

Chapter 9

A Case Study in the Emergence of Coherence through Cultural Change

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of e-governance within Tacoma, WA, a progressive, midsized, U.S. city located in the Pacific Northwest, has been a process of insights and solutions. The interrelationships of e-government, Enterprise Architecture (EA), and sustainable practices as a means to e-governance are examined in the chapter thorough the case study of one Tacoma city division, Building and Land Use Services (BLUS). BLUS managers have redesigned business processes to automate service delivery by the optimization of enterprise-wide interoperable information technology. The discussion includes consideration of the influences that collective decision-making, codes, culture, and vision have on governmental transformation. The identified gap between EA and e-government systems was consistent with the emerging convergence of knowledge for developing EA maturity, developing best practices for shared information management, and expanding human potential. Internal and external stakeholders have experienced the successful emergence of BLUS into rationalized data and applications, in which the optimization of existing interoperable technology has enabled an enhanced partnership between the city government and the community.

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INTRODUCTION

Enterprise Architecture (EA) is a blueprint for organizational change as defined in models (i.e., words, graphics, and other depictions) to describe in both business and technology terms how the organization is operating currently and how it will operate in the future. EA models also include a plan for the organizational transition to this future state (US GAO, 2006).

The EA approach is a path to knowledge management through the linking of information across disciplines to create a common groundwork for e-government, and ultimately, the opportunity for an informed public to participate fully in the government that serves them (Wilson, 1998). In a context broader than e-government, Wilson (1998) discussed consilience as the key to unification, literally a 'jumping together' of knowledge by the linking of facts and fact-based theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation (p. 8).

The abundant promise of e-government is the capability for leaders to deliver meaningful governmental services to people worldwide. Based on the potential to improve the human condition, as with all endeavors of such significance, many government leaders eagerly are watching to learn and apply the practices to their circumstances. With the focus on innovation and adaptation that has been achieved in the private sector through the delivery of e-services, expectations for the public sector to experience similar results have increased (Albert, Flournoy, & LeBrasseur, 2009).

The three interrelated and overlapping phases of e-government have been defined as follows:

- **Infrastructure:** Creating an information infrastructure based on reliable and affordable Internet connectivity for citizens, businesses, and stakeholders in a given jurisdiction within the public sector and across society.
- **Integration:** Leveraging the new infrastructure within the public sector to share information (internally and externally), and to bundle, integrate, and deliver services using more efficient and citizen-centric governance models that encompass multiple delivery channels.
- **Transformation:** Pursuing service innovation and e-government across a broader prism of community and democratic development using more networked governance patterns to be applied (a) within government, (b) across various government levels, and (c) among all sectors in a particular jurisdiction (United Nations, 2008, p. 77).

Members of the public have high expectations for e-government; however, our experience in Tacoma has shown that e-government lacks the foundation of a universally accepted, systematic approach to the collection, use, and sharing of information between multiple governmental authorities. Public expectations of e-government have not been met yet in Tacoma.

EA has been used successfully in private enterprise as a structured approach to move from using information silos to using information sharing and process modularity (Gruman, 2006). Enterprise architecture has the agility and flexibility in which organizational leaders can foster the necessary innovation to fulfill the promise of e-government (NUS Institute of Systems Science, 2010).

Researchers at the MIT Center for Information Systems Research (Ross, Weill, & Robertson, 2006) have identified four evolutionary stages of EA relevant to what we are observing in the City of Tacoma: (a) business silos, (b) standardized technology, (c) optimized core architecture, and (d) business modularity. The stages have been defined as:

- **Business silos:** Locally optimal business solutions.

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