

Chapter 52

Assessment of Web 2.0 Applications Employed by Human Resource Departments in U.S. Cities

Maureen McDonald
WDE Consulting, USA

Gerald A. Merwin Jr.
Valdosta State University, USA

J. Scott McDonald
University of Texas El Paso, USA

Keith A. Merwin
Merwin & Associates, USA

Mathew Richardson
University of Texas El Paso, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter argues cities are not realizing the vast potential of Web 2.0 applications to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their HR departments.

The chapter reviews the websites of the 50 most populous U.S. cities in terms of Web information available regarding human resources. This review found cities were generally not utilizing Web 2.0 applications. Additionally, the study found Web 2.0 applications, when available were predominately in English only, ignoring Spanish, the largest and fastest growing minority population.

Most local governments employ an intranet within the organization, to assist in human resources. A telephone survey of local government officials (n=17) found these intranet sites employ few Web 2.0 applications. The survey found most cities have plans to increase their use of Web 2.0 applications for human resources management. However, the recent economic recession has adversely impacted these plans. The chapter forwards recommendations to improve local governments' use of Web 2.0 applications while maintaining cost efficiencies.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-1601-1.ch052

INTRODUCTION

This chapter fills a significant void in the literature focused on local government Human Resources (HR) practices in the United States. Specifically, to what degree are HR departments in large cities employing Web 2.0 applications to make their practices more efficient, effective, and inclusive. Inclusiveness was measured as a function of the digital divide, to what degree have these cities expanded their content offerings beyond English, to Spanish speakers, the largest and fastest growing non-English speakers in the U.S.

BACKGROUND

Human Resources: A Brief Review

HR is one of the essential organizational functions. Its focus is human capital, one of several types of capital, including for example: finance, equipment, and land. Both private sector and public sector organizations employ capital to maintain themselves and to provide goods and/or services. Since HR deals with humans, it is one of the most complex of organizational functions. Most simply, HR is charged with ensuring an organization has the right people at the right place with the right skills. Specifically, HR links performance standards to rewards, and provides individuals with authority commensurate with their responsibilities (Guy, Klay, & Coursey, 2004; Zeidner, 2008b). The realm of HR is broad and complex, and includes recruitment; retention; skill development (training); morale; rewards (salary, benefits, and others); performance evaluations; communication with current and potential employees; outplacement (retirements and lay-offs); and compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations; among other functions. (Bohlander & Snell, 2010)

Human Resource Function in Local Government

The USGAO reports the three enablers of public sector management are: people, process, and technology and of these enablers, Doug Baker (2005) concurs with GAO that people are the most significant organizational asset. (USGAO, n.d.) According to Doris Wong, Vice President of Peoplesoft, appropriate application of technology is an essential contributor to human resource management (Inside View, 2008). A decade ago, choice of technology implied hardware and basic software. Today, key technological decisions surround use of the www and implementation of Web 2.0 applications (Inside View, 2008). Increasingly, HR links two key organizational assets, people and technology.

Expanding upon the above definitional assets, the complexity of HR comes to light:

- **“The right people”:** recruitment and retention, and outplacement (lay-off and retirement).
- **“The right place”:** geographic, organizational, and temporal location (access).
- **“The right skills”:** employee development (i.e. training and career ladders).

These three assets are impacted by innovations associated with Web 2.0, and in turn impact an organization’s ability to effectively employ the many potential advantages presented by Web 2.0 applications.

Public Policy and Human Resources

Public policy interests impact HR, possibly more than any organizational function. For example, affirmative action and the Americans with Disabilities Act greatly expanded diversity within the workplace and made hiring and promotion practices more transparent and possibly more complex. The HR function in the public sector

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/assessment-web-applications-employed-human/67193

Related Content

Competencies 2.0: A Theoretical Model for Defining and Managing a Presence Plan on the Web

Jaime Izquierdo-Pereira, Carmen Avilés-Palacios, Joaquín García-Alfonso and Manuel López-Quero (2012). *Human Resource Management in the Digital Economy: Creating Synergy between Competency Models and Information* (pp. 208-224).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/competencies-theoretical-model-defining-managing/62674

Value, Visibility, Virtual Teamwork at Kairos

Douglas Eyman (2008). *Handbook of Research on Virtual Workplaces and the New Nature of Business Practices* (pp. 595-603).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/value-visibility-virtual-teamwork-kairos/21926

Relations between Knowledge Acquisition Forms and Sources of Power in Organization

Yvan Leray (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 739-745).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/relations-between-knowledge-acquisition-forms/13308

A Contingency Perspective on the Implementation of E Performance Management

Tanya Bondarouk and Jan Kees Looise (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 197-202).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/contingency-perspective-implementation-performance-management/13230

An Integrating Architecture for Competence Management

Giuseppe Berio, Mounira Harzallah and Giovanni Maria Sacco (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 538-546).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/integrating-architecture-competence-management/13279