Project Summary

A pressing challenge for small local governments is the issue of records management, particularly the management of records created in digital form, known as “born digital records.” The most efficient way for local governments to maintain these records is digitally throughout the record’s life cycle, however, this presents a challenge to local governments with limited technical capacity. Currently, many of these governments rely on paper output and manual processes that consume staff time, slow down operations, increase costs, and ultimately affect citizens’ ability to access government services and information.

To mitigate these challenges, Digital Towpath (DTP), a nationally recognized digital government shared service comprised of medium and small local governments throughout New York State, is partnering with the Center for Technology in Government (CTG). CTG will help DTP improve its electronic records management system so that local governments can operate more efficiently, easily comply with records management laws, increase public records access for citizens, and be more open.

This project, spearheaded by CTG and funded by the NYS Archives’ Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF), has several components:

• Provide DTP with the capacity to provide its local government members with the functionality to manage “born digital” records throughout the record’s lifecycle in a cost and time effective manner, allowing for greater public records access for citizens.
• Help local governments take a comprehensive look at their government information by addressing the policies, management practices, as well as technology issues, so that they can be more transparent and open.
• Allow individual governments to better safeguard information and more easily comply with increasingly demanding records management laws.

Student Involvement

Overseen by CTG’s Director of Technology Innovation and Services, Derek Werthmuller, and Web Application Developer, Jim Costello, four UAlbany College of Engineering and Applied Sciences students will analyze the existing electronic records management system (ERMS) to include a comprehensive mapping of the current code. This work, which the students will do as part of CTG’s student lab, will help minimize the costs of developing the new software needed to enhance the ERMS. Experiential learning opportunities such as working with CTG and DTP on this project are designed to have lasting effects on a student’s future career by providing them with real-world, practical experience to supplement their classroom education.

For more information on Digital Towpath, visit their website.