

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Tying a Sensible Knot: A Practical Guide to State Local Information Systems

Albany, NY - The Center for Technology in Government (CTG) at the University at Albany released a guide today detailing how best practices and fundamental principles can shape the way state and local governments share information systems.

The best practices and principles are the cornerstone of the guide, "Tying a Sensible Knot: A Practical Guide to State-local Information Systems." It outlines the forces that shape the state-local environment, ideal system characteristics and barriers to achieving them, plus guiding principles and best practices that can make the difference between failure and success.

State-local information systems link state and local agencies together in a coherent service delivery or administrative environment. An efficient, effective information system is not easily coordinated when state and local participants differ in their resources, technologies, and processes. To understand how effective state-local information systems are built, the Center for Technology in Government, The New York State Office for Technology and the Office for Technology's Subcommittee on Local Government coordinated efforts to identify best practices from eleven state-local information system projects throughout New York State. The project handbook dictates stories from each of the projects to explain the best practices in real world situations. The project, which involved more than 150 state and local officials, focused on eleven existing projects that ranged from electronic voter registration to systems that support the work of county probation officers.

Project participants indicated, through surveys and interviews, that certain best practices should go into the design, development and operation of any state-local information system. The nineteen best practices are not to be used as steps in building a state-local information system but as areas of attention that need to be continually addressed throughout the project. Some of the best practices include:

- Define a shared purpose and scope
- Communicate often and clearly with stakeholders
- Look for existing models
- Use industry standard technology
- Integrate with related processes and practices

The project identified nine fundamental principles to guide state-local information system initiatives. All of the principles support a shared vision among the stakeholders. Some principles include:

- Understand the full range of local and state conditions
- Commit to serious partnerships
- Communicate as if your survival depends on it

The report is available on the CTG Web site as a downloadable document or may be purchased as a bound handbook.

The Center for Technology in Government, an Innovations in American Government award winner, forms strategic partnerships with government agencies, technology corporations, and university faculty and students. Three dozen high-tech companies, more than thirty government agencies, and a dozen academic researchers have participated in Center projects since its inception in 1993. Its mission is to solve problems related to public services through the use of information technology in state and local government.