

E-Gov marches on: what are we learning?

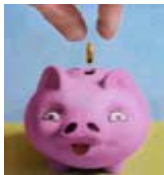
A ton, that's for sure. As in a ton of ideas, observations and general enthusiasm for Iowa's movement to 100% E. State CIO Richard Varn and Information Technology Department staff this month completed a series of 40+ meetings with state department directors and their senior staff to hear their questions and ideas on Iowa's 100% E digital government process. Several of the most common questions/comments:

We're excited and supportive of 100% E, but how do we manage this process and determine what will get done when and how we'll pay for it?



ANSWER: A business process plan is in place that guides departments through the creation of e-government service or programs within a department. Surveys to gather ideas from directors, managers, employees and Iowa citizens are under way.

Departments will review ideas from the surveys, rank and prioritize them, examine their internal business processes to see if any changes, big or small, should be made in how things get done. They will also consult with ITD to map out specific needs and research funding options, look at software/design options, test and install chosen applications, evaluate performance and determine project completion.



Many departments emphasized the value and cost savings of potential e-payment methods.

COMMENT: We agree!!! Anderson Consulting states that every in-person or phone transaction converted to online government saves between \$40 and \$400 per transaction.

Participants talked about the need to examine and chart day-to-day work flow and procedures so that e-government services would not be connected to outdated or inefficient work processes.

COMMENT: Doing a "business process review," as it is commonly called, is indeed a crucial step prior to designing a new electronic application. As was stated in several meetings, "we don't want to be paving streets over cow paths." The most efficient processes should be in place before design and software selection begins.

ITD will assist any department who wants help in conducting a business process review. Just contact Rich Varn, Dan Combs or Debbie O'Leary at ITD.



What is ITD's role and what is a State department's role in determining what programs move to an e-government system?



ANSWER: Every State department owns its business process and customer relationships. Each department will be its own chief decision maker in deciding what programs it wants to move to 100% E. The ITD staff is available as a project consultant to help departments navigate the e-government development process.

Service and flexibility are the watchwords for ITD's role. If a department needs special resources to accomplish something, ITD will assist in finding them, whether they exist inside or outside the state. If a department needs occasional help or hour-by-hour involvement from ITD, it will be done based on the department's needs. ITD will maintain a master database of all projects, so that any department can quickly view the status of a given project.

Workforce Development is a paperless pioneer

Effective July 1, 2001 the State of Iowa will no longer accept paper forms for the reporting requirements for work injuries in Iowa. Sound interesting? Read on.




One of the goals for workers' compensation is to seamlessly process workers' compensation information from its initial reporting source, whether that is the employer, insurance company, claimant or medical provider.

Reliable information is important because:

- it is used to identify the causes and extent of work place injuries and illness and can be used by employers to reduce the incidence and severity of industrial injury and illness;
- comparable data can be used by law makers to draw comparisons across jurisdictional lines and measure the impact of legislative and regulatory reform; and
- it can determine and measure cost drivers in the system.

The Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is a solution to the problems associated with data collection in Workers' Compensation and Iowa Workforce Development is leading the nation in this electronic revolution. The benefits to EDI reporting include:

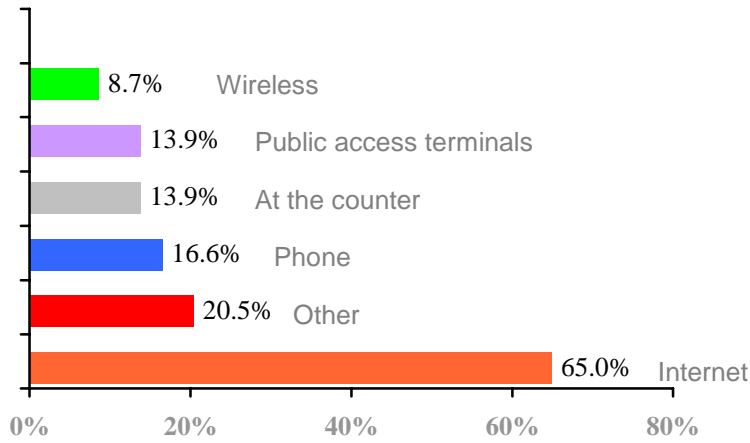
- reduction of paperwork;
 - one time data entry;
 - reduced errors,
 - improved error detection;
 - on-line data storage;
 - faster management reporting;
 - automatic reconciliation;
 - reduced clerical workload;
 - high productivity without increasing staff;
 - reduced paper usage;
- 
- more timely communications;
 - rapid exchange of business data;
 - elimination of mail charges;
 - improved production cycle;
 - uniform communications with all trading partners; and
 - national standard for reporting to enable interstate comparison of data.

In August of 1997 Iowa became the first state in the country to receive the latest upgrade software for testing. The latest version expanded the information that can be transmitted and combined the Employers First Reports of Injury and Supplemental Report into a single transmission.

The program was tested in partnership with Employers Mutual Insurance Companies, Inc. of Des Moines. Testing was completed in May of 1998 and the software was then available for rollout nationwide.

The use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) by Iowa Workforce Development is a major step toward achieving 100%E by 2003.

How service would be delivered



Surveys come rolling in

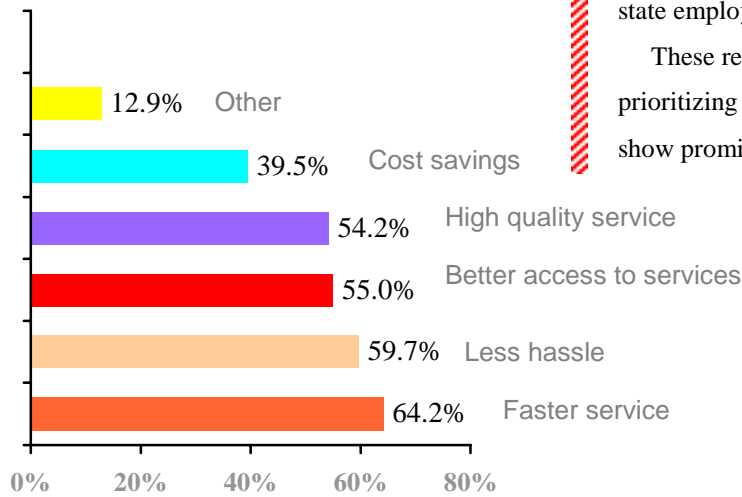
With nearly 400 responses from State department directors and their management teams, the first survey of e-government project ideas is now complete.

Highlights are summarized in the charts (left and below). They break out respondent ideas about how their e-government services would be delivered, what kinds of customer benefits could result, and what improvements in business processes could be realized by departments and individuals through e-government service delivery.

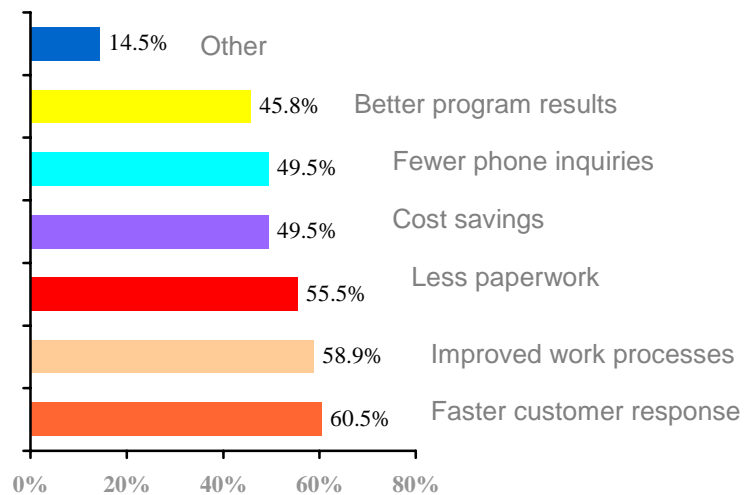
Now under way are similar surveys distributed to state employees and Iowa citizens.

These results will be used to begin sorting and prioritizing prospective e-government projects that show promise and potential.

How e-project would benefit customers



How e-project would benefit depts., programs, individuals



Eight imperatives for leaders in a networked world



Richard Varn
State CIO

Iowa CIO Richard Varn is a member of the Policy Group On Network-Enabled Services and Government at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The following is an excerpt from the Group's recent report on public leadership and technology. Rich contributed to this report. Space allows only 4 of the imperatives to be published in this issue. Be watching for 5-8 in the next issue of **ERP**N.

1. Focus on how IT can reshape work and public sector strategies

Problem. The knowledge required to succeed with IT is complex and rapidly changing. Given the large size of many agencies and the checks and balances established to foster debate and deliberation, governments tend to become inwardly focused and fail to keep pace with the innovation required in the Information Age.

What to avoid. Don't delegate all responsibility for technology to technologists, or focus on internal operations to the exclusion of externally oriented service improvements and building essential political support.

What to do. Learn how digital processing and communications are revolutionizing the work-place and the nature of work, ideally through becoming directly involved in IT projects and working with computer applications as part of your personal routine.

2. Use IT for strategic innovation, not simply tactical automation

Problem. The enormous potential benefits of IT are often compromised if it is used merely to entrench old work processes and organizations rather than to fundamentally redesign them.

What to avoid. Don't focus on incremental improvements to the exclusion of more aggressive innovation.

What to do. Push for some strategic ten-fold improvements, and not merely for 10 percent. Foster and protect experimentation. Design an e-government strategy with wide opportunities for "anytime, anyplace" service. Explore service integration across program and organizational boundaries. Develop rich and flexible technology-based options for self-service.

3. Utilize best practices in implementing IT initiatives

Problem. The failure rate of IT initiatives has often been daunting, even though the most difficult problems have been political rather than technological.

What to avoid. Don't approach IT as primarily a technology problem, and don't delegate IT projects predominantly to technology specialists.

What to do. Recognize that technology implementations are usually change-management problems. Place general managers and politically capable leaders in charge of most major IT initiatives. You need leaders who can authoritatively deal with organizational conflict and budget issues.



4. Improve budgeting and financing for promising IT initiatives

Problem. By focusing on incremental annual changes to existing programs, government budgeting makes it hard to invest in IT initiatives that offer high value but also require long-term, cross-agency innovation.

What to avoid. Don't rely too heavily on funding IT through the traditional tax-levy budget.

What to do. Analyze economic and budgetary trends to identify sources of financing appropriate for an increasingly electronic economy. Your analysis should explore the principle of letting the direct users of services pay when they are the ones that capture the benefits (i.e., user charges for service elements not inherently public in nature). Also, explore budget reforms to give greater emphasis to multiyear, cross-boundary service integration and innovation (via capital funds, revolving funds, shared-risk investments with the private sector, etc.).