

Information integration is considered one of the most significant ways to change the structure and function of organizations. It has the potential to support the transformation of organizational structures and communication channels between and among multiple agencies working in different locations. Traditional governmental structures have organized the capture, use, and management of information along agency lines. Overcoming these deeply entrenched program and information "silos" is the particular challenge agencies face as they pursue the benefits of integrating information. This current practices study contributes to a community-wide knowledge building effort by examining the factors that influenced the success of selected justice information integration initiatives.

Not all integration initiatives are the same. Some focus on a specific problem, others focus on building systemic capacity. The benefits realized from information integration differ from organization to organization as well, and according to the characteristics of specific projects. However, there are certain types of benefits that can be expected in almost any information integration or information sharing initiative. Dawes (1996) classifies these benefits into three categories: technical, organizational, and political.

Despite tremendous benefits, information integration, like many other IT-related initiatives, presents organizations with tremendous challenges. A review of the academic and practitioner literature identified four key categories of barriers to information integration: (1) turf and resistance to change, (2) IT and data incompatibility, (3) organizational diversity and multiple goals, and (4) environmental and institutional complexity.

The cases included in this study illustrate the following strategies used to mitigate the impact of each barrier as well as the cumulative effect of multiple barriers.

- Retain autonomy of the involved agencies
  - Establish and exercise a governance structure
  - Secure strategic
  - Build on long-range and comprehensive planning
  - Build understanding of the business
  - Secure adequate financial
  - Obtain and nurture executive leadership and legislative support
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