

INNOVATIONS

*The Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany/SUNY
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Improving Public Safety Through Criminal Justice Integration

A student is raped and murdered by a newly-hired janitor whose record of violent criminal assaults was unknown to school officials. A police officer making a routine traffic stop unknowingly releases a fugitive wanted for a string of unsolved murders. A prisoner is mistakenly released and then violently assaults a young woman he encounters.

Stories like these appear in newspapers across America with alarming frequency. And as heinous as these acts of violence are, the most unfortunate thing about them is they all could have been prevented. A thorough background check returned to the school in a timely manner could have saved the student's life. Felony warrants available at the touch of a button in patrol cars could have meant an earlier arrest for a serial killer. Accurate information about prisoner release dates could have prevented an assault. In short, better communication and access to information could have made all the difference in the world.



The **United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (OJP)** recognizes this problem and has created an initiative, of which CTG is a partner, to help solve it.

OJP has embarked on a plan to assist state and local governments in the development of information sharing processes and integrated information systems. Paul Kendall, the general counsel of OJP, said the Office's criminal justice integration initiative is designed to enable timely and efficient information sharing within and between agencies in order to improve the effectiveness and

fairness of the criminal justice system to the benefit of all citizens.

As part of the effort to advance this initiative, CTG was awarded a \$363,000 cooperative grant to create a guide to developing a business case for criminal justice integration. "The business case must inform decision makers in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the importance of providing leadership, resources, and governance structures that will support the integration and interoperability of state and local justice information systems," said CTG Director Sharon Dawes.

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Staff changes **Page 6**
CTG is just about bursting at the seams of 1535 Western Avenue with the addition of several new employees and staffers who have taken on new roles.

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1998-99 was a banner year for CTG as we continued to improve the business of government through our innovations projects, which are detailed in our latest annual report.

More than 50 criminal justice officials and political leaders from across the country provided advice and recommendations on how to construct the business case and the types of information that should be included in it. These criminal justice representatives got together in late June for the two-day “Workshop for Building a Business Case for Integration of Criminal Justice Information,” which was conducted by CTG in Minneapolis, MN. Participants represented the areas of police, prosecution, defense, courts, and corrections, as well as elected officials from city, county, and state government.

Dawes said the goal of the workshop was to “encourage a better understanding of one another’s

The business case must inform decision makers about the importance of supporting integration of criminal justice information systems.

perspectives and to search for common ground where a convincing and comprehensive case for integration can be built.”

CTG facilitators led participants through a series of focused discussions and activities to elicit the benefits of criminal justice integration, as well as the barriers to integration and ways to overcome them. Several themes emerged out of these discussions:

- ◆ The goals or objectives of criminal justice integration are remarkably consistent from place to place, but the environments in which they are sought differ widely.
- ◆ Although general goals are shared, there are important differences in emphasis among the levels and branches of government and among the types of agencies involved.
- ◆ There is strong agreement that the collective benefits of criminal justice integration must be accompanied by benefits that are meaningful to each specific stakeholder.
- ◆ Barriers to criminal justice integration are both tangible and intangible.

Workshop participants also worked through a case study that followed a multi-county region’s efforts to start an integration initiative. This work resulted in a number of strategies for building and presenting a case for criminal justice integration.

- ◆ Find and cultivate a champion.
- ◆ Understand the needs and motivations of multiple audiences.
- ◆ Educate them about issues, benefits to them, needed investments, and likely problems.
- ◆ Be honest about how far it is from ‘here’ to ‘there.’
- ◆ Be prepared to answer the hard questions of cost and performance.
- ◆ Find ways to leverage related activities, investments, and events.
- ◆ Benchmark your situation against others.
- ◆ Many approaches can work.

The suggestions, insights, and stories shared by the workshop participants have proven invaluable to the CTG team crafting the business case guide. The guide is taking shape as a handbook criminal justice officials can use to build their own tailored business cases that will help them convince decision makers that integration initiatives should be supported. The business case materials will be distributed by the Department of Justice later this year.

For more information about this project, visit www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/doj/dojmn.html

HIMS Prototype System Unveiled in New York City

If we do not lay ourselves in the service of mankind whom should we serve? – Abigail Adams’ words from two centuries ago so aptly describe the mission of government today. And improving service to mankind, specifically the homeless population of New York State, is the goal of the latest prototype system developed as part of a CTG project.

The Homeless Information Management System (HIMS) is a prototype information resource that draws upon data from existing case management systems and uses technology to enable decision makers to manage and evaluate temporary housing and service programs for the more than 30,000 homeless families and single adults in New York. The prototype, which was developed by a team of representatives from CTG, the **New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance’s Bureau of Housing Services (BHS)**, University at Albany, and Oracle Corporation, was unveiled in September.



“The prototype is a blueprint of what can be done with a full system,” said CTG Project Support Manager Donna Canestraro. “Service providers have a hard time getting to this data. This tool will add a lot of new information.”

The prototype was demonstrated to a group of local homeless shelter providers at Oracle’s headquarters in New York City. CTG and BHS staff presented a general overview of the prototype and shared some of the lessons learned during the prototype development process. Later that day, the prototype’s evaluators, a group of staff from New York City homeless shelter organizations, were given a more in-depth lesson on the system’s functionality, query capabilities, and data issues.

HIMS is a decision support tool based on a data mart. The prototype is designed to use a small slice of information to demonstrate the form, function, and capability of the full system. For the prototype, three homeless shelter providers in New York City (H.E.L.P. USA, Homes for the Homeless, and the New York City Domestic Violence Office) provided anonymous demographic data for people living in a total of nine homeless family shelters. Those facts were joined by welfare data provided by the state. All this information was matched in the prototype’s staging area. Users query the system for answers about various homeless service programs. These answers allow government and non profit program managers to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

The prototype planning and development process took about six months to complete and involved a core team of 12 people. The project team conducted a series of meetings with homeless shelter organizations to address data issues, and privacy and

confidentiality concerns. The team dealt with the data quality and data transformation issues that were involved in the effort to integrate disparate data sets, developed an implementation and testing plan, and designed the prototype system. Lakshmi Mohan, associate professor of management science and information systems at the University at Albany, led the team through the user needs and data analysis, and developed the framework for the prototype design. Oracle then took the lead in completing the design, development, and population of the data repository, including the Web-based user interface.

At the September unveiling, the prototype was evaluated by nine organizations. Officials from BHS, CTG and shelters in New York City, Westchester, and Suffolk counties tested the prototype HIMS following a structured evaluation plan. CTG is now evaluating the results of the test phase and producing a report of recommendations on the policy, management, and technology issues to be addressed by BHS as they consider a full system implementation.

CTG is planning a public demonstration of the HIMS prototype in Albany within the next few months. Stay tuned to our Web site for more details.

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

Corporate Partner Vital to Process

A team of technicians from Oracle Corporation, led by Technical Manager Pat Schaffer, was instrumental in the creation of the HIMS prototype.

The Oracle team spent an intensive three months building and populating the various components of the prototype, including the data repository, the staging area, and the Web-based user interface. Consulting closely with representatives from CTG, as well as the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance’s Bureau of Housing Services and Division of Audit and Quality Control, Oracle used CTG’s Government Technology Solutions Laboratory to complete some of the prototype work. The lab has traditionally served as a place for project partners to test technologies in a low-cost, low-risk environment before investing in high stakes, high-cost systems.

The HIMS prototype utilizes Oracle Express software and runs on a Hewlett-Packard Netserver system (see page 6).

Oracle has been a longtime CTG partner. The 22-year-old California company has donated close to \$170,000 worth of software and consulting services to CTG over the past six years for a variety of projects.

Sharing Project Experiences with International Visitors

As media scholar Marshall McLuhan observed more than 30 years ago, “The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of the global village.” CTG has been a good neighbor by hosting visits by several global villagers.

IT representatives from Swedish federal agencies and Canada’s Centre Francophone d’Informatisation des Organisations (**CEFRIO**) recently shared insights and experiences with CTG staffers in Albany.

Chief information officers from five Swedish federal agencies, including the Agency for Administrative Development (**Statskontoret**), spent a full day at CTG learning our methods for solving practical problems of information management and service delivery in the public sector. The group also met with the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, which is a partner in the second round of CTG’s Using Information in Government Program, during the trip.

Olov Ostberg, director of the Information and Business Process Reengineering Division of Statskontoret, paid a return visit to CTG and conducted a more thorough study of our formation and contractual processes. Statskontoret officials hope to replicate CTG’s approach in Sweden.

Officials from CEFRIO joined CTG for their first annual meeting to inaugurate the formal research partnership that was created last year. Discussions centered on identifying the major IT trends facing public sector managers and how CEFRIO and CTG are responding to them.

Researchers from both centers exchanged information and ideas about creating research projects that further the effective use of information by government agencies in the United States and Canada. CTG and CEFRIO are embarking on a project, “New Models of Collaboration for the Delivery of Services to Citizens and Businesses,” which will involve researchers from both organizations, as well as other institutions from around the world.

Learn more about CTG’s international research partners by visiting www.ctg.albany.edu/aboutctg/ctginternational.html

Expanding Our Ranks



New projects and initiatives at CTG led to the addition of several staff members in the past few months – Project Associate **Mark LaVigne**, Clerk **Marcy Hornberger**, and Graduate Assistant **Jing Zhang**.

LaVigne brings political savvy to his position as project associate, which involves conducting research, writing reports, and assisting in the management of CTG’s criminal justice integration project with the United States Department of Justice. He spent the last four years working in the New York State Assembly, first as a writer and editor in the Speaker’s Correspondence Office, and most recently as a senior editorial writer and special project coordinator in the Communication and Information Service department. He earned a B.A. in English literature from LeMoyne College in Syracuse and is pursuing an M.A. in communication from the University at Albany.

Hornberger’s skills have been put to good use as CTG’s clerk, where she assists in a variety of office support activities. She previously worked at Rensselaer Polytechnic University in Auxiliary Support Services for four years. Prior to that experience, Hornberger worked as a receptionist at the State Employees Federal Credit Union.

Zhang is a thorough researcher who is working on the Using Information in Government and Gateways to the Past, Present, and Future projects as a graduate assistant. A doctoral student in the University at Albany’s Educational Administration and Policy Studies Program, she previously conducted research on public sector technology innovation and education evaluation for that department. In her native China, Zhang worked for the Foreign Investment and Loan Office of the Ministry of Education as a project coordinator. She earned a B.E. in mechanical engineering from Northern Jiaotong University in Beijing, China, and an M.S. in educational administration from UAlbany.

For more information about the people at CTG, visit www.ctg.albany.edu/people/peoplemn.html

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 few months.

Presentations

Director of Program Development Peter Bloniarz participated in a panel on the “Future of the Internet: What Does it Mean for the States?” at the **Council of State Government’s Eastern Regional Conference** in Burlington, VT. Peter shared relevant information from CTG’s involvement in the National Science Foundation’s Digital Government and Partnerships for Advanced Computational Infrastructure (PACI) programs.

“Teaching Data Quality Concepts Through Case Studies” was the subject of Graduate Assistant Pam Neely’s tutorial at the **America’s Conference for Information Systems**. A group of academics and practitioners participated in her session at the Milwaukee, WI, conference.

The **Best Practices in Outreach and Public Service: The Scholarship of Engagement** conference at Penn State University, was the destination for both Sharon and Peter. Sharon discussed “Partnerships for IT Innovation in the Public Sector,” while Peter talked about the Education, Outreach, and Training component of the National Science Foundation’s PACI program.

Peter detailed CTG’s participation in the Education, Outreach, and Training component of NSF’s PACI program once again at the **EDUCAUSE Conference** in Long Beach, CA.

Education

CTG staffers shared information about our research program, partners, and innovations projects at the **Government Technology (GTC) East Conference** in Albany. The focus of our exhibit, “Using Information in a Digital Government,” fit right into the conference’s “eGovernment: Strategies for the New Millennium” theme.

Projects

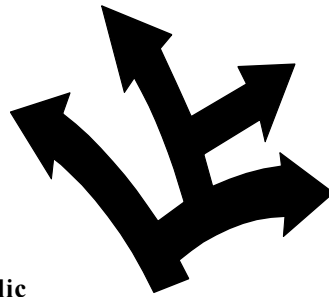
Sharon and Theresa conducted three one-day workshops with close to 40 MIS and program managers from a wide variety of New York City operating agencies. The **New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications’** Using Information in Government (UIG) project involves developing a new information management paradigm to support IT investment decisions in the city.

Representatives from half a dozen homeless service providers continued to provide their input into the **Homeless Information Management System (HIMS)** project through a series of facilitated meetings in New York City. The HIMS prototype was later demonstrated to a select group of providers who participated in a formal evaluation of the system.

CTG partnered with **Compaq** to conduct a one-day workshop with the **Office of the New York State Comptroller’s** UIG project team. The workshop focused on strategies for conducting current and best practices research that will assist the team as they redesign the state’s centralized accounting system.

Members of the **New York State Office of Real Property Service’s** UIG project team participated in a series of workshops with CTG staff and University at Albany faculty to design the preliminary model for implementing a new annual reassessment program.

Organizations involved in the **United States Department of Justice’s Criminal Justice Integration Initiative** attended a workshop at the University of Wisconsin in Madison to discuss the progress of their projects. Peter joined Research Director Anthony Cresswell to share information about CTG’s development of a guide for building a business case for criminal justice integration.



Staff Take on New Roles

The winds of change howled through the halls of 1535 Western Avenue this summer as several staffers took on new roles at CTG.

Peter Bloniarz, a CTG founder who until recently served as research and laboratory director, was appointed director of the University at Albany's Information Science Doctoral Program. Half of Bloniarz's time is now spent guiding the nine-year-old interdisciplinary INF program, which has 40 doctoral students and 25 faculty members. The rest of his time is devoted to managing new program development, with special emphasis on the Education, Outreach, and Training program of the National Science Foundation's Partnerships for Advanced Computational Infrastructure, as director of program development at CTG.

Derek Werthmuller, former systems administrator, has taken Bloniarz's role as lab director and is now director of technology services. He is responsible for the Technology Solutions Laboratory and management of the Center's technology unit, which maintains our technology infrastructure, conducts technology investigations, and supports electronic products.

Anthony Cresswell, longtime University professor and CTG senior research fellow, is now our full-time director of research. Cresswell is leading CTG's research unit, which writes grant proposals, designs and conducts program evaluations, and formulates research programs.

Jochen Scholl, who came to CTG last year as a graduate assistant and student in the University's Information Science doctoral program, is now a half time project support manager. Scholl, who has more than 20 years of experience in the IT field, is managing various aspects of the best practices research, business analysis, evaluation and prototyping process for several CTG projects.

For more information about CTG's staff and organization structure, visit www.ctg.albany.edu/people/peoplemn.html

HP Makes Great Partner

Hewlett-Packard is not only one of *Fortune* magazine's "most admired companies," they also make a great corporate partner.

The 60-year-old California company has been instrumental to the success of CTG since our inception. Over the past six years, HP has donated more than \$290,000 worth of equipment and software to CTG.

That commitment is evidenced in HP's two most recent contributions. The company donated a high speed network switch that improved CTG's infrastructure. HP also provided equipment for the Homeless Information Management System (HIMS) project. The HIMS prototype data warehouse runs on an HP Netserver that uses Oracle and Windows NT.



"HP has been an ongoing partner with CTG, both for our projects and for our infrastructure," said Director of Technology Services Derek Werthmuller. "HP's continuing commitment to CTG is extremely valuable to us."

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In the past, HP has donated hardware and software for use in the Balancing Environmental Quality and Economic Vitality in the Adirondack Park, New York State Internet Services Testbed, and Models for Action projects.

"Corporate partnerships are important to our project and infrastructure needs," Werthmuller said. "HP has really been a standout partner to CTG."

For more information about Hewlett-Packard, visit www.hp.com.

Looking Back

New projects. New partnerships. New people. The past year was one of great progress for CTG. And that progress is detailed in our new annual report.

“Using Information in Government” is the theme for the report, which covers CTG activities from July 1998 to June 1999. The annual report highlights our projects, including the Using Information in Government Program, Homeless Information Management System, Kids Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse, and Designing the Digital Government of the 21st Century, as well as our partners, resources, education program, and Web site. All of our work is designed to help government agencies make better use of information so they can craft programs and make decisions that benefit the public.

As CTG Director Sharon Dawes wrote in her opening letter, “Thanks to partnership projects with New York State and local agencies and ground-breaking work sponsored by the federal government, we are learning important lessons about two rapidly accelerating trends: sharing information across organizational boundaries and maintaining its availability and usefulness over time.”

The report was sent in September to several thousand of our supporters – state legislators, university staff, public sector managers, IT practitioners, and citizens – interested in how CTG works improve the business of government.

The 1999 annual report is available from our Web site at www.ctg.albany.edu/resources/news/nwltrann.html.

Looking Ahead

Our 1999-2000 year got off to a terrific start when we learned CTG had been awarded a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study “Knowledge Networking in the Public Sector.” This is the largest research grant in CTG’s six-year history.

“I’m very proud that CTG was chosen by NSF to receive this \$1 million research grant. It’s an honor to have such a prestigious organization recognize the value and quality of our work,” said CTG Director Sharon Dawes. “We’re excited to embark on this investigation into the rapidly-expanding field of knowledge networks and especially pleased that NSF has recognized the importance of information sharing in the public sector.”

Ours is one of just 31 projects funded by NSF as part of its Knowledge and Distributed Intelligence (KDI) program. The three-year research grant will enable us to examine the formation and operation of knowledge networks, which are the relationships, policies, information, processes, and technology tools organizations use to achieve collectively-defined purposes.

CTG will study seven initiatives in which groups of agencies in New York State engage in projects that depend on the sharing of knowledge and information across multiple organizations. The study will result in an enhanced model of knowledge network formation and operation in the public sector, as well as recommendations for practitioners about planning and implementing knowledge networks.

Look for more information about this new project in the next issue of *Innovations*, available in January 2000.

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