

Making Smart IT Choices

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Why evaluate information technology (IT) choices? Because IT innovation is risky business in every organization. The public policy choices and public management processes that are part of government make it an especially difficult environment for IT managers. This environment adds several risks that are unique to the public sector. These layers of complexity present a daunting challenge to public managers who are responsible for choosing, funding, and building IT innovations.

Government managers need to evaluate IT choices because they are among the most complex and expensive decisions they are expected to make.

There are three ways to mitigate the risks inherent in these complex decisions: thoroughly understand the problem to be solved and its context, identify and test possible solutions to the problem, evaluate the results of those tests against your service and performance goals. This handbook is designed to help any government manager follow a well-tested methodology for evaluating IT innovations before deciding (with greater confidence) to make a significant investment.