Center for Technology in Government

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SHARING:

A PLANNING TOOLKIT

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Foreward

The past two decades have seen notable changes in the way essential public services and programs are delivered. From building infrastructure to assuring public safety to providing human services, these services and programs have become the responsibility of complex inter-organizational networks of public, private, and non-profit entities. Scholars and practitioners alike recognize that complex societal needs and network-based strategies demand individual and collective ability to work across boundaries between departments, agencies, professions, sectors, governments, and even nations. CTG and many others, scholars and practitioners alike, have seen that the need to share information lies at the heart of these service and program networks, and it often involves sharing information for a purpose that was not its originally intended use.

The challenges to information sharing as key to an effective public service and program network must be understood and addressed. We've learned in our work that regardless of scope and detail, challenges increase proportionally according to the size and complexity of the network—e.g. with the number of boundaries crossed, types of information sources to be shared, and technical and organizational processes to be changed or integrated. For example, an effort to increase case closure rates by linking multiple databases and case management processes in a district attorney's office or a county department of health are less problematic than an enterprise-level initiative to create a statewide crime communications network or a regional network to respond to a public health crisis such as West Niles Virus. The first type involves units of a single organization operating under one executive leader. The second kind involves many separate organizations at several levels of government pursuing related but somewhat different objectives in diverse but overlapping programs with different policies, practices, and data resources. Neither type is easy, but a network has special demands for governance, communication, problem-solving, and resource sharing.

This toolkit was designed by CTG to help government agencies understand challenges to their information sharing efforts whether being carried out by two divisions of a single agency or multiple agencies across multiple governments. It is based on knowledge and experience gained during many such projects across numerous government policy areas, including justice and public health as well as more general data sharing efforts carried out in the interests of opening government data. Through these projects, CTG applied and studied basic concepts of organizational capability in the context of multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional information sharing and in doing so recognized the need for a better way to help government organizations understand their own capability to build systems to share information.

The capability-based view offered in this toolkit and the related executive development programs provided by CTG allow for a more specific consideration of the complexity of an information sharing initiative in context; an examination of the 16 dimensions of capability by each participating entity and then collectively across those same entities provides for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of what is actually possible.

Successful innovation in the delivery of essential public services and programs relies on greater attention to the complexity of any particular information sharing initiative and to the context or network within which that initiative will be carried out. This toolkit provides a framework and an approach for just such an effort. I invite you use our toolkit in your work and to contact us here at CTG to explore it and its potential use.

Theresa A. Pardo

Theresa A. Pardo
Director, Center for Technology in Government

Executive Summary

Government enterprises face many performance challenges that can be addressed more successfully through better information-sharing initiatives. These challenges differ widely in their scope and complexity. Enterprise-level initiatives, such as creating a statewide crime communications network or a regionwide network to respond to a public health crisis such as West Nile Virus or Avian flu, may involve many organizations at several levels of government pursuing related but somewhat different objectives. These organizations are engaged in diverse but overlapping programs and depend on similar, if not identical information and increasingly on effective information sharing. At the other extreme, smaller initiatives, such as seeking to increase case closure rates by linking multiple databases and case management processes in a District Attorney's office or a county department of health may involve units of a single organization, operating under one executive leader, working together to achieve a common organization-level goal.

Regardless of the size and complexity of these initiatives, they are all made less challenging when participating organizations have a joint action plan that outlines what information sharing is necessary to be successful and what investments in capability must be made to close the gaps between capability required and capability available. Decisions to invest in information-sharing initiatives must be grounded in such an action plan

This toolkit is designed for government professionals tasked with planning and implementing initiatives that rely on effective information-sharing. It provides a process for assessing where capabilities for information-sharing exist and where they must be developed to achieve targeted goals. Assessment results provide a basis for action planning to fill capability gaps.

This is a self-assessment and planning tool, that assumes the persons involved in an information-sharing initiative are best equipped by their knowledge and experience to make judgments, supply evidence about these capabilities, and plan accordingly. The toolkit provides a framework for planning within individual organizations and across organizations involved in an information-sharing initiative. It guides assessment and planning along sixteen capability dimensions and aids in developing a collaborative plan for how to increase the chances that a specific initiative will be successful. Use of the toolkit will:

- inform planning and design of information sharing or integration initiatives;
- identify both relevant capabilities and capability gaps in each participating organization;
- focus investments in specific capability-building efforts; and
- help identify risks and risk mitigation strategies.

The toolkit is divided into five sections:

1. Getting started guide
This section was prepared to orient the manager of the assessment process to the material in the toolkit and the key phases of work that it entails.

2. Overview of capability assessment
The overview provides a brief description of information-sharing capability and the costs and benefits of a capability

USING THE TOOLKIT

This guide is written for use by persons tasked with planning and managing projects that involve information sharing. Using the guide is likely to involve staff from different areas and at relatively junior as well as senior levels. Consequently, the descriptions of the assessment process and directions for managing it assume no particular project management approach, techniques, or models. The process management directions should therefore be treated as suggestive and can be modified to fit the particular context of use.

assessment. It also presents the approach to capability assessment used in this toolkit including brief summaries of the methods and the kinds of results that can be expected. The overview is designed to be shared with executives or as a source of talking points when seeking support for an assessment process. It should also be used in orientation sessions for organizers, participants, and other stakeholders.

3. Implementation guide
The implementation guide describes how to conduct a capability assessment and to develop an action plan for an initiative that relies on effective information sharing. The guide introduces the five-phase process of gathering, analyzing, and using assessment data and offers process and analysis options for different situations. It is designed specifically to assist the person or team responsible for managing the assessment and planning processes.

4. Capability dimension worksheets
This section includes worksheets for the sixteen dimensions of capability and their associated subdimensions. They address such topics as governance, collaboration readiness, security, project management, technology knowledge, and stakeholders. These worksheets are used by individuals and groups to record specific ratings, evidence for those ratings, and confidence levels as input to the discussion and planning sessions.

5. Appendices
These include a case example, sample correspondence and work plans, workshop facilitation guides and exercises, and reference material.

Overview

WHY ASSESS INFORMATION SHARING CAPABILITY?

Capability assessment is designed to enhance the prospects for success in information sharing initiatives. These initiatives can involve different levels of government, various combinations of agencies, and a wide range of information types and technologies for sharing. The JNET Project in Pennsylvania, for example, is a statewide effort that has developed a secure network infrastructure, web-based information sharing access, and information sharing relationships among the law enforcement agencies. Current functionality includes a portal for access to driver license photos, mug shots, rap sheets, and court case data, advanced photo imaging for investigations, and capacity for email and pager notification of security events or arrests. Oregon established a statewide system to share information related to West Nile Virus that involved information sharing between its Department of Human Service, Department of Agriculture, and county health departments. Rather than establishing new systems and technologies, this initiative leveraged existing systems and interorganizational networks.

Some more extensive integration examples are found at the county or city level. The Hartford Connects II project in Hartford, Connecticut is a group of government agencies and nonprofits that pooled their resources to form a city-wide data system to help youth-serving organizations track youth outcomes and improve services. The Harris County (Texas) Justice Information Management System (JIMS) is a highly integrated information sharing system that involves 281 public agencies in the county (which includes the city of Houston), and covers most aspects of both criminal and civil justice functions, including jury management and payroll.

Some local projects have narrower information sharing objectives. The Jacksonville (Florida) Sheriff's Department implemented a web-based portal for information sharing and coordination among its 48 law enforcement agencies providing security for the 2005 Super Bowl football game.

Information sharing initiatives regardless of scope or size are typically complex, difficult, and prone to failure. They are more likely to succeed if they are based on a comprehensive and systematic assessment of organizational and technical capabilities. This toolkit is designed to generate comprehensive information about those capabilities and to rate them. The results are useful in planning information sharing or integration initiatives because they focus attention on particular capabilities needed and on the strategic selection of sharing partners. The assessment results also help identify risks and risk mitigation strategies.

UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION-SHARING CAPABILITY

The concept of "information sharing capability" used in this toolkit balances two different notions of capability. One is that capability is composed of a set of generic dimensions that apply in practically any project. The other is that these dimensions may be applied or interpreted differently, depending on the nature of a particular initiative. Because each initiative has its own goals, resources, and capability issues, the toolkit provides a means to assess all the important dimensions of capability in a way that can be adapted to a wide range of situations.

This approach is reflected in the following basic assumptions about information sharing capability that have guided the development of the toolkit. Capability is:

- **multidimensional** – it is made up of several dimensions (in this framework there are sixteen), all of which contribute to overall information sharing capability.
- **complementary** - high or low levels can result from different combinations of factors, high capability in some dimensions can often compensate for lower levels in others.
- **dynamic** – it can increase or diminish due to changes within an initiative or in its external environment.
- **specific to its setting** – some elements of capability apply to all settings, but capability for any particular project must be assessed relative to its own specific objectives and environment.

The interorganizational nature of most efforts in information sharing suggests two additional guiding ideas for capability assessment. First, the success of an information sharing initiative depends on the combination of capabilities that exist among the sharing partners. Not all organizations need the same capability profile. Instead, the combination of capability profiles across a set of government entities sharing information determines the effectiveness of an initiative. Secondly, the knowledge and experience required for effective assessment can be found in the people working on the effort. The necessary combinations of knowledge and experience may not exist in a single organization, but may be available as a result of a joining of forces across the multiple organizations involved in a cross-boundary sharing initiative.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The elements of the toolkit all work together to support capability assessment, but to be effective they should be used in an atmosphere of commitment, learning, and trust. Effective use of the toolkit therefore requires careful attention to the following critical success factors.

Trust and candor

The success of the assessment will depend in large part on the willingness of users to make assessments and decisions based on solid evidence. Participants must be willing to freely share information about their own organizations and about the capabilities of their sharing partners. Such a willingness helps build an accurate assessment of the initiative as a whole. It also helps identify gaps in capability and strategies for addressing them.

The information and judgments on which the assessments are based must be as accurate and honest as possible. Accurate assessment depends on letting the "warts and wrinkles" in operations show. Without candor, the assessments will not be a useful guide for improving information sharing capability and creating action plans. Threats to accuracy and honesty, such as low quality information, unconscious bias, and distortion of the status-quo, can lead to invalid or badly skewed capability assessments.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Trust and candor
2. High levels of individual and organizational commitment
3. The right mix of participants
4. Willingness to repeat the assessment as needed

Biased information can come from many sources. Participants may inflate ratings to avoid embarrassment or sanction by management. Conversely, they may downgrade their own unit's ratings to make a stronger case for new resources or other organizational benefits. In either case, the value of the overall capability assessment is diminished. The risk of inflated capability assessments can be greatly reduced by explicit assurances from executives and accompanying actions demonstrating assessment results will not be used to penalize any individual or unit. These assurances must be credible to all participants and be reinforced by adequate trust relationships. If the necessary levels of trust and credibility do not exist, efforts to establish them should precede the capability assessment.

Individual and organizational commitment

Using the toolkit requires a high level of commitment from all participants and organizations to carry out a labor- and time-intensive endeavor. Considerable effort and time are needed to gather the necessary information, make capability judgments, participate in group discussions, resolve differences, reach decisions, and implement action plans. The endeavor also requires logistical support from participating organizations.

The right mix of participants

Assessing information sharing capability for an initiative requires specific knowledge and experience. The selection of participants for the assessment should result in teams with the right mix of knowledge for the situation at hand. It is not necessary (or possible) for every individual participant to be an expert on every aspect or dimension of capability. What matters is to get the right expertise by putting together the right team. This team should include program specialists, IT specialists, and program and agency leaders from each participating organization. Collectively, the participants must have knowledge of the program environment, existing systems, and possible future strategies and technologies. In addition, they will need to form accurate judgments about the capacity for change in management, policy, and technology, and about new investments of resources. The team must bring to the task a solid institutional memory and innovative spirit as well as an appreciation for interdependencies. Diversity among participants helps ensure that differences both within and across organizations are considered. Broad involvement throughout the process helps assure that different perspectives about capability are made explicit and taken into account.

Willingness to repeat the assessment as needed

The complexity of information sharing initiatives and the changing nature of information needs and technologies suggest that assessments of capability should be repeated over the life of an initiative. Through repeated assessments emerging requirements can be taken into consideration, and new capabilities and problems can be identified. Likewise, action plans can be refined in light of new requirements and resources that come to light through repeated assessments.

USING THE CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

This toolkit provides a framework and methods for collecting capability assessment ratings from knowledgeable individuals and using that information to inform decision-making and planning about information sharing initiatives. It uses simple data analysis tools and extensive discussion opportunities to assemble overall capability assessment ratings. The toolkit's methods help participants share their individual knowledge and build a well-grounded, collective understanding of areas of high and low capability. This shared understanding helps the participants identify positive steps to enhance capability and thus the overall prospects for the success of an initiative.

While the toolkit provides assessment criteria and methods, it does not require outside evaluators or consultants. Rather, the assessment process works by collecting and organizing local knowledge and experience in a systematic way. External assistance in facilitating or supporting the assessment can often be helpful, but it is not required. Decisions about whether and how to use external assistance can be made by the organizers of the assessment.

An assessment effort includes three kinds of activities:

- **preparation** - obtaining authorization, mobilizing support and resources, and planning the details of the activities,
- **assessment** - collecting, analyzing, and reporting assessment data, and
- **implementation** - designing and implementing actions to enhance capability.

A summary and examples of these activities are presented in this Overview section of the toolkit. The details of how to implement the assessment process and work with the assessment data are presented in the next section of the toolkit, the Implementation Guide. The Dimension Worksheets section contains the data collection worksheets used to collect the assessment data. The Appendix presents a case example along with sample work plans and useful references.

CYCLE OF PLANNING AND CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

The activities described above are part of a larger set of planning activities shown in **Figure 1** and illustrated in the case example provided in Appendix 1. Use of the toolkit should begin only after careful preparation. Preparation includes developing a clear, if preliminary, understanding of

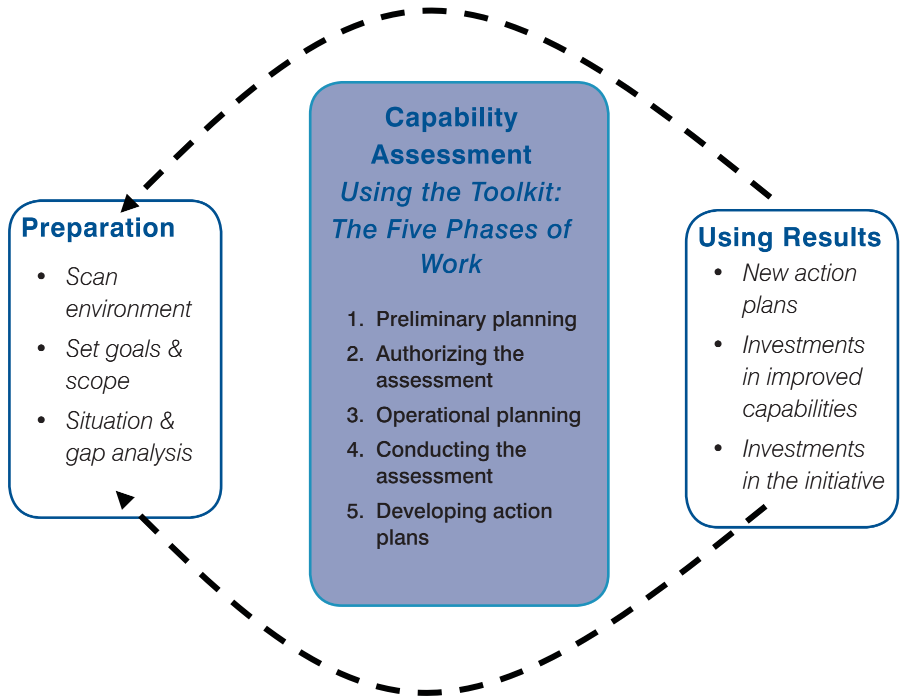


Figure 1. Cycle of Planning, and Capability Assessment Activities

the goals and scope of the information sharing initiative. This understanding is based on existing plans and responses to environmental demands. Preparation also requires describing the current situation and identifying the gaps between it and the desired situation. These preparation activities set the stage for use of the capability assessment toolkit, shown as the central activity in Figure 1. The results of an assessment lead to action plans that lead in turn to investment decisions for the specific initiative and the general improvement of information sharing capability. The dashed arrows indicate that this process is rarely linear; instead, it progresses through multiple iterations as information and analysis from one set of activities feed back into and modify earlier conditions and understandings. Over the long term, as indicated in the links from Using Results to Preparation, the investments made in one initiative will change the status-quo and shape future initiatives.

COLLECTING AND COMBINING DATA FOR CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

The most complete assessment data come from a process that begins with the individual organizational units engaged in the initiative assessing themselves and producing unit-specific results. These are then combined into results for each entity and then combined again for the entire initiative. A more detailed view of this part of the process is shown in **Figure 2**, which illustrates how this might work in a setting with three agencies, each having two subunits involved in the initiative.

The assessment would occur first in the appropriate units within each entity, then be combined into entity-level results through discussions among the participants from that entity. Participants from all entities would then use the methods

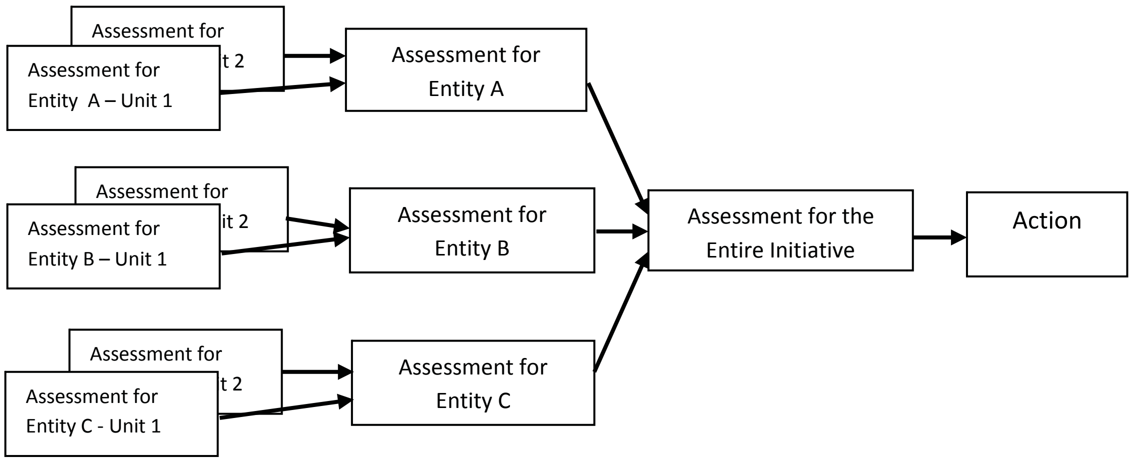


Figure 2. Assessment Process Capability

described in the toolkit to combine the results from individual entities into a composite assessment and to develop action plans for their shared initiative. In addition, all participants build knowledge regarding their ability to contribute to cross-boundary sharing efforts. (Although this is not shown in **Figure 2**, each unit and agency can also use the process to develop action plans and strategies to guide its own efforts to develop information sharing capability.)

DIMENSIONS OF INFORMATION-SHARING CAPABILITY

The dimensions of information sharing capability used in the toolkit come from an extensive field analysis that identified sixteen major dimensions and several subdimensions within each. Taken together, these dimensions identify the influence of organization, policy, and technology on an information sharing initiative. **Table 1** lists all sixteen dimensions and their high-level descriptions.

TABLE 1: Dimensions and Descriptions of Information-Sharing Capability	
1. Business Model & Architecture Readiness	The degree to which the initiative has developed business model and enterprise architecture descriptions that describe the service and operational components of the enterprise, how they are connected to each other, and what technologies are used to implement them. These descriptions may include detailed analyses of business processes.
2. Collaboration Readiness	The degree to which relationships among information users and other resources support collaboration including staff, budget, training, technology, and prior successes or failures in collaborative activities.
3. Data Assets & Requirements	The extent of specific and formal policies for data collection, use, storage, and handling, as found in databases and record systems documentation and in data quality standards and dictionaries.This may include procedures for and results of data requirement analyses and data models and modeling techniques.
4. Governance	The existence of mechanisms to set policy and direct and oversee the information sharing initiatives that are planned or underway.
5. Information Policies	The level of development of policies that address the collection, use, dissemination, and storage of information as well as with privacy, confidentiality, and security
6. Leaders & Champions	The involvement of leaders and champions. Leaders motivate, build commitment, guide activities, encourage creativity and innovation, and mobilize resources. They see the goal clearly and craft plans to achieve it. Champions communicate a clear and persuasive vision for an initiative, provide the authority and legitimacy for action, and build support in the environment.
7. Organizational Compatibility	The degree to which the work styles and interpersonal relationships, participation in decision-making, levels of competition and collaboration, and styles of conflict resolution support information sharing. Compatibility of cultures may be gauged by the degree of centralization, degree of conformity, deference to authority, adherence to rules, and symbols of status and power.
8. Performance Evaluation	The presence of the skills, resources, and authority necessary to observe, document, and measure: (1) how well the initiative itself is developed and implemented, (2) whether information sharing goals are achieved, and (3) how the performance of the justice enterprise is improved.
9. Project Management	The availability and use of methods for goal setting, scheduling development and production activities, analyzing resource needs, managing interdependencies among activities and goals, and provisions to anticipate and respond to contingencies.
10. Resource Management	The extent of effective use of financial, human, and technical resources through budgeting, strategic plans, financial analyses, and accepted financial management procedures and practices.
11. Secure Environment	The degree to which appropriate security protocols for data, systems, applications, and networks as well as systems, policies, training, and management practices are in place.
12. Stakeholder Identification & Engagement	The extent of awareness of and interaction with the persons or groups with an interest in the information sharing initiative and capacity to influence it. This dimension is based on stakeholder analyses, staff experience and knowledge, records or reports of participants in making policy and decisions, and membership of advisory or constituent groups.

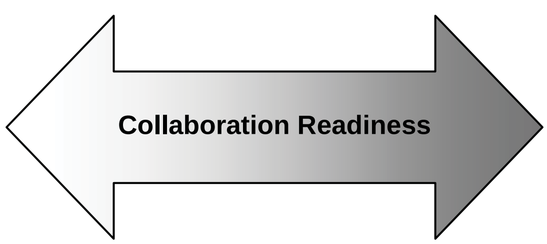
13. Strategic Planning	The quality and comprehensiveness of strategic plans and strategic planning processes, including resources and integration of strategic planning with other elements of governance and management.
14. Technology Acceptance	The extent of talk and actions expressing positive or negative attitudes toward workplace changes, trust of new tools and techniques, success or failure stories that are widely shared and believed, and enthusiasm for innovations.
15. Technology Compatibility	The presence of agreed-upon standards, the extent of connectivity among the persons and organizations seeking to share information, and the experiences of staff with information sharing activities.
16. Technology Knowledge	The levels of knowledge about current and emerging technology for information sharing, including technical qualifications and experience of staff, records and documentation of technology assets, and the actions of staff in compiling, storing, and sharing such knowledge.

This manual presents descriptions for each dimension that characterize the opposite (anchor) ends of a continuum. These anchor descriptions describe an organization with high capability and one with low capability on that dimension. Each dimension is then broken down into a set of attributes called subdimension statements. The capability on any dimension or subdimension is measured on a continuum. For example, an organization is not simply ready for collaboration or not; instead, it falls somewhere on a continuum from not at all ready to fully ready. To support the assessment of each subdimension, the process calls for a statement of factual evidence. Based on the evidence, each participant reports the level of confidence he or she has in the accuracy of that particular assessment rating. Strong evidence should support high confidence; weak or no evidence should result in lower confidence.

The relationships among these different kinds of information are illustrated in **Figure 3**, which show how the dimension of Collaboration Readiness appears on the dimension worksheet in the toolkit. **Figure 4** shows some of the subdimension statements to be assessed individually. **Figures 5 and 6** illustrate the use of evidence statements and confidence levels.

Charateristics of an Organization at the high end:

- Actively seek collaboration
- Readily available resources for collaboration (money, people, technology, etc.)
- Policies and practices to support collaboration



Charateristics of an Organization at the low end:

- Threatened by collaboration
- Lack of resources and support
- No experience with cross-boundary collaboration

Figure 3 - Collaboration Readiness Dimension Description

Where capability falls along any dimension rests on the ratings recorded for its associated subdimensions. To guide the rating process, each dimension worksheet presents statements about each subdimension and asks for a rating in terms of agreement or disagreement with the statement. Ratings range from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD). A "neutral" response (N) is possible for those situations where a person has a neutral or balanced opinion about a statement. A "don't know" response (DK) is used (**Figure 4**) for those statements about which a person has no knowledge to base an opinion.

	Subdimension Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	DK	Evidence
2.1	We actively seek opportunitiess for collaboration							
2.2	We have a substantial record of successful collaboration across organizational boundaries							
2.3	We have policies that effectively support collaboration							
2.4	We have management practices that effectively support collaboration							

Figure 4 – Examples of Subdimension Statements

Ratings of individual subdimension statements should be supported by evidence. Accordingly, the person or group making the judgment is asked to provide this evidence.

	Subdimension Statements	Evidence
2.1	We actively seek opportunitiess for collaboration	Over the past five years our organization has participated in data sharing projects with the Department of Corrections.
2.2	We have a substantial record of successful collaboration across organizational boundaries	
2.3	We have policies that effectively support collaboration	

Figure 5 – Example of Subdimension Evidence Statement

Step 2: To help analyze these answers it is useful to know how confident you are in your repsonse. Please go back ove each statement and mark your level of confidence in each answer, using **H** for high, **M** for medium, and **L** for low. Put the lettter in the far right-hand box at the end of each row, as shown in the example below.

	Subdimension Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Nuetral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Confidence
2.1	We actively seek opportunitiess for collaboration	SA	A	N	D	SD	DK	H

Figure 6 – Assigning a Confidence Level to the Rating

The weight of the evidence leads to more or less confidence in the rating. Therefore, the response on each subdimension includes a confidence level for that rating. Using H for high confidence, M for medium confidence, and L for low confidence, provides the assessment team with information that can be used to guide additional information-gathering efforts, to weight responses, and to describe results (**Figure 6**).

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING A CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

The toolkit facilitates discussion about the information sharing capability of each individual organization and of the group of organizations involved in a joint initiative. The strength of the toolkit lies in the identification of areas where problem solving and planning need to focus. A primary responsibility of assessment planners and organizers is to ensure that the process gets off to a good start. Participants should understand what will be expected of them and what will be done with the results of their work. Everyone who participates should understand from the outset how the assessment will be conducted and how the results will be analyzed and used.

Decisions about how to conduct an assessment and how to use its results should take existing information sharing capabilities into account. For instance, some who use this toolkit will have an information sharing architecture in place and will be applying the toolkit to a very specific information sharing initiative. Others may have several initiatives in place, but no overall architecture for information sharing; they can use the toolkit to assess their capability for developing one. Still others may have done little more than exchange electronic records or data sets with other entities, and they can begin developing more comprehensive or strategic information sharing efforts.

The purpose and status of these information sharing initiatives can vary a great deal. Therefore, the toolkit offers a number of options for organizing and implementing an assessment. Organizers must decide how to manage the assessment ratings, who to involve in discussions and decisions using the ratings, and how to organize their efforts. Equally important, decisions must be made about how to compile and present ratings from individual units for use in interorganizational discussions. Some of the options rely on group consensus, others defer to executive decision-making. Data can be weighted in different ways and presented in qualitative or quantitative form. The implementation guide describes these options.

Implementation Guide

GETTING STARTED

The Capability Assessment Toolkit was devised to be used by the person or team responsible for managing the assessment. It contains the information needed to plan and carry out the work as well as material that participants will use during the process. A good way to get started is to read the overview and case study (appendix 1). Together they present the rationale, summarize the methodology, and provide a practical example of capability assessment.

The assessment manager can select different parts of the kit to share with various participants at different points in the assessment. For example, the overview might be a useful way to introduce assessment concepts to top executives (either as a handout, or as a guide for a presentation). The overview plus one or two dimension worksheets would help orient the participants from the various agencies or organizational units to how they can rate capability. The implementation guide and material in the appendices (such as the sample correspondence, facilitation plans, and how-tos) will help the assessment manager plan and carry out the assessment. All the parts of the toolkit have been tested by government professionals around the country. Their advice and practical ideas are included throughout.

Capability assessment links planning and action as shown in the figure on page 12. An effective capability assessment will be aligned with strategic plans, program goals, and policy priorities and the results will lead to investments and actions that help achieve them.

APPLYING THE CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

This guide describes the implementation of a information integration capability assessment. It lays out the five phases of work and identifies the decisions that planners need to make along the way to tailor the assessment to their particular setting. The five phases are presented in logical order, but in practice a group may move back and forth among them as new information and analyses dictate. In most cases, supplementary resources referred to the text are provided in the appendix.
The five phases of work for applying the capability assessment toolkit:

1. Preliminary Planning
2. Authorizing the Assessment
3. Operational Planning
4. Conducting the Assessment
5. Developing Action Plans

Table 2 on the next page summarizes the key activities and decisions associated with each phase; it is a rough checklist or a guide to preparing a detailed plan. The implementation guide and appendices offer much more information.

Table 2: Five Phases of Work

Phase	Key activities and decisions
1. Preliminary planning	Identify the organizing team who will plan and implement the assessment
	Identify goals of the assessment process
	Orient organizers to the toolkit and process
	Begin to consider assessment implementation options in terms of goals
	Identify timeline for conducting the assessment
	Identify milestones for communicating with participants and leaders about the assessment process and resulting plans
2. Authorizing the assessment	Identify necessary authorizing bodies
	Develop business cases targeted to the necessary authorizing bodies including approach, costs, and benefits
	Obtain approval to proceed
3. Operational planning	Decide who should participate
	Decide how dimensions will be assigned
	Decide what method will be used to review and combine ratings
4. Conducting the assessment	Conduct orientation workshops with all participants
	Conduct as many ratings and analysis workshops as necessary using selected methods
5. Developing action plans	Share results with participants and leaders
	Integrate results with ongoing strategic planning processes or create new planning processes as necessary
	Determine where investments in the specific information sharing initiative must be made and where more general investments must be made in organizational capability
	Identify short term investments to build capability
	Identify long term investments to build capability

PHASE ONE: PRELIMINARY PLANNING

A good start is necessary to make the capability assessment successful. The assessment team and the participants should understand what will be expected of them and what will be done with the results of their work. This requires deciding early on who will be involved in rating discussions and decisions, and this in turn will influence the selection of processes and methods. Effective communication about these choices and their implications is critical to a successful assessment. This first phase consists primarily of becoming familiar with the toolkit and creating an overall strategy for tailoring it to unique conditions. Therefore, it is critical and should not be overlooked in the interest of getting "right to it."

In most cases this phase will be completed by a team of organizers and planners for the assessment. During this phase organizers learn about the components of the process, they plan a strategy for securing authorization and they begin to consider the details of operational planning. This group drafts goals for the assessment and identifies the expected benefits. Conducting the orientation workshop with the process organizers will help the planning team collectively develop an understanding of the process and engage in discussion about preferred implementation strategies. (Appendix 3 contains materials to support the participant orientation workshop, but it may also be used to orient the planning team.)

PHASE TWO: AUTHORIZING THE ASSESSMENT

The preliminary planning started in phase I provides the basis for obtaining formal authorization to conduct the assessment. The results of phase I are usually supplemented by other supporting material to make a convincing case for the assessment. Wherever appropriate, the presentation should take the form of a business case, that is, a description of the assessment's business goals, costs, benefits, and processes. The business case should also name the members of an assessment team or describe how its members will be recruited and engaged. It should address operational planning to inform decisions on approach, costs, and benefits. In preparing the business case you should consult with executives and policy makers to let them know what is being considered and to collect their perspectives. Involving executives early in the making a case for the assessment may ensure their long term support for it. Appendix 2a contains a sample memorandum seeking leadership support for a capability assessment process..

PHASE THREE: OPERATIONAL PLANNING

Once decision makers have approved the assessment effort, the core team can begin detailed operational planning. The sections below identify major decisions to be made and options to be considered. Of course, as the assessment process unfolds, you may need to adjust the plan to specific or changing circumstances. Accordingly, the plan should assign responsibility to one or more participants,to monitor and adjust the process, define agreed on key checkpoints, and provide for open communications with all participants.

Key decisions that will shape the overall assessment must be made in this operational planning phase.

- Who should participate?
- How will dimensions be assigned?
- What method will be used to review and combine ratings?

Who should participate?

Decisions about participation are a function of how the assessment process will be organized. Choices about the number and type of participants should balance the need to include all important perspectives and interests with the need to keep the overall assessment to a manageable size. For example, a process for an initiative that needs wide support among many stakeholders should accommodate a broadly representative group of participants from all affected entities. This option takes longer and needs more planning and communication, but it gathers more broadly-based information and is more likely to reveal the issues that need to be addressed. The level of detail and engagement in the process also help build a knowledge base in the participating organizations that can support action planning. At the other end of the spectrum, an executive-only assessment process involves fewer people who have broader perspectives. This approach would proceed more quickly and keep the focus on high-level concerns, but the results would rest on less detailed information and more assumptions about street-level issues. Planners can also combine these strategies into a process that produces an effective balance of inclusion, detailed evidence, and leadership concerns. These three options for organizing the assessment process are discussed below.

1. **Successive capability ratings.** Data gathered from individuals can be analyzed and summarized at each successive level of aggregation ranging from individual work units to the entire information sharing initiative. Groups of participants at each level record individual ratings, analyze them, and combine them into summaries. To work in this way, all participants need to be oriented to the process and how their work will be used by others. Individual ratings are based on each person's own judgment about capability on each of the 16 dimensions. The raters in each unit work together to combine their individual ratings into an organizational unit rating. This process continues through agency and interagency levels until it reaches the executive decision making

level. Participants on each level also summarize the implications of their ratings for the initiative. These implications include recommended actions and investments to enhance information sharing capability. The detailed arrangements for these group activities must be carefully planned and clearly understood by the participants. Appendix 3 contains a sample workshop plan for this option.

The ratings and recommendations produced by this method are clearly group results. Executive involvement would be initially limited to directing and supporting the group process and would later extend to participation in determining outcomes.

2. **Executive rating.** Individual executives or executive groups create the reports of capability ratings. In this approach, the individual participants on the staff level simply complete the capability rating worksheets. The worksheets and related evidence and information are then submitted to an executive or executive group to: analyze, make overall capability ratings, identify the implications of those ratings, and make decisions accordingly.

3. **Combined capability rating.** Limited data analysis is conducted on the group level before the data is submitted for executive-level decisions. This approach combines executive decision-making with some group-based summaries of results. The points of aggregation could be at any level that seems suited to the specific initiative. Results are then passed to the executive level for summary and decision-making about investments in the initiative and in general enhancements of information sharing capability.

Each approach has benefits and limitations. The successive capability ratings approach provides for the widest variety of perspectives and the most fully informed discussions about capability. However, it can be time-consuming and expensive. The executive ratings approach with less group participation may be more efficient but may generate less support for the results among the other participants unless accompanied by clear communication and some opportunity for discussion. A number of process variations can be successful as long as they preserve opportunities for substantial information sharing and deliberation.

How will dimensions be assigned?

Once participation has been decided, you must determine how to assign the capability dimensions to participants with different roles in the initiative. It may be desirable to have some raters work with only a subset of dimensions while others may work with all 16. In practice, this means matching the dimensions to the particular expertise and roles of various individuals. Doing so can help ensure an accurate and valid assessment, since poorly informed or inexpert participants cannot be expected to produce valid ratings. For example, in most organizations executive leaders would not be expected to have the knowledge to assess the technical compatibility of various systems. Similarly, technical staff might not be very knowledgeable about governance issues. **Table 3** offers one way of assigning selected dimensions to people with particular roles or kinds of expertise. It is based on an actual application of the toolkit in an ongoing initiative.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Just as there are different ways to organize the information sharing capability assessment process, there are also different ways to think about capability. The *Capability Assessment Toolkit* presents one perspective, based on the 16 dimensions of capability that emerged during the Toolkit's development. Each subdimension statement however, can also be linked to a number of alternative dimensions on capability.

- Management & Leadership
- Organizational Culture
- Policy
- Technology
- Data
- Knowledge
- Analysis

Table 3: A Sample Assignment of Specific Dimensions to Types of Participants

Dimension	Participant Role or Area of Expertise		
	Executive Leadership	Management	Technical
1. Business Model & Architecture Readiness		X	X
2. Collaboration Readiness	X	X	X
3. Data Assets & Requirements		X	X
4. Governance	X	X	
5. Information Policies		X	X
6. Leaders & Champions	X	X	
7. Organizational Compatibility	X	X	
8. Performance Evaluation	X	X	X
9. Project Management	X	X	X
10. Resource Management	X	X	
11. Secure Environment		X	X
12. Stakeholder Identification & Engagement	X	X	
13. Strategic Planning	X	X	
14. Technology Acceptance		X	X
15. Technology Compatibility			X
16. Technology Knowledge		X	X

For example, having a good business model for an initiative can be thought of both as valuable knowledge and as a reflection of good analysis capability. Alternative dimensions may offer additional insights into the reasons for low or high capability ratings or suggest new strategies for improving capability in weak areas. A set of alternative dimensions was identified during development of the Toolkit and mapped to the subdimensions.

WHAT METHOD WILL BE USED TO REVIEW AND COMBINE RATINGS?

Two methods for sharing and using results are outlined below. The first focuses on the use of visual aids to collect and share individual ratings within a group and to guide discussion. The second provides a process for those situations where numeric scores are desired. The summary score method includes a strategy that helps participants take into account the relative importance of subdimensions by assigning weights. An additional option enables participants to consider the strength of the evidence for a rating as part of that summary score. The summary score approach, also intended to guide group discussion, more readily enables the summarization of unit- or agency-level assessments.

The process should not be used to push a group toward consensus on a particular determination of capability. It should be used to identify different perspectives on capabilities to be explored as part of assessment and planning. The process should enable groups to share perspectives on the capabilities necessary to achieve an initiative's goals, and the capabilities available for that purpose. Differences and points of agreement can then be explored in terms of their implications for the initiative and for necessary investments. When all the dimensions have been discussed, recommendations and action plans can be developed.

Visual summary method

With this method, individuals complete the worksheets assigned to them by circling their level of agreement with the subdimension statements, indicating their confidence level, and noting evidence. This work should be completed before participants arrive at the meeting. Alternatively, a separate time slot during the meeting could be provided for this activity.

Also prior to the meeting, a facilitator or designated group member prepares a separate flip chart labeled with the name of each capability dimension, a dimension arrow, and other content as shown in **Figure 7**. These are posted in the room so they are visible to all participants.

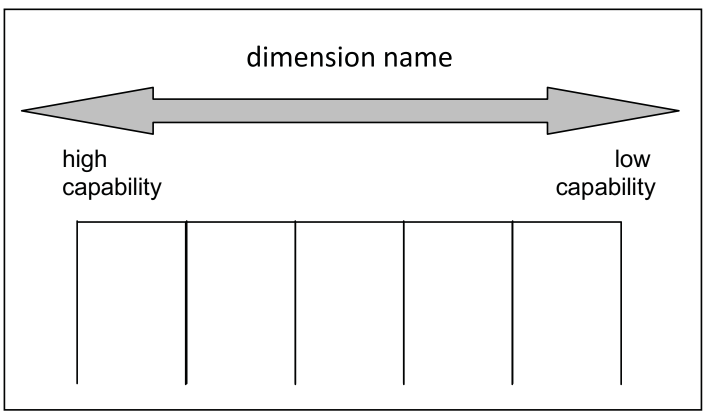


Figure 7 - Format for Dimension Displays

The facilitator or discussion leader then explains the process and begins working with the first dimension. The facilitator asks each participant for his or her rating and confidence level regarding the first dimension. The facilitator then places a colored dot on the display representing each person's rating. The color of the dot represents the confidence level (green = high; yellow = medium; red = low). The group can discuss the first person's rating and proceed to the next person until all individual ratings are displayed. An alternative is to sequentially post the dots for all participants without discussion and then discuss the whole pattern rather than each individual's rating. When completed, the flip chart will contain a compilation of the group's ratings (see example in Figure 8). The overall pattern can be discussed or adjusted as necessary.

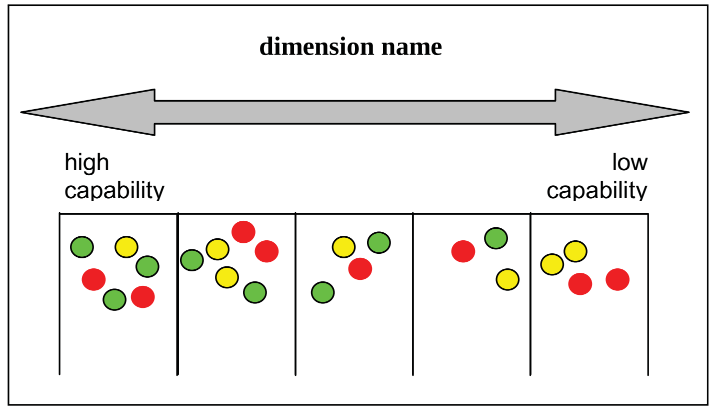


Figure 8 - Example of Dimension Summary Display

This method provides a low-tech visual representation of each unit's or organization's results that provides a readily accessible way to make differences explicit and discuss them. This process has the benefit of fostering knowledge sharing that leads to sound strategic plans and recommendations.

The discussion leader or a note taker should record important comments and qualifiers stated by the participants as they discuss the ratings. The discussion should be kept focused on the dimension's meaning, the rating process, the evidence, and the positions and the dots' implications. A low confidence rating for a dimension is usually a signal that more information is needed. The group should discuss how that information can be obtained and brought back to the group for consideration.

After discussion, the group decides on a summary rating for that particular dimension. The summary ratings for each dimension can be recorded on the dimension summary sheets (included in Appendix 7 – Summary Sheets), which list all 16 dimensions.

The main value of this method is the use of a visual summary to stimulate and focus discussion. There is no special significance in the use of a five-part division of the dimension arrow from high to low; four or seven or no divisions would work just as well. Similarly, using three levels of confidence is a matter of convenience and ease of definition. What matters is how well the overall pattern of dots represents the best judgment of the group and how the group uses those patterns to focus their discussions.

Summary scores method

In those cases where numeric scores are desired, you can calculate an average or summary score for each dimension. To do this, answers to each subdimension statement must be treated as numbers along a scale from high to low capability. Three ways to calculate that summary score are described below.

1. **Simple average score** – Use the spaces in the column labeled SCORE to record the number circled for each subdimension. For any statement marked "Don't Know" or not answered, leave the space in the SCORE column empty or marked with an X. Add the numbers in the SCORE column and divide by the number of answers in the column. Do not count "Don't Know" or blank answers. The results of the division is the simple average score for that dimension. For ease of reporting, the average can be rounded to the nearest tenth. With this method the columns labeled Weight, and Confidence are not used.
2. **Weighted average score** – This method is a way for participants to take into account the relative importance of subdimensions by assigning different weights to each. Some subdimensions may be considered more important than others in making up the overall dimension score. To accommodate this difference, participants can assign different weights to each subdimension to reflect their relative importance. For simplicity in calculations, consider using weights from 1-10. A weight of 10 indicates an extremely important subdimension while a weight of zero indicates that a subdimension is not important at all. The same weight can be used for more than one subdimension within a dimension. By this method a subdimension with a weight of 6, for example, would be twice as important as one with a weight of 3 in making up the summary score. The weighted average for the dimension is calculated by multiplying the weight by the rating and placing the answer in the SCORE column.

This method requires that weights be assigned to each of the subdimension statements in the dimension worksheets. This can be done a number of ways. The weights may be assigned to each subdimension statement in advance of rating, by the groups conducting the ratings in each agency or by agency management. Alternatively, the weights can be assigned by each group after they have completed the ratings, such that the weighting discussion is part of the overall rating analysis and summary. It is also possible to have each participant assign their own weights as they do their individual ratings, though this method makes combining and summarizing results more complex.

3. **Average score using confidence** – The confidence ratings can also be taken into account in calculating summary scores. For example, you could specify that any confidence rating less than High (H) should reduce the importance of a subdimension in making up the overall score. To use this method, determine the subdimension score by simple or weighted averages, then specify the reduction in that score due to a lower confidence rating. For example, use 80% of the score for a Medium (M) confidence rating and only 60 percent for a Low (L) rating. Multiply every Medium confidence score by .80 and every Low confidence score by .60, then calculate the average as above.

	Subdimension Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Nuetral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Weight	Score	Confidence
2.1	We actively seek opportunitiess for collaboration	5	4	3	2	1	DK	5	20	M
2.2	We have a substantial record of successful collaboration across organizational boundaries.	5	4	3	2	1	DK	2	6	H
2.3	We have policies that support collaboration effectively	5	4	3	2	1	DK	8	24	M
2.4	We have management practices that support collaboration effectively	5	4	3	2	1	DK	9	36	H
2.5	We have standard operating procedures that effectively support collaboration	5	4	3	2	1	DK	4	N/A	L
2.6	We are willing to commit resources (staff, finances, technology, etc.) across boundaries	5	4	3	2	1	DK	5	20	H
2.7	We have effective mechanisms to commit resources across boundaries	5	4	3	2	1	DK	8	24	H
2.8	We have an executive-level champion of collaborative activities	5	4	3	2	1	DK	7	35	H
2.9	We have high levels of stakeholder support for collaboration.	5	4	3	2	1	DK	8	32	M
	*The average is based on eight answers, omitting the one with the "Don't Know " response							Total	197	
								Average	24.6	

Figure 9 - Alternative Dimension Worksheet for Weighted Ratings

NOTE: All of the subdimension statements reflect a positive aspect of capability. Therefore, the higher average scores calculated for any dimension indicate greater capability.

PHASE FOUR: CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment can proceed once the assessment managers and participants have made the necessary decisions about approach and the operational plan is prepared,. This manual recommends that participants use the visual summary method to record and analyze capability ratings. The sample workshop facilitation plans and exercises provided in appendix 3 reflect these methods, and exercises can be modified to support alternative approaches as desired.

Conducting the assessment according to this design requires the follow two types of workshops using a group decision conference style with a facilitator.

1. The first to orient planners and participants to the toolkit and implementation design options
2. The second to collect and analyze ratings in a group setting through the use of the visual summary method.

The orientation workshop focuses on a presentation of the information sharing initiative's goals and the toolkit's role in assessing capability across the participating organizations (see appendix 3b). It gives participants the opportunity to discuss the goals, examine the capability assessment process, identify their roles in it, and engage in a mock discussion of the assessment and ratings using a selected dimension. The orientation workshop can be conducted as many times as necessary and can be used to orient new units to the toolkit and bring them up to speed on the assessment's progress.

You can also use the Sample Facilitation Plan for the Ratings Collection and Analysis Workshop in appendix 3F as many times as necessary. It provides for the sharing of results from each unit or agency and facilitates review and discussion of their implications for the overall initiative. The workshop is designed to support collection and analysis of the ratings by a visual summary. Each organizational unit could hold this workshop to summarize individual ratings. Each entity can repeat the workshop when the units share and combine their summaries. This would result in a summary assessment of the agency's capability and the resulting action plan related to its own investments. Following the agency-level workshops, this same facilitation plan could be used to support the sharing of assessment ratings among the entities involved in the initiative. The result would again be an overall summary assessment of capability and the resulting action plans, but this time the assessment and action plans would relate to the entire initiative.

Regardless of the methods chosen, the results of the ratings and analysis should be available to the participants as soon as possible following the rating. Further discussions will be more meaningful and productive if the memory of the rating is still fresh. Participants should have access to their own ratings as well as to related summaries and supporting information collected in each stage of the process. This distribution will support diagnosis and planning within organizations and their subunits. Similarly, executives and policymakers involved in the initiative should have access to summaries and analyses of the results for deliberations regarding the entire initiative. It is also likely that executives and policymakers will have questions about some results. Therefore, you should assign responsibility for follow up and possible new analyses and presentations.

PHASE FIVE: DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS

The assessment results provide detailed, well-grounded information about current capabilities that can be used to focus and inform discussion about what new or enhanced capabilities are needed and about strategies for building them. With this information the groups participating in the assessment and other decision makers can begin action planning. Depending on how the assessment is organized, the results can be integrated into action planning at the individual unit level, across entities, or for the overall initiative or enterprise. Where action planning has not already occurred, you can use the assessment results to begin the planning process. In this way the planning can focus directly on what improvements in capabilities are necessary and on the strategies and investments to fill existing gaps.

These gaps will be evident in the details of the results. Analysis of the ratings may highlight overall low ratings on some dimensions, wide variations in the ratings on individual subdimensions, or large discrepancies among various groups in their results. Since the dimensions are largely independent, it is quite possible that ratings on some dimensions turn out much higher than others. For example, an initiative may have a sound and well-developed governance structure in place along with an antiquated technical infrastructure or inadequate project management resources. In fact, it is unlikely that any initiative will have similar ratings across all dimensions. Equally important, a middle-of-the road rating on a dimension may mask a mix of high and low ratings on its subdimensions. For example, an initiative may have instituted policies and procedures to facilitate collaboration, but may still lack experience or compatible cultures, resulting in a mixed rating for Collaboration Readiness. It is also likely that some groups in the initiative will have much higher capability ratings than others on the same dimension and subdimensions. For example, technical experts, because of their more detailed knowledge, may give a much lower rating on the Secure Environment dimension than program managers. The analysis and presentation of results should show these possible outcomes, to provide the participants with the details necessary to identify where work is needed and to plan appropriate actions.

CONCLUSION

This implementation guide supports and informs use of the toolkit, but not as a set of strict rules or a rigid recipe. The details of how the kit is used should be adapted to the specifics of a particular initiative and its context. It's important, therefore, that the organizers and directors of the assessment understand all the parts of the kit and how to use them. It is also important that the assessment activities be carefully planned and managed. To aid in that planning, this guide presents the basic information about assessment activities in a logical sequence. However, it is not the only possible sequence. For an effective assessment, you should combine the information in this guide and the suggestions for use with the best local knowledge about the initiative and its development needs. That combined knowledge will form a sound foundation for planning the assessment activities and putting the results to use in building a successful information sharing initiative.

APPENDICES

This appendix offers a case example illustrating the use of the information sharing capability assessment toolkit, some sample documents, and a number of reference materials.

1. **Case example**

   Reducing the number of parole violators

2. **Sample documents**

   Memos to leaders and participants

   Capability assessment workshop materials

3. **Reference materials**

   Glossary

   Related links

   Selected publications

Appendix 1. Case Example

REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PAROLE VIOLATORS NOT IN CUSTODY

A murder in a large eastern city was committed by a convicted felon who was found to be already in violation of his parole when the new crime was committed. As a result of substantial negative publicity about this crime, the heads of three state agencies—the State Police, the Office of Court Administration, and the Department of Parole—decided to set a goal of substantially reducing the number of parole violators on the street, particularly in the large cities of their state. The Superintendent of State Police was already deeply concerned about recent statistics that showed a growing number of crimes committed by parolees who were in violation of their paroles, but had not been returned to custody. This new goal resulted from informal discussions he started with the other agency heads to identify ways to improve the situation. These agency heads realized that to achieve this goal they must make information about parole violations available to all relevant parties in a timely and easily accessible manner. They also realized that to do so would require overcoming many serious challenges. One in particular was the absence of a comprehensive understanding of the capabilities of each organization to share information about parolees, their location, activities, violations, and related information needed to locate and return violators to custody. To better understand these capabilities, they decided to employ a set of analytical tools to jointly asses their current situation and plan for improved information sharing across their boundaries.

Specify Goals and Scope of Initiative

Top administrators in the three agencies identified a shared goal of implementing improvements in cross-agency information sharing that would sharply reduce the number of parole violators not in custody. They set a preliminary target of cutting the current number in half within three years. The administrators then created a project planning committee composed of agency staff to begin more formal and regular discussions about this shared goal and how to achieve it. The committee consisted of an IT manager from each agency plus a Captain from State Police headquarters, an Associate Commissioner of Parole (a former parole officer), and the Administrative Director of the Office of Court Administration. The planning committee began by identifying stakeholders in the parole process, both in their own agencies and a wider range of interested parties. These included local law enforcement agencies, state corrections and county jail officials, prosecuting and defense attorneys, victims advocates, and local political leaders. Representatives of the major stakeholder groups participated in a series of meetings to inform all three agencies about their interests, to develop a shared understanding of the problem, and to mobilize support. These meetings revealed that the agencies had not fully grasped the complexity of this goal or its implications, such as the difficulties of working with incompatible computer systems, lack of standard data definitions, and conflicting stakeholder interests. The meetings helped participant's understand what aspects of the problem and what possible solutions were of most interest to each stakeholder. After several meetings all participants understood how their agency-specific goals related to others, and where their interests overlapped. They drafted and shared with other agency staff members and stakeholders revised statements of the overall project goal and scope of the problem.

As a result of these meetings, the planning committee members decided that one individual should coordinate this cross-agency initiative. They saw that dealing with such a complex problem, and the number of issues and stakeholders involved, required substantial planning and preparation. This would be facilitated by having a skilled administrator manage coordination, logistics, and documentation. They identified John Lane, a veteran administrator in the Department of Parole, as well qualified for this task and asked the Commissioner of Parole to lend him to the project. The Commissioner appointed John as the Interim Integrated Justice Coordinator, assigned to assist the planning committee.

Describe Current Situation and Identify Gaps

The next step was what the planning committee called a "change inventory." The committee tasked each unit in the involved agencies to identify the changes they need to make to achieve the intended outcomes. They also began meeting regularly with these units to share information about what had to change. This resulting change inventory identified the kinds of revisions in work and information flows needed. One work change involved parolee curfews; information about a night-time curfew imposed by the parole officer should be made part of the information available to police officers who may encounter the parolee on the street. Contacting parole officers at any hour to check on curfew requirements would be difficult at best. The work practices might also be revised to require routine verification of parolee address information to ensure its accuracy. There was also no system for routing police records of contact with parolees to their parole officers. A detailed inventory of needed changes of this kind provided a valuable preparation for the capability assessment.

Apply the Capability Assessment Toolkit

After reviewing the change inventories, John Lane concluded that a more detailed analysis was needed. To develop support for a more complete capability assessment, he approached the Superintendent of State Police, whom John considered a champion of the project, the person who cares deeply about it and is able to mobilize wide support and resources for the effort. The Superintendent was the strongest advocate for the initiative and in a position to influence events in his own and the other agencies. John proposed that the three agencies spend time determining if they can collectively achieve the stated goal. Though the agency heads agreed that the goal was sound, they did not know whether they had the capability to implement the necessary changes. With the help of the Superintendent, John received support from the top executives at the other two agencies.

The top executives in the agencies commissioned the planning committee to take responsibility for managing an assessment. They designated Loraine Cooper, the representative from the Court system, as chair, with John as staff. The planning committee had to choose among several ways to organize the activities and identify participants. The change inventory showed that many units and staff members in each agency would be involved or affected by the initiative. Therefore the committee engaged several units in each agency in the assessment. Each unit received a subset of the assessment questions tailored to their responsibilities, experience, and expertise. The assessment could then be conducted at three levels: first within the selected units in each agency, then summarized for each agency, then combined for an executive-level assessment of the entire initiative. Each agency could then combine their unit results and produce an agency-level summary.
The planning committee would take those results and produce the overall assessment report.

Based on these choices, the planning committee created a management plan for the assessment and obtained each agency's agreement to a list of steps to be followed. The plan identified the units to be involved, details of the assessment process, a timetable, and methods to review and summarize results. Assessment materials and plans were distributed to each of the participants in the agency units. The committee held an orientation workshop for all participants to explain the process and clarify roles and responsibilities. During the orientation, the participants were given copies of the Overview from Sharing Justice Information: A Capability Assessment Toolkit along with the dimension worksheets relevant to their roles.

At the Individual Unit Level

The individual units began the assessment. Some units decided to have their members work individually on their worksheets, then come together for discussion and summary. Other units completed their worksheets as a group. Some units included new participants in their meetings to draw on their expertise. For example, the State Police IT unit was trying to resolve issues concerning victims' rights and existing communication mechanisms for victims. They sought information and help from the planning committee, which prompted the committee to revisit the change inventory and seek additional information from the

Crime Victims Bureau about their goals and procedures. This inquiry generated new insight into the changes needed in current operations and resources in the State Police information systems. The State Police IT unit identified new data elements and requirements about crimes and victims. These data elements, moreover, required standardization so they could be shared among agencies, in turn requiring conversations in the unit about their business model and architecture, and information policy dimensions. The units concluded their rating based on a shared understanding of their results in each dimension. Each set of ratings included a confidence determination and a preliminary set of recommendations for short- and long-term strategies for enhancing that unit's capability. The results of each unit's ratings were passed to John, who combined them for the next level of work.

At the Agency Level

Each agency designated representatives from each unit to make up an agency-level team. With the help of a process facilitator, these teams held workshops to share, discuss, and summarize their capability assessments. These teams reviewed and discussed each dimension in turn, exploring capability ratings and what each rating implied for individual units and the agency as a whole. The teams attempted to identify ratings and areas where a high capability in one unit could possibly counterbalance a low capability rating in another.

In the course of these discussions, the agency teams discovered some wide and puzzling inconsistencies in ratings. In the Parole team, for example, the three most divergent ratings came up in the Business Processes, Data Policies, and Security Dimensions. On further investigation, the team discovered that the Division of Parole units had incomplete knowledge of practices in other units, resulting in distorted understandings of each other's capabilities. The IT unit, for example, did not understand how parole officers exercise discretion in dealing with possible violations. The administrative units did not fully understand court procedure in handling violation issues and communicating with victims. Parole officers lacked technical knowledge about systems and infrastructure security. These caused divergent assessment ratings.

To solve this problem Parole teams compared their understandings, agreed on consistent process and capability descriptions, and adjusted the ratings accordingly. They continued to explore the dimensions, using the revised assessments to test their understanding of the environment, establish priorities for action, and create overall ratings for their agency. Similar processes occurred in the other agencies.

At the Initiative Level

The final level of the assessment brought the three agency-level teams into a combined workshop to create an overall set of ratings for the initiative as a whole. With the help of a facilitator, they continued reviewing and summarizing the ratings. They presented the overall results from each agency and continued sharing, discussing, and summarizing.

The process was not a smooth one. Considerable disagreement arose between the court team and the police team in particular about ratings for the security infrastructure and the readiness for full-fledged collaboration. Several agency team members began to question the value of creating an overall assessment. As one frustrated participant said, "Why are we arguing over these scales? We're wasting our time. We have to go forward with this project anyway!" That remark led to a heated exchange about the value of the overall ratings versus detailed ratings and evidence coming from unit- and agency-level work. The workshop participants were divided over how to proceed until John Lane intervened. He said that while it was not up to them to decide the fate of the initiative, it was their responsibility to provide decision makers with the best assessment of capability they could. He suggested they produce both an overall rating and detailed reports and commentary. All would be useful in planning for and conducting the project. He also suggested that the workshop divide into two groups: one to generate overall ratings and the other to identify and highlight the most important detailed ratings and evidence. The result was an overall capability assessment based on a robust understanding of the individual units, each agency, and the multiagency collaboration.

Generate Action Plans

Through the unit-level, agency-level, and initiative-wide assessment, the teams identified short-term actions and long-term strategies to enhance information sharing capability. The State Police had a long history of information sharing and investing in technology. The assessment results, however, showed that their stakeholders doubted the statewide police network's ability to provide an adequate architecture and secure environment for this enterprise-wide initiative. The State Police therefore undertook an effort to build confidence in their network by informing local police units and state public safety agencies about its features, reliability, security, and availability for stakeholders' use.

The assessment also showed the need for the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to streamline its business processes. The OCA discovered that long-term participation in the development and use of statewide data standards for parole did not automatically lead to compatible business practices among the agencies.

Results also indicated compatibility problems with Parole's technology and information policies, though these deficiencies were balanced by the department's high level of capability in terms of collaboration readiness and project management. Parole was open to and sought collaborative solutions, and provided support for managing the project. Shortcomings in infrastructure and policy were balanced by the capability to participate in and lead a collaborative activity.

Overall, combining results resulted in a greater understanding of where high capability existed, where a single partner had low capability but was balanced by high capability elsewhere, and most importantly, where insufficient capability existed in all partners. Concern about security in the police network, for example, was based more on anecdote and perception than on detailed technical analysis. On the other hand, the assessment confirmed low capability due to divergent business practices and readiness for collaboration among all three agencies. Both areas were identified as high priority for improvement. Project planning capabilities in the court system were generally agreed to be low, but could be balanced by much higher capabilities in the other two agencies. Discoveries in this last category were valuable for risk assessment and collective planning focused on building the foundation for this new initiative.

Investments in Capability Enhancement and the Information Sharing Initiative

Each of the agencies made at least two kinds of investments as a result of new information about itself and the other organizations. Often these investments resulted from a reallocation of resources—money, people, and technology—while others resulted from a sharing of resources across organizations. Some investments required new budget allocations, and others relied on grants from organizations interested in both information sharing and capability enhancement.

The State Police devoted considerable staff resources to reviewing and publicizing the robustness and security of their network. The planning team combined funding from all three agencies to hire a consulting firm to work with the agencies to document and analyze the business processes involved in the information sharing project. The court agency invested in project management training for members of its IT and operations staff. The Integrated Justice Coordinator position was made permanent and located in the State Police agency pending the creation of an administrative structure to direct multiagency information sharing projects. Finally, the planning committee was funded for a year-long strategic planning effort to translate the results of the assessment and follow on work into a broad strategic plan for justice information sharing statewide. The strategic plan would include provision for the parole project as a first priority.

Appendix 2. Memos to Leaders and Participants

2A. Sample Memorandum Seeking Leadership Support

DATE: January 15, 2005
TO: Jane Doe, Director of Criminal Justice
FROM: John Smith, Coordinator of Integrated Criminal Justice Services
SUBJECT: Assessing capability for success of ***[Name of Information-Sharing Initiative]***

As you know, I am in the process of developing the plan to implement the State's new ***[Name of Information-Sharing Initiative]***. To ensure success in this important initiative I would like to lead the appropriate agencies through an assessment of our collective capabilities. The purpose of this memorandum is to request approval to launch this assessment process, which will inform our plans and increase our overall likelihood of success.

The assessment process will be guided by a resource called *Sharing Information: A Capability Assessment Toolkit*. The toolkit, designed in consultation with some of the nation's leading practitioners in integrated justice, guides the review and discussion of information sharing capabilities both within each agency and across agencies. The outcome of the process is a consensus-based plan outlining the actions necessary to enhance critical capabilities within and across agencies. Staff time is the only resource that will be required at this point. Selected program, policy, and information technology staff from the agencies involved in the initiative would participate in group meetings required to complete the assessments and to produce summary assessments and action plans.

Upon your approval, I will form an assessment team to assist me in organizing and carrying out this assessment and identify individuals from each agency to participate in the process. I expect this effort to take three months. Current planning for ***[Name of Information-Sharing Initiative]*** can continue while this assessment is conducted. The efforts can run in parallel and will inform each other.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the assessment process and how it fits in to our efforts to meet our integrated justice goals.

Thank you.

2B. SAMPLE INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

[It would be best to have this invitation come from the highest level Criminal Justice Official, but short of that, it should say that the initiative has his or her full support.]

DATE: April 15, 2005
TO: Joe Jones, CIO, Department of Law
FROM: John Smith, Coordinator of Integrated Criminal Justice Services
SUBJECT: Assessing capability for success of ***[Name of Information-Sharing Initiative]***

As you may know, our new ***[Name of Information-Sharing Initiative]*** is underway and its success depends largely on the capabilities within individual agencies and on the capabilities of agencies to work together across boundaries.

To that end, I invite you to participate in an assessment project designed to assess our respective capabilities to share information. The assessment process has the full support of the ***[Name of Director of Criminal Justice]***.

The process will be guided by a US Department of Justice resource called *Sharing Information: A Capability Assessment Toolkit*. The toolkit, designed in consultation with some of the nation's leading practitioners in integrated justice, guides the review and discussion of information sharing capabilities both within each agency and across agencies. The outcome of the process is a consensus-based plan outlining the actions necessary to enhance critical capabilities within and across agencies. Staff time is the only resource that will be required at this point. Selected program, policy, and information technology staff from the agencies involved in the initiative will participate in the group meetings required to complete the assessments and to produce summary assessments and action plans.

The capability assessment will require approximately three days of your time over the next three months. That time will be spent mainly in facilitated group meetings during which unit and agency assessments will be shared and discussed.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I will be in touch shortly to confirm your participation and look forward to working with you on this important endeavor.

Thank you.

Appendix 3. Capability Assessment Workshop Materials

3A. Two Types of Workshops

These workshop descriptions present methods to prepare a wide range of participants for the assessment. In some settings, less elaborate workshops or meetings may be sufficient. These materials and directions should e adapted as necessary to your initiative.

Type	Purpose
Orientation Workshop	Build understanding of the capability assessment process, its purpose, and the roles that individuals and organizations will play.
	Build understanding of the Capability Assessment Toolkit and its purpose through presentations and facilitated exercises in support of preliminary and operational planning
	Prepare participants to gather the information required in the assessment process and to use the results.
Ratings Collect and Analysis Workshop	Collect assessment results through presentations of individual participants' assessments and facilitated discussions of unit- or agency-level results. At the end of this workshop the group will have a collective assessment of capability that can be moved to the next higher level of assessment. Local action plans can also be developed.
	If this workshop is conducted at the initiative level, then participants will develop initiative-wide action plans or recommendations for moving forward.

3B. SAMPLE FACILITATION PLAN FOR THE ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

Orientation Workshop Facilitation Plan				
	Time	Description	Materials, Handouts and Notes	Speaker
1	15	**Plenary session** - Welcome and overview **Purpose** – Provide an overview of the overall assessment process and this half-day workshop.	**Materials** • Slide show, laptop, and screen. **Notes** • Outline the goals of the workshop, of the assessment process, and the role of participants in each. • Share timeline and information about the sponsors of the effort and the resources supporting it.	*Initiative Champion and Process Manager*
2	30	**Plenary session** – Visioning Exercise **Purpose** – To share previously unstated hopes and fears about the assessment process or about the information sharing initiative in general. Begin the process of group formation and create an atmosphere of open dialogue.	**Materials** • Colored paper, markers, tape, wall space. **Note** • Instructions for facilitating this session presented in appendix 3c.	*Assessment Process Manager or Designated Facilitator*
3	45	**Plenary session** – Presentation on the Tool Kit **Purpose** – To orient participants to the concepts of information integration and capability as used in the toolkit and to the phases of the capability assessment process.	**Handouts** • Sharing Justice Information: A Capability Assessment Tool Kit - Overview • Initiative and assessment process timelines • A selected dimension worksheet **Notes** Suggested outline for the presentation: • Introduce organizing principles of the toolkit – information integration, capability, dimensionality, assessment, group decision conferences • Describe how the use of the toolkit contributes to the success of the initiative • Outline the components of the assessment toolkit • Discuss how assessment results will be used in action planning • Describe the worksheets and the individual and group processes used to collect and summarize assessment ratings.	*Assessment Process Manager*

	Orientation Workshop Facilitation Plan *(continued)*			
	Time	**Description**	**Materials, Handouts and Notes**	**Speaker**
4	60	**Small Group Exercise** – Learning to Use the Dimension Worksheets **Purpose** – Allow participants to become familiar with the use of the ratings worksheets to collect individual perspectives and to inform group discussions and decision-making about capabilities of the team relative to the requirements of the initiative.	**Materials** • Flip-chart paper and sticky dots in red, yellow, and green for each small group. **Handouts** • "Collaboration Ready" worksheet • Learning to Use the Dimensions Worksheets -Participant Instructions **Notes** • Each group should have a facilitator assigned to it and each facilitator should have opportunity to review the facilitation instructions prior to the workshop. • Instructions for the facilitators of this exercise are provided in appendix 3e. • Use 15 minutes of this time slot to introduce the exercise and to move participants into small groups. Use the remaining time for the exercise itself.	*Small groups – each with Facilitator.*
5	30	**Plenary session** – Report out and discussion of small group work **Purpose** – Generate group understanding of how an assessment ratings process will be carried out. Allow participants to express concerns about the process so they may be responded to.	**Notes** Facilitator should keep the focus of reports and discussion on the individual and group worksheets, and in particular on the sub-dimensions, the use of evidence, and the confidence level. Discussions should not focus on the particulars of collaboration readiness per se.	*Assessment Process Manager or designated facilitator*
6	15	**Plenary session** – Presentation on next steps **Purpose** – Keep participants informed and as appropriate, assign responsibilities for ongoing work.	**Notes** • Revisit the assessment process timeline. • If operational planning has been completed and participants can be provided with their assignments for the ratings collect and analysis workshop – then distribute those assignments together with the worksheets for completion by the ratings workshop. • If operational planning is not complete, then share information about when it will be and when the actual capability assessment activities will begin.	*Assessment Process Manager*

3C. HOPES AND FEARS VISIONING EXERCISE - FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

This exercise allows participants to develop a shared vision of both the information sharing initiative and the capability assessment process. The exercise's tangible products are named "idea clusters" that the participants have shared and have been posted for viewing by all. The exercise's desired outcome is a shared understanding of the barriers and benefits of an initiative. This shared understanding can become the focus of future discussions about capability. If barriers are recognized then discussions can focus on collective capability required to overcome them. If benefits are recognized, they can be used to focus incentive discussions and to make a case for continued investment in assessing and developing capability.

Exercise Summary

Participants are taken through an "affinity clustering" exercise. They are asked respond to an elicitation question and responses that are similar are clustered together on a wall or space visible to all participants. This response process generates discussion and is a valuable way to discover similarities and differences in perspectives about initiatives and the capability available in a particular initiative.

Each participant is asked in two successive rounds of the exercise to think, first of their hopes for the information sharing initiative, and second, of their fears about it. Each participant then writes that hope or fear, one per sheet, on the paper provided. Using a round-robin collection method, the facilitator asks each person to read their item out loud to the group. After the item is read to the group, the facilitator takes the item from the participant and posts it on the wall. As this process continues the facilitator is also making decisions about which items "cluster" with other items. Like items should be posted in proximity to one another. As new ideas emerge, the facilitator may need to move items due to space limitations or to create new clusters. As more items are posted and as time allows, the facilitator may ask the participants where they think an item should be placed. Once all items are posted, then the facilitator should ask the participants if the clusters, as they appear, "work" for them – do the items seem similar, in what ways, etc. Adjustments can be made accordingly as long as time allows. The final step in the process is labeling clusters. This is useful for reporting purposes and for discussions. Three approaches work here. In the first, the facilitator suggests labels for each cluster and asks for reactions from the group. This is the faster approach. In the second, the facilitator asks the group to generate cluster names and then moderates a discussion until a consensus on a cluster label emerges. This may generate a more interesting discussion, but is more time consuming. The third approach is a combined one. The facilitator labels the clusters that are obvious, then asks the group to suggest labels for those that are less so. This process typically generates discussion about the items and what they mean to people, which can be useful to the capability assessment process manager.

Supplies

Paper (at least four colors), markers (one per participant), masking tape.

Room Requirements

Meeting room must have at least one wall large enough to display many single sheets of paper individually and in clusters, accessible to facilitators for posting items. Be sure to check the wall surface ahead of time - tape doesn't always stick.

Steps

In the Large Group

1. Review the exercise instructions and the time allotted for this exercise.

In the Small Group

2. Be sure that all participants can see the wall you will use to post items and are seated in way that is conducive to group discussions.

3. Distribute several sheets of colored paper (one color for hopes, another for fears) and a marker to each participant.

4. Ask participants to spend 5 minutes considering the following question:

   "What are your hopes (fears) for this justice information sharing initiative?

   - Be prepared to respond to participants regarding the specific focus of their hopes and fears – often participants are uncomfortable with the vagueness of the question and want to know specifically what you are looking for. Encourage them to think broadly about the initiative – but expect to get some responses that are about the capability assessment process itself. This is not a problem. The discussion is the primary purpose here.

5. Ask each person to write down at least two hopes (fears) - one per sheet of paper.

6. In a round-robin fashion ask each participant to introduce him or herself and read one item aloud. Encourage participants to present their "favorite" or "most important" item first – often they will have more items than you have time to post.

7. After the participant has read their item, post it on the wall, clustering similar items together; consulting on placement with the group as desired and time allows. This is a time for the facilitator to ask for clarification about or expansion of an idea.

8. Throughout the exercise encourage discussion of the implications of the hopes and fears for the information sharing initiative and the capability assessment.

9. Continue until each participant has provided at least two items. (Whether to continue for more than 2 items is your decision as facilitator, taking into account group size, time availability, and value of additional items)

10. After collection is complete begin naming the clusters. Three approaches work here and may be considered in terms of group size, and time availability, etc.

    - First suggest titles for each cluster and ask the group to react. Select a different color paper from the one used for the items in the cluster. Write your suggested name on that sheet and tape it near or on top of the clustered items. Then confirm with the group that this title accurately collects the essence of the cluster. If so, move to the next. If not, then ask for suggestions and then modify the sheet or create a new one.
    - Second, moderate a discussion seeking suggestions for and then consensus on titles suggested by the participants. This is a moderated discussion with you as facilitator guiding discussion around proposed cluster names and leading the group toward agreement. Keep in mind in this exercise that the outcome (titled clusters) has value, but the greater value is in the discussion. So allow the group to compromise on titles and allow a cluster to be titled without complete consensus.
    - The third is a combination of the first two. For those obvious clusters, you suggest the title, for those less obvious you moderate a discussion until a general consensus has been reached.

11. Steps 1-10 are repeated for fears using a different color paper, clustering them separately from the hopes. Some rooms may have limited wall space so you may need to remove the hopes clusters before beginning the fears.

12. At the end of the meeting the sheets grouped by cluster should be collected and included in the overall documentation of the assessment.

13. Soon after the meeting, results should be summarized and shared with participants and others involved in the information sharing initiative and the capability assessment.

3D. FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS - A CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT PRACTICE ROUND

This exercise introduces participants to the assessment process used in the toolkit. Participants complete a practice assessment of their unit on one dimension, then engage in a group discussion of the results. When they move on to the actual assessment workshops, they will assess capability first by unit, then by organization, and where needed across organizations. Workshop discussions will focus on the ratings, evidence used, and levels of confidence in the ratings. In this practice round however, the main purpose to gain familiarity with the assessment process. The practice round activities will help identify issues to be addressed before the actual assessment begins. The capability assessment manager may choose to debrief facilitators following the orientation workshops as an additional input into the final design and implementation of the assessment.

Practice Round Overview

This exercise requires a facilitator and reporter for each group. Participants divide into groups, ideally 4–5 persons per group, and use the Collaboration Readiness worksheet in a practice assessment of their organization's readiness to collaborate. The small groups then report back to the large group, focusing on their assessment process, not on the Collaboration Readiness rating. Each small group must have easy access to a flip chart with a mockup of the collaboration readiness dimension. Meeting organizers may prepare this ahead of time or each facilitator can draw it on the flip chart while the group members are doing their assessment work.

To begin, ask participants to complete their individual assessments on the worksheets provided. This may take a while. Check group progress as they work on the ratings and after approximately 10 minutes ask the group to see how much more time they will need. Limit the overall rating time to 15 minutes. This round's purpose is to give participants practice completing ratings and engaging in discussion, not to have a completed assessment. For the practice round workshop, participants complete this work as part of the exercise. However, the subdimensions should be completed before participants arrive at the actual workshops where ratings will be collected and analyzed

When the individual rating is completed, elicit rating results from each participant. For the first few times, you may suggest where the rating should fall on the dimension and the level of confidence in that rating. Record the rating on the flip chart by placing a colored dot in the appropriate space (see the chart on the next page); the dot color indicates the confidence level: green = high; yellow = medium; red = low. After a few rounds the group will become familiar with the process and begin sharing their rating in terms of the dot color and where it should be placed on the dimension arrow. Encourage this as it will save the group time, but don't require it, since some participants may be uncomfortable reporting their rating as a dot color and location. Throughout this process encourage brief discussions of rationale and evidence, balanced with discussions about process.

This process continues until all ratings are collected or until five minutes are left in the session. Use the last five minutes to ensure that all observations about process are collected and that the reporter is ready to speak for the group about their experience with the toolkit.

Supplies

Flip-chart paper (36" X 48"), easel or wall that allows for taping the flip chart, markers, sticky dots, a "Collaboration Readiness" dimension worksheet for each participant, and a large Collaboration Readiness summary worksheet for each small group.

Room Requirements

Each small group must have a space that is separate from the other small groups. This space must accommodate a group discussion as well as use of a flip chart.

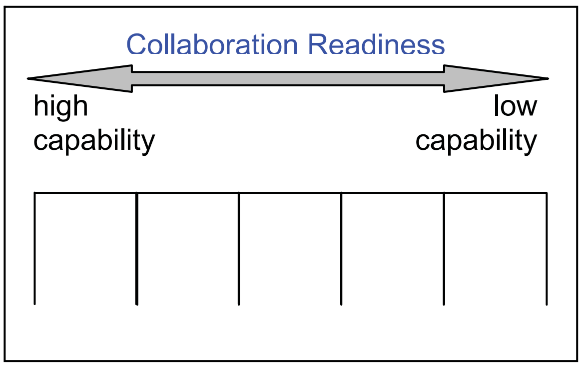
Steps

Prior to the workshop

1. Make refinements to the agenda and room arrangements based on the size of the full group, on

the number of and sizes of small groups. Aside from additional space, a larger number of small groups may require more time for group reports.

2. Prepare a separate flip chart labeled for collaboration readiness, a dimension arrow, and other content as shown below for each small group.



In the Large Group

3. Distribute the participant instructions provided in appendix 3e and review them with the participants. Remind participants that the focus of their small group exercise and report is process, not rating results. Restate the expected time limit for each group report.

4. Divide the participants into small work groups of 4-5 people each. Have each group move to a corner of the room or to a separate breakout room. If using separate rooms, be sure to factor travel time from room to room in your plan.

In the Small Group

5. Each small group should start the exercise session by identifying a discussion recorder and someone to report back to the large group; it may be the same person.

6. Allow 10 minutes for each person to complete the Collaboration Readiness dimension worksheet. Suggest that they begin by reviewing the dimension description.

7. After 10 minutes check on the progress of your group. If necessary give them five more minutes. Remind them that the purpose of this exercise is not a completed assessment but gaining and sharing experience with the toolkit. After 15 minutes, begin the small group sharing of results.

8. In a round-robin fashion, ask each participant to share their rating, evidence and confidence level on the dimension. Participants can change their ratings if desired, based on the discussion.

9. When the discussion is finished, direct each participant to decide on their own overall rating for collaboration readiness. The facilitator then asks each person for their rating and places a colored dot on the display representing the rating. The color of the dot represents the confidence level (green = high; yellow = medium; red = low).

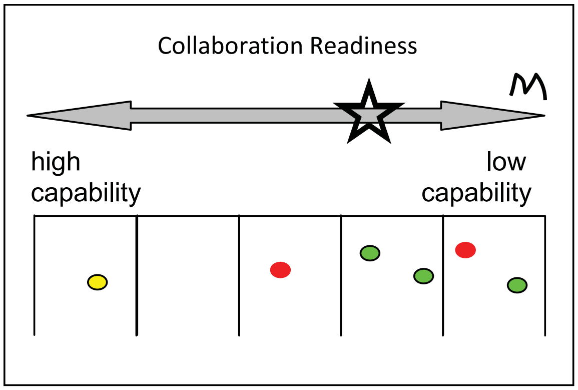
10. Ask the group to discuss each as it is posted and then proceed to the next person until all individual ratings are displayed. An alternative procedure is to post the dots for all participants without discussion, then discuss the whole pattern. When completed, the flip chart will contain a compilation of the group's ratings (see below).

11. As the ratings are being posted, comment on differences in ratings, confidence levels, and supporting evidence. After sufficient discussion, the group is asked to decide on an overall rating and confidence level, to be marked on the flip chart, shown as the letter M in the figure below.

    Of primary interest for this orientation workshop, however are observations about the process of capturing ratings. Key points generated by discussion should be recorded on flip chart. Remind participants that during the actual workshops they will be asked to focus their discussions on ratings rather than on the rating process.

12. When completed, the flip chart will represent a summary of the group's ratings on one dimension, similar to the figure below. Each dot will represent

one person's overall rating and confidence level, with the star as the overall group rating.



13. Use the last five minutes to review the observations list and to summarize those observations for use by the person reporting to the larger group.

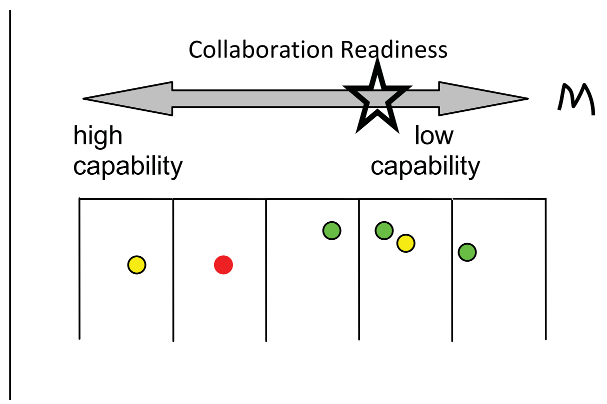
In the Large Group

14. The large group facilitator asks the group reporters in turn to share their groups' results. Remind each reporter of the time limit and how "time's up" will be signaled by the large group facilitator. As the reports are given, the large group facilitator should make a list on flip chart paper of concerns and tips for later distribution to the participants.

3E. PRACTICE ROUND PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS

Start the exercise by identifying one person to record key issues in the discussion and one person to report results back to the large group.

1. Working individually, each participant should complete the subdimension ratings for the selected dimension and use those ratings to choose their own overall rating for that dimension.
2. In a round-robin fashion, each member of the group will be asked to share:
   - His or her rating for the selected dimension on the scale from high to low.
   - A brief description of the evidence he or she used, including subdimension ratings.
   - A confidence level for his or her selected dimension rating.
3. The recorder then places a colored dot on the flip chart to represent each member's rating, as shown in the figure below.
4. This process continues until all participants have shared their dimension ratings, discussed then in detail, and each member's rating is represented by a dot on the flip chart.
5. The group is then asked to give an overall group rating on this dimension and a confidence level for that rating. That overall rating and confidence level can be marked on the flip chart, as shown by the star and letter "M" (for medium) in the figure below.
6. When completed, the flip chart will represent a summary of the group's ratings on one dimension, similar to the figure below. Each dot will represent one person's overall rating and confidence level, with the star as the overall group rating.



Notes

- Participants may change their ratings at any time.
- The recorder should use a separate flip chart sheet to keep track of key points of agreement or disagreement, unique insights, and indications of where new information is required before ratings discussions can continue. The notes should be part of the report and discussion in the large group.

3F. SAMPLE FACILITATION PLAN FOR THE RATINGS COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS WORKSHOP

NOTE: This facilitation plan can be used to combine individual ratings into unit ratings, unit ratings into agency-level ratings, and agency-level ratings into initiative-wide results.

Ratings Collection and Analysis Workshop Facilitation Plan				
	Time	**Description**	**Materials, Handouts and Notes**	**Speaker**
1	15	Plenary session – Welcome and Overview Purpose – Ensure participants understand the purpose of and the plan for the day ahead of them.	Materials: Slide show, laptop, and screen Notes • Outline the goals of the workshop as part of the overall capability assessment process. • Share timeline as well as information about the sponsors of the effort and the resources supporting it. • Describe the roles and responsibilities of participants.	*Initiative Champion and Assessment Process Manager*
2		Plenary session – Sharing Capability Ratings Purpose - To collect and discuss the capability assessment ratings for each dimension and select the summary rating for each dimension.	Materials • Flip charts, markers, sticky dots Notes Exercise 1	
3		Plenary session – Creating a Capability Summary Rating for the Initiative Purpose – To review summary ratings for all dimensions collectively and discuss implications.	Materials: • Flip charts, markers, sticky dots Notes • Exercise 2	
4	60	Plenary Session – Action Planning Purpose – Identify, prioritize, and assign responsibility for specific actions to address capability gaps identified through the assessment.	Notes • Exercise 3	

3G. RATINGS COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Workshop planning notes

This workshop has three exercises. The first is to collect, compare and discuss the detailed thinking underlying each dimension in order to produce a summary rating for each of the 16 dimensions. The second is to discuss the summary ratings across all 16 dimensions to produce a rating for the initiative as a whole. The third is to review the key ideas, issues, and opportunities for future actions that emerge from the discussion. This third exercise is critical to capturing the insights generated through the rating collection process and provides input to action planning.

- This workshop can be repeated as many times as necessary based on the method selected to review and combine ratings.
- If the successive capability ratings approach is used, the number of workshops depends on the number of units and how many organizations involved. One workshop may be enough for each unit, a few more times at the agency level, depending on the number of units, and then at least one at the cross-agency, or initiative level.
- If the executive ratings approach is used, fewer workshops may be needed, possibly only one.
- If a combined approach is used, the number is best decided by considering the number of units and organizations providing ratings as input to an executive ratings process. If the initiative includes many units and organizations, it may take more than one workshop for the executive review and summarization of those ratings.
- Be sure to identify anyone who has not attended the orientation workshop prior to the ratings collection and analysis workshop so you can orient them offline before this workshop. At the very least, communicate with them to be sure they have reviewed the toolkit and understand their role during the workshop. Be sure they understand that they must arrive with their ratings completed.

3H. FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS - CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT RATINGS COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS EXERCISE

This exercise is the foundation of the capability assessment. It takes participants through the group activity of sharing and discussing ratings on the capability of a unit, an organization, or multiple organizations engaged in the information sharing initiative.

In this exercise participants share their ratings of capability and discuss the implications, similarities and differences among ratings, the evidence offered to justify the ratings, and their confidence n the ratings. Discussions should be moderated to identify concerns, goals, issues, opportunities, and priorities for action planning.

Exercise Summary

This exercise requires a facilitator and at least one reporter. Ideally, the group should be no larger than 8-10 persons, or in the case of an organization or initiative level workshop, 8-10 units or agencies. A flip chart with a mock-up of each of the dimensions must be prepared ahead of time. Participants are expected to arrive at the workshop with a completed set of worksheets.

The facilitator collects each participant's overall rating on each dimension and represents that rating on the flip chart by placing a colored dot on the appropriate dimensions. The facilitator must listen to the participant and make a determination about color and position of the dot along the dimension; the color of the dot represents the rater's level of confidence (green = high, yellow = medium, red = low). Each workshop will be different in terms of how comfortable the group is with this process. The first few dimensions will take longer. After a few rounds, the group will become more familiar with the process and begin sharing ratings in terms of the color of the dot and its placement on the dimension arrow. Each workshop may have some participants who have done this exercise several times already; for others, this may be their first time since the orientation workshop. Encourage participants to give you their rating by color and location to save time, but don't require this. Some participants may not be as comfortable transforming their rating into dot color and location at first. Encourage discussions of evidence and confidence. Keep track of observations about high capability, what is possible because of it, where it is low or missing, and what might be done to ensure success. Discussions might include:

- Where capability is low or missing and how it might be balanced by capability elsewhere
- Where low or missing capability is a widespread problem and must be created across some or all agencies involved in the initiative
- Where resources must be invested to create or increase capability for the enterprise
- Where resources must be invested to create or increase specific capability for this initiative
- Where differences about available or necessary capability exist and must be explored for planning

This process continues until all ratings are collected and the implications of differences and agreements have been explored. The group then discusses and decides on a summary rating for that dimension. Consensus is not always necessary to choose the summary rating; it can also be used to report differences of opinion on capability.

Continue this process until all 16 dimensions have been covered.

Supplies

Flip-chart paper (36" X 48"), easel or wall that allows for taping the flip chart, markers, sticky dots, and a large mock-up summary worksheet for each dimension.

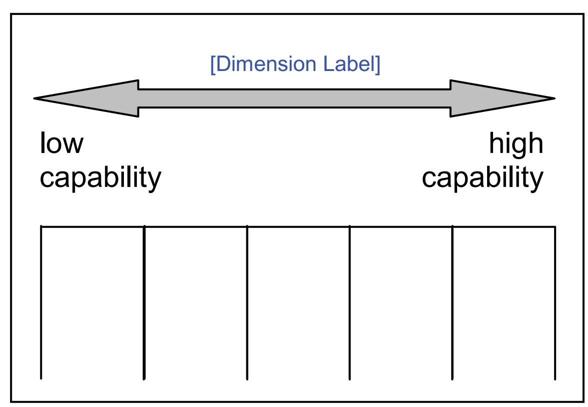
Room requirements

All participants must be able to see the posted flip charts. The wall space should allow for posting of multiple flip charts (ideally, all 16) on a visible wall. The room should accommodate a U-shaped seating arrangement, either at tables or simply in chairs in front of the wall.

Steps

Prior to the workshop

1. In preparing it is important to choose the order and number of dimensions to be completed in any time block. These choices will depend in part on the group size. Assuming that the process will be slower at first, it might be possible to complete three dimensions with fewer subdimensions in the first hour. As the group becomes more familiar with the process it will move more quickly. However, be sure to allow for productive discussions to continue as long as necessary.
2. Refine the agenda based on the size of the full group, facilities, and other logistics. For example, less wall space may require you to take more time between dimensions. The group's size will determine the time spent collecting each person's ratings so that discussion time can be maximized.
3. Prepare a separate flip chart labeled for each dimension, a dimension arrow, and other content as shown below.



4. Prepare a separate flip chart size version of the Dimension Summary sheet in the workbook. This will be used to record the summary rating at the end of each dimension discussion.

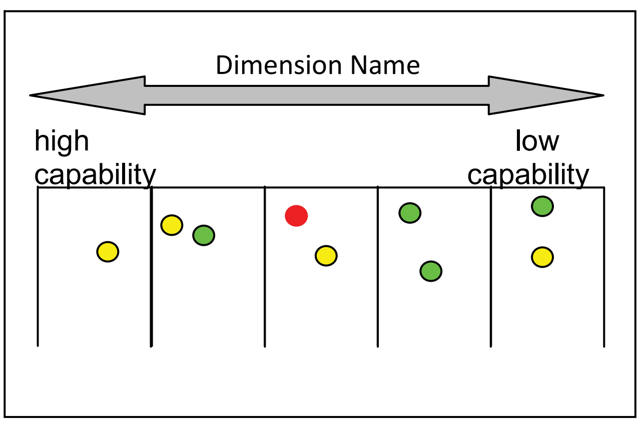
At the Workshop

5. **Exercise 1** – Carry out steps 6-10 for each dimension.

6. In a round-robin fashion, ask each participant to share their overall rating, on the dimension and confidence level. Each participant may also describe the evidence and subdimensions that influenced the overall rating, evidence, and confidence level on that subdimension. The facilitator then places a colored dot on the display representing each person's rating. The color of the dot represents the confidence level (green = high; yellow = medium; red = low).

7. The group can discuss each rating as it is posted and then proceed to the next person until all individual ratings for that dimensions are on the display. Alternatively the facilitator can post the dots for all participants without discussion and then discuss the whole pattern.

   When completed, the flip chart will contain a compilation of the group's ratings (see below).



8. As ratings are being posted, seek comment on differences in ratings, confidence levels, and supporting evidence. Collect comments from the discussion on flip charts for use in the final exercise of the day.

9. When discussion of individual ratings is complete, the group must choose an overall rating and confidence level. Use the flip chart sheets to guide this discussion. It is not necessary to achieve consensus, but to identify where differences of opinion or perspective exist so they can be explored.

10. Carry out steps 11–14 once, taking into account all dimensions.

11. After all dimension ratings have been collected, discussed, and summarized on the dimension flip charts, it is time for the group to focus on the summary ratings for all 16 dimensions. Use the flip chart with a mockup of the Dimension Summary worksheet.

12. With the group participating in the process, read the rating for each dimension, confirm with the group the accuracy of each dimension summary rating.

13. Moderate a discussion regarding the rating. If the group would like to change it based on new understanding or ideas that emerged since they assigned that rating, let them change it.

14. Once the group comes to a conclusion on the summary—either a consensus on one summary rating or agreement to disagree—mark the result on the summary worksheet. Do this for each of the 16 dimensions. Work to have the group react to some extent with the ratings as they are transferred, but manage the discussion so that issues are noted and recorded. Do not try to resolve them. This is a good place to remind the group that the purpose at this point is noting issues, not necessarily trying to resolve them. This exercise may produce statements about actions that need to occur in order to improve capability. Have a flip chart available to record these ideas. Encourage the group to focus on generating these ideas, not elaborating them. That comes next.

15. **Exercise 3** – Carry out steps 17 through 22 once, using the summary ratings sheet.

16. After all the summary ratings have been recorded on the summary worksheet and ideas about actions to take to address issues have been recorded, have the group reflect privately on this information.

17. In round-robin fashion, ask each participant to identify an action to improve a low or missing capability or to take advantage of high capability. Ask them to share their highest priority actions first. Record these ideas on a flip chart. Go around the room at least twice. Encourage short discussions about these items to help the group understand what is being suggested, who might be involved, and what the benefits of that action might be.
18. After the list is recorded and discussed have the participants take five minutes to identify their highest priority items.
19. Moderate a discussion to explore consensus and disagreement within the group on priorities. The group should be asked to explore whether their low priority items might be higher for another group or unit.
20. For the highest priority items, ask the participants what persons or units should be responsible for developing specific plans for this action.
21. The products of this exercise include the Summary Rating worksheet, the nature of actions to be taken, their priority, the identification of responsible parties, and the ideas, concerns, and observations recorded on flip charts. This information should be marked to show its source and forwarded to the next level of the assessment activity for use as input to the ratings process and to executive decision making and planning.

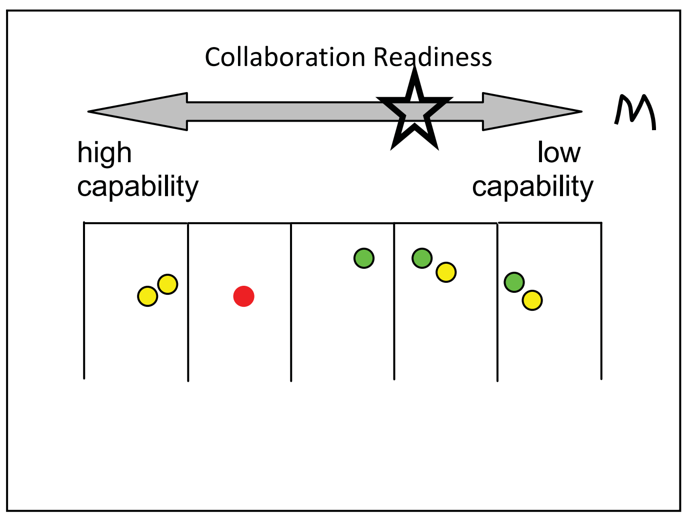
3I. PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS – RATINGS COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This exercise assumes all participants have individually completed their assessment worksheets.

In round-robin fashion, each group member reads aloud his or her assessment rating for the first assigned dimension, including a brief statement of the supporting evidence, and confidence level.

Participants may ask questions about each rating.
As each participant is sharing their rating the facilitator will mark the participant's overall rating and confidence level on the flip chart by using different colored dots, each color representing a different confidence level: green = high; yellow = medium; red = low. For example, a high capability rating with medium confidence should result in a yellow dot placed in the far-left section of the figure. The facilitator places the colored dot in the appropriate place on the chart. When completed, the chart will contain a summary of the group's ratings similar to the figure below.

The recorder should take note of key points of agreement or disagreement, unique insights, and indications of where new information is required before ratings discussions can continue.



Appendix 4. Glossary

Term	Definition
Business process	A collection of related, structured activities--a chain of events--that produce a specific service, product, or business result, either within a single organization or across several organizations.
Champions	Individuals who communicate a clear and persuasive vision for an initiative, provide the authority and legitimacy for action, and build support in the environment.
Change inventory	Identification of policy, management, and technical conditions that must be created or modified in order to achieve the goals of an information sharing initiative.
Charter	A formal, written, statement of authority for an information sharing initiative.
Dimensions	Interdependent factors that reflect how organizations operate, the policies that govern their behavior, and the technology investments that shape their current and future work.
Enterprise	All the organizations that participate in the services and business processes in which the information sharing takes place.
Enterprise architecture	Formal description of the service and operational components of the enterprise along with how they are connected to each other and the technologies used to implement them.
Facilitation plan	An action plan to guide a facilitator in managing a group process.
Facilitator	A person knowledgeable in process improvement, problem solving and group dynamics who assists groups in exploring issues and reaching decisions.
Governance	Formal roles and mechanisms to set policy and direct and oversee information sharing initiatives.
Group decision conferences	A process in which a group familiar with a particular issue or problem works collaboratively, with a facilitator, to develop a decision, process model, or action plan.
Information policies	Rules and regulations that govern the collection, use, access, dissemination, and storage of information, including access, privacy, confidentiality, and security.
Information-sharing initiative	The collection of organizations, activities, and participants involved in justice information sharing improvements. These initiatives can range from a single project in one justice agency to a multi-state effort composed of several related projects.
Infrastructure	The computer and communication hardware, software, databases, people, and policies supporting the enterprise's information management functions.
Interoperability	The ability of systems or organizations to exchange information and to provide services to one another in a way that allows them to integrate their activities.
Metadata	Information describing the characteristics of data and systems, or information about information.
Organizational culture	A set of shared values, assumptions, beliefs and practices defines the nature of the workplace and leads to common work habits and interaction patterns.
Risk assessment	The process of identifying, the threats to success and assessing the probabilities and potential costs of the threats materializing.
Stakeholder	Persons or groups that have an interest in the outcomes of an information sharing initiative and some capacity to influence it.
Strategic planning	The process by which an enterprise or organization envisions its future and determines the strategies, investments, and action plans to achieve it.
Tactical planning	The process of determining the shorter-term goals and actions that will move and organization toward its strategic vision.

Appendix 5: Related Resources

A Capability-based View of Government IT Innovation
May 2008
The obvious difficulty and high failure rate of information technology (IT) innovations in government and elsewhere have been central concerns in much of CTG's work over the past 15 years. Our first-hand experiences, coupled with reviews of the current research, highlight the importance of organizational capability as a critical success factor in IT innovation. It is clear that successful IT innovations, and the transformation they seek to support, depend at least as much on how well the organizations and individuals perform as on the chips, networks, and software. This finding led us, in turn, to further explore the concept of organizational capability and to work with government agencies to develop tools to enhance capability for IT innovation.
www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/issuebriefs/capability_innovation

Sharing Justice Information: A Capability Assessment Toolkit
November 2005
The justice enterprise faces many performance challenges that can be addressed more successfully through better information-sharing initiatives.This toolkit is designed for justice professionals to use when considering or planning for a justice information-sharing initiative.
www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/sharing_justice_info

Building State Government Digital Preservation Partnerships: A Capability Assessment and Planning Toolkit, Version 1.0
August 2005
Decisions to invest in digital preservation projects must be grounded in a full understanding of the ability of those involved to identify and fill the gaps between current and required capability. This toolkit is designed for library, archives, records management, and information technology professionals to assess where capability for digital preservation exists and where it must be developed in order to achieve the goal of preserving significant at-risk government information.
www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/digital_preservation_partnerships

Why Assess Information Sharing Capability?
December 2005
Government faces many challenges that can be addressed more successfully when information is shared across organizational boundaries. Initiatives that depend on these kinds of information sharing are typically complex, difficult, and prone to failure. They are more likely to succeed when they include a comprehensive and systematic assessment of both organizational and technical information sharing capabilities.
www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/why_assess

Appendix 7: Summary Sheets*

Name or Organization: ____

Business Model & Architecture Ready ______ Confidence

Collaboration Ready Confidence

Data Assets & Requirements ______ Confidence

Governance ______ Confidence

Information Polices ______ Confidence

Leaders & Champions ______ Confidence

Organizational Compatibility ______ Confidence

Performance Evaluation ______ Confidence

Project Management ______ Confidence

Resource Management ______ Confidence

Secure Environment ______ Confidence

Stakeholder Identification ______ Confidence

Strategic Planning ______ Confidence

Technology Acceptance ______ Confidence

Technology Compatibility ______ Confidence

Technology Knowledge ______ Confidence

*This sheet can be used to record overall ratings for each individual or organization to share with other participants and to use in developing an overall initiative rating.

About

THE CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

The mission of the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) at the University at Albany/SUNY is to foster public sector innovation, enhance capability, generate public value, and support good governance. We carry out this mission through applied research, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem solving at the intersection of policy, management, and technology.
The results generated by each CTG project add to a growing knowledge base designed to support the work of both government professionals and academic researchers. Our guides, reports, and tools are freely available on our publications page: www.ctg.albany.edu/publications.

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Anthony Cresswell

Senior Fellow

From 1999 to 2011, Dr. Creswell served as deputy director of CTG working with a variety of government, corporate and university partners to conduct applied research projects on the policy, management, and technology issues surrounding information use in the public sector. Dr. Cresswell retired at the end of 2011, but continues to work at CTG as a Senior Fellow.He began working at CTG as a senior research fellow in 1994 and also served as interim director from 2008-2009. One of his major contributions has been his focus on return on investment for government information technology and addressing the core issue of determining public value. In addition, Dr. Cresswell's efforts have been directed at problems of interorganizational information sharing, knowledge networks, and IT impacts on practice.
Dr. Cresswell has been at the University at Albany since 1979, with faculty appointments in Educational Administration and Information Science

Theresa Pardo

Director

Dr. Theresa A. Pardo is director of the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) and a member of the faculty of Rockefeller College of Public Administration and Policy and the College of Computing and Information at the University at Albany, State University of New York.
Under Dr. Pardo's direction, CTG is developing a public value assessment framework for open government initiatives. This work, funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), is being carried out in partnership with numerous state and federal government agencies. Her most recent NSF-funded effort is to develop a data interoperability framework for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) region. In addition to funding from the NSF, Dr. Pardo's work has been funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Library of Congress, the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, the United Nations, SAP, Microsoft Corporation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and New York State, among others.

Dr. Pardo serves as a member of several national and international boards, including the Steering Committee of the National Gap Analysis on Homeland Security, the Digital Government Society of North America, Government Information Quarterly, the U. S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Executive Council for Information and Technology Management, and the International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV). She is also a Senior Adviser to the State Information Center, P.R. China and has served as a member of the jury panel for the Sultan Qaboos Award for Excellence in eGovernment in Oman.

Sharon Dawes

Senior Fellow

Sharon is Senior Fellow at the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) and Professor Emerita of Public Administration and Policy and Informatics at the University at Albany, State University of New York. As the founding Director of CTG, from 1993-2007, she led the Center to international prominence in the field of digital government research. Her research interests are cross-boundary information sharing and collaboration, international digital government research, and government information strategy and management. Her current focus is international digital government partnerships including an international community building program funded by the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and partnerhip-building efforts in Asia, Europe and North America. A fellow of the US National Academy of Public Administration, she was elected the first President of the Digital Government Society of North America in 2006. She serves on advisory committees for NSF, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the United Nations University International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST). Under her leadership, CTG received several prestigious national awards including an Innovations in American Government Award, sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

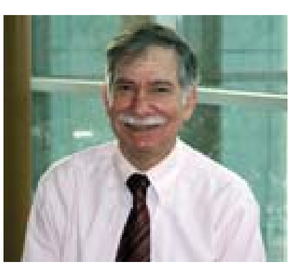
Donna Canestraro

Program Manager

Donna's current work focuses on the policy, management, and technology issues related to inter- and intra-organizational information integration, enterprise IT Governance, and business process analysis. As Program Manager, Donna brings more than 30 years of professional experience in program and project management, adult education, and information technology to CTG's partnership projects. She has been with the Center since 1999 and has worked collaboratively with Center partners from the government, corporate, and academic arena on policy, management, and technology issues surrounding information use in the public sector.

Dubravka Juraga is a former research associate at CTG and currently on the faculty of Triton College.

THE EDITOR



Alan Kowlowitz

Government Fellow

Retired from state service, Alan has brought his 32 years of experience with the New York State Archives and the Office for Technology (OFT) to CTG as a Government Fellow. During his tenure with these organizations, Alan was involved in a number of CTG projects. He is presently applying his expertise and deep knowledge of NYS government and its critical challenges to identifying key themes across past projects, taking the lead on editing and repackaging past reports, and researching related topics to help address emerging issues in digital government. He has also been involved in recent CTG projects requiring expertise in electronic records management, information policy, information security, and other issues.

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