

Summary

Government is an information-intensive enterprise with a legal obligation to create and maintain huge volumes of public records. Motor vehicle records are a case in point. Paperwork problems exist in part because these records are caught up in processes that are often antiquated, slow, error prone, and expensive.

Document imaging and work flow management systems merge several technologies to convert paper documents to electronic images. They offer both operational and financial benefits. Document imaging systems, however, are expensive to implement, and they nearly always require extensive analysis, business process reengineering, and organizational change.

This first project of the Center for Technology in Government demonstrated document imaging and work flow solutions in a particular government application, the vehicle title operation at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. The project was completed in 1993 and produced a prototype application of a portion of the title issuance operation at DMV. The project answered many technical, managerial, and organizational questions. The project also involved demonstrations and presentations to more than thirty-five other government agencies and generated important lessons about imaging and work flow.

Publications & Results

Reports and Working Papers (1)



Title Imaging Project with NYS Department of Motor Vehicles

Tue, 01 Nov 1994

Paperwork. Few words evoke such a negative picture of government operations. This report presents the results of a prototyping project that demonstrated document imaging and work flow solutions in the vehicle title operation at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Paperwork. Few words evoke such a negative picture of government operations. Yet government is an information-intensive enterprise with a legal obligation to create and maintain huge volumes of public records. The paperwork problem exists in part because these records are caught up in processes that are antiquated, slow, error prone, and expensive. Document imaging and workflow management systems merge several technologies to convert paper documents to electronic images. However, they are expensive to implement and nearly always require extensive analysis, business process reengineering, and organizational change.

This report presents the results of a prototyping project that demonstrated document imaging and workflow solutions in the vehicle title operation at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The process of building the prototype answered a range of critical technical, managerial, and organizational questions.

Lessons Learned

The following broader lessons of the project are of value to any government agency considering workflow and imaging technologies:

Business process analysis is an indispensable first step in the design and development of imaging and work flow applications. Much, if not most, of the value of a new system can be derived simply from rethinking and redesigning business processes.

Flexible, modern information tools can be successfully integrated with existing mainframe-based information systems. Adding a PC-based front end to legacy mainframe applications in a client-server architecture can be a

powerful enhancement to staff productivity and an effective way to prolong the value of old, but indispensable systems.

Imaging and work flow systems are deeply embedded in organizational context. They directly affect employees, work culture, and work processes. To reduce organizational resistance and improve prospects for success, the people affected by these changes must be full participants in their design and implementation.

Prototyping is a flexible, low-cost, low-risk approach to expensive and significant technological change. Once defined, the DMV prototype was constructed in only four weeks. It gave the agency an opportunity to learn about new technologies, to test the reaction of key organizational units, and to learn important lessons before proceeding to full system design and procurement.

Public demonstrations, presentations, and careful documentation of prototype projects can turn one agency's investment into learning that benefits many others. The DMV prototype demonstrations generated well-informed enthusiasm for imaging and work flow applications and gave many agencies their first thoughtful look at the attendant costs and benefits.

Press Releases & News Stories

Press Releases

A Model for Simplifying and Improving Government Services
Tue, 06 Jan 1995

Prototype

The title imaging prototype is no longer operational, but descriptions of the design and requirements are included in the project report, Title Imaging Project with NYS Department of Motor Vehicles.

Partners

Government Partners

- New York State Department of Motor Vehicles

Corporate Partners

- AT&T Global Information Solutions (formerly NCR/AT&T Corporation)
- Grumman Data Systems
- Image Innovation
- Microsoft Corporation
- NewVision Systems Corporation

Center for Technology in Government

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Original Scope of Work

Improving Customer Service Through Title Imaging

Vehicle titles are issued in New York State under provisions of the Uniform Vehicle Certificate of Title Act. At the time of the project, the process for issuing titles was largely paper-bound. Between 1970 and 1990, the number of titles issued annually by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) had increased more than 400%, from 660,000 to over 3.7 million. Along with other factors, this growth in volume led to waiting times of up to 120 days to process a title application. The resulting inconvenience to customers received executive and legislative attention. A 1990 DMV study to resolve these problems recommended that the agency explore a computerized image transaction processing system to improve service.

The objectives of this project were therefore to:

1. Create a prototype imaging application for a portion of title operations at DMV. The portion selected was the processing of requests to issue a duplicate title.
2. Evaluate how images may be indexed, audited, and tracked within large agency operations, and how new technologies may work with existing systems.
3. Evaluate how imaging, automated work flow management, networking, and other information management technologies may improve quality or lower the cost of government services that rely on documents.
4. Develop cost benefit bases for making decisions about technology alternatives and configurations for various kinds of agency applications.
5. Evaluate the robustness of imaging and work flow technology in different settings, and identify important characteristics, both functional and physical, that are critical for agency environments.
6. Provide accurate information to other agencies about these technologies, and educate decision makers about their possibilities and limitations.

To accomplish these objectives, the project team installed a basic imaging system at the Center for Technology in Government and developed a prototype application supporting the processing of requests for duplicate titles at DMV. The prototype allowed the team to investigate work flow software and its ability to facilitate business process reengineering, to demonstrate an interactive connection between this new application and the DMV mainframe, and to investigate ancillary technologies such as optical character recognition (OCR) and rapid prototyping tools.

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