

INNOVATIONS

The Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany/SUNY
An Innovations in American Government Award Winner

Collaboration Issue

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A Committee That Stands Up To Its Name

Long before the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) opened its doors in 1993, a group of thoughtful, talented, and persistent people shared a vision and created a plan for a research program that would help state agencies experiment with new technologies for service delivery. This collection of visionaries, formed around 1990 and led by Jackie DelRossi of the Office of Mental Health, was a working group of the New York State Forum for Information Resource Management (Forum). These dedicated IRM professionals actually invented CTG and worked tirelessly to see it become a reality. They developed a concept paper that was discussed with every possible funding agency. They sponsored the first all-volunteer project (the Department of Motor Vehicles Title Imaging Project) that was put together to demonstrate, not just talk about, their vision. They developed guidelines and policies that eventually became the operating framework for CTG; developed a systematic process for announcement, selection, and execution of CTG projects; and have remained an essential part of the Center's ongoing program.

Once CTG was formally established, this group became a Forum standing committee which meets monthly with Center staff to help define, guide, select, and evaluate projects. The Committee has evolved in many ways over the past five years but has remained true to its original vision. When the members were asked recently about their current role, they responded with similar phrases. Robert Kelly, Director of Information Systems at the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal, believes the primary role of the standing committee is "to act as a sounding board for future activities, projects and approaches." Terry Maxwell, Executive Director of the New York State Forum for Information Resource Management explained that the standing committee's focus is "to assist with the evaluation and selection methods for projects." The clearest description of the committee role was given by Ron Cooke, Chair of the CTG standing committee since 1993 and Director of Data Processing at the New York State Police. In his words, "The standing committee provides advice and guidance in a variety of areas but perhaps the most critical role is to assure an ongoing connection between the day-to-day activities, concerns, and pressures of

operating agencies and the projects that CTG pursues. It is vitally important that CTG projects, best practices, and results continue to be directly applicable to the real-world problems and challenges facing state and local governments."

In the public sector it is essential to stay abreast of how information technology can support mission critical services. It is equally important to understand the ever-changing political climate. Standing committee members come to the table with extensive experience and knowledge about the NYS state of affairs and they also understand what information management and technology needs exist within New York state and local governments. Their immersion in the concerns of the IRM community complements their collective ability to define relevant projects that address those

when many NYS agencies were faced with the need to create high quality Web sites in a short time and at low cost, the committee members discussed and endorsed the idea of a testbed where several agencies could take part in the development of clear, informative Web sites. The result was the Internet Services Testbed which produced one of the Center's most popular products, "Recommended Practices for Developing and Delivering Government Services on the WWW," and well as the Universal Interface Project which experimented with many ways of using the Web as the universal gateway to government services.

During the past five years the standing committee has also helped CTG expand its focus from single agency issues to projects that engage groups of agencies and have wider applicability in government. Projects such as "Best Practices in State-Local Information Systems" involved state agencies and local governments who were working on eleven different information system initiatives. Alex Roberts, Assistant Director of Data Processing at the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services noted that, "CTG has refined its technique over the past five years, their link to supporting business services has strengthened and their products are becoming more generalizable to the IRM

community in the government arena." Bob Kelly went on to say, "CTG's projects have created an excitement in NYS, addressing the needs of many NYS agencies and producing products that are relevant and far-reaching." Sharon Dawes, CTG Director, believes, "The standing committee is our sounding board and reality check. Over the years, each member has been a valued, candid advisor. When people outside NYS compliment us on the practical value of our projects, the praise really belongs to the standing committee which keeps us focused on the real world."

CTG's standing committee meets on the third Friday of each month to discuss current projects, future areas for research and experimentation, and current IRM issues in NYS.

The most critical role of the Standing Committee is to assure an ongoing connection between the day-to-day activities, concerns, and pressures of operating agencies and the projects that CTG pursues.

Ron Cooke, Chair
CTG Standing Committee

concerns. Their keen sense of what is important helps CTG conduct projects that not only address issues for specific organizations, but also makes it possible to select topics that generate findings that benefit a much wider audience.

Tom Donovan, currently the Managing Principal Consultant at Oracle Corporation and a former CTG standing committee member stated, "As a member of the committee and as a practitioner in the IRM community, I relied on CTG's continuous review of emerging technology and its application to the real world issues in the public and private sectors." Several committee members stated that discussing IRM issues within their own agencies, and within the state as a whole, allows them to better target the problems for CTG to tackle. For example, in 1995

CTG Standing Committee

Current Members

Ronald Cooke, NYS Police
Edward DeFranco, DCJS
Paul Fisk, DOB
Robert Kelly, DHCR
Terry Maxwell, NYSFIRM
Peter Poleto, DMV
Alex Roberts, DCJS
Thomas Ruller, NYSED
Doug Williams, OSC

Former Members

Jacqueline Del Rossi
Thomas Donovan
Howard Geer
Jake Nolan
Frank Lees
Martin Zakis

Best Practices in State-Local Information Systems Wins Award

“Tying a Sensible Knot: Best Practices in the New York State-Local Government Information Systems Project” recently won a 1998 recognition award for outstanding achievement in the field of Information Technology from the **National Association of State Information Resource Executives (NASIRE)** in the category of Statewide Initiatives/Policy, Planning and Management. Of the 89 nominations submitted, “Best Practices” was one of 10 winners. The project, involving 150 New York state and local officials representing 17 state agencies and 56 local governments, developed a set of tools and recommendations to help state and local agencies develop effective intergovernmental information systems. The tools include fundamental principles, best practices, and recognition of several barriers and environmental factors that could hinder success in developing state-local information systems. Congratulations to everyone who helped make this project a national success. To see the project products visit our Web site at:
<http://www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/lg/lgmn.html>.

Alliance Update

As featured in the May 1998 issue of *Innovations*, the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) has partnered with the National Computational Science Alliance (Alliance) to build the information infrastructure of the next century. CTG, as head of the government team in the Education, Outreach, and Training Partnership for Advanced Computational Infrastructure, will help identify, develop, and disseminate innovative applications of technologies to apply to the practical problems of federal, state, and local governments.

The Alliance '98 conference, held in April at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is one of the focal points of the Alliance partnership. The conference gathered Alliance partners including computational scientists, computer scientists, and professionals in education, outreach, and training to discuss current and future projects. Approximately 850 Alliance participants, representing over 50 U.S. universities and research institutions, gathered for reporting sessions, tutorials, “birds-of-a-feather” discussion, and several demonstrations of computational and collaborative tools. Each of the respective disciplines learned about projects and products developed by their Alliance counterparts. The overall conference atmosphere was collaborative itself, with computational scientists and K-12 educators discussing partnerships, and government outreach professionals networking with technology experts.

One of the highlights of the conference was a demonstration of some of the Alliance's collaborative tools, including Habanero and Tango. Habanero is a collaborative framework and set of applications that allows users to share tasks from remote locations in real time over the Internet. Habanero also enables developers of groupware applications to build powerful collaborative software in a reduced amount of time. Tango, a multi-user system, helps individuals collaborating in real-time from remote locations to share Web and non-Web applications through the Internet.

Another successful session at Alliance '98 was the “birds-of-a-feather” discussion on outreach to government. The session drew about a dozen participants for a lively exchange of how technology can be used to support government services. Several hours were spent discussing the generalizability and transferability of technologies developed by the Alliance partners to both the state and local government sectors.

One new product unveiled at the conference was a tailored version of CTG's “Making Smart IT Choices.” The altered version, adapted for the Alliance community, focused on using CTG's suite of tools to get the most out of the Alliance's field tests of new technologies. Not surprisingly, the workshop participants found that end user needs are still the primary focus if the new technologies are to have any impact on solving problems.

Overall, Alliance '98 provided an opportunity for the partners to meet and exchange ideas, but also to facilitate future projects. Watch for more Alliance updates in the next *Innovations* newsletter.

Thank you, Digital!

Reginald Height, Regional IT Infrastructure Software Consultant at Digital Equipment Corporation has once again demonstrated his dedication to CTG projects. He and Donna Berlin, Internet Coordinator at CTG, developed and delivered an informative Technical Awareness Seminar for the Using Information in Government (UIG) Program in May 1998. The half-day seminar, “Best Practices Research on the Web” was developed to teach UIG participants how to search the Web for systems similar to the ones they are developing. The seminar included topics such as choosing a search engine, defining a search, and power searching. Reggie stated, “I think this seminar is a good example of what can happen when a corporate partner gets involved with CTG to help customers better understand how technology can work for them.”



The Grand Finale

Over 150 participants crowded into the NYS Museum theater on June 18th to see a presentation of the **Models for Action** project results and prototype. The project, sponsored by the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) and carried out with the State Archives and Records Administration (SARA) and the NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA), produced two practical tools that support the identification of records management requirements as information systems are being developed. One of the tools, the Records Requirements Analysis and Implementation Tool (RRAIT), supports the identification of records management requirements, as well as the strategies for their implementation during business process improvement and system analysis activities.

The Models for Action project, funded in part by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), also produced a prototype system developed to support the land use permit process at the NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA). Project partners were present to witness the debut of the prototype including John Banta and Edward Hood from APA, and John Tierney, Barry Blanchard, and Mike Sedgewick from Intergraph Corporation. Intergraph was the lead corporate partner in the design and development of the prototype. Other corporate partners were Image Conversion Systems, Oracle Corporation, MediaServ, Microsoft Corporation, Sybase, Inc., and Audio Visual Sales and Service.

Although the completion of the Models for Action Final Report marks the end of the project, the consideration of electronic records issues will be continued at CTG through the application of the RRAIT analysis in current and future projects. CTG will also continue its research in electronic records management through a second grant from NHPRC. In November 1997, CTG and SARA were awarded \$380,000 from NHPRC to investigate innovative and emerging technologies to ensure that electronic records continue to be accessible for secondary use. The project entitled “Gateways to the Past, Present, and Future: Practical Guidelines to Secondary Uses of Electronic Records” will develop records management processes and models to help assure that electronic records are available and usable for the widest variety of contemporary and future public needs.

The Models For Action final report and practical tools are available at <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/er/ermn.html>.

Best Practices in Government Technology

The New York State Office for Technology invites you to attend the following fall 1998 sessions:

Financial Management Systems for Local Government
9/16/98, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Empire State Plaza
Legislative Office Building Hearing Room B

Mobile Computing
10/14/98, 8:30 a.m. to 4 pm, Empire State Plaza
Meeting Room 6, Concourse Level

E-911 Emergency Response/GIS Systems
11/19/98, 8:30 a.m. to 4 pm, Empire State Plaza
Meeting Room 6, Concourse Level

For more information and to register, call the Office for Technology, 518 / 473-5622.

Project Update Using Information in Government

As reported in the May 1998 issue of *Innovations*, the Using Information in Government Program (UIG) at the Center for Technology in Government involves four agency teams developing business plans for projects that use government information. The four projects are approaching this topic in vastly different ways yet all are dealing with the same set of information issues. The New York State Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance is seeking to track homeless, at-risk adults and families to understand how services impact NYS's homeless population. The State Emergency Management Office is pursuing an emergency management needs assessment system that will provide dynamic data. The Office of the State Comptroller has proposed the development of a contact management repository for their Division of Municipal Affairs. The Central New York Psychiatric Center is proposing the development of a facility-based Intranet site to meet the information needs of their Operations Division.

The UIG program framework follows a series of workshops that will lead the project teams through the definition and early decision making phases of their projects and will expose the teams to specific technical areas such as data management, data integration, data quality, and data warehousing. The workshops are active learning, planning, and development sessions designed to help each project team make substantial progress toward their specific project goals. They comprise an ordered series of topics that build upon previous sessions. In the six workshops completed, participants have had the opportunity to hear from several speakers covering a range of topics including:

Workshop Sessions

- Dr. Lakshmi Mohan, University of Albany
Getting Value from Data Warehousing: Lessons Learned from Practice
- Dr. Terry Maxwell, NYS Forum for IRM
Welfare Reform: Identifying Performance Measures
- Dr. Giri Kumar Tayi, University at Albany
Data Quality Management

Information System Overviews

- *NYS Office of Mental Health Overtime Analysis Intranet Application*
Alan Weinstock, Executive Deputy Commissioner, NYS OMH
Michael Middleton, Director of the Information Systems Office, NYS OMH
Anthony Buzzelli, Project Coordinator, NYS OMH
- *COMPSTAT (Computerized Comparison Statistics)*
Philip McGuire, Assistant Commissioner, NYC Police Department
- *MAGNET (Massachusetts Access to Government Information Network)*
Louis Gutierrez, Chief Information Officer, Massachusetts

Technical Awareness Sessions

- *Developing a Data Mart*
Dr. Peter Duchessi, University at Albany
- *Best Practices Research on the Web*
Reginald Height, Digital Equipment Corporation
Donna Berlin, Center for Technology in Government
- *Data Integration and Decision Support*
William T. Winand, SAS
- *Designer 2000 System*
Steve Frank, Oracle
- *Data Quality Tools*
Pam Neely, Center for Technology in Government

Following the UIG workshops scheduled to end in the fall, two project teams will continue their work with CTG and develop prototype systems. Watch for UIG program updates in future *Innovations* newsletters.



Digital Government

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is sponsoring a new research initiative called the Digital Government Program. According to the program announcement released in June, the Digital Government Program is designed to support "projects that innovatively, effectively, and broadly address through research the potential improvement of agency, interagency, and intergovernmental operations and/or government/citizen interaction. Such research is expected to enable the generation and use of a continuous stream of advanced information technologies for early adoption and integration into the Federal information systems community."

CTG has received one of the first grants from this program to conduct an October 1998 planning conference called "Designing the Digital Government of the 21st Century: A Multidisciplinary Workshop." Working with NSF Program Officer Larry Brandt, and an organizing committee whose members include leading computer scientists, social science researchers, and federal, state, and local government officials, CTG will organize a two-day program in Arlington, VA. The invitational workshop, one of several being conducted this year, has several objectives, including:

- ◆ to broaden understanding of the range of government functions that can be supported by advanced applications of IT
- ◆ to explore a "program-centric" view of the information needs of government operations including a look at how policy, organizational, and human factors shape the implementation environment
- ◆ to apply a variety of disciplinary lenses to this picture of government
- ◆ to generate a number of high-quality collaborative research proposals.

Future issues of *Innovations* will report on the workshop and the development of the Digital Government initiative.

Five Years of Collaboration

The Center for Technology in Government will highlight five years of accomplishments at the **Government Technology Conference (GTC-East)** in September 1998. GTC, sponsoring conferences on both the east and west coasts, is one of the premier information technology conferences for state and local governments. In the conference's Government Solutions Area, CTG will showcase several projects including:

- ◆ **Models for Action: Developing Practical Approaches to Electronic Records Management and Preservation**
- ◆ **Tying a Sensible Knot: Best Practices in State-Local Information Systems**
- ◆ **Delivering on the Web: The NYS Internet Services Testbed**

To register for GTC, visit their Web site at: <http://www.govtech.net/conferences/gtc/conf.shtm>

Kudos, Dr. Pardo!

Congratulations to Theresa Pardo, Project Director at the Center for Technology in Government, for completing her doctorate in Information Science at the University at Albany. Dr. Pardo's dissertation, "Reducing the Risks in Innovative Uses of Information Technology in the Public Sector: A Multidisciplinary Model," is based on the results of the Internet Services Testbed. All of us at CTG are proud of Theresa's accomplishment and look forward to applying her research to future projects.

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Making Connections

April 1998

Sharon Dawes was the keynote speaker at the Conference on Information Technology in Public Administrations in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The conference, sponsored by the Sao Paulo Computer and Telecommunications User's Association, the Brazilian Association of Information Technology City Companies, and the Institute for Promotion of Conferences on Information Technology, focused on Information Technology and Telecommunications in government management.

Later in the month, the Center for Technology in Government hosted Brazilian visitor, **Professor Nicolau Reinhard**, from the University of Sao Paulo (USP). Professor Reinhard met with CTG staff to discuss possible partnership opportunities and to give an overview USP's Foundation for Management and Administration.

Bridget Sisk and **Charles Rosenburg**, officials from the **United Nations**, met with the Models for Action Project Team, including CTG and SARA staff, Anthony Cresswell from the University at Albany, and John Banta and Edward Hood from the Adirondack Park Agency. The discussion focused on the applicability of the products from the Models for Action project in the context of records management at the United Nations.

May 1998

Theresa Pardo presented "Delivering Government Services on the Web: Management, Policy and Technology Lessons Learned from the Field" at the American Society of Public Administration Annual Conference held in Seattle, Washington. **David Connelly** also presented "Best Practices in Intergovernmental Information Systems."

Anthony Cresswell, a CTG senior faculty fellow, presented "Making Smart IT Choices" at the Government Technology Conference-West in Sacramento, California.

Sharon Dawes served as moderator at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) and the Lake Ontario Archives Conference (LOAC) in Saratoga Springs. The panel discussion focused on The Twenty-First Century Issues in Electronic Records Management. Speakers on the panel included **Alan Kowlowitz** of the **New York State Archives and Records Administration** and **Ken Thibodeau** of the **National Archives and Records Administration**.

Sharon also spoke at the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy's Pi Alpha Alpha reception as a distinguished practitioner in the public sector.

June 1998

Sharon Dawes spoke at the Empire State Report's **First Annual Local Government Information Technology Conference** on "Implementing New York State's Net," at the Marriott Hotel in Albany.

Sharon served as a moderator for a panel discussion regarding NYS Electronic Commerce Projects at the **Electronic Commerce Symposium** sponsored by the NYS Office for Technology.

Kristine Kelly gave a presentation on the Models for Action Project to APA Agency Board and staff. The presentation provided an overview of the project goals and project products including the prototype developed to support the minor project review process.

Kristine was also a guest lecturer in an Information Policy course at Rockefeller College. The process and results of the Models for Action Project were presented.

CTG hosted visitors, **Tom Prudhomme**, Associate Director for Government Programs and **Jerry Sheehan**, Education and Outreach Coordinator for State and Local Governments from the **National Center for Supercomputing Applications**. They met with CTG staff to discuss the current partnership for advanced computational infrastructure project and to attend CTG's Using Information in Government Workshop.

Peter Bloniarz attended a "Train the Trainer" workshop hosted by the National Science Foundation in San Diego, California. The focus of the workshop was to look at education and training in the areas of parallel, high-performance, and networked computing and scientific problem solving as it relates to network-based education and training.

July 1998

Kristine Kelly spoke at the 16th International Conference of the **Systems Dynamic Society** in Quebec City, Canada. Her presentation was entitled "The Effects of a Group Model Building Intervention on Information Choices for Sustainable Development Decision Making."

Alan Kowlowitz presented "Integrating Document Management, Workflow, and GIS to Support Land Use Permitting in the NYS Adirondack Park" at the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Peter Bloniarz and Sharon Dawes participated in the National Computational Science Alliance's Education, Outreach and Training Team Steering Committee meeting in Chicago.

David Connelly participated in the National Science Foundation Digital Government Initiative, Geographic Information Systems Workshop in Washington DC.



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