



Nova Scotia e-Government Provincial/Municipal Joint Venture

Summary of Progress

October 2003

Why e-Government?

Governments around the world are delivering more and more services online. Among the benefits are:

- ▶ Increase in customer satisfaction and better service integration
- ▶ Increase in service satisfaction by developing a single portal providing a range of packaged and single services in ways that make sense to customers
- ▶ Branding a municipality as a model user and bringing its citizens into the digital world
- ▶ Putting the municipality ahead of its class, and so increasing its competitive position for attracting trade and investment
- ▶ Public perception that good government manifests itself in a concern for and action on service delivery improvements, customer choice and convenience

e-Government matters from two perspectives:

#1 People/Customers:

- ▶ Citizens want services to be more accessible: at times and places (weekends and evenings) convenient to them

- ▶ The service experience is expected to be more responsive: knowing where to start, who to see, getting action on their request
- ▶ Citizens want service to be delivered in a way that saves them time

#2 Government/Councilors:

- ▶ Moving to e-Government has the potential to transform and improve the relationship between citizens and their municipal representatives and staff
- ▶ e-Government services can increase customer participation in municipal activities, provide better and more information to customers, make transactions more efficient and make it easier for citizens to access services
- ▶ The move to e-Government enables municipalities to raise their delivery methods to the level that citizens have come to expect by virtue of their dealings with the private sector



Transition

The transition to e-Government will have its most profound effect upon the organization and on the people who normally interface with citizens. Knowing what underpins the success of the transition is important to achieving success. The underpinnings of the transition are fundamentally as follows:

- ▶ Capacity to manage the change process in the municipality
- ▶ Redesigned business processes

Service improvement initiatives fail when planning, staff, customer and organizational issues that underpin service delivery are not considered. Improvement initiatives also fail when poorly delivered services that are not user-friendly are automated. In this case, “physical run around” for the customer may be replaced with “electronic run around” and there may be no appreciable improvement in customer satisfaction.

If local governments are to improve services and generate cost savings, a wholistic approach is required that manages the cultural aspects of the organization, and analyses, assesses and redesigns business processes and technology where warranted.



Seminar

In May of 2001 at Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, it was decided to hold a seminar on the importance of e-Government for both the province and municipalities. This seminar was presented in cooperation with the [Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities](#) and the [Association of Municipal Administrators](#). The seminar was held on October 16, 2001 in Sydney just prior to the UNSM conference and it was open to municipal administrators and elected municipal officials.

The goal was to provide review of the types of e-government functions provided by Canadian Municipalities, determine Nova Scotia’s position, and collaborate and share discussions and insights on implementing e-Government and electronic services within the municipal sector.

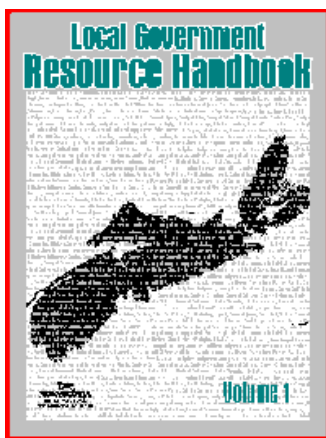
In addition to presenting the e-Government plans for the Province of Nova Scotia, the seminar featured guests from North Bay, Ontario and Campbellton, New Brunswick to feature some of the innovations they had in e-government.

Municipal/Provincial e-Government Committee (Phase 1)

During the October 16, 2001 seminar it was reported that the research indicated Nova Scotia municipalities rated very well against the rest of Canada. This sparked considerable interest with a number of the municipalities and AMA who wanted to work with SNSMR to maintain this lead in e-government, venture further in the provision of e-Government services and participate in joint projects.

At the first meeting of the interested parties, it was decided to have a “how to manual” produced to provide guidance for all municipal units wishing to initiate or further develop their e-Government services.

SNSMR contracted CGI to prepare this document because of their many years of direct experience working with government organizations around the world developing e-government systems, such as the Ontario and Alberta Governments, PWGSC, and Service New Brunswick, as well, CGI and British Telecom have joined forces to service Local Authorities in the United Kingdom. There are very few companies (and governments) that have actually rolled out a working one-window delivery system. CGI has been part of the most fully integrated one-window delivery initiative in Canada and perhaps the world.



In August 2002, a 130 page document, *Transition to Single-Window Government (e-Government)* by CGI was published in the Local Government Resource Handbook and sent to all municipalities. <http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/info/manuals/lgrh.stm>

SNSMR would also like to thank the following for their review, input and direction to CGI on completing this document:

Roy Brideau, Town of Wolfville

Deborah Campbell, Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Dennis Egyedy, Municipality of the District of Argyle

Ray Gallant, Town of Yarmouth

Lyle Goldberg, Town of Wolfville

Donna Truesdale, Town of New Glasgow

Don Smeltzer, Municipality of the District of Argyle

Janice Wentzell, Association of Municipal Administrators

Municipal/Provincial Joint Ventures e-Government Committee (Phase 2)

At the completion of the “how to guide” the committee decided to move into the action oriented phase with joint ventures. It was also decided at this time to send out a call to all municipalities to see if they would like to participate in future action plans.

To facilitate this phase, SNSMR hired a computer consultant to lead the Municipal Joint Ventures e-Government Committee through the process of developing a needs assessment and procurement process to achieve these joint ventures. Through a series of meeting the following overall project objectives were delineated:

- ▶ To identify, enhance or establish a service delivery environment which may be utilized by municipalities to provide consistent, effective, high quality electronic delivery of services to their clients.
- ▶ To enhance electronic linkages among all levels of government.
- ▶ To do this in the context of the broader single-window e-government initiative.
- ▶ Enable electronic service delivery that enhances client service for municipalities.
- ▶ Maximize the use of existing and emerging e-Government tools and knowledge within the province and elsewhere.
- ▶ Develop a transaction infrastructure that will support municipal e-Government implementations.
- ▶ Identify or develop standards and best practices to guide the establishment of new municipal e-service interfaces.
- ▶ Integration of all municipal and provincial e-services to provide single window access.

These overall objectives were viewed through the perspective of “*What do municipalities want out of this arrangement?*”

- ▶ Economies of scale
 - ▶ Pooling of transaction volumes for discounts
 - ▶ Lower cost services
- ▶ Single window for gov’t services to provide consistency
- ▶ Citizen convenience
- ▶ Increase knowledge and best practice sharing
- ▶ Inventing wheels once
- ▶ Make process easier for smaller municipalities
- ▶ Efficiency of application ‘blueprints’
- ▶ Menu of available services
- ▶ Ability to provide services that municipalities wouldn’t have resources or ability to provide alone or soon
- ▶ Faster implementation

To achieve these objectives the e-Government Joint Venture Committee decided on the following:

- ▶ Strike a formal committee with municipal and provincial co-chairs (Donna Truesdale and Stephen Feist).
- ▶ Approach UNSM to have an elected official on the committee to report back to UNSM.
- ▶ Rather than developing RFP’s for projects it was decided to leverage existing contracts with province and municipalities, including: Aliant with HRM and ACOL at the Province for the first series of joint ventures.
- ▶ Conduct a needs survey of what is currently in place or under development or desired from all 55 municipalities and 22 villages.

Current Practices in Nova Scotia

Many municipalities are doing non-financial web-based requests, including:

- ▶ tourism info (New Glasgow, Truro, Berwick)
- ▶ Some community general info (Truro)
- ▶ Forms (HRM)

- ▶ HRM using Aliant web facilities
- ▶ Recreation registration (Berwick)
- ▶ Guest book facility (Berwick)
- ▶ RFPs (Berwick, CBRM)
- ▶ Municipal contact info
- ▶ General information request handling (CBRM)
- ▶ Job postings (CBRM)
- ▶ Auctions (CBRM)
- ▶ Minutes of Council, committees (Wolfville)
- ▶ Council info exchange (Wolfville, New Glasgow)
- ▶ Limited implementation of financial-based transactions
- ▶ HRM has launched parking ticket payment
- ▶ Most are using banks online payment facilities (EDI)

Aliant /HRM Contract

HRM did not have internal skills to develop its E-services so HRM decided to seek a partner to provide expertise in the



delivery of E-services. Due to the Urban/Rural mix of HRM’s population, HRM’s definition of electronic services includes the telephone in addition to the web. E-services is an additional service delivery channel and will only be used where appropriate, supported by a business case.

The main points of the Aliant contract are as follows:

- ▶ HRM decides what services it wishes to provide electronically
- ▶ HRM decides on when it will deliver its electronic services
- ▶ Aliant and its subsidiary X-wave provides the resources
- ▶ Aliant and HRM appoint Project Managers to provide single points of contact
- ▶ Flexible payment options for HRM
 - Full payment of system
 - Monthly payments over time (up to 5yrs)
 - Per transaction cost

The contract is open to all municipalities in Nova Scotia. These municipalities may utilize any services developed for HRM at the same cost provided to HRM

The method for initiating an E-services project is defined as follows:

- ▶ HRM identifies an opportunity
- ▶ A preliminary business case is developed with rough cost estimates and a fixed price for the detailed business case
- ▶ HRM decides whether to proceed to a detailed business case
- ▶ The detailed business case provides the costs and benefits of proceeding and pricing options are presented
- ▶ The system is built and implemented

Atlantic Canada On-Line (ACOL) and the Province

The alliance is based on a multi-year contract signed by the premiers of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward



Island and Unisys Canada Inc. on May 10, 1996 following a competitive procurement. Unisys is a global information management company providing technology solutions, systems integration, outsourcing services and support to business and public sector clients. Unisys has committed to investing in the design, development, and management of the ACOL business and technology infrastructure and in return has been granted:

- ▶ The exclusive, non-transferable right and licence to use the trademarks Atlantic Canada On-Line and “ACOL”, registered official marks of the Provinces; and
- ▶ The non-exclusive and non-transferable right and licence to access provincial databases and to provide access to clients for: information

retrievals; searches; updates; and registrations

The government’s investment is the information assets that they are making available to ACOL through license agreements, while remaining custodian of the data.

The goals of ACOL are as follows:

- ▶ Provide an economically viable electronic access service to government clients across the region
- ▶ Improve the efficiency, convenience and economy of electronic transactions with government

Capitalize on government information resources by identifying and developing market opportunities for public information products and services

- ▶ Encourage and support economic development through knowledge-based industries
- ▶ Secure new sources of non-tax revenues through value-added products and services
- ▶ Ensure the rights of individuals to personal privacy

Ask Joe Howe

In 2002, SNSMR purchased the licence for the Google search engine to use on the Province’s Web site as “Ask Joe Howe.”

“Ask Joe Howe” is a new search service to assist citizens and businesses in finding information on Government of Nova Scotia and other public sector Web sites. “Ask Joe Howe” uses world-class search



technology from Google to help you find the information you're looking for on various Web sites,

quickly and easily.

As part of the licencing agreement with Google, the Province of Nova Scotia is able to share this search engine with the municipalities at no cost to the municipality.



A number of municipalities have taken up the offer to use Google to search their municipal website, as well as adjoining municipal websites, or all Nova Scotia municipal websites and the Provincial website.

Web page Template

SNSMR is developing a template for municipal web site development. This has been developed with Cape Breton Regional Municipality and will be available for use by all municipalities. For those municipalities interested in using this template, it should save considerable time and expense in developing your website, while at the same time permitting your municipality to customize it to their look.

The CBRM web page can be viewed at:

www.cbrm.ns.ca

For further information, please contact Stephen Feist, at 424-5537 or feistse@gov.ns.ca

The members of the e-Government Joint Venture Committee include:

Anna Allen	Mayor of Windsor, UNSM Representative
Larry Armstrong	Town of Windsor
Doug Armstrong	Town of Windsor
Roy Brideau	Town of Wolfville
Deborah Campbell	Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Steve Feindel	Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
Stephen Feist	Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
Ray Gallant	Town of Yarmouth
Ed Gerritts	Town of Wolfville
Neil LeBlanc	Municipality of Argyle
Colin MacDonald	Town of Port Hawksbury
Gary MacIsaac	Municipality of Colchester
Ken Moses	Municipality of Yarmouth
Linda Parker	Town of Berwick
Daya Pillay	Halifax Regional Municipality
Robert Putnam	Town of Truro
Keith Robicheau	Municipality of Annapolis
Catherine Sanderson	Halifax Regional Municipality
Donna Truesdale	Town of New Glasgow
Janice Wentzell	Association of Municipal Administrators