

Digital Government: The Challenges of Integration and Interoperability

dg.o2005 Birds of a Feather Session

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this Birds of a Feather session is to bring together researchers and practitioners interested in the challenges of Digital Government-related integration and interoperability. Integration and interoperability in the sense of this session encompasses (but is not limited to) government information systems integration, workflow and process integration as well as vertical and horizontal interoperability. The emphasis of the session extends to the managerial, organizational, informational, social, legal, and technological challenges faced when integrating and interoperating government systems and processes.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

K.6 [Management of Computing and Information Systems]:

General Terms

Management, Measurement, Documentation, Performance, Design, Economics, Reliability, Experimentation, Security, Human Factors, Standardization, Languages, Theory, Legal Aspects, Verification.

Keywords

System integration, system interoperability, process integration, legal aspects, managerial challenges in governmental interoperation, limitations of integration and interoperation

1. SESSION DESCRIPTION

Digital Government purportedly leads to increased integration and

interoperability between and among agencies. Among the challenges in practice and research are the development, implementation, maintenance, and overhaul of government transaction processing and information systems (IS) as well as the integration of information systems (legacy and Digital Government IS) to support inter-organizational components of Digital Government.

However, the obstacles, which prevent a rapid progress into that direction, are not merely technical. In fact, the technology side may prove the least difficult to address, while the organizational, legal, political, and social aspects may prove much more of a challenge. At the strategic level, the various dimensions of (inter-agency, intra-agency, inter-governmental, and intra-governmental) of interoperability and integration as well as the scope and limitations of inter- and intra-governmental information and process integration need to be understood and assessed. Although widely expected, the gain in internal effectiveness and efficiency (IEE) and increased responsiveness through interoperability needs yet to be demonstrated in practice. Barriers to interoperability come in many guises: Privacy, ambiguity about statutory authority, openness to public scrutiny, trust, lack of experience, hardware/software incompatibility, data sharing standards, a lack of awareness of opportunities to share, or even an unwillingness to share information or integrate processes.

Researchers and practitioners have only begun analyzing and understanding the complex nature of the multi-faceted integration process. The goal of this session is to help form a community of practice and research dedicated to this important building block of Digital Government.