

Summary of Findings

ISD Challenges

Respondents were asked to identify the most significant challenges their jurisdictions faced (or are still facing) on their way to implementing their ISD initiatives and how they are working to overcome their challenges. A content analysis of their responses revealed eight themes:

1. Overcoming Organisational Cultural Differences
2. Partnerships
3. Resources
4. Technology
5. Resistance to Change and Change Fatigue
6. Leadership
7. Citizen-Centred Services
8. Marketing

The following is a summary of what were noted to be ISD challenges organised according to the above themes. In parentheses is the number of case studies in which these themes were cited. There are a total of 19 case studies.

Challenge: Overcoming Differences in Organisational Cultures (9)

Canada has a long history of government ministries working in silos. Working within silos, insulated from interaction with other ministries, creates a definitive culture within an organisation. Successful integrated service delivery, which by its nature requires organisations to partner or amalgamate, faces several challenges in overcoming cultural differences. If organisations cannot overcome their differences, their success, if any, will be limited.

Integrating organisations, the culture clash.

You will note in the case studies that a number of projects required the integration of previously separated organisations/agencies to form a new ISD entity. The joining together of different organisations can be extremely challenging. Challenges include addition of staff not trained in customer service, transferring staff from a federal agency into a new provincial organisation and integrating three levels of

government where staff are working under different collective agreements.

In order to address some of these challenges, the executive of Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services used the situation as an opportunity to define a new collective vision for the organisation. Using extensive staff consultation, a common language and vision was created and staff provided additional input on the development and modification of programs. In Winnipeg's ISD Initiative managers are consulting with staff and providing them the opportunity to develop a plan to work towards integration. Actively involving staff in the transition will aid substantially in the creation of a new common culture.

In the case of Victoria Connects (federal-BC), where three levels of government were brought together to provide integrated services, staff commitment to the project and relaying to staff the success of the initiative and their role in it, helped create a common culture and pride within the office.

Partnerships, "kindred organisations"¹ are rare in government. Linked to the partnerships theme, but deserving to be examined under this theme, are overcoming cultural differences between partnering organisations. To have an optimally performing partnership, parties need to have a sense of shared culture - common understanding, vision and goals about why and how they have/will come together to work toward an ISD initiative.

Particularly difficult partnerships are often those with organisations that do not see themselves as customer focused and as such they are not eager to participate in ISD initiatives. Again, developing a common vision for the organisation and communicating with it the need for ISD is necessary to ensure a good working relationship.

Igniting a cultural revolution.

CCMD states that support for ISD is closely enough tied to individuals that initiatives do not always survive regime change.² Part of moving the ISD agenda forward has to include

¹ Play on "kindred spirit" from Anne of Green Gables. "Kindred organisations", meaning organisations that are similar to or in sympathy with one another.

² Hopkins, 2001. He continues: "Trust is built on transparency, knowledge and competence. The complement to trust is credibility. If people are seen to be playing games, playing one side against another, or using relationships to achieve a hidden agenda, then the distrust engendered is fatal."

discussions about sustainability. If the ISD culture was more mainstream, everyone would simply accept that it is the way government does business and ISD initiatives would not flounder after champions/leaders move on to new projects.

Challenge: Partnerships (8)

The essence of ISD is to create seamless services that are citizen centred. This means that organisations must establish partnerships with other departments within their jurisdiction and/or with other levels of government. In the case studies presented, the number of partnerships between organisations ranged from two to over two dozen. The larger the number of partnerships the more complex the relationship. These are the lessons learned:

Agree on a common direction and purpose at the beginning.

At the start of any partnership is it important for parties to agree and to set common goals, establish common assumptions and build trust. These objectives need to be agreed upon by all partners before a project can proceed.

To achieve buy-in and consensus, all groups at the table need to feel that their needs are being met, or at least that there is a benefit to them participating. Those negotiating the partnership need to be open to recognising every individual's needs and boundaries. One participant suggested that partners should draw up a list of sacred things that they should not or cannot be given up to the cause of integration. Providing this information at initial meetings will let your partners know your limitations and communicate how you are able to participate.

Adapt project models from other successful projects/jurisdictions and create a project plan. As part of the plan, partners may decide to develop agreed upon frameworks to help resolve problems/issues in a timely manner.

It is also important that partners responsible for the maintenance / operation of an ISD initiative once it is up and running, be identified and agreed upon in the development stage. The fate of a project can hang in the balance if no partner or group of partners is willing to take responsibility for the project after it is complete.

Project consensus is important, but don't let it bog you down.

Though this may appear to contradict the first lesson, participants noted that working in partnerships and defining project objectives and requirements is often challenging. The more partners you have, the more challenging it can become. Building consensus on these topics can be time consuming, dragging the project on and increasing costs on all sides. Technology projects are particularly vulnerable to long drawn out consensus building. As technology is in a constant state of flux, solutions can change or increase in price over short periods of time.

Nurture your partnerships. If you don't have time, make time.

Getting back on track when a relationship is facing a difficulty of any kind is a big challenge, especially in multi-year, large-scale partnerships. To avoid or mitigate partnership issues, it is important to build trust early in the relationship and make sure that you continue to nurture it throughout the life of the project. Partner relations often fall off the agenda as pressures mount and deadlines loom. Even if schedules are tight, it is important to continue to invest and check in with your partner(s) resolving issues quickly before they escalate, putting the project or the partnership into jeopardy.

Don't try to reach the perfect "vision". It may be impossible.

Agreement on high level end state vision is important but trying to perfect it can be detrimental to substantive change. Transformation is never as precise over the long term and inertia results from trying to control what cannot be controlled.

Challenge: Resources (8)

Not surprisingly, securing funding was the third most often talked about challenge that jurisdictions face when working on ISD initiatives.

In search of the almighty dollar

While participants noted that securing funding is important for their ISD initiatives, many have to manage their projects with little or no new funding.

In the case of Service Alberta, Treasury Board recognised the value of their project and supported the concept, but because they did not have a clear understanding of potential achievables, it did not approve new funding in 2001. In

retrospect, Service Alberta sees this experience as the catalyst for their future success.

A lack of funding forced Service Alberta to rethink their development strategy and break it down into smaller more achievable segments. Service Alberta realised, at this point, that unless they could achieve quick tangible wins in the near future, it would be difficult to demonstrate the value of the initiative and that it might be in serious trouble of losing momentum all together in the future. It is now achieving its vision through an incremental implementation approach. This approach is being used in a number of jurisdictions to provide quick wins and to demonstrate the benefits of integrating services.

It should be noted that Service Alberta still does not have extensive funding. In 2002, based on its demonstrated achievements to date, it asked each ministry to make a tangible contribution to the further development of Service Alberta. Service Alberta received contributions including direct funding, on-line services, and the loan of human resources for a year from ministries in Alberta.

The Service Delivery Project (BC) was also able to secure funding in much the same manner. After early success on the project developing community service plans, ministries were willing to provide \$10,000 each to implement the plans.

Going Dutch. Splitting costs between partners.

Distribution of resources and balancing the contribution from each partner, including reaching agreement on what the contribution is, is a challenge that many partners face. Adding to the challenge is securing funding horizontally in a silo system. Many ministries are reluctant to contribute funds to projects if they can not see tangible benefits that link directly to their ministry.

Challenge: Technology (5)

Authentication

Ministries/departments are sometimes reluctant to participate in initiatives due to privacy and authentication issues. Service Yukon is facing this challenge and there are no quick resolutions. Service Yukon continues to work on policy, consistent with national identity initiatives, to determine appropriate authentication processes for its Global Address

Change project. It is anticipated that by working together to create a policy with their partners, their fears and resistance to joining the project will be overcome.

Privacy and building customer confidence in e-services.

Through surveys and focus groups, Service Alberta identified privacy and confidentiality as an issue for citizens conducting transactions with government over the Internet. This issue is not unique to Alberta; it has been identified as a concern for citizens across Canada. Building trusted online services, including implementing authentication solutions and continuing to consult with Albertans to ensure that they are satisfied their privacy is protected, is part of Service Alberta's Strategic Plan for 2003-06.

The pace of technical evolution

Ministries are rarely at the same stage of technical evolution. Many have developed their own legacy systems and Web applications. This becomes a particular challenge when ministries want to work together or amalgamate to provide integrated service delivery. It can be costly to integrate systems that were designed for different purposes. Also training staff on new systems is necessary but time consuming.

One participant noted that technology based solutions do not or can not keep pace with the changes and demands of customers/citizens. Technology can quickly become outdated and lose relevancy if partners do not ensure that systems are kept updated and change with citizens' needs over time.

Challenge: *Resistance to Change and Change Fatigue (5)*

Government, the safe bet. Working in A Risk Adverse Culture.

The challenge of integrated service delivery is that it means a transformation of the way ministries and individuals traditionally do business. Integration means that you no longer own complete control over a process, service channel, etc., and that control is now shared between partners, or even worse, you can find yourself negotiating to keep any stake at all in an area.

The reality is ISD is about change and that change requires a certain level of risk. Unfortunately, governments tend to produce a risk adverse culture, which impedes substantial change. Working in this type of environment requires extensive

communication and consultation as well as influence management skills to encourage staff/ministries to see the benefits of change, not just the barriers to it.

Victoria Connects (federal-BC) found that resistance to change tended to be more strongly felt in the central agencies and technical support areas than it was on the front line. Perhaps this is because front line staff deal with customers on a daily basis and are eager to provide them with the best services possible where as central agencies have little or no contact with the public. Regardless of the reasons, many jurisdictions point to a risk adverse culture and change fatigue as serious impediments to ISD initiatives.

e-Contact (federal) is finding that it is difficult working simultaneously across a single jurisdiction and with other jurisdictions. It was noted that many managers feel a general lack of comfort when dealing with things outside their particular span of control. Even though they may have a vision in the silo world, it does not always translate into the peripheral vision required to work in an integrated world. It was felt that this could be attributed, at least in part, to an ingrained and rewarded cultural resistance to change. These concerns can manifest themselves as a desire to be seen to embrace change and integration while still maintaining the status quo.

The Service Delivery Project (BC) found that change fatigue also strengthens a manager's resistance to change. Since May 2001, BC managers across government have been faced with significantly decreased funding and staffing in addition to new policy direction. It was within this environment that the Service Delivery Project was initiated. Many managers, already involved in overseeing the changes within their own ministries, were reluctant to enter into a new project that would require significant time and resources on their part, without a certain outcome. Constant communication and visible leadership was needed at all levels to reinforce the long-term benefits of participation.

Challenges: Leadership (3)

It is interesting to note that leadership is identified as one of the major critical success factors for successful ISD initiatives. It follows that a lack of leadership can quickly become a major challenge to ISD.

Keeping ISD on the agenda.

Keeping ISD on the agenda has proven challenging for some jurisdictions. One of the reasons for this challenge is the lack of ISD/ citizen-centred champions to promote and encourage cross-ministry partnerships and initiatives. In particular, a lack of senior ISD leaders (political and bureaucratic) has limited some ISD initiatives.

To overcome this challenge, Saskatchewan recently appointed a new senior position, Chief Services and Information Officer (CSIO), with the responsibility to promote ISD initiatives across ministries. In order to foster buy-in, the new CSIO will have to demonstrate the value of ISD initiatives, particularly relating to budget efficiencies and overall advantages for the public as well as government.

Pssst...have you heard what ISD can do for you? Spread the word.

The Government Agents Branch has found that continual communication is needed to educate ministries/people regarding the benefits and advantages of an ISD model. The Branch has promoted the ISD agenda for years within BC, and it has only been within the last year that they are beginning to see the results and active leadership at the senior levels.

Challenges: Citizen-Centred Services (2) and Marketing (2)

Rounding out the list of challenges to ISD are providing Citizen-Centred services and marketing.

Citizen-centred services need to drive your ISD project.

ISD must be driven by a common desire to increase customer service. ISD partners should seek to satisfy a broad range of stakeholders by determining how to meet their needs and then actually meeting them. However, ISD practitioners need to recognise that customers in different parts of the province may wish to receive services differently and those differences should be factored into their initiatives.

Marketing, letting customers know about your new ISD services.

ISD creates change; a change in services sometimes can lead to a change in location as partners co-locate and/or amalgamate services. Marketing new services is a necessary

component of ISD initiatives. If a citizen does not know about a new service or where to access it, has the organisation achieved its ISD vision? No it has not. Unfortunately, finding the funding for marketing or branding initiatives prohibits many jurisdictions from promoting their new ISD initiatives.