

Summary

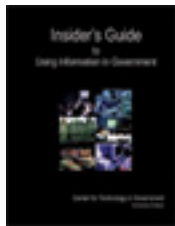
Many people working in state and local government organizations face challenges in using information to do their jobs. They seek to use government information for program planning, monitoring, and evaluation, but struggle with a general lack of understanding of the nature and level of financial, technical, and human investments necessary to use information well.

The Center for Technology in Government led an investigation into policies, data standards, costs, skills, strategies, and technical tools associated with effective information use in the public sector. Working with seven state and local agencies on projects with varying information use issues, CTG led each project team through the project definition phase while researching the factors that influence effective information use.

The culmination of the findings are reflected in the Web-based practical resource *The Insider's Guide to Using Information in Government*. It presents, along with case studies from the seven projects, the management, technology, and policy issues that affected the agencies' efforts to effectively use and share information to fulfill their goals.

Publications & Results

Online Resources (1)



Insider's Guide to Using Information in Government

Wed, 01 Nov 2000

Every day, the people inside government use information to develop policies, make decisions, evaluate programs, and deliver services. This Web resource draws from real agency experiences to provide a practical resource for government professionals who use information to do their jobs.

Reports and Working Papers (9)



New York State Central Accounting System Stakeholder Needs Analysis

Fri, 01 Jul 2000

The Office of the New York State Comptroller decided to conduct an extensive stakeholder needs analysis before making any decisions about how to design and develop a next generation Central Accounting System (CAS). CTG worked with the agency on this project, and developed a set of

commendations for next steps in devising a plan for the CAS.

Reassessing New York: A Collaborative Process

Thu, 01 Jun 2000

In order to implement the state's new annual reassessment program, the New York State Office of Real Property Services set out to identify the needs of the local assessment community. CTG worked with this agency on the project, and produced a report that presents a collaboratively developed set of recommendations for moving the Annual Reassessment Program forward.

Putting Information Together

Tue, 01 Feb 2000

Organizations spend millions of dollars putting information together in data warehouses, but as many as 50 to 80 percent of those projects fail. This report, which summarizes the fourth seminar in the UIG Seminar Series, highlights the lessons learned from the creation of the prototype Homeless Information Management System.

What Rules Govern the Use of Information?

Fri, 01 Oct 1999

Every government function depends on information, and each function has a set of policies behind it. This report, which summarizes the third seminar in the Using Information in Government Seminar Series, addresses the use of government information and the policies that govern that use.

Building Integrated Data Repositories

Mon, 01 May 1999

Having the right skills, competencies, and technical tools can help government managers use information more effectively in their work. This report, which summarizes the second seminar in the UIG Seminar Series, focuses on ways to get the most from government information.

Research and Practical Experiences in the Use of Multiple Data Sources for Enterprise Level Planning and Decision Making: A Literature Review

Spring 1999

Public and private sector organizations recognize the importance of information sharing as a way to improve planning and increase productivity. Because of this trend, the use of multiple data sources for enterprise level planning and decision making has become even more important. This paper identifies current research and practical experiences in the use of multiple data sources to support performance measurement, strategic planning, and interorganizational business processes.

Web-based Applications and/or Networked Legacy Systems

Spring 1999

A multitude of private and public institutions are now using e-commerce to deliver products and services to customers and clients. For many of these organizations, jumping into the world of e-commerce means they must link legacy systems and their attached databases to new Web-based applications and distributed databases. The ramifications of this process are examined in this report.

Dealing with Data

Wed, 01 Feb 1999

Proper data management is instrumental for successful information systems. This report, which summarizes the first seminar in the UIG Seminar Series, focuses on data quality management, data tools and techniques, long term maintenance and preservation, and real life experiences with data issues.

Data Quality Tools for Data Warehousing - A Small Sample Survey

Sun, 01 Oct 1998

The quality of data in data warehouses is crucial to the effective use of the warehouse. This paper examines the issues associated with data quality and maps the issues to features available in data quality software tools. Examples of the tools are also included.

Public Events (4)

Using Information in Government Seminar Series

February 1999 - February 2000

Dealing with Data

February 1999

http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/dealing_with_data

Building Integrated Data Repositories

May 1999

<http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/building>

What Rules Govern the Use of Information

October 1999

http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/what_rules_govern

Putting Information Together

February 2000

http://www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/reports/putting_info

Press Releases & News Stories

Press Releases

Meet the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA)

Thu, 05 Jul 2001

Center for Technology in Government Wraps Up Two-year Project: Using Information in Government Program Involved Seven State and Local Agencies

Mon, 26 Jun 2000

Improving the Information Resources that Hold Government Together

Mon, 06 Dec 1999

Center for Technology in Government Announces Four New Projects: Using Information in Government Focus of Work with State/Local Agencies

Fri, 11 Jun 1999

Center for Technology in Government Hosts Seminar on How to Use Information:
Session Features Tools, Skills, and Cases Designed to Help Public Managers
Mon, 19 Apr 1999

Center for Technology in Government Hosts Seminar on "Dealing with Data:"
Half-Day Session Highlights Tools for Information Resource Managers
Mon, 19 Jan 1999

News Stories

"The Center for Technology in Government will begin the second round of its Using Information in Government program..." July 1999 Civic.com

"Investigations into Using Information in Government Continue"

Project Updates: August 1998 Innovations Newsletter "Collaboration Issue"

"Using Information in Government: Feature Series" July 1998 Open Forum

"Using Information in Government: A CTG Workshop Series" June 1998 Open Forum

May 1998 Innovations Newsletter "Using Information Issue"

Project Updates: February, 1998 Innovations Newsletter "Center Stage in Research Issue"

Prototype

The Homeless Information Management System (HIMS) prototype demonstrated that integrating related data from multiple sources into one repository presents many challenges. Many of the lessons learned from building this prototype are included in the Putting Information Together seminar summary. The summary highlights the management, policy, and technology challenges faced by the NYS Bureau of Housing Services and their local partners in the collaborative effort to develop an integrated data repository to support the assessment of services to the homeless population. The prototype HIMS data repository was showcased at the seminar.

Partners

Government Partners

- Central New York Psychiatric Center
- New York State Archives and Records Administration
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York State Office of Real Property Services
- New York State Office of the State Comptroller, Central Accounting System,
- New York State Office of the Comptroller, Division of Municipal Affairs,
- New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications

Academic Partners

- David Andersen, Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Public Administration and Policy, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, SUNY
- Lakshmi Mohan, Associate Professor, Management Science and Information Systems Program, School of Business, University at Albany, SUNY

- Giri Tayi, Professor, Department of Management Science and Information Systems, School of Business, University at Albany, SUNY

Center for Technology in Government

- Darshana Apte, Graduate Assistance
- Donna Berlin, Internet Coordinator
- Peter A. Bloniarz, Director of Program Development
- Donna Canestraro, Project Support Manager
- David Connelly, Public Administration
- Meghan Cook, Project Associate
- Tony Cresswell, Research Director
- Sharon Dawes, Director
- Ophelia Eglene, Graduate Assistant
- Winsome Foderingham-Williams, Education Coordinator
- Sally Goodall, Publications Manager
- Linda Keane, Secretary
- Kristine Kelly, Manager, Project Research
- Jane Krumm-Schwan, Administration & Outreach Director
- Mark LaVigne, Project Associate
- C.N. Le, Research Associate
- Carol Murray, Secretary
- Shrilata Nath, Manager, Project Associate
- Pam Neely, Graduate Assistant
- Theresa Pardo, Project Director
- Carrie Schneider, Graduate Assistant
- Jochen Scholl, Project Support Manager
- Stephanie Simon, Information Coordinator
- Fiona Thompson, Research Associate
- Derek Werthmuller, Director of Technology Services
- Jihong Zeng, Graduate Assistant
- Jing Zhang, Graduate Assistant

Original Scope of Work

Every day people inside government use information to develop policies, make decisions, evaluate programs and deliver services. But many face challenges in carrying out these tasks.

Issues Government Managers Face in Using Information

The **Using Information in Government Program** was launched when state and local program and IRM managers came together to discuss the challenges they face in using government information for planning, operations, evaluation, and decision making. The workshop established a set of goals and framework for the two-year investigation that reflected their needs and ideas for effective information use within government.

The participants identified dozens of issues they have faced in using information to do their jobs. They expressed concern in several areas including:

- a lack of understanding of the nature and level of financial, technical, and human investments necessary to use information;
- data ownership, stewardship, and related organizational issues;
- inadequate, inappropriate, and stand alone technologies and systems; and

- workforce issues including the increasing difficulty of attracting and retaining Information Technology (IT) managers and professionals to government service.

Using Information in Government Program Goals

Participants enumerated some goals and practical results they would like the **Using Information in Government Program** to produce. The following six program goals do not focus on a particular program area, but were considered among the top ranking concerns across all program areas.

1. **Recommend policies or policy templates to guide public officials in their use of government information.** Comprehensive information use policies covered such topics as data collection, ownership, stewardship, intra- and inter-agency sharing and external release. Also, incorporating existing legal requirements. Data content and use policies should also be coordinated with related technology policies.
2. **Develop and assess data standards, inventories, and quality assurance tools.** Participants noted the importance of the current data standards effort sponsored by the NYS Office for Technology, and suggested that the program develop data standards, definitions and inventories, and assess methods, costs, and benefits for creating and maintaining them.
3. **Develop and assess cost-benefit models and other measures of information value.** Many participants were concerned that policy makers undervalue information as an organizational resource and a governmental asset. Specifically, they would like to identify mechanisms to measure and convey the value of information.
4. **Specify the information use skills necessary for government professionals and recommend ways to acquire them.** Participants were concerned about the lack of skills necessary to effectively use government information, including ability to search, assess, analyze, and present information. They suggested a program goal of defining information-related competencies for program staff and research and IT professionals, as well as recommending education and hiring strategies.
5. **Assess the cost-effectiveness of various technical tools and techniques.** Many information management tools are in use, or are under development in government and business. The program should explore the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and appropriateness of various tools, such as databases, query tools, data warehouses, data marts, and data mining, for diverse business objectives.
6. **Develop collaborative and collective resources for data users.** Participants identified several techniques to assist in achieving this goal, including a Web site which provides tools, tips, techniques, and contacts for those engaging in many kinds of data projects. In addition, a set of recommended practices based on real public sector experiences that address the policy, management, and technology issues to consider.

A Using Information in Government Program Framework

Most government program managers think of information services as tools to support both internal functions and a wide array of services to the public. These functions and services can be usefully divided into four areas: public management processes, policy analysis and evaluation, complex public service programs, and direct public contact. Each of these has different decision-making requirements, and therefore different information content and service requirements. We characterize them as follows:

Public management processes include internal controls, procurement, personnel management, rule-making, records management, auditing, and financial management.

Policy analysis and evaluation covers such functions as research, planning, program development, evaluation, and reporting.

Complex public service programs involves professional staff from one or more agencies in

Using Information in Government Program

ensive service delivery, regulatory, or enforcement activities.

Direct public contact includes publicly accessible information, referral services and directories; direct public access to reports and information; public participation processes; freedom of information requests; and simple transactions such as license and registration renewals or payment of fees and fines.

The conceptual framework for the **Using Information in Government Program**, shown below, reflects both this array of governmental functions and the list of program goals described earlier. The **Program** addresses not only one or a few cells in this framework but represents experiences and lessons across the full range of possibilities.

Using Information in Government: A Program Framework				
	Government Functions			
Using Information Program Goals	Public Management Processes	Policy Analysis & Evaluation	Complex Public Service Programs	Direct Public Contact
Information use policies or templates				
Data standards, inventory, quality assurance				
Cost-benefit model, value measures				
Assessment of technical tools				
Information-related skills				
Collaborative & collective resources				

Contact Information

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