system will offer consolidation, evaluation, and presentation of emergency information to key decision makers.

The Town of North Hempstead will focus on the planning and development of a document imaging system for the Town Building Department's permit modification procedure. Currently over 2500 permits, requiring reference to both new information and existing records, are issued each year and processed manually. The electronic system would be designed to overhaul the old methods currently in place and streamline building permit procedures.

OSC's Division of Municipal Affairs has proposed the development of a comprehensive and consistent contact management repository to address the complexity of communications with local governments. These communications take place in various formats including e-mail, telephone messages, information requests, reports and publications, and miscellaneous notes. Their goal is to develop an electronic system to coordinate contact information and alleviate the duplication and inconsistency problems.

The Central New York Psychiatric Center will develop a plan for a facility-based Intranet site using Web-based technology to meet the information management needs of the Operations Division. The Intranet would be able to transmit quarterly report data electronically from remote locations throughout the state. The reporting process, currently performed manually, is essential to planning, staffing, and resource allocations decisions.

Expected Results

Based on the recommendations of the participants at the November 1997 "Using Information in Government Program Kickoff," several project deliverables were identified that can help many public agencies make better use of their information assets:

- ◆ **Recommend policies or policy templates to guide public officials in their use of government information.** Comprehensive information use policies might cover such topics as data collection, ownership, stewardship, intra- and inter-agency sharing and external release.

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Using Info in Gov't

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- ◆ **Develop and assess data standards, inventories, and quality assurance tools.** Develop data standards, definitions and inventories, and assess methods and costs.
- ◆ **Develop and assess cost-benefit models and other measures of information value.** Identify mechanisms to measure and convey the value of information.
- ◆ **Specify the information use skills necessary for government professionals and recommend ways to acquire them.** Assist in defining information-related competencies for program staff, and research and IT professionals.
- ◆ **Assess the cost-effectiveness of various technical tools and techniques.** Explore the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and appropriateness of various tools for diverse business objectives.
- ◆ **Develop collaborative and collective resources for data users.** Recommend practices based on real public sector experiences that address the policy, management, and technology issues.

Project participants are scheduled to complete a series of seven workshops by October 1998. The workshop activities include developing a strategic framework, analyzing stakeholders, designing the technical system, developing an implementation plan, analyzing costs and benefits, and constructing valid evaluation methods. Watch for updates in the *Innovations* newsletter.

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Editors:
Meghan Kiernan
Sally Goodall

Contributing Authors:
Winsome Foderingham
Kristine Kelly
Pam Neely

1535 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 442-3892 (phone)
(518) 442-3886 (fax)
info@ctg.albany.edu
http://www.ctg.albany.edu



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

A Korean Experience

Dong Seok Kang, an information technology professional from the National Computerization Agency (NCA) of Korea, is spending a semester at CTG studying effective project selection methods in the public sector. After surveying basic concepts of project management at CTG, Mr. Kang will perform a comparative analysis of the NCA and CTG project management frameworks.

Woon Suk Suh, also from the NCA of Korea, is studying the NYS Geographic Information System Cooperative Project. Mr. Suh will document implementation techniques for possible data sharing in Korea. It is his hope that he will be able to present several alternatives to the NCA for a National GIS initiative in Korea.

Understanding Government

On March 11-12 nine private sector representatives joined CTG for a two day seminar entitled "Information, Technology and Government" (ITG). This seminar targets private sector executives who want to better understand how their public sector partners operate. It teaches lessons in how government information management decisions are made. Instructors at ITG provide an interactive learning environment where participants are placed in real-life public sector situations. They are guided in making information technology decisions in an environment deluged with competing objectives, multiple stakeholders and related rules, regulations and policies. The ITG seminar outlines:

- Democratic principles
- United States Constitution as a business plan
- Information ownership
- Bureaucratic politics
- Competition vs. cooperation, as an operating principle

Participants are given an opportunity to make decisions as a public manager facing several competing ideas, expectations, and stakeholders. Russell Lee of IBM Corporation noted that because of the seminar, "I have a much better understanding of how complex this is, and to understand the driving forces gives me more respect for government managers who act as change agents."

"This seminar gave me a more in depth understanding of what my state clients deal with on a daily basis and how I can help them in their decision making process."

Jim Roche, META Group

CTG Publications

All CTG **Reports and Handbooks** are available on our Web site for downloading free of charge (<http://www.ctg.albany.edu/resources/rptwplst.html>).

Handbooks

- Making Smart IT Choices
- Developing and Delivering Government Services on the World Wide Web: Recommended Practices for NYS
- A Cost/Performance Model for Assessing WWW Service Investments
- Tying a Sensible Knot: A Practical Guide to State-Local Information Systems

Reports

Models for Action Project

- Functional Requirements to Ensure the Creation, Maintenance, and Preservation of Electronic Records
- A Survey of System Development Process Models
- A Survey of Key Concepts and Issues for Electronic Recordkeeping
- The Records Requirements Analysis and Implementation Tool
- An Introduction to Workflow Management Systems

State-Local Information Systems Project

- Partners in State-Local Information Systems: Lessons from the Field
- Executive Briefing Paper: Tying a Sensible Knot: Best Practices in State-Local Information Systems

Internet Technologies Testbed Project

- The World Wide Web as a Universal Interface to Government Services

Internet Services Testbed Project

- Delivering on the Web: The NYS Internet Services Testbed

Geographic Information System Project

- Sharing the Costs, Sharing the Benefits: The NYS GIS Cooperative Project
- The New York State Spatial Data Clearinghouse Technical Report
- Compelling Reasons for GIS Coordination in NYS
- A Framework for Evaluating Public Sector Geographic Information Systems

Adirondack Park Agency Project

- Balancing Environmental Quality & Economic Vitality in the Adirondack Park
- Evaluating the APA Prototype: Prospects for Providing Cheaper, Faster, and Better Services to APA's Customers
- Using Technology to Change Work: Technical Results from the APA Prototype

Office of Mental Health Project

- Supporting Psychiatric Assessments in Emergency Rooms
- Report of the Field Test to Evaluate a Decision Support Tool for Psychiatric Assessments in Emergency Rooms

Office of Regulatory and Management Assistance Project

- Voice Information Response System
- Reviewing the Performance of ORMA's Voice Response System for Automated Business Permit Information: Integrating Technical, Cost-Based, and Customer-Oriented Evaluations of System Performance

Groupware Testbed Project

- Groupware Testbed

Department of Motor Vehicles Project

- Title Imaging

Paper copies of all **Reports** are available free of charge. An invoice (\$10 each) will be sent for paper copies of **Handbooks**.

Publication Order forms are available:

Call - 518/442-3892

Fax - 518/442-3886

E-mail - info@ctg.albany.edu

CTG Web site -
http://www.ctg.albany.edu
click on "Order Form"

New Corporate Partners

The following companies have recently become CTG Corporate Partners donating hardware, software, and consulting services for the CTG electronic records project - *Models for Action*.

Image Conversion Systems

ICS provides document capture products and services for business,



governments, and professional organizations. In the *Models for Action* Project, ICS provided scanning and indexing services that helped to demonstrate the practicality and efficiency of electronically capturing and organizing APA project file documents and information.

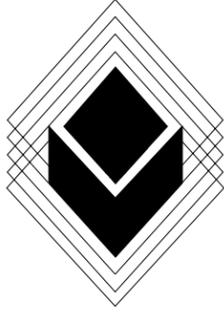
Intergraph

Intergraph Corporation is dedicated to supplying interactive computer



graphics systems. Intergraph's business is primarily in two areas - hardware (workstations and servers) and technical software applications requiring interactive computer graphics. Intergraph contributed hardware, software, and development services for the *Models for Action* project. Intergraph's John Tierney, led the development of the prototype and assisted in the installation and training activities at the Adirondack Park Agency.

Private corporations bring state-of-the-art information technologies and services to the Center. Their participation reflects both interest in the practical applications of technology and a long history of successful industrial research and development programs. Since information technology and service companies have both business and government customers, they offer a broader context for problem-solving than either sector can achieve on its own.



Alliance Project

CTG has embarked on a five-year partnership with the National Computational Science Alliance (Alliance). The Alliance is a partnership of computational scientists, computer scientists, and professionals in education, outreach, and training at more than 50 United States universities and research institutions working to develop an informational and computational infrastructure for the 21st century. CTG, as head of the Government Education, Outreach, and Training team (EOT) of the Alliance, will help identify, develop, and disseminate innovative applications of technologies to apply to the practical problems of federal, state, and local governments.

CTG is currently investigating and testing new applications for collaborative work among EOT members. Using Microsoft's NetMeeting, CTG has been able to communicate with Alliance coordinators through audio, video, chat room and whiteboard features. This shared application allows two users to communicate using the audio and video capabilities, and permits an unlimited number of people to use the shared chat room and whiteboard features. The whiteboard area allows all participants to write to a central location, build on one another's thoughts, and develop collaborative products. CTG is performing a series of tests experimenting with the bandwidths needed for this type of collaborative communication. If successful, this technology could be used for communication in more extensive applications later in the project.

CTG, coordinating efforts with two additional government partners, the National Center for Supercomputing Application's Federal and State Government Division and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, both at the University of Illinois, will define and disseminate general models and guidelines for effective and practical uses of advanced technologies in government.

Making Connections

January 1998

Peter Bloniarz served as a panelist on "The Virtual University: Collaborative Partnerships at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications Consortium," session of The Triple Helix of University-Industry-Government Relations: Future Location of Research Conference. The conference was held in Purchase, New York.

Theresa Pardo, Peter Bloniarz, and **Kristine Kelly** presented "Possible Joint Activities with the NYS Center for Technology in Government: An Overview of the Internet Testbed Project" at the **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Department of Decision Sciences and Engineering Systems**.

Sharon Dawes hosted a planning meeting among researchers from Quebec and the US to assess interest and feasibility of an international research project on "New Models of Collaboration for Delivering Public Services."

Theresa Pardo presented "Electronic Records Management Access and Preservation Partnerships" with **Alan Kowlowitz** from **State Archives and Records Administration** at the Commissioner's Quarterly Review at the New York State Education Department.

February 1998

Sharon served as a panelist on Intergovernmental Initiatives at the **Virtual Government '98 Conference** in Maryland. Her talk focused on the lessons learned in our recent project on best practices in state-local information systems.

CTG hosted an informational session with **Dr. Michael Armitage** and **Stephen Wade** from the **Government of South Australia**. They discussed collaborative approaches used in New York to foster effective use of information technology to support government services

Peter Bloniarz presented a keynote presentation at the **University of Michigan-Flint Center for University Outreach, Knowledge for Action Program** on "Government and Technology." He discussed CTG's Internet Testbed Project and how it contributed to the NYS government community.

March 1998

Sharon Dawes gave a presentation at the **Citizens Budget Commission** in New York City about "Using Technology to Improve State and Local Government Operations."

Officials from the **National Institute on Public Administration in Portugal, Rui Afonso Lucas** and **Antonio Correia de Campos**, visited CTG as part of an American tour to evaluate potential partners in American universities. They were hosted by **Professor John Rohrbaugh** of the University at Albany Graduate School of Public Affairs.

Sharon Dawes taught a session of the **Public Management Internship Program** at Rockefeller Institute focusing on Information Technology and Public Services in New York State. **Tom Duffy** (NYS Office for Technology), **Terry Maxwell** (NYS Forum), **David Walsh** (NYS Senate), and **Brian Scott** (NYS Health Department) also participated as experts on NYS IT policy and practices.

Kristine Kelly presented "Planning for Information Management Systems: Part One" at the **Northeast Documentation Conservation Center**. The conference, sponsored by the National Park Service Museum Management Program, National Register of Historic Places and the National Records and Archives Administration, was titled, "The Information Ecosystem: Managing the Life Cycle of Information for Preservation and Access."

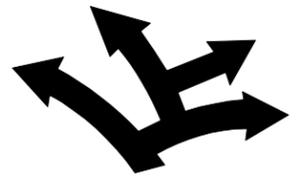
Kristine also spoke at the **National Archives and Records Administration** about CTG's Models for Action project.

April 1998

Peter Bloniarz and Sharon Dawes spoke at the **Links '98** conference at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Links is an annual conference devoted to building partnerships between public institutions of higher education and state governments. Sharon presented an overview of CTG and its relationship with NYS government and Peter spoke about CTG's role in the Government Education, Outreach, and Training program of the PACI Alliance.

Peter presented "Smart IT Choices" at the **Alliance '98 Conference** at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This conference gathered all partners in the National Computational Science Alliance (Alliance) partnership together with industrial partners. **Pam Neely** spoke with conference participants at the "Poster Session" segment of the conference where Alliance partners displayed their progress in the project.

Darryl Green presented "Developing and Delivering Government Services on the World Wide Web" at the **Association of Records Managers and Administrators** sponsored conference at the National Archives.



Electronic Records Management

Many government organizations are moving their information resources from paper to electronic forms. This migration raises serious questions about how organizations will manage and maintain access to records created during the normal course of business. Government organizations often create electronic records in a myriad of forms and formats. However, they often lack adequate tools to manage the growing number and variety of electronic records, particularly over time. As a result, many agencies are in danger of losing access to records stored in personal computers, e-mail boxes, or personal local area network (LAN) directories.

The Center for Technology in Government (CTG) and the State Archives and Records Administration (SARA), combined efforts to develop practical tools to support the identification and implementation of records management requirements during business process analysis and system design. The project, coined "Models for Action," was funded in part by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the funding arm of the National Archives and Records Administration. "Models for Action" combined theory and best practices from such areas as business process analysis, system design and development, and electronic recordkeeping in the development of practical tools that support the identification of records management requirements and management, policy, and technology strategies for addressing them.

CTG and SARA tested the tools in the development of a prototype system to support the land use permit process at the New York State Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The "Models for Action" project prototype is an integrated document management and workflow system that allows for access to APA's Geographic Information System and demonstrates technology strategies for records management. The prototype, installed at the APA in early March, offers a customized interface for specific APA users. John Banta, Director of Planning at APA, says, "The best feature of the prototype is the chance to use both the simple user interface tools and the sophisticated document management software. The strength of the prototype lies in the ability to integrate the two." He further indicated that "In working with CTG, there is always a focus on the user's needs before the technology is implemented. They put people first."



Models for Action - Prototype Demonstration

The "Models for Action" products and results will be presented on Thursday, June 18th from 9 am -12 noon at the New York State Museum. The program will include segments on electronic records management issues, a prototype demonstration, and recommendations for improving electronic records management in public agencies. For registration information, visit our Web site at <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/whatsnew/whatsmn.html> or call CTG at 518/442-3892.

Grad Students Join CTG

Bonjour! **Ophelia Eglene**, a graduate assistant at CTG, is nearing completion of her Master of Business Administration in Marketing at the University at Albany, SUNY. Her concentration is in international business, complementing her ability to speak and translate four languages - French, Spanish, Italian and English. A native of Strasbourg, France, Ophelia, as a graduate assistant at CTG, is focusing on several projects including researching best practices in project management, and reviewing CTG's public information plan and marketing efforts.

"I like the learning atmosphere at CTG. I have had the opportunity to gain an understanding of government organizations and with my political science and business background it has proved to be insightful."

Ophelia Eglene
CTG Graduate Assistant

Telecommuting is no stranger to **Pam Neely**. Living over an hour and a half from CTG, Pam takes advantage of the opportunity to telecommute whenever she can. As a doctoral student in the Information Science Program at the University at Albany, Pam comes to CTG with an interesting background. As a Certified Public Accountant for 10 years she has interests in areas such as Information Decision Systems and Accounting Systems. At CTG, Pam is currently working on the National Computational Science Alliance project. Pam states, "I like the challenge of learning something totally unrelated to my prior work. I have been able to bring my skills as an entrepreneur to the job and apply them to the project."

Best Practices in Government Technology

Why Best Practice Sessions?

For government professionals today, managing huge volumes of complex information is a way of life. The need for secure, fast, and constant access to information is imperative. While advances in technology can make these transactions easier, more efficient and less costly, busy managers have a hard time keeping up with the latest technology approaches. For that reason, the **NYS Office for Technology** is making it easier for you by holding "Best Practices Sessions" throughout the year to showcase a host of new technology initiatives going on in state and local government agencies.

Why should you attend?

Research into existing best practices helps raise technology awareness and also identifies important management and policy issues and ways to address them. Showcasing a variety of approaches in specific technology areas brings clarity to your understanding by detailing the distinctions between the many diverse technologies.

Spring Line Up

- 5/19/98 - Accessible Systems
- 6/11/98 - Harnessing the Internet/Intranet for Government Business

Time: 9am to 4pm
Location: Meeting Room 6
Concourse Level
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY
Registration: Office for
Technology
518/473-5622



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