

dg.o 2002

*Engaging Governments in
Digital Government Research*

May 20, 2002

**Making A Case for Local E-Government:
The New York Experience**

Meghan E. Cook

Center for Technology in Government

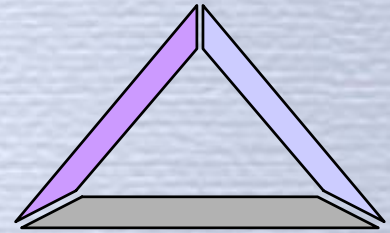
Center for Technology in Government

The Center for Technology in Government, located at the University at Albany/State University of New York, works with government to develop well-informed information strategies that foster innovation and enhance the quality and coordination of public services.

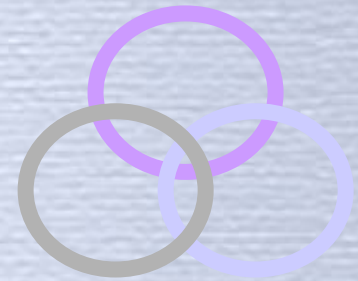
We carry out this mission through applied research and partnership projects that address policy, management, and technology dimensions of information use in the public sector.

Center for Technology in Government

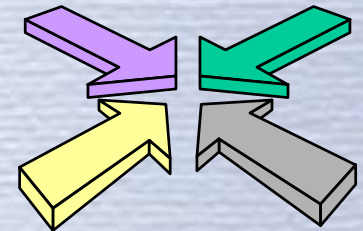
Partnerships



Problem Solving



Knowledge Building



e-Government: Tools of the Trade Program

- **E-Government Roundtable Discussion (March 2001)**- 79 public sector professionals from 43 organizations (including 35 state agencies, 3 local governments, and 5 non profits or private sector)
- **1/2 day - Open Space Facilitation Plan - No Set e-Gov Topics- Discuss what they think is important**
- **End product: identification of issues and recommendations for action**

e-Government: Tools of the Trade Program

- **Result of Roundtable Discussion--26 recommendations for e-Government projects.**
- **Online survey- asked participants to vote for projects that were most important or useful to work**
- **Opened survey up to public**
- **Identified top projects - our program of work**

CTG e-Government: Tools of the Trade Program



- **Business process implications of e-government - a research and best practices**
- **Briefing paper for top executives on the critical role of business process transformation**
- **Guide to electronic records in e-government**
- **Case study in collaboration**

CTG e-Government: Tools of the Trade Program

www.ctg.albany.edu/egov/



- **An e-government knowledge repository**
- **Local e-government briefing**
- **A guide to building a business case for e-government**
- **Guide to collecting baseline measures and conducting an ROI**
- **Making the transition from the static to the dynamic Web**

Local E-Government: Where to start?

What do locals need? How do we find out?

- Attended NYS Office for Technology(OFT) regional information sessions for local governments
- Held roundtable discussions with local governments
- Conducted phone interviews with clerks/officials
- Joint local government survey with NYS OF, NYS Department of Economic Development, and NYS Department of State

Analysis and Recommendations

- Identification of general themes and patterns
- Where can CTG add the most value

Making a Case for Local e-Government



- People within all functions in local governments want to have a **greater understanding of e-government** and think that **increasing general awareness** about local e-government initiatives in New York State is the place to start.
- They also said that they wanted to hear about e-gov initiatives from the **program leadership, and service point of view**, rather than from the IT perspective.

Making a Case for Local e-Government

- A project to increase the awareness and understanding of local e-government in NYS
- Identify and gather local e-Government “Pioneers” in a clerk/administrative or mayor supervisor position in counties, cities, towns, and villages across NYS for regional facilitated workshops
- Draw out insights, lessons, and stories from those who are planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating e-government initiatives in their own local governments.



Goal of the Project

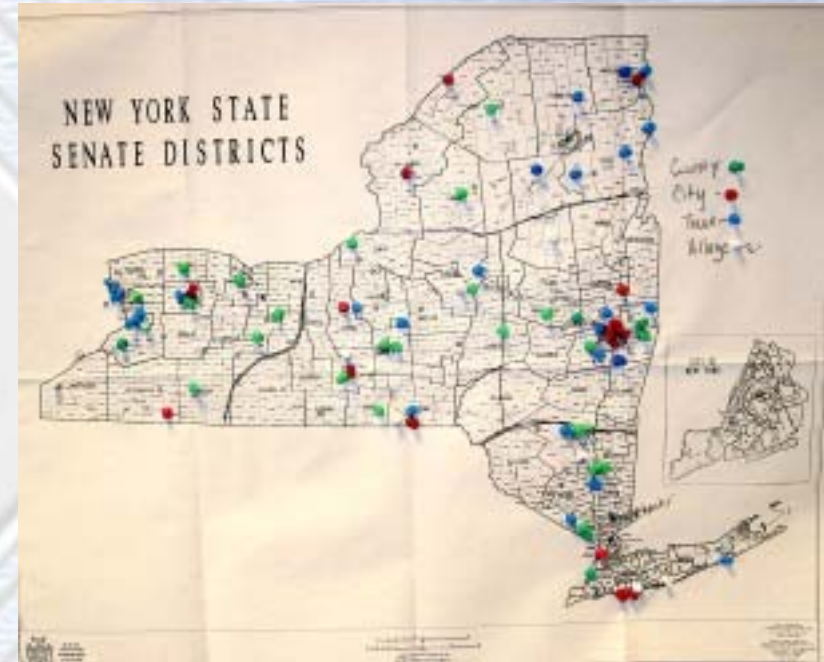
- **To create a document/resource that anyone in a local government can read learn about e-government in local governments**
- **To give local governments a tool to communicate with colleagues within their own local government about e-government**



How Did We Do It?

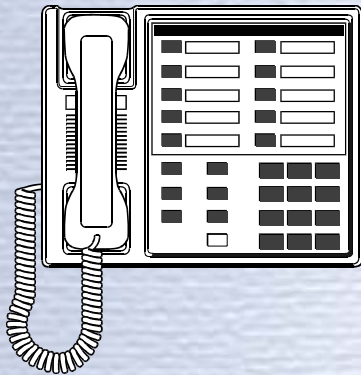
Finding Local e-Gov Pioneers

- Develop selection criteria
- Call advisory groups and associations for contacts
- Check local government Web sites
- Start making calls and talking about the project



Up Front Research and Preparation

- From Dec 2001- Feb 2002 Approx. 300 initial phone calls were made to local governments to identify the pioneers in local e-gov. In addition, approximately 100 follow-up phone calls were made- each conversation was documented and lasted approx. 5-30 minutes.
- After the initial phone calls, 109 local government people from 88 local governments were *invited* to the workshops via a personalized mailed letter and registration form, a personal phone call, and an e-mail.



Workshops and Interviews

- 54 people from representing 15 counties, 10 cities, 19 towns, and 5 villages in New York State



Regional Facilitated Workshops

- **Five Locations --Albany, Saranac Lake, Cortland, Batavia, and Purchase**
- **Two CTG facilitators, one note taker**
- **Opening presentation and detailed facilitation plan**
- ***Scripted questions* - Is e-gov going on in your local governments? What was the catalyst of your project? How did you get buy in? What are the challenges? How are you dealing with them? What advice do you have for someone starting out? Why should someone consider e-government?**

In-Depth Interviews

- Supervisor, Mayor Board Member - who could not attend workshop
- Follow-up with specific participants from workshops
- **Same set of questions**



Analysis and Results

- Local e-Government applied- real life stories
- Specific e-Government initiatives across the state
 - Initiatives by county, city, town, or village
 - e-service, e-management, e-commerce, e-democracy
- Critical Success Factors
- Advice to those starting out
- “Why Consider e-Government”



Local e-Gov Critical Success Factors



Get the **right people at the table**

Rally **leadership**

Share information constantly and consistently

Acknowledge **political differences**

Learn from **other local governments**

Think about and **plan for technology**

Create **innovative partnerships**

Understand and address **privacy and security** concerns

Develop successful **vendor relationships**

Engaging Local Governments in Research

- **Make the trip to them**
- **Acknowledge their changing environment and resource constraints**
- **Present recent research in e-government**
- **Build Credibility by telling stories about other local governments to communicate “how others are doing it” (and provide contact info when possible)**
- **Recognize their expertise and encourage them to share their tacit knowledge**

Engaging Local Governments in Research

- **Plan pre, during, and post methods of contact and then follow through!**
- **Allow time for them to learn from each other**
- **Acknowledge, document, and accurately reflect their ideas, thoughts, and concerns and then check it with them!**
- **Let them be the champion**



Our Research Experience

STATE

- State governments, on average, have more staff and resources to dedicate to research project
- Work intensely with one agency and generalize results for larger community

LOCAL

- Locals governments have limited staff and resources to dedicate to research project
- Work more broadly with many local governments to capture the diverse nature of their work then disseminate to larger community



Engaging State and Local Governments: Some Things in Common

- **Not all are created equal and need to respect differences**
- **Working with them requires long term relationship building**
- **All want cross-agency information sharing**



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