



Libraries and E-Government: Roles, Issues, & Strategies

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Session Outline

- Defining E-government
- The E-government context
- Libraries and E-government
- Opportunities and issues
- Strategies and moving forward



What Is E-government?

- The answer depends on who you ask
 - Electronic government means the use by the Government of web-based Internet applications and other information technologies, combined with processes that implement these technologies, to enhance the access to and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government entities; or bring about improvements in Government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation (E-Government Act of 2002, P.L. 107-347)



What is E-Government?

- Florida (from enterprise Florida, <http://www.eflorida.com/>)
- ...the Governor implemented a model where Florida's government uses technology to provide businesses and citizens with more efficient services. The state government is now acting as a single enterprise and, like private industry, aims to achieve customer satisfaction. Florida's government has transformed and is interacting with businesses and citizens electronically more and more each day.



Defining E-Government

- In short, E-government
 - Involves the use of a range of information technologies (computers, PDAs, mobile devices, other)...
 - Involves the use of a range of
 - Client devices (computer, PDA, cell)
 - Systems applications (servers)
 - Platforms (Web, databases, forms)...
 - ...to deliver and provide access to a range of government services



The E-Government Context

- Multiple governments providing E-government
 - Federal, state, local
- Multiple agencies providing E-government
- Multiple visions, goals, and objectives for E-government
- Multiple levels of quality and service goals
- Multiple developers of E-government applications
 - Outsourcing, internal, other



The E-Government Context

- Multiple platforms, technologies, and delivery mechanisms
- Conflicting mandates
- Lack of integration and consistency across applications, agencies, and governments
- Multiple access mechanisms
 - Computers (of varying configurations, quality, and capabilities, for example)
- Range of skill levels of users



The E-Government Context

- E-Government occurs in a range of situations and circumstances
 - User-initiated (applications, license renewal)
 - Government imposed (DCF)
 - Emergency/disaster
 - Hurricanes















The E-Government Context

- Said differently, there is no über-E-government

.....and








- **It all comes together at the point of service delivery -- the user and his/her device**
 - Personal
 - Public access
 - Multiple configurations, implementations, needs

Public Libraries and E-Government - Florida*

		Response Percent	Response Total
Locating information about local government (e.g., schools, city or county government)		95.2%	80
Locating information about state or federal government agencies		96.4%	81
Locating or completing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) forms		96.4%	81
Completing job applications, online training, or filing unemployment claims		88.1%	74
Locating or completing Medicaid registration or prescription drug forms		78.6%	66
Contacting Immigration and Naturalization Service		67.9%	57
Motor vehicle registration renewal		64.3%	54
Locating or completing social service forms (e.g., DCF ACCESS Florida forms)		86.9%	73
Registering citizen complaints regarding local government		26.2%	22
Access to government information in electronic databases		84.5%	71
Voter registration or candidate information		81%	68
<input type="button" value="View"/> Other (please describe)		32.1%	27
Total Respondents			84
(skipped this question)			0

*Survey conducted in 2006 by State Library

Public Libraries and E-Government - Florida*

		Response Percent	Response Total
The library building(s) serve(s) as emergency shelters during storms, hurricanes, or other disasters		7.6%	6
Library staff provide emergency responder services during times of need (e.g., manage emergency call centers, assist first responders, provide relief services)		49.4%	39
Library's equipment (e.g., bookmobiles with wireless Internet access, public access workstations, laptops) is used by first responders during times of disaster		19%	15
Library's public access computing and Internet access services are used by the public to access emergency relief services and benefits (i.e., FEMA) during times of disaster		86.1%	68
Library provides disaster (e.g., hurricanes) information regarding evacuation and shelters		92.4%	73
The library is involved in disaster and emergency planning activities at the local (e.g., town, city, county) level		57%	45
<input type="button" value="View"/> Other (please describe)		16.5%	13
Total Respondents			79
(skipped this question)			5

*Survey conducted in 2006 by State Library



Public Libraries and E-Government

- **Nationally:***
 - Staff provide as-needed assistance to patrons for understanding how to access and use government websites, programs, and electronic forms (78.5%)
 - Staff provide assistance to patrons applying for or accessing E-government services (55.0%)
 - Public libraries provide computer and Internet access to emergency responders (31.9% - jumps to nearly 50% in urban areas)
 - Public libraries serve as shelters in emergencies and disasters (18.5%)

*Data from Public Libraries and the Internet 2007 study, funded by the American Library Association. Available at <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet/>



Public Libraries and E-Government

- Public librarians support a range of E-government activities
 - Information location and access
 - Basic eligibility (e-mail accounts)
 - Public access computing infrastructure (workstations, bandwidth)
 - IT training
 - Troubleshooting



Public Libraries and E-Government

- Social services and support
 - Community anchor
 - Community recovery
 - Family location
 - Understanding multiple programs to assist users who might qualify (or need to apply for) for multiple services



Public Libraries and E-Government

- What else?



Public Libraries and E-Government

- In summary, public libraries provide
 - A central community location
 - Robust and reliable technology infrastructure
 - Technical know-how
 - Information literacy
 - Particularly the ability to navigate a range of information resources and services
 - ***The Librarian***



Issues and Opportunities

- Issues
 - Agencies closing down retail outlets
 - Shift in burden in the name of efficiency and cost savings
 - Strain on resources
 - Staff
 - Technology infrastructure
 - Buildings
 - Budgets
 - Librarians are not
 - Program experts
 - Social workers
 - First responders



Issues and Opportunities

- Issues

- Libraries do not
 - Control or influence E-government applications and programs
- Pressure to constantly upgrade and absorb
- Stress and frustration
- Liability

- Other?



Issues and Opportunities

- Opportunities
 - Partnerships (DCF Partners)
 - Integration with government agencies
 - Point of service agency
 - Service to community
 - Visibility of the library as an ***essential service***
 - Other?



Strategies and Moving Forward

- We know that public libraries provide these services
 - Do government officials?
 - DCF - 4 million applications submitted each year (across programs), primarily through Access Online
 - How many originated and completed in public libraries?
 - DCF claims it saves \$83 million in annual cost savings
 - How much of that is picked up by public libraries?
 - Need to ***talk and demonstrate*** outside the circle
- Bring in local, state, federal government officials



Strategies and Moving Forward

- Work with specific agencies to
 - Coordinate efforts
 - Fund staff
 - Train staff
 - Fund technology and infrastructure
 - DCF “partners”
- Work with city/county government to
 - Demonstrate value and necessity of library E-government services
- Work with state government to
 - Increase state aid



Strategies and Moving Forward

- Work with the Congress and Federal government to
 - Provide specific language in the E-Government Act of 2002 about the role of public libraries as providers of E-government
 - Mandate and legitimacy
 - Funding for E-government service provision in E-Government Act and possibly LSTA
- Marketing
 - “e-government@your library”
- What else?



Strategies and Moving Forward

- More research and telling the story
- Information Institute E-government initiative
 - Grant proposal currently with IMLS
 - National public library Internet surveys
 - Working with state library to continue to document Florida library roles
 - Librarygov.org
- Moving beyond talking to ourselves



Thank You!

Comments/Questions?

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Selected Resources

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