

One of the promises of e-government is a reinvented government. This vision includes improved access for citizens, more responsive service, increased efficiency, and greater effectiveness.

But building e-government is not simple or easy. It is a complex and costly design and construction effort that challenges existing skills and demands policy, management, and technology tools for planning, design, implementation, and evaluation.

In response to government managers' needs for such tools, CTG's "E-Government: Creating Tools of the Trade" program has created a series of practical resources to assist in the design and implementation of e-government. Chosen by the pioneers in New York's e-government work, these tools provide practical advice for public managers facing a wide variety of e-government challenges.

Information Access in an Electronic World

- How do government agencies decide what information to make public and how?
- How do they determine what information to include or exclude from their Web sites?
- How can they best use information technology to give people the information they need?
- How do they protect personal privacy and try to ensure personal and national security?

These questions were at the heart of a policy panel hosted by CTG in January at the State Capitol in Albany. The panel discussion, entitled "Information Access in an Electronic World," examined the difficult balance among competing information policy goals.

The policy panel encompassed a broad range of disciplines including government agencies, academic institutions, citizen-access groups, and IT and homeland security experts. Panelists included representatives from the New York State Department of Law, New York State Office for Technology, New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Center for Democracy and Technology, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Making a Case for Local E-Government

E-government may be uncharted territory for many in local government, but technology holds great potential for improving the way government works. Local and county governments are trying to realize this potential by finding the best ways to implement new technology. The lessons from their experiences are the focus of an executive briefing released by CTG in July.

The briefing, entitled **Making a Case for Local E-Government**, is the result of research into local experiences in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating e-government initiatives. It draws from the insight, lessons, and stories shared by local e-government pioneers who participated in the CTG research program.

e-Gov FirstStop

After a yearlong process of research and development, CTG introduced **e-Gov FirstStop**, a knowledge-sharing partnership. Located at www.ctg.albany.edu/egovfirststop, **e-Gov FirstStop** includes a carefully selected collection of e-government materials including executive-level briefings, research and best practices reports, case studies, and Web sites. All resources included in **e-Gov FirstStop** are reviewed and selected by e-government practitioners and scholars.

e-Gov FirstStop was created in response to government managers who expressed frustration by the need to sort through vast amounts of information to find useful, high-quality, timely material. They requested a resource that classifies and evaluates e-government resources and presents them in an organized, intuitive, and usable way. New material is continuously nominated, reviewed, and added to the site, making it a "living" resource for e-government research.

Investing in e-government

Statistics on information technology investment report that failure rates in the range of 50 to 80 percent. Most failures occur because of an inability to appreciate the complexity of IT decision making and how IT affects nearly every other aspect of an organization's work.

CTG's **Smart IT2** is the revised edition of an earlier handbook designed to help organizations make good decisions about when and how to invest in information technology. It offers a well-tested approach to reduce the risk of failure that is focused first on the service objectives and underlying business processes rather than on the technology itself. A second principle is to identify all of the internal and external stakeholders and to understand clearly their different needs, resources, and expectations. **Smart IT2** is organized as a guide to a careful analytical process that culminates in a sound business case for investing in significant IT projects.

Electronic Government and Business Process Change

Electronic government has the capacity to change how government works, making it inevitable that existing business processes will change. Some will be only slightly revised while others completely vanish or are overhauled from scratch. In each case, success will depend on the ability of government professionals to respond to and manage the elements and effects of business process change.

Electronic Government and Business Process Change is a work in progress that examines the challenges of business process change related to e-government initiatives. It focuses on strategies and tactics for dealing with these issues and includes recommendations for action. The analysis is based on academic- and practitioner-oriented best-practices research in both the public and private sectors.

From Static to Dynamic Web

As the Internet expands and evolves, Web sites become larger, more interactive, and more complex. With this increased complexity comes a greater need to efficiently manage Web content while moving from a static to a dynamic "living" resource.

CTG has been bringing the latest thinking in dynamic Web technology to a diverse audience of public sector information technology professionals via a presentation series entitled **XML: From Static to Dynamic Web**. The series explains the challenges of cutting-edge Web site management-involving content, layout and style-and the effective solutions that XML (eXtensible Markup Language) can provide. The presentations feature discussions of challenges, examples of code, Web redesign analyses, and practical advice for developing a Web site that is both more dynamic and easier to manage.

Partners

The E-Government: Creating Tools of the Trade project was based on the insight and input of a legion of e-government practitioners including representatives of 50-plus local governments, more than a dozen state agencies, valued academic and corporate partners, and numerous other university and government colleagues. CTG gratefully acknowledges their participation and contributions. A complete listing of these participants is provided on the CTG Web site as well as within each of the individual "tools" publications.