

Public Sector Reform and E-Government

Terry F. Buss, PhD

Carnegie Mellon University—Australia

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Presentation Overview

- Public sector and IT reforms
- The Obama Administration's Open Government Initiative
- Some selected case studies
- Results of early evaluations & assessments
- Endemic policy, management and structural problems and some solutions
- Prospects for the future

Public Sector Reforms

Goal 1: an effective, efficient, and economical public services

Goal 2: transparency, accountability and lately equability

Two Decades of Public Sector Reform

Clinton: Reinventing Government

Bush: President's Management
Agenda

Obama: Yet to be determined

IT Reforms

Development: enterprise architecture

Acquisition and procurement

E-Government

Social media

Cloud computing, open source software,
mobile phone apps

Cyber security

Obama's Open Government Initiative (OGI)

Started on first day in office:

- Transparency and Open Government Directive
- Freedom of Information Act
- Open Government Directive

www.whitehouse.gov

Wendy Ginsberg. The Obama Administration's OGI. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 7-5700, 2010. www.opencrs.com

Features of OGI

Goal: to **strengthen democracy** & improve efficiency and effectiveness of government

Principles:

- Transparency => accountability
- Public Participation => crowd sourcing, etc
- Collaboration => across & within agencies, and externally

Features continued...

IT based:

- Chief Information Officer
- new Chief Technology Officer
- Task Force
- Responsible officers at program and agency level

Web based:

- Web 3.0 semantic web
- Cloud first
- Social media
- Open source software
- Third party websites and applications

Features continued...

Data availability:

- render data into machine readable form
- promote accessibility
- declassify, when in doubt

Accountability:

- OGI dashboard
- OGI plans
- Transparency working group

Best Practices: Challenge.gov

Recovery.Gov

Purpose: How the Obama/Bush stimulus money was being spent.

Features:

- MS Sharepoint, FAST Search and SQL Server
- Web 2.0 and 3.0 features: wikis, podcasts, blogs, widgets, gadgets, pipes and microblogs
- Open source components
- Amazon cloud

General Services Administration

Apps.gov lists all approved apps for use in

- Business
- Productivity
- Cloud IT
- Social Media

Website: https://apps.gov/cloud/advantage/main/start_page.do

Office of Management & Budget

OMB not only manages OGI, but also provides data from its own sources.

Office of Management and Budget. 2010. Open Government Plan. Washington, DC: OMB

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/open>

Data.Gov

Data.gov is a warehouse for over 380,000 federal databases

Features:

- Semantic web
- Apps
- Communities of practice

Early Evaluation Results

Although no formal evaluations have yet been done, watchdog groups have been assessing OGI

Findings:

- Great deal of variation in what agencies accomplished
- The worse rated agency was OMB
- OGI dashboard is compliance based, no concern for quality, relevance, efficiency
- Limited guidance and standards
- Inspector General reports tend to be buried
- Budget justifications difficult to find
- Responsible officers not listed or not operable
- OGI web pages not integrated into general agency web pages
- Lacked public participation tools linked to OGI
- Data tend to be outdated

Ex: www.ombwatch.org/node/10785

A Variety of Problems

- Government needs to be reformed before some IT solutions can be applied
- Sustainability in and across administrations is difficult to achieve
- IT still not well-integrated into management or planning
- ROI information is not produced or reported
- Generational barriers are huge
- Organizational culture is difficult to transform

Problems continued....

- Incentives are not sufficient to change behavior
- White House and Congress have exempted themselves from OGI
- Data availability tends to have little to do with transparency or accountability
- Data tend to misrepresent
- Data quality are often suspect

Problems continued...

- Dubious awards and recognitions—not transparent
- Premature launch (e.g., CTO)
- Issues in policing blogs, wikis and citizen input
- Simplistic data analysis capacity
- Potentially slows down citizen participation process
- Very few people access websites

Some Possible Solutions

First, do the opposite of everything implied by problems above, but consider these...

- Need presidential leadership
- Appoint management and policymakers who know what to do and want to do it
- Build bipartisan consensus
- Gain civil service buy-in
- Transform organizations

Some Possible Solutions

- Build IT industry support [Microsoft et al]
- Build constituency support [powerful advocate groups]
- Build understanding and capacity in federal workforce, and in graduate school
- Facilitate communities of interest across constituencies

Prospects for the Future

Drivers of sustainability and growth in future...

I'm optimistic about Open Data, but

- Mega events [9/11; wikileaks; SONY]
- Fate of Obama and Democrats over next two years
- Budget cuts—E-government fund
- New generations in civil service—millennial generations

Contacting Me

E-mail: tbuss@andrew.cmu.edu

Phone: 61 8 8110 9907

Website: www.cmu.edu.au

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