

Project Summary

In early 2006, the NYS Legislature and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) initiated a pilot program to test how portable information technology (now commonly called mobile technology) could be used in child protective services (CPS) casework. At the time, New York State was among a handful of states examining the use of mobile technologies to enhance child welfare service delivery. To understand and learn from the incremental deployment, OCFS partnered with CTG to conduct an assessment of each pilot period in order to answer important questions about the changes and impacts brought about by mobility in CPS work. A series of six evaluation reports focus on device selection, what makes a supportive mobile environment, and provides rich descriptions of how workers use devices to do their work.

Publications & Results

Reports and Working Papers (6)



Does Mobility Make a Difference? A Cumulative Study of the Impact of Mobile Technology in New York State Child Protective Services

Fri, 13 Jan 2012

Over the past six years, the New York State (NYS) Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has invested in a mobile technology strategy to support child protective services (CPS) work. This report presents results from a multi-year assessment on how the use of mobility technology has affected CPS casework. Findings suggest that laptop use has transformed on-call work processes, provided caseworkers with access to critical information while away from the office, and enabled an immersive community experience for caseworkers. These results have also led to modest, but meaningful improvements in productivity. The report also outlines elements of supportive mobile environments and offers recommendations for improving OCFS' mobile technology strategy.

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Assessing Mobile Technologies in Child Protective Services (2008-2009): A Demonstration Project in 26 New York State Local Departments of Social Services

01 December 2009

The New York State (NYS) Mobile Technology Demonstration Project is a multi-year initiative to assess the use of mobile technologies in child protective services (CPS) work in New York State. Starting in 2006, this collaborative effort among the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), county Departments of Social Services (DSS or local district), and the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) at the University at Albany has had four distinct evaluation studies. This assessment focuses on the most recent effort in 2008-2009. Starting in January 2009, twenty-six NYS local social service districts received mobile technologies for CPS. There were 505 mobile devices deployed CPS caseworkers and supervisors and managers. This assessment solely addresses measures of productivity and efficiency.

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Maximizing Current and Future Mobile Technology Investments in New York State Child Protective Services

Thu, 10 Dec 2008

NYS's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) partnered to conduct an extended study of the use of connected laptops in child protective services (CPS). Previous pilot and demonstration assessments established a solid foundation of information to support a reasonably clear picture of the short term impacts of deploying and using laptops in CPS work. This assessment allowed a longer time period for data collection (8-10 months) and provided an opportunity to learn more about how laptops are integrated into CPS work, including examining mobility, productivity and satisfaction. This study also examines the long-term impacts and conditions necessary to maximize current and future mobile technology investments in NYS's child protective services.

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Assessing Mobile Technologies in Child Protective Services: A Demonstration Project in 23 New York State Local Departments of Social Services

Thu, 13 Mar 2008

NYS's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) partnered to learn more about the impact of mobile technology use in child protective services (CPS) in New York State. In the Demonstration Project in 23 Local Social Service Districts, 450 laptops and tablets were deployed to CPS caseworkers in 23 NYS Local Social Services Districts. CTG conducted the independent assessment where the evaluation focused on mobility, productivity, and satisfaction as well as addressed environmental factors in statewide IT deployment. The summary report looks at high level impacts across all districts and the profiles detail findings from each individual district.

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The individual district profiles can be selected below:

- Albany County Department for Children, Youth and Families Programs & Services Children and Family Services
- Broome County Department of Social Services
- Chemung County Department of Social Services
- Clinton County Department of Social Services
- Columbia County Department of Social Services
- Fulton County Department of Social Services
- Jefferson County Department of Social Services
- Nassau County Department of Social Services

- Niagara County Department of Social Services
- Onondaga County Department of Social Services
- Orleans County Department of Social Services
- Putnam County Department of Social Services & Mental Health
- Rockland County Department of Social Services
- Schenectady County Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services
- Seneca County Children and Family Services
- St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services, Protective Services
- Suffolk County Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services Bureau
- Ulster County Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services
- Washington County Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services Unit
- Wayne County Department of Social Services

Assessing Mobile Technologies in Child Protective Services: An Extended Pilot in New York City's Administration for Children's Services

Mon, 07 Jan 2008

This assessment report was done under contract with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and in conjunction with the NYC Administration for Children Services (ACS). This project involved a large scale deployment of wireless laptops to CPS workers in New York City's ACS. The pilot ran from August – October 2007 and involved approximately 135 child protective services workers and supervisors in the Staten Island and Williams Street (Manhattan) offices. The report shows the complexity of deploying technology into a well established profession. The study focused on mobility, productivity, and satisfaction, and includes a set of recommendations and future considerations.

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Assessing Mobile Technologies in Child Protective Services

Tue, 02 Jan 2007

This assessment report was prepared by the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) under a contract with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The purpose of the work was to assess the performance of mobile technology deployed in a pilot test program with child protective service (CPS) workers. The mobile technologies were deployed to a sample of CPS workers for use in their field work and reporting responsibilities. The pilot was conducted in three Local Departments of Social Services (Local Districts): the New York City Administration for Children's Services (NYC/ACS), Westchester County Department of Social Services, Family and Children's Services, and Monroe County Department of Human Services, Child and Family Services Division. OCFS engaged the Center for Technology in Government to conduct this assessment and provide a report to the Commissioner of OCFS to assist in decision making and planning for possible further deployment of these technologies.

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Press Releases & News Stories

News Stories

Public CIOs Struggle to Manage Mobility Demands

Government Technology

September 8, 2009

The Right Tools in the Right Hands

New York State Association of Counties News (p. 17)

Fall 2008

The Case for Mobility

Government Technology

September 2008

Investigative Aid: Mobile computing devices boost the efficiency of social workers, leaving them more time to protect at-risk children.

Statetech Magazine

July/August 2008

Partners

Government Partners

- New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- Albany County Department for Children, Youth and Families Programs & Services Children and Family Services
- Broome County Department of Social Services
- Chemung County Department of Social Services
- Clinton County Department of Social Services
- Columbia County Department of Social Services
- Fulton County Department of Social Services
- Jefferson County Department of Social Services
- Monroe County Department of Social Services
- Nassau County Department of Social Services
- Niagara County Department of Social Services
- Onondaga County Department of Social Services
- Orleans County Department of Social Services
- Putnam County Department of Social Services & Mental Health
- Rockland County Department of Social Services
- Schenectady County Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services
- Seneca County Children and Family Services
- St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services, Protective Services
- Suffolk County Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services Bureau
- Ulster County Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services
- Washington County Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services Unit
- Wayne County Department of Social Services

- Westchester County Department of Social Services, Family and Children's Services
- New York City Administration for Children's Services (NYS/ACS)

Funding Sources

This project was funded by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Original Scope of Work

Throughout all phases in the NYS Portable Information Technology Pilot Program for Child Protective Services the main focus is to evaluate:

- how the technology is used in the work setting and
- how the technology impacted work itself.

More specifically, the purpose is to learn about three areas:

- mobility and use,
- productivity and efficiency, and
- user satisfaction.

Phase V – 2010-2011 Does Mobility Make A Difference Cumulative Assessment June 2010 – December 2011

Phase Five includes a multi-year assessment of all caseworkers receiving laptops in NYS. It also includes a description of good implementation strategies as well as recommendations for overall strategy.

Phase IV – 2008-2009 Demonstration Project July 2008 – January 2009

Phase IV of this project includes an in-depth study of three Local Social Service Districts to inform the development of a business case for a large-scale laptop deployment within other OCFS units. This phase also includes an assessment of mobile technologies in 33 local districts deploying in late fall 2008. Both parts are scheduled to be completed by January 2009.

Phase III - Portable Information Technology Demonstration Project in 23 NYS Local Social Service Districts November 2007–March 2008

Phase III of this pilot program included 23 Local Social Service Districts who submitted proposals and were granted requests to participate in the mobile technology effort. Over 400 laptops and tablets were deployed to districts throughout NYS. A final report was completed in March 2008.

Phase II - Extended Pilot in New York City's Administration for Children Services August–December 2007

Phase II of this project involved a larger scale deployment of wireless laptops to CPS workers in New York City's Administration for Children Services (ACS). The pilot ran from August – October 2007 and involved approximately 135 child protective services workers and supervisors in the Staten Island and Williams Street (Manhattan) offices. These locations were selected to include a range of work and transportation conditions encountered by CPS workers in New York City. ACS managed all deployment and training, while CTG conducted an assessment of the technology, concentrating on issues of productivity, timeliness, and workers' satisfaction. A final report was completed in December 2007.

Phase I NYS Portable Information Technology Pilot July-November 2006

The first phase of the pilot program was a collaborative effort among NYS OCFS, three NYS Local Social Service

Districts, and CTG. NYS OCFS coordinated the procurement and management of the Local District's initiatives, but each district designed how the technology was tested in its own pilot. CTG conducted an individual assessment for each district. All three districts tested different technologies, which were:

- the NYC Administration for Children Services tested six models of notebooks, tablets, and a Blackberry;
- Westchester County tested a dictation system accessible by phone; and
- Monroe County tested digital pens and dictation software for personal computers.

Overall, the assessment extended over a four month period starting in July 2006 and ending in late October 2006. A final report was completed in November 2006.

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