

OTS bits & bytes

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CIO Corner

The foundation of the Office of Technology Services (OTS) continues to evolve. I am heartened to observe OTS staff rising to the occasion to not only directly support the evolving functions of the office, but also shore up non-traditional service needs that have arisen.

Due to diligent effort, the mainframe consolidation highlighted in the last newsletter continues to move forward smoothly. In August, the new consolidated mainframe arrived at the ISB. The larger Department of Children and Family Services mainframe was successfully migrated to the new mainframe on September 6th, and the Division of Administration (DOA) mainframe was migrated on September 21st. Concurrently, OTS resources serving at the ISB worked collaboratively with the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) to relocate an existing DOTD mainframe to the ISB. The next phase of mainframe consolidation focuses on consolidation of mainframe storage on to new hardware; the consolidated hardware should arrive in late September.

OTS has also made headway in establishing IT procurement procedures; new guidelines for procurement were disseminated and posted [online](#) in August. In recent weeks the first set of bills to our customer organizations were generated. Though many such initiatives remain to be fine-tuned, I believe that with the continued hard work and dedication of OTS employees that our vision of a refined, consolidated organization will become a reality.

The reorganization of OTS is progressing. In early August we held eight meetings with OTS and Office of Telecommunications Management (OTM) employees to present the detailed organizational charts for the various OTS units. The first phase of the reorganization, posting the top level positions and competitively filling the positions from current OTS and OTM employees, began with the posting of nine positions on September 12th. A panel consisting of Ron Jackson, the HR director for the DOA, three departmental undersecretaries, and myself are currently conducting interviews of eligible applicants. We strive to announce selections for these positions expeditiously; the people selected for these positions will play an integral role in the next phase of job postings, interviews, and selections.

Sincerely,
Dickie Howze, Chief Information Officer

Project & Portfolio Management

The Project Management Office (PMO) within OTS has been envisioned to play an integral role in IT project oversight and control. The director of the PMO is charged with working closely with the State CIO and OTS governance to assure that IT projects initiated by in-scope agencies align with the state's strategic plan. The PMO must analyze new and existing IT projects to assess the technical risks and benefits of each project and to determine its strategic and business value. The PMO will assume oversight responsibility for IT projects that are either high risk or high visibility for the state.

In addition to the director, the PMO team will consist of two assistant directors, four project officers, and several analysts. The team will coordinate effort across multiple IT projects. Their objective is to identify commonalities between and among diverse IT projects to leverage shared resources. The long-term objective of their efforts is to generate cost savings through pooling and streamlining of both human and technical resources.

PMO team members work directly with various departments to support IT projects at all points in the project life cycle. Team member duties may include helping develop procurement documents such as RFPs, evaluating proposals, and coordinating or facilitating project activities within any phase of a project from initiation to closing. Ultimately the team is responsible for assuring that IT project activities conform to state and industry standards for project management. Requests for assistance from departments for guidance and support on their IT projects is running strong, and the PMO is growing to meet the demand for IT project support services.

Consolidation Cost Savings

A significant aspect of OTS's mission is to drive down the cost of providing Information Technology to Executive Branch customers by leveraging economies of scale in procurements, improving resource utilization, and delivering more efficient operations. OTS has been charged with generating over \$24.7 million in savings in the current fiscal year. OTS has already saved the state ≈\$5.6 million in the first two months of the fiscal year. Consolidation of select hardware and software maintenance and licensing agreements has reduced the per unit cost for items covered under these contracts. Restructuring consulting services contracts for maintenance and support of enterprise systems has generated over \$1 million of savings directly to the state general fund. Diligent conservation of vacancies as we embark upon reorganization of OTS and rebalancing of support resources has also contributed towards savings to date.

While generating these savings represents significant progress, much remains to be accomplished. Additional savings initiatives are underway in the areas of software license consolidation, managed services, data center infrastructure consolidation, and shared services. Many of these initiatives are predicated upon completion of ongoing projects such as migration to a statewide directory services model, mainframe platform consolidation, acquisition of a unified helpdesk management solution, and procurement of cloud computing services. Attaining our savings goal while maintaining or improving the current level of service does represent quite a challenge, but the continued dedicated efforts of all OTS staff will put us in a position to be successful.



Reducing duplication while maintaining or improving service delivery through consolidation has been at the forefront of the mission for OTS. One of the steps initiated quickly towards this end is consolidating all smaller data centers into one of the two primary hardened data centers maintained and supported by OTS: the Information Services Building (ISB) located in downtown Baton Rouge and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) data center located off Independence Boulevard in Baton Rouge.

Consolidation of the Office of Group Benefits data center previously located at Bon Carre has already been completed. Over the weekend of August 15th, nine server racks were successfully moved to the DPS data center. Sixteen members of the IT support staff were also relocated at that time. During the course of the data center move, OGB was able to reduce their footprint by consolidating the 40 physical and 120 virtual servers on five racks instead of nine racks.

The Wildlife and Fisheries (WLF) data center is also slated for consolidation. WLF previously experienced flooding at their current location which required them to replace all of their data center equipment. The three server racks and network equipment systems comprising the WLF data center will be moved to the ISB Data Center on October 25th. The data center move should promote increased stability for WLF systems and enable a more seamless process for existing data sharing procedures.

In association with the mainframe consolidation effort, the Transportation and Development (DOTD) mainframe was successfully relocated from DOTD Headquarters into the ISB Data Center on August 23. With the consolidation of mainframe storage set to occur in the coming weeks, DOTD anticipates saving over \$600k in mainframe storage costs alone. DOTD also reports benefiting from the utilization of OTS mainframe support staff since they will not need to replace staff lost through retirement. The remaining eight server racks at DOTD will be moved to the ISB in mid-December. The Corrections data center will also move into the DPS Data Center as part of the data center consolidation process and has not yet been scheduled.

LaGov Enhancements

July 1, 2014 was an exciting time for LaGov as this was the 'Go Live' date for three new LaGov agencies:

Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority (CPRA), Natural Resources, and Wildlife & Fisheries. The LaGov team provided development, conversion, training, and post Go Live support to these agencies, while also continuing to support departments that completed conversion previously, Transportation & Development and Environmental Quality. Training for the new LaGov users consisted of web-based and instructor-led courses taken during May and June.

When asked about CPRA's conversion experience, their Chief Financial Officer, Janice Lansing stated, "CPRA had high expectations for the outcomes that LaGov would deliver, particularly with project accounting. Every person on the team, starting with Kathy Sessums and her agency (OTS) team to the contracted designers/programmers, provided CPRA with high quality service. They worked countless hours to find solutions to the complexities of CPRA's budgeting and accounting needs. Every member of the team went above and beyond to understand the issues and find the right, workable solutions. I feel it was truly a partnership in which all were focused on achieving the best for CPRA while maintaining state compliance. The process was by no means easy, but with the caliber of the LaGov team and the CPRA team members and the cooperation between the two, it was made easier."

LaGov also continues to be enhanced. Beginning in March 2015, all purchasing-related activities currently conducted in Advanced Government Purchasing System (AGPS) will instead be done in LaGov's eProcurement module, Supplier Relationship Management (SRM). The AGPS system will be effectively retired at this time; users will still be able to access and view historical information in AGPS. The LaGov eProcurement (SRM) module will be able to capture all contract spend of the state, including higher education, quasi-agencies and political subdivisions. OTS is looking forward to meeting with agency personnel during the coming months to share more details regarding the statewide implementation of SRM.



eCert

eCert, electronic time certification, is a new process, accessed through LEO, that is used by an employee and their supervisor, each pay period, to certify time worked, leave hours taken, and costing values to be charged. Piloting will begin in September 2014.

All employees, whether their time is entered by a time administrator or via self-entry using LEO Time or Cross Application Time Sheet (CATS), can leverage the new eCert process. This will eliminate the need to print and sign timesheets. Agency participation is optional. For any agency that elects to participate, conversion to the new certification process may be staggered, with groups of employees given different start dates.

Continue to watch for more detailed information on eCert in the upcoming months.

Additional Consolidation Updates

The Reinvent IT Website continues to be an effective method of communication that OTS is using to provide IT Consolidation news of interest to IT staff and the public. Reinvent IT was redesigned in August 2014 and can be accessed at: <http://reinvent.la.gov>.



State of Louisiana

Office of Technology Services

For more information

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