

The value of research to practice reflects the fit between the topics that interest researchers and their funders and the problems that practitioners are trying to solve. It also reflects the effectiveness with which knowledge is transferred between the two domains. Research needs span all of the links indicated in Figure 1. The link from **Emerging IT Tools to Government Practice** is the most obvious and perhaps most often addressed. This type of research tends to focus on how various technologies support the programmatic and service delivery functions of government organizations. Information management is a key component of the link between **Emerging IT Tools** and **Government Practice** and also provides a focus for research. For example, Andersen and Dawes (1991) discuss several specific information management topics such as the level of risk that is appropriate for government operations in the context of IT implementation; managing the costs of information; managing the pace of technological change; and sustaining a technically skilled workforce. They further indicate that there are three levels of policy that support government information management: work unit policies, organizational policies, and government-wide policies. The interaction among policies, information management requirements, and technology opportunities are also important topics for government IT research.

The link between **Emerging IT Tools** and **Government Objectives** provides another focus for research. As new IT tools become more pervasive, and new and enhanced services become easier to offer, government organizations may reconsider their programmatic objectives. Further, as citizens become increasingly aware of the capabilities of technology, they change their expectations of what government organizations do and how they do it, and this further influences government objectives. Changing objectives, in conjunction with the implementation of **Emerging IT Tools**, influence **Government Practice** in terms of how information is collected, used and disseminated.

While many factors such as the economy and societal issues influence **Government Information Policy**, changes in **Government Practice** also give rise to new **Government Information Policy** challenges. McClure (1996) defines information policy as a set of interrelated principles, laws, guidelines, rules and regulations that guide the creation, management, access, and use of information. Andersen and Dawes (1991) define public information policies as those strategies that allow us to use information well and adapt government organizations and information systems to a rapidly changing environment.

**Changes in Government Objectives** such as the shift to Medicaid Managed Care and Welfare Reform, not only change government practice, they also require the identification of appropriate IT strategies to support policy implementation, decision making, and program evaluation. The identification of new IT strategies in turn, requires that policies associated with the creation, access, and use of information be reassessed in light of new objectives and changed practices. As new information policies are developed, they further influence the way that governments operate and manage information. Research that focuses on this link must take into account the relationships between programmatic objectives, and information management practices.

The links between **Government Objectives** and **Emerging IT Tools** and **Government Information Policy** and **Emerging IT Tools** also provide an important focus for research. This research relates to the degree to which the IT industry understands and responds to the needs of government. If the developers of IT tools and applications are to design products and services that meet the needs of government, it is critical that they maintain an awareness of the political and economic environment in which technology solutions will be used as well as the information policies that need to be taken into account in government IT implementations.

Lastly, for all of the areas of research focus outlined above, the effectiveness of the transfer of research to practice is an important consideration. Therefore, research that focuses on identifying and evaluating mechanisms for the transfer, application, and evaluation of research results is also an important component of an overall government IT research agenda.