Maximizing Current and Future Mobile Technology Investments in New York State Child Protective Services

NYS's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) partnered to conduct an extended study of the use of connected laptops in child protective services (CPS). Previous pilot and demonstration assessments established a solid foundation of information to support a reasonably clear picture of the short term impacts of deploying and using laptops in CPS work. This assessment allowed a longer time period for data collection (8-10 months) and provided an opportunity to learn more about how laptops are integrated into CPS work, including examining mobility, productivity and satisfaction. This study also examines the long-term impacts and conditions necessary to maximize current and future mobile technology investments in NYS's child protective services.

Government Worth Having: A briefing on interoperability for government leaders

While public officials at all levels of government play important roles in interoperability efforts, government leaders alone have the power to alleviate the institutional constraints that impede these potentially transformative, but highly complex enterprise initiatives. Unfortunately, while leaders have the unique power to make these changes, experience shows that the policy environments they have created, or in many cases inherited, often limit the capability of governments to share authority, to collaborate, and to jointly and strategically manage enterprise initiatives. To change this, leaders must understand the link between their policy decisions and the capability of governments to create the systems necessary to share information and other resources across boundaries. This paper is for government leaders and presents a unique focus on creation of the policy and management capability, rather than technical capability, necessary to create interoperable government. It presents a set of recommendations to guide these leaders in the development of policies and principles for action.

Improving Government Interoperability: A capability framework for government managers

This paper presents a framework for governments as they begin to move beyond the vision of a more effective government to the reality. Governments are finding that a typical hierarchical bureaucracy is not necessarily the best form of organization to meet citizen and other demands. Rather, governments are finding that a network form of organization where new groupings of persons and organizations must learn to work together and share information, exchange knowledge, and respond to demands in new ways is more appropriate. Interoperability is key to the success of these government networks. The framework focuses first on understanding the capabilities needed to develop and manage (i.e., plan, select, control, and evaluate) initiatives to improve interoperability among government agencies and their network partners, and second on determining the right mix of capabilities needed to share information across a network of organizations. The complete framework is provided for immediate use by government managers to assess existing and needed capabilities for improving government interoperability.

Assessing Mobile Technologies in Child Protective Services: A Demonstration Project in 23 New York State Local Departments of Social Services

NYS's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) partnered to learn more about the impact of mobile technology use in child protective services (CPS) in New York
State. In the Demonstration Project in 23 Local Social Service Districts, 450 laptops and tablets were deployed to CPS caseworkers in 23 NYS Local Social Services Districts. CTG conducted the independent assessment where the evaluation focused on mobility, productivity, and satisfaction as well as addressed environmental factors in statewide IT deployment. The summary report looks at high level impacts across all districts and the profiles detail findings from each individual district.

2007 Center Review: Self Evaluation Report
Mar 2008

This report was produced for the University at Albany’s Vice President for Research, in response to a policy requirement calling for periodic reviews of research centers and institutes. The report, prepared by Center staff, covers the period from the Center’s founding in 1993 to the present. It includes an overview of the Center’s history, where we stand today, and our vision for the future. Although the audience for this report was originally external to the Center, preparing the report gave us a valuable opportunity to reflect on our fifteen years of research and project efforts to improve government through IT innovation. As a result we have a new appreciation and pride in the contribution our work has made to the practice of government in New York State and beyond, as well as to the study of digital government world wide. Through this report we are sharing our vision and our progress with our University colleagues, the broader academic community, and our government and private sector partners and friends.

Using XML for Web Site Management: Lessons Learned Report
Jan 2008

This report is based on the lessons learned from CTG’s XML Testbed. The success of the Testbed rested on the enthusiastic participation of five New York State (NYS) agencies who committed to extensive hours of workshops, training, and prototype development. CTG extends its thanks to the NYS Department of Civil Service, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal, NYS Higher Education Services Corporation, NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, and the NYS Office of Cultural Education, State Education Department. The Testbed was undertaken in partnership with the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations (GOER), the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), and the Office for Technology (OFT).

Assessing Mobile Technologies in Child Protective Services: An Extended Pilot in New York City's Administration for Children's Services
Jan 2008

This assessment report was done under contract with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and in conjunction with the NYC Administration for Children Services (ACS). This project involved a large scale deployment of wireless laptops to CPS workers in New York City’s ACS. The pilot ran from August – October 2007 and involved approximately 135 child protective services workers and supervisors in the Staten Island and Williams Street (Manhattan) offices. The report shows the complexity of deploying technology into a well established profession. The study focused on mobility, productivity, and satisfaction, and includes a set of recommendations and future considerations.

Journal Articles and Conference Papers (2)

Collaborative Governance and Cross-Boundary Information Sharing: Envisioning a Networked and IT-Enabled Public Administration

Governments around the world are moving toward a more global perspective in their efforts to address complex social, political, and economic issues. New requirements for international cross-boundary collaboration, driven by this global view, demand a new understanding about how individual nations respond to public problems and how nations work together in response to transnational problems. In addition, new forms of government enabled by information technologies and made possible through new models of collaboration are emerging. The future of public administration is clearly linked to the development and management of new forms of collaborative governance.
governance and the use of information technologies. Globalization is also contributing to the internationalization of
the public sector, in which cross-boundary collaboration and information sharing will happen not only within a
country, but between nations. This paper contributes to the exchange of knowledge about the future of public
administration by presenting a view that considers important trends in public management and public service
around the world. As a backdrop we first present a discussion about the emergence in public administration
toward post-bureaucratic organizations and interorganizational networks. E-government and cross boundary
information sharing are then introduced as part of the new context of public administration. We then draw the
focus back to the importance of collaboration and information sharing in transnational public problems and
international cooperation and characterize the need for new capability in working across the boundaries of
organizations, governments, regions, and nations. Finally, drawing on this discussion we outline four topics of
critical importance for inclusion in the public administration classroom to fully prepare students to work in the
government of the 21st Century; Post-Bureaucracy and Organizational Networks, Information Technologies and
Inter-organizational Information Integration, Collaborative Governance and Interoperability: Creating policy,
management, and technology capability, and Transnational Problems and the Internationalization of Public
Administration. The new generation of public administrators must understand the importance of collaborative
governance, information technologies, and the internationalization of complex social problems for the public
administration of the twenty first century.

Governance structures in cross-boundary information sharing: Lessons from
state and local criminal justice initiatives
Proceedings of the Forty-First Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS 2008), Jan
2008, p.211

Governments are increasingly using collaborative, cross-boundary strategies to face complex social problems.
Many of these cross-boundary initiatives have at their core the use, and in many cases, the sharing of information
and communication technologies. In fact, government managers and researchers alike are now recognizing the
value and great opportunities offered by cross-boundary information sharing, in particular. Current research has
identified important factors that affect these cross-boundary information sharing initiatives Governance structures
are among those factors found to be important in cross-boundary information sharing. However, there is little
research about the determinants of an effective governance structure in these multi-organizational settings.
Based on semistructured interviews with participants in four state and local government criminal justice initiatives,
this paper systematically identifies the determinants of governance structures for cross-boundary information
sharing initiatives. By doing so, this study contributes to theory, but also supports the development of more
specific guidelines for public managers and other individuals involved in crossboundary information sharing.

Book Chapters (1)

Sustainable cross-boundary information sharing
In H. Chen, L. Brandt, V. Gregg, R. Traunmüller, S. Dawes, E. Hovy, A. Macintosh, & C. A. Larson (Eds.)Digital
Springer.

Information is one of the most valuable resources in government. Government managers are finding however,
that information needed to plan, make decisions, and act is often held outside their own organizations, maintained
in disparate formats, and used for widely different purposes. Efforts to bring this data together across boundaries
have provided new understanding into just how difficult cross-boundary information sharing is. Finding ways to
bring together information and integrate it for use in solving pressing public problems is fast becoming a focus of
attention for digital government practitioners and researchers alike. This chapter reports on one such study1 of
cross-boundary information integration that revealed three important lessons for creating and sustaining
cross-boundary information sharing: 1) interoperability is key, 2) a shift in agency culture is necessary, and 3) the
role of policymakers is central to this type of project. Four recommendations for action derived from the case
studies are presented as well. Government executives and policy-makers need to ensure the creation of
enterprise-wide mechanisms and capabilities such as (1) governance structures, (2) resource allocation models,
(3) scalable strategies, and (4) non-crisis capacity.

Working Papers (8)
Building a State Government Digital Preservation Community: Lessons on Interorganizational Collaboration
Mar 2008

As a part of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP), the Library of Congress sponsored a series of collaborative workshops between April and May 2005 to help state governments identify their needs and priorities for digital preservation. During these workshops, state and territory representatives showed strong interest in fostering partnership efforts and collaborative strategies toward preserving state government digital information. Based on the findings of the workshops and previous efforts on digital preservation, this paper discusses the challenges and opportunities regarding interorganizational collaboration and community building for digital preservation of state government information.

Fostering Innovation in Electronic Government: Benefits and Challenges of XML for Web Site Management
Mar 2008

As government Web sites have grown in size, complexity, and prominence, Web site management, content management, maintenance costs, and accessibility have become growing concerns for federal, state and local governments. Government agencies are losing the ability to be responsive and flexible in providing new information and services and the costs of maintaining these Web sites have become prohibitive. Government webmasters and system administrators have come to realize that the technologies and strategies used in the past to build most Web sites are designed to produce individual Web pages. They do not provide a structure to easily maintain entire Web sites, keep them responsive to changing needs, or manage the workflow involved in Web content production and maintenance; nor do they facilitate the sharing and reuse of Web site content. This paper examines the potential of XML for Web site content management in government settings. Five state government agency teams were selected, looking for a mixture of several aspects such as technological expertise, organizational capabilities, agency size, and institutional environment. The study uses multiple research methods such as semi-structured interviews, surveys, and analysis of relevant documents to explore the benefits and challenges of using XML for Web site content management in government agencies. Overall, participants identified information consistency, reduction of data and content duplication, and compatibility with new devices and formats as the main benefits. Organizational and individual resistance to change, multiple and different priorities, and unrealistic goals were identified as the most important barriers. The paper also reports some differences in perceptions between technical and program staff.

Building Response Capacity through Cross-boundary Information Sharing: The Critical Role of Trust
Mar 2008

Governments around the world are increasingly turning to information sharing and integration to help solve problems in a wide range of programs and policy areas. These complex interorganizational efforts face not only the technical challenges of many information technology initiatives, but also the difficulties derived from interacting among multiple and diverse organizations. Trust has been identified as one the most important organizational factors for cross-boundary information sharing and integration. However, more research is needed regarding the determinants of trust building in this multi-organizational contexts. This paper highlights the relevant role of trust in cross-boundary information sharing initiatives and provides evidence about three of its most important determinants.

A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Digital Government Capability Assessment
Mar 2008

The issue of organizational capability is central to virtually all efforts to improve government performance, particularly in the area of information technology innovation. Capability assessment can play an important role in the digital government domain in at least two ways: one is to provide a basis for judging whether agencies are ready to initiate some digital government innovation, and the other is to judge the impact of a digital government initiative in terms of improved capabilities. Data on capabilities targeted by digital government initiatives can provide both baseline measurements and evidence of subsequent improvements. As part of its research and
development on several digital government projects, the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) has
developed an approach to capability assessment, resulting in specific assessment toolkits for use in different
types of digital government initiatives. This paper describes the approach used in developing these toolkits
generally, with an example from one version intended for use in justice information integration projects. The paper
includes the theoretical rationale for the design of the toolkits, methods for their use, and implications for use in
practice.

Critical Issues and Practical Challenges of IT Tools for Policy Analysis and
Program Evaluation
Mar 2008

Policy makers and public managers want and need to know how well government programs perform, but few
have the information to accurately and continuously evaluate them. The dynamic nature of public programs, and
the traditional methods used to assess them, compound this problem. Performance measurement and
performance-based decisions can be improved by more sophisticated information systems designed for to
support analysis and decision making. However, such systems demand close and continuing involvement of
program staff, attention to programmatic context, and much better understanding of business processes and the
data they generate. Through the use of a case example, the prototype Homeless Information Management
System, this paper highlights how attention to these issues can lead to useful and usable performance analysis
and evaluation systems.

Measures and Conditions of Success in Public Sector Knowledge Networks
Mar 2008

Interorganizational networks are increasingly the subject of both theoretical and empirical research in sociology,
economics, organizational behavior, and public and business management. While the most common network
congcepts and studies have focused on multi-organizational forms of production, “network” has also emerged as a
way to describe how organizations share and integrate knowledge and information. This paper focuses on a type
of network that is increasingly important in public affairs, but largely unaccounted for in the extant literature – the
public sector knowledge network. The paper synthesizes and augments the exiting literature to include public
sector knowledge networks. It then identifies performance measures that can be used to evaluate them at the
network, organizational, and individual levels of analysis and identifies critical success factors that pertain to each
level.

Examining Digital Government Publication Trends
Mar 2008

The purpose of this study was to assess the publishing patterns of digital government (DG) research in top
scholarly journals in the fields of public administration (PA), public policy (PP), and management information
systems (MIS) within the last five years (See Table 1). DG research was published in nine of the twelve top
journals in these fields since 1999. A total of 114 DG articles were identified, representing approximately 4.9
percent of the total number of articles published in these journals between 1999 and 2003. It seems that the top
journals have published DG research in limited ways given public and media attention and increased funding
opportunities to conduct e-government research.

New models of collaboration for delivering e-government services: A dynamic
model drawn from multi-national research
Mar 2008

This paper presents a conceptual model of how organizations collaborate to deliver electronic public services.
The model is derived from a comparative study of 12 e-government collaborations in Canada, the US, and Europe
that involved various combinations of public, private, and nonprofit organizations pursuing a variety of service
objectives. The study draws on the literature of interorganizational relations, as well as management information
systems, public management, and organizational behavior to devise a preliminary model of how such
collaborations form and operate. The case study data are then compared to the preliminary model and a revised,
more dynamic model is presented. The revised model more closely fits the case experiences across various
service types, project structures, and national settings.

www.ctg.albany.edu/publications/publications?sub=2008 5
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Issue Briefs (4)

Mobile Technology in the Public Sector: It’s more than just the laptop
Fri, 3 May 2008

One of the most difficult problems facing government managers who want to implement new technology is anticipating how it will affect work. Of course, the primary goal is to improve performance. However, it is nearly impossible to take into account all the human, organizational, and external influences that may impact how well that goal is achieved. Until the technology is put to work, planning is often little more than speculation. This is particularly true with mobile technology, which may have substantial potential, when combined with wireless networks, to expand the time, locations, and effectiveness of many types of government work. Fully exploiting this potential, however, presents a complex problem for government managers.

Regional Coordination: Exploring new response capability
Fri, 3 May 2008

A crisis rarely occurs in one jurisdiction or community; they tend to cross multiple geographic and organizational boundaries. The effects of the World Trade Center attacks, for example, extended far beyond New York City and the effects of Hurricane Katrina were felt far beyond the city of New Orleans. Events such as these continue to generate new insights into the coordination across boundaries necessary to ensure effective response to incidents—both natural and man-made.

The Performance Measurement Puzzle
Thu, 2 May 2008

There is a simple and persuasive proposition that is quite common in government policy and practice: better measurements of performance will lead to overall improvements in government. That proposition is fundamental to any notion of governing as rational decision making, from at least as far back as the Program Planning and Budgeting Systems (PPBS) and government accountability movements in the 1960’s, up to the emergence of ComStat-style programs currently operating in many agencies. Performance measurement is central as well to the President’s Management Agenda for improving U.S. federal agency operations, and many similar initiatives that can be found in state agencies. In spite of this long history of concern with performance measurement, however, it remains a puzzling problem for governments at all levels.

A Capability-based View of Government IT Innovation
Wed, 1 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.