

INNOVATIONS

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

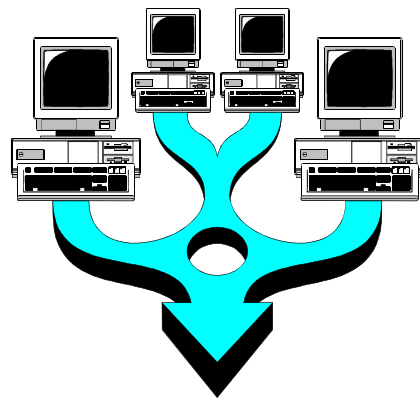
July 1999

UIG Round 2 Ushers in Four New Investigations

When you mention the words ‘relationships’ and ‘sharing,’ government is usually the farthest thing from people’s minds. But in reality, relationships and sharing are integral to the workings of public sector agencies and programs.

The Center for Technology in Government (CTG) is studying the affect of complex organizational relationships and information sharing on the management, policy, and technology issues under investigation in the four projects that comprise the second round of the Using Information in Government Program. Those projects are with the NYS Office of Real Property Services, the NYS Office of the State Comptroller, the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, and the NYS Department of Transportation.

“Complex organizational relationships and information sharing are the umbrella themes for these four projects,” said CTG Director Sharon S. Dawes. “All the submissions were excellent and posed interesting research questions, but the four chosen projects will allow us to investigate the problems



of using information in government in the most challenging and comprehensive manner.”

While they all focus on organizational collaboration and information sharing issues, the four projects vary in terms of scope, length, research questions, and methods. All of the projects will begin this year and continue into 2000.

“Development and Deployment of a Market Analysis System,” the **NYS Office of Real Property Services’** (ORPS) project, is an investigation into a new comprehensive, statewide database

to help local property tax assessors annually update assessments for New York State’s five million parcels of real property. “This is an issue that is critical for ORPS right now as many of the efforts currently underway in our agency are dependent on establishing effective and efficient processes for sharing information,” said Thomas G. Griffen, executive director of ORPS.

CTG will work with ORPS in two phases. The first phase will involve a series of interviews with local assessors to gather information about their range of needs and capabilities in order to better inform the design of the system. The second phase will include a CTG-conducted workshop where assessors and ORPS staff can meet and discuss the resources, policies, and operational changes that are necessary to implement a new assessment system.

In the **NYS Office of the State Comptroller’s** (OSC) project, “Central Accounting System Stakeholder Analysis,” CTG will work with OSC staffers to perform a thorough analysis of user needs and expectations of a

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A prototype Homeless Information Management System and a two-day business rules and records workshop are two products from UIG round one projects.

Seminar highlights Page 4

Public sector managers need new skills to effectively use information in their organizations. The second UIG seminar highlights successful cases from NYS agencies.

Partner named Page 7

Cartoonist Randy Glasbergen is CTG’s newest corporate partner. His work, which humorously portrays common workplace situations, now illustrates our presentations.

Publication released Page 7

“Some Assembly Required,” the final report from the Digital Government Workshop, sheds light on building a digital government for the 21st century.

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redesigned central accounting system, which is the backbone of financial and budgetary operations in New York State. “New York’s current CAS (Central Accounting System) is a statewide, mission-critical system that is now 17 years old and many of its stakeholders have identified the need to modernize and improve it,” said State Comptroller H. Carl McCall. “Before we initiate a system redesign project, we would like to launch a thorough, objective analysis of the needs and expectations of those who use and depend on the CAS.”

“We will conduct a series of facilitated sessions throughout the state to find out what different kinds of users are looking for in a centralized accounting system,” said Theresa Pardo, CTG project director. This work will involve analyzing and documenting stakeholder needs, which will lead to identification of necessary system features.

“Utilization of Information Regarding New York City’s Information Technology Systems and Best Practices” is the title of the project with the **New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications** (DoITT). “This project proposes to create a new information management paradigm to manage the wealth of information about the City’s information technology systems and about best practices,” said William Keller, deputy commissioner and director of the Office of Technology at DoITT. “The information will need to be easily accessed, searched, and analyzed by the numerous and varied end-users.”

CTG will work with members of DoITT’s Technology Steering Committee and other agencies to define and test a new information management model that will support sound IT investment decisions linked to New York City’s IT Strategic Plan. The project will define information content needs of these agencies; explore and select methods of collecting, organizing, and analyzing that information; and identify and test tools for searching, exchanging, and accessing that information by multiple users.

CTG will work with the **NYS Department of Transportation** (DOT) on the “Information for Use in an IT Investment Process” project. “The New York State Department of Transportation is creating a standard process for evaluating and approving IT investments, whether for new IT projects or for ongoing support of the current IT infrastructure,” said Dom Gieras, IT planning coordinator for DOT. “The result of this process is the development of a portfolio of IT project investments that maximizes mission performance.”

This summer, CTG will assist DOT’s Information Service Bureau, IT Council, and Budget and Finance Division in defining the needs and goals for this IT investment process. For the next several months, DOT will carry out its plan and stay informed about related developments and best practices that emerge from the DoITT project. CTG will return to DOT in the winter to conduct a follow-up evaluation of the agency’s efforts to link strategic business planning with IT investment planning, link IT decisions and accountability to line management, and integrate the IT investment process with the budget process.

“These projects present a great opportunity to address an array of governmental functions and the broadest set of Using Information in Government Program goals, while directly addressing the agencies’ own goals,” Dawes said.

For more information about CTG’s Using Information in Government Program, visit www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/projmain.html#a1

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... an applied research center devoted to improving government and public services through policy, management, and technology innovations.

First UIG Projects Wind Down

As CTG revs up to take on four new projects in the second round of the Using Information in Government (UIG) Program, two projects from the first round are racing for the finish line.

The **Office of the State Comptroller's Division of Municipal Affairs** (OSC) is working toward having its electronic information repository of local government contacts up and running by the end of the year. As part of their work to develop MACROS – the Municipal Affairs Contact Repository Operating System – 30 staffers from the division's central and regional offices participated in a two-day workshop conducted by CTG. Through large and small group exercises, and a best practices session, participants worked on specifying the technical assistance process as a service that will be documented using MACROS.



“The purpose of the workshop was to build understanding of, and a consensus around, the business rules that govern the delivery of technical assistance and the records that must be captured to document that delivery,” said Theresa Pardo, CTG project director. “The results of the work provide information necessary in developing the data models and object/entity relationships for the document management system.”

The workshop and subsequent report are the final steps of the Division of Municipal Affairs' UIG project activities.



The Homeless Information Management System (HIMS) project with the **Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's Bureau of Housing Services** (BHS) will be finished within the next few months. A core team of 14 people from BHS, CTG, and Oracle are working to develop and test a prototype information resource that will draw upon data from existing case management systems and use technology to enable decision-makers to manage and evaluate temporary housing and service programs for homeless families and single adults.

Building on the business case for HIMS developed by the project team during the first six months of the project, the second six months were spent on the data discovery and system design phase, said CTG Project Support Manager Donna Canestraro. The project team completed a variety of tasks, including: secured participation of four homeless shelter organizations to provide data, identified which data from current legacy systems will be matched to the new data, chose Oracle as corporate partner, developed an implementation and testing plan, and designed the prototype system.

The prototype is scheduled to be tested at about 10 sites during the summer. Officials from BHS, CTG, NYC Department of Housing Services, and shelters in New York City, and Westchester and Suffolk counties will test the prototype following a structured evaluation plan. The project will conclude in the early fall with a final report on the management, policy, and technology issues that were identified and addressed in the HIMS project.

More information about the HIMS project is available at www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/hims/hismn.html

Effective Information Use Requires the Right

As the 21st century dawns and new technologies emerge at a breakneck pace, it has become much harder for managers to find and use the information that is so vital to the operation of their businesses.

As part of the Using Information in Government Program Seminar Series, CTG presented “Information Use Tools and Skill Sets” on May 4 to address public managers’ needs for new skill sets, information-related competencies, technical tools, and techniques to get the most out of information for planning, evaluation, and decision making. More than 65 people from two dozen state agencies attended the seminar, which featured presentations, case studies, and a panel discussion.

“We’re all inundated with the pressures to pull together data to support decision making and to use data better and more effectively. Information literacy is the key,” said Theresa Pardo, CTG project director.

Pardo set the stage for the half day seminar with her discussion of the information use issues CTG has encountered in the UIG projects. While technology is part of every project, the core work often involves developing new business processes and policies. In order to participate in these processes people must: understand the value of the data, develop new business models, map those models to data sources, create new data and design models, and develop and use feedback features. All of these require learning new skills to use information.

CTG Graduate Assistant Jochen Scholl expanded on this foundation and discussed knowledge management, which is a tool used to ensure learning, change, and vitality in organizations. Public and private sector businesses must capitalize on employees’ individual skills and experiences by having them share this knowledge with their coworkers. The process of learning can bring about change within the organization. Learning and change are integral to the health and longevity of the organization. “It is not only important to learn, but it’s also important to change,” Scholl said.

Representatives from three New York State agencies – Department of Health, Department of Transportation, and Office of Mental Health – shared stories of how their organizations dealt successfully with various information use issues.

The NYS Department of Health’s Peter Lannon, research scientist, and Robert Pennacchia, manager of Data Processing Technical Services, discussed the Medicaid Managed Care Encounter Data System (MEDS), an Intranet-based system created to track and assess enrollment of Medicaid recipients in managed care plans. Lannon and Pennacchia said developers and users needed to expand their skills in a variety of areas in order to effectively create, implement, and use the system. These new skills included: expand communication and facilitation abilities,

develop the capacity to identify business processes, hone analytic abilities, and build on basic PC skills. As Pennacchia said, the development and deployment of the MEDS program created an opportunity for the business officials, program managers, and technical team members to share skills.

The NYS Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Executive GIS Capital Program Viewer, which provides executives with up-to-date information on department activities throughout the state, is another example. Frank Winters, GIS Unit director at DOT, said the program was designed for ease of use; the GIS viewer contains all vital project information on one page and has limited controls. “We just provide some basic mapping and some hooks to these positional identifications. It dynamically takes tabular data and applies it to the map,” Winters said. “Just being able to zoom around and tell someone what DOT projects are going on in an area is a powerful tool for our executives.”

The NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) is another agency that dealt with information use problems by creating a new system. Michael Mittleman, OMH associate commissioner and chief information officer, said the Overtime Analysis Intranet Application tool was developed to monitor and analyze overtime costs in the agency’s 28 hospital facilities. The following information competencies were required by users: overcome technological phobias, exploit the available information resources, know how to interpret tables and graphs, understand the statistics, draw conclusions from multiple views of the same data, and view the PC as a personal tool to make new information. “One of the challenges is to come up with a display system that converts data into information and have the user smart enough to translate it and apply it in a business plan,” Mittleman said.

By sharing their experiences with information use tools and skill sets, the seminar panelists were able to impart some of their knowledge to the participants. As one agency representative said, “Learning how other organizations are addressing important issues provided me with some fresh perspectives.” CTG is documenting the UIG Seminars through a series of reports. The report on the second seminar will be added to our Web site soon.

For more information visit
www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/usinginfo/usinginfo.html

UIG Seminar Series Continues in Fall

“What Rules Govern the Use of Information,” the third session in the Using Information in Government (UIG) Program Seminar Series, will be held Tuesday, October 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the University at Albany’s Campus Center Assembly Hall.

Organizations need comprehensive policies to guide the use of information. This seminar will address information use issues – such as ownership, stewardship, liability, privacy, and confidentiality – as they relate to inter- and intra-agency information sharing. New York State agency representatives will share their information sharing experiences. Invited speakers will discuss relevant state policies and successful frameworks.

For more information about the
UIG Seminar Series,
visit www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/usinginfo/uig_seminars.html

Kudos

CTG Faculty Fellow David Andersen received one of the University at Albany’s highest honors when he was presented with a 1999 Excellence in Academic Service Award. David, who helped create CTG, was honored for his demonstrated leadership and service to the University. He has been with the University since 1977 and currently teaches in the Department of Public Administration and Policy. In the past, he served as dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs, director of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, and interim chair of the Department of Public Administration and Policy. David also helped create the University’s interdisciplinary doctoral program in information science.



Graduate Assistant Jochen Scholl recently received an award for the best article in the *Change and Management Reader* from the Graduate School of Business at Zurich and the Organizing Committee of the Zurich MBA Forum. Jochen, who is a student in the University at Albany’s information science doctoral program, was also invited to present this award-winning paper, “Knowledge Management and the Vital Organization,” at the Zurich MBA Forum in Switzerland.



Making Connections

Part of CTG's mission is sharing our innovations and practices with the wider government, academic, and research communities through presentations, education, and projects. This column highlights some of the connections the Center has made with other organizations during the past four months.

Presentations

Attendees of the **American Society for Public Administration's national conference** in Orlando, FL, learned about "Making Smart IT Choices" from David Connelly, graduate assistant. David also presented a talk on "It's Not the Technology, Stupid."

Peter Bloniarz, research and laboratory director, presented the results of the Digital Government Program workshop at an open house for the ACCESS Center in Washington, DC. **The National Computational Science Alliance's ACCESS Center**, billed as the technology center of the future, is a prototype of the kind of collaborative environment that is made possible by the Partnership for Advanced Computational Infrastructure technology.

A group of **Swedish government IT managers** visited CTG to learn more about the Center and its work on intergovernmental projects. The Swedes also met with several federal agencies and the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications during their trip to the US.

Y2K awareness was the subject of Project Director Theresa Pardo's presentation at the annual meeting of the **Town Clerk's Association** in Syracuse.

Peter discussed the results of CTG's Internet testbed project at the **Federal Webmasters' Conference** in Bethesda, MD.

The **LINKS 99 Conference**, designed to strengthen the relationships between state governments and public universities, was Peter's next destination. He participated in a panel discussion about developing public sector IT workforces and supporting innovative use of IT in the public sector at the Sacramento, CA conference.

Pam Neely, graduate assistant, presented "Hard and Soft Data: A Look at Data Quality Management Decision Making" as part of the doctoral symposium at the **Information Resource Management Association conference** in Hershey, PA.

The exotic locale of Lisbon, Portugal, was the setting for Director Sharon Dawes' presentation at the international conference "Public Administration on the Eve of the 21st Century – The Main Challenges." The conference, which marked the 20th anniversary

of the founding of **Portugal's National Institute of Administration**, featured a talk by Sharon about using technological partnerships as instruments of change in public sector management.

Meghan Kiernan, project management specialist, presented "Tying a Sensible Knot" as a best practice at "Jazzing Up Financial Management," the annual **Professional Development Conference and Exposition of the Association of Government Accountants** in New Orleans, LA.

Jochen Scholl, graduate assistant, presented a paper, "David vs. Goliath. Free vs. Proprietary Software. Or: Can GNU/Linux Outperform Microsoft One Day?" at the **System Dynamics Annual Conference** in Wellington, New Zealand.

Education

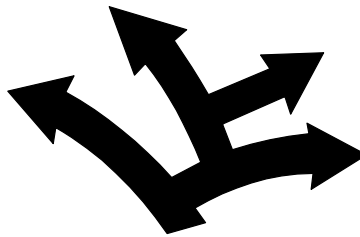
The **United Nations Postal Commission** received a lesson in how to apply the electronic records management principles from the Models for Action project to their needs. Sharon, Theresa, and Alan Kowlowitz of the NYS Archives and Records Administration discussed and demonstrated the Models for Action tools.

Anthony Cresswell, CTG faculty fellow, taught a two-day short course on "Making Smart IT Choices" for students in the **University at Albany's Graduate School of Public Affairs**. He covered such Smart IT principles as developing a strategic framework, conducting a stakeholder analysis, and defining service objectives.

Projects

Researchers from CTG and the **Center for French Speaking Research into the Use of Information in Organizations (CEFRIO)** in Quebec inaugurated their formal partnership with a two-day meeting in Albany. Officials from both organizations discussed their various projects, identified major IT trends facing public sector managers, and devised project ideas on how to respond to these trends.

CTG temporarily set up shop in Minneapolis, MN, to present a two-day workshop for the **United States Department of Justice**. The "Workshop to Develop a Business Case for Integrated Justice Information Systems" was designed to facilitate information sharing in the nation's criminal justice system

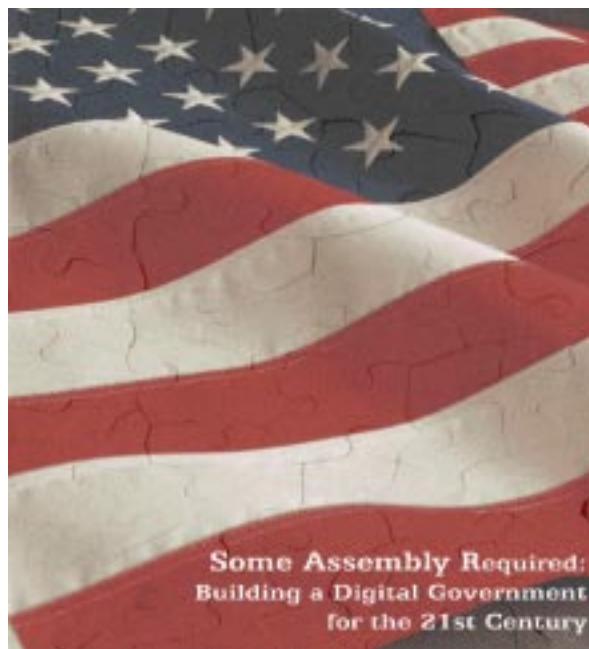


Some Assembly Required

Everyone has dealt with government. Whether it's applying for a building permit, getting a driver's license, filing an income tax return, or actually working in the public sector, all of us have had interactions with government agencies. As the 21st century rapidly approaches, all levels of government are becoming more aware of how technology can make these government transactions easier, more efficient, and better for the people who use them.

CTG is at the forefront of a national movement encouraging government to use technology as a way to transform services and programs for the next millennium. The recent CTG report, "Some Assembly Required: Building a Digital Government for the 21st Century," explores this issue and recommends how the National Science Foundation (NSF) can proceed with its Digital Government Program.

Pockets of digital government already exist. The IRS e-file and Telefile programs save millions of people time and effort by allowing them to file tax returns electronically. And with the rapid advance of technology, it's no stretch to imagine a day when a family planning a home renovation will be able to use their television to submit and receive all the necessary plans and permits via e-mail and the Internet, or when a state legislator will use data analysis tools to assess the impact of a proposed law and use the Internet as a venue to inform and hear from constituents. These types of technology-enhanced public services will benefit all Americans.



"Some Assembly Required: Building a Digital Government for the 21st Century" can be downloaded from the CTG Web site at www.ctg.albany.edu/resources/rptwplst.html#dig_gov. More information about the report and the program are available from the NSF Web site at www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?pr9933.

New Partner Tickles Funny Bone

We've acquired lots of corporate partners over the years, but CTG has never had one quite like this.

Our newest partner is **Randy Glasbergen**, a cartoonist and humor illustrator who has spent the last 27 years creating laugh-out-loud comics that illustrate common situations in family life, the business world, and everything in between. Glasbergen has agreed to allow CTG to use his cartoons, such as the one shown here, to illustrate our presentations, meetings, and conferences.

Glasbergen is most widely known for his daily panel cartoon, "The Better Half," which appears in newspapers around the globe via the King Features Syndicate. His "Today's Cartoon" is published every day on the World Wide Web. His cartoons have also appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Business Employment Weekly*, *Computing Today*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Good Housekeeping*. Such varied clients as Compaq, Johnson & Johnson, Hallmark Cards, and Ralston-Purina have used Glasbergen's illustration and advertising talents.

Spend a few minutes at Glasbergen's Web site and you'll see why he's CTG's latest corporate partner. View his cartoons at www.glasbergen.com

