

NEWS RELEASE

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CTG's Internet Gateway Prototype Tests New Efficiency and Coordination of State and Local Government Information Systems

Albany, NY - The University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government and its partners today presented the New York State-Local Internet Gateway Prototype. The prototype was designed to test new methods of interaction between state and local information systems.

With a complicated and growing web of independent information systems connecting New York State's local and state government, there is a need to develop a new way for them to interact with each other. For instance, dog license information is managed in different formats -- paper and/or electronic -- in each municipality of the state. Only the state government has electronic access to all the information. Also, after every local election, dozens of state agencies scramble to update their databases with new contact information for local officials. Local government workers have to send that same information to multiple agencies -- sometimes on paper and sometimes electronically. Because data is often re-entered multiple times, two agencies may end up with two different names as the mayor of one city or village.

"When people talk about e-government, they tend to think about ways to improve the way we interact with citizens. But there are tremendous opportunities to improve the way different agencies and levels of government work with each other," said Sharon Dawes, director of the CTG. "We set out to explore what it would take for state agencies and local governments to embark on a new way to engage in government-to-government business relationships," said Dawes.

The prototype channels three different state-local business functions on the Internet through one common interface. It includes a single contact directory of state and local officials along with an associated data management system, a dog licensing application, a real property reporting application, links to a variety of government-oriented information resources, and user support functions.

In all, 80 individuals from all five regions of New York State, representing eight state agencies, nine counties, nine cities, 18 towns, two universities, two professional organizations, and four private sector companies participated in the conception, development and testing of the Gateway Prototype..

"The Gateway Prototype helped us understand what would be necessary for state, county, and municipal governments to realize greater efficiency, high quality authentic data, and more consistent and coordinated services," said Prototype Project Manager Meghan Cook. "We learned that the two most important factors in developing more effective state-local business coordination are peer-to-peer working relationships and thinking of government as an interconnected enterprise and not a collection of individual organizations."

The prototype was the product of collaboration between CTG professional staff, and corporate partners CGI Information Systems and Management Consultants, Inc., and Keane, Inc, who donated their products and services. An AT&T Foundation grant supported the evaluation costs of the prototype and Microsoft donated software to the project.

The Center for Technology in Government www.ctg.albany.edu 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.

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