A COMPARATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA IN NORTH AMERICA

This project seeks to better understand the role of technology in the ability of individual nations to respond to public problems and in the ability of nations to work together in response to transnational problems. The focus on Canada, Mexico, and the United States will allow the researchers to look at topics that are germane to North America as a whole.

Co-chairs:
Theresa Pardo, Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany
Luis F. Luna-Reyes, Universidad de las Americas, Mexico.

Project Summary
As the governments of the world evolve toward a more global perspective on the social, political, and economic issues facing our nations it is critical that research efforts are sensitive to and respond to this evolution as well. New requirements for cross-boundary collaboration driven by a global view demand new understanding about how individual nations respond to public problems and about how nations work together in response to transnational problems. New forms of government enabled by technologies and made possible through new models of cooperation and collaboration made possible through new models of cooperation and collaboration must be explored and tested. As researchers, we must also create new models and strategies for working together across geographic and political boundaries, focusing on the efforts of government ass they seek to work in this new way. This proposal seeks support for an international digital government working group that will focus on understanding new models of collaboration required by the global nature of government problems as well as the role of technology in facilitating these inter-organizational initiatives. The activities of this working group will focus on the development and pursuit of a research agenda that attends to comparative questions about intergovernmental digital government initiatives in North America as well as questions related to North American digital government initiatives that are transnational in nature.

Although the three countries of North America are very different in many aspects (providing good variation), they have important similarities in government and a federal system). Project leaders in the three countries appreciate the importance of intergovernmental relationships for the success of many digital government initiatives. In addition, the three countries are closely related and interdependent in several political, economic, and social issues. Therefore, the results may also have important policy implications for each of the three countries and North America as a whole. Finally, the

inclusion of a developing country, a country with a highly developed presidential – system, and one with a highly developed parliamentarian – system will allow the results to be relevant to many countries specifically as well as many regions around the world.

Group co-chairs will be Dr. Theresa A. Pardo from the Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany, and Dr. Luis F. Luna-Reyes from the Universidad de las Americas, Mexico. The eleven-member working group includes members from three countries: Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Eleven institutions are represented by the group.

This initiative provides the opportunity for the members of the working group, many of whom have collaborated together in the past, to take their joint interest and expertise in this area to a new level. The grant funds will provide the opportunity to leverage many previously productive two and three way collaborations among members of the proposed group to a more significant and focused effort towards a long-term research and practice collaboration.

December 2009 Meeting, Washington DC

Members of the North American Digital Working group met for a working session in Washington, DC.

CTG, as a member of the North American Digital Government Working Group (NADGWG), hosted their fourth meeting in our nation's capitol. NADGWG, a group of researchers and practitioners from a variety of institutions and disciplines from Canada, the United States, and Mexico, was formed with the support of the National Science Foundation Digital Government Research program and the home institutions of its members. The group explores the advancement of electronic government research across geographic and political boundaries.

Over the past three years, this group meets virtually and also holds an annual meeting in one of the host countries cities. Over the past three years the meetings were held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Cholula, Mexico; and

Quebec City, Canada. This year's meeting was held in Washington DC on December 13 – 16, 2009.

At this year's meeting the NADGWG participants continued their work on the development of a comparative transnational research agenda, as well as participated in a one day workshop hosted by the Digital Government Society of North America and the United States Office of General Services Administration on December 15th focused on Social Media and Government, *Sharing Cutting-Edge Practice and Research*. NADGWG members contributed to this meeting by presenting their work to the participants of the workshop.

February 2009 Meeting, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, Mexico

Members of the North American Digital Working group met for a two-day working session at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE).

Researchers from Canada, Mexico, and the United States met for a two-day working session at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE). The group developed a framework for investigating and analyzing intergovernmental collaboration and interoperation including cross-border collaboration. The group is in the process of preparing a detailed research proposal to the Mexican Programa Interinstitucional De Estudios Sobre La Región De América Del Norte (PIERAN), which is aimed at developing a sound theoretical foundation and a detailed research agenda for the study of international intergovernmental collaboration and interoperabilty in North America.

November 2008 Meeting, Université Laval, Québec City, Quebec

The North American Digital Government Working Group held its fourth meeting at Université Laval in Québec City, Quebec, Canada from November 20-22, 2008. Fourteen members of the working group met together in the facilities of the Institute of Information Technology and Society, Université Laval; all three countries were well-represented at the meeting. The three day meeting focused on refining the Working Group's overall Research Agenda, moving forward the research activities of each of the Working Group sub-groups, and exploring key issues of interest with invited guests. The first day of the Working Group meeting opened with a welcome from Dr. Diane Poulin, the Chair of the Institute of Information Technology and Society. Following Dr. Poulin's remarks, members provided activity updates since the last meeting for both the overall Working Group and the two sub-groups; Border States Information Sharing, and Full Information Product Pricing Strategies. The members reviewed the various grants received so far and discussed strategies for seeking additional funding to continue the work of the Group. In addition, items published since the last meeting were acknowledged and continuing publication plans were outlined and agreed upon including a continued presence at conferences such as the International Digital Government Research Conference and the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS). The later part of the day provided opportunity for the sub-groups to work on their respective research initiatives.

The second day of the Working Group meeting opened with a welcome from Ms. Jacqueline Dubé, Présidente-directrice générale, Centre francophone d'informatisation des organizations (CEFRIO) and featured presentations from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation as well as a number of officials of the Quebec Provincial government including the Ministry of Government Service and the Ministry of Agriculture. Each presented on current issues and initiatives in their organizations. After the presentations,

which included a brief overview of the Working Group, the members engaged in round table discussions with the guests exploring areas of common interest and to identify opportunities for collaboration. Discussion topics included overall digital government strategy as well as structural arrangements for and challenges in managing information technology at an enterprise level; information sharing and governance issues related to organic product traceability; and information sharing and collaboration in environmental protection at border regions.

On the final day, Working Group members continued their research agenda discussions by breaking into small groups and exploring key transnational and comparative questions as well as creating a presentation framework for the agenda. The members also developed a plan for completion of the agenda including an outreach strategy. Several administrative discussions were held including coordinating interdependencies among the two sub groups and the development of a Working Group web page. Planning for the next round of Working Group meetings was completed with plans for a meeting at the International Digital Government Research Conference, dg.o 2009, in Puebla, Mexico and a full Working Group Meeting in Albany, NY in October of 2009. The Working Group meeting ended with an informative (and brisk) walking tour of Old Quebec, one of the oldest cities in North America and since 1985, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

May 2008 Meeting, Montreal, Quebec

Members of the North American Digital Working group met to coincide with dg.o 2008 in Montreal, Quebec.

The North American Digital Government Working Group held its third meeting in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on Sunday May 18th, 2008. The meeting was scheduled to coincide with dg.o 2008. Fourteen members of the workgroup were in attendance. A 2.5 hour meeting was held on Sunday night around an abbreviated agenda of topics of importance to the full workgroup. Additionally, the two subgroups were given a brief amount of time during the meeting to schedule additional time together. The agenda included working group business including a discussion of the working group web site, a proposal for an edited book, the research agenda setting activities, and the planning for the fourth working group meeting to be held this November in Quebec City, Quebec.

The meeting started with an open discussion of general lessons learned and challenges facing subgroup efforts. These include funding, translation of research protocols, grant applications, and other related documents and the human subjects process. The role of the institutional review board and its relationship with international comparative work was discussed and generally agreed to be problematic. The working groups decided to put the edited book effort on hold and to focus on the research agenda development efforts. A team was formed to focus on the research agenda setting activities. The members leading the planning for the fourth meeting of the working group shared the status of plans for that meeting and invited feedback on and participation in those efforts.

In addition to holding the third meeting at dg.o 2008, the workgroup activities were well-represented at the conference with three posters being presented, a panel session organized by three members of the working group based on ideas generated at the second working group meeting in Cholula, Mexico, as well as participation in a panel on the three international working groups organized by the PIs of the DGI project.

December 2007 Meeting, Chulula, Mexico

Members of the North American Digital Working group gathered in front of the main entrance of the Villas Arqueologicas Hotel in Cholula, Mexico.

Members came together at the Universidad de las Americas for three days in November 2007 to continue the working group activities launched during its first meeting. The opening day of the working group meeting involved a set of discussions organized around group formation activities, as well as in the subgroups formed during the first meeting. The design of the second day provided an opportunity to spend a full-day with government officials from a variety of ministries of the Mexican Federal Government and other organizations involved in digital government in Mexico. The morning session consisted of a series of panel presentations on Digital Government, Information Society, and Innovation in Mexico. Following the panels, the working group members met in small groups with the panelists to discuss key areas of common interest and to explore future collaboration efforts.

Two initial projects are starting to consolidate as part of the research agenda and as potential sources of collaboration among the three countries. These projects include one to explore Border States Information Sharing, and another to explore Full Information Product Pricing Strategies to promote international commerce and regional development.

May 2007 Meeting, Philadelphia, PA

Members of the North American International Working Group brainstorming during their first meeting in Philadelphia in May of 2007.

The first meeting of the North American International Working Group took place in Philadelphia in May of 2007, and was attended by close to fifteen participants of the working group from Canada, Mexico and the United States. The meeting focused on group formation discussions, sustainability of the group, setting a research agenda, and potential products. The brainstorming sessions led to numerous ideas and themes for research from border and immigration issues to economic and trade issues to e-government leadership to create digital cities and smart regions in border areas.