

Today, state and local government use of information technology is manifested in many independent systems, each supporting one business function or satisfying one particular program need. As a result, a large and growing number of individual systems for G2G (government-to-government) business relationships are employed across state and local levels. This multiplicity of systems is often a significant impediment to efficient work. It is also a financial strain because many systems require their own hardware, software, security, office space, and business rules.

In order to perform business functions on each system, local government officials must sign in and out as they use each one, requiring numerous log-ins and passwords. Usually, data entered into one system cannot be used by another. Numerous duplicate requests for information are made and fulfilled as individual organizations respond to uncoordinated requests and requirements. This situation poses a significant burden on the work processes of both state agencies and local governments and entails higher than necessary costs for everyone.

The New York State-Local Internet Gateway Prototype was built to test an alternative strategy to this current way of working. The goal of the Prototype was to identify, demonstrate, and evaluate key factors associated with a single point of contact for G2G work among state and local governments.

Toward that end, a broadly representative group of state and local officials developed a vision for an ideal State-Local Gateway. They believed an ideal State-Local Gateway would be:

- governed jointly by state and local organizations through a formal governing structure;
- driven by genuine business needs;
- affordable to all interested participants;
- designed to offset initial investments and ongoing costs through future cost reductions to all participants;
- protected from external threats and internal misuse by jointly established security features;
- characterized by high quality, accurate, and authentic data;
- modular, flexible, and versatile in design and content;
- continually evaluated for usability and improvement under a variety of local conditions and use a standard set of conventions for information and applications;
- designed to accommodate users with low technical skills;
- designed from the user point of view;
- highly reliable and available to all state and local users; and
- able to incorporate other existing efforts.

These characteristics were then adopted as principles to guide a prototyping effort to test the feasibility of a single point of contact for G2G work among state and local governments.