

Designing 21st Century Government: The Value of E-Government Research

NZCSRSC 2010

15 April 2010

Professor Miriam Lips
Victoria University of Wellington

17 years 'E-government'

How do we understand 'E-Government' today?

- E-Government conferences, journals, teaching programmes
- Origins of the E-Government concept
- Influence of E-Government consultancy firms



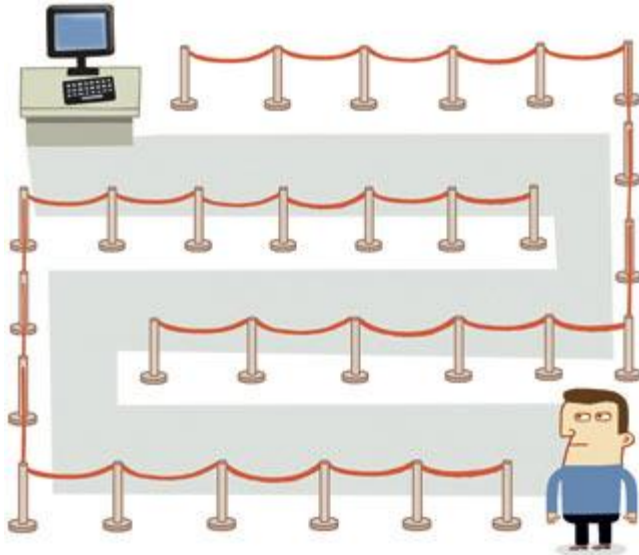
17 years 'E-Government' – Another Crisis?

- Failing E-Government projects
- Huge costs involved: “Dangerous Enthusiasms” (Gauld & Goldfinch)
- International news on data breaches in the public sector
- Flaws in E-Govt surveys (Gartner)



17 years 'E-Government': Wrong Perspectives?

- From 'E-Government' to 'T-Government'...
- ...to 'I-Government'?



17 years 'E-government'

The screenshot shows the USA.gov website in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar displays "http://www.usa.gov/". The browser's menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Favorites", "Tools", and "Help". The toolbar contains various icons for navigation and utility. The website header features the USA.gov logo with the tagline "Government Made Easy" and a search bar. Navigation tabs are provided for "For Citizens", "For Businesses and Nonprofits", "For Government Employees", and "For Visitors to the U.S.". A secondary navigation bar lists categories like "Kids", "Teens", "Parents", "Seniors", "Military and Veterans", "Americans Abroad", "Media", and "More Audiences >>". The main content area is titled "Get It Done Online!" and lists services such as "Shop Government Auctions", "Apply for Government Jobs", "Find Federal Forms", "Apply for Disaster Assistance", "Replace Vital Records", and "Contact Elected Officials". A "Government Information by Topic" section lists various categories like "Benefits and Grants", "Consumer Guides", "Defense and International", "Environment, Energy, and Agriculture", "Family, Home, and Community", "Health and Nutrition", "History, Arts, and Culture", "Jobs and Education", "Money and Taxes", "Public Safety and Law", "Reference and General Government", "Science and Technology", "Travel and Recreation", and "Voting and Elections". On the right side, there are sections for "Government Agencies" (including "A-Z Agency Index", "Federal Government", "State Government", "Local Government", and "Tribal Government") and "News and Features" (including "Social Security Benefits Increase 5.8% in 2009" and "Economic Crisis"). The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including "Welcome to...", "myvictoria...", "Microsoft O...", "A survey of...", "USA.gov: T...", "staffhom...", "keynote.doc...", and "Microsoft Po...". The system tray on the right shows the time as 10:00 p.m.

Pathway to 'E-Government Maturity'

Four Stage E-Government Development Model:

- The Information Stage
- The Communication Stage
- The Transaction Stage
- The Transformation Stage



Next stage 'E-Government'?

TheyWorkForYou.co.nz
Helping you track Aotearoa New Zealand's Parliament

Home Bills Portfolios Debates MPs Parties Organisations Blog About

As of January 2010, this website is no longer being kept up to date. It contains NZ Parliament debates from November 2005 to December 2009. We may resurrect the site in 2011 for the General Election.

TheyWorkForYou.co.nz is volunteer run, and has been in operation since November 2006. We developed it entirely with free and open source software, as a *hint* to the public sector that they should be adopting and promoting free and open source software themselves (despite what foreign corporations masquerading as a NZ ICT industry may say to the contrary).

Find out what your elected representatives are doing in Aotearoa New Zealand's Parliament.

You can view parliamentary debates grouped by their relationship to bills, ministerial portfolios, MPs or organisations.

You can also compare party voting in the 49th Parliament.

Home | Bills | Portfolios | Debates | MPs | Parties | Organisations Blog | About

...or 'e-Government'...



The Value of *E-Government* Research

- Acknowledging the interdisciplinary nature of **E-Government**
- ICTs as disruptive technologies: they act on *information*
- Informational Government is all around us
- The need for empirical research
- Moving beyond the surface of benchmarking findings, demonstrating actual change and implications

The Value of *E-Government* Research

Empirical research example 1

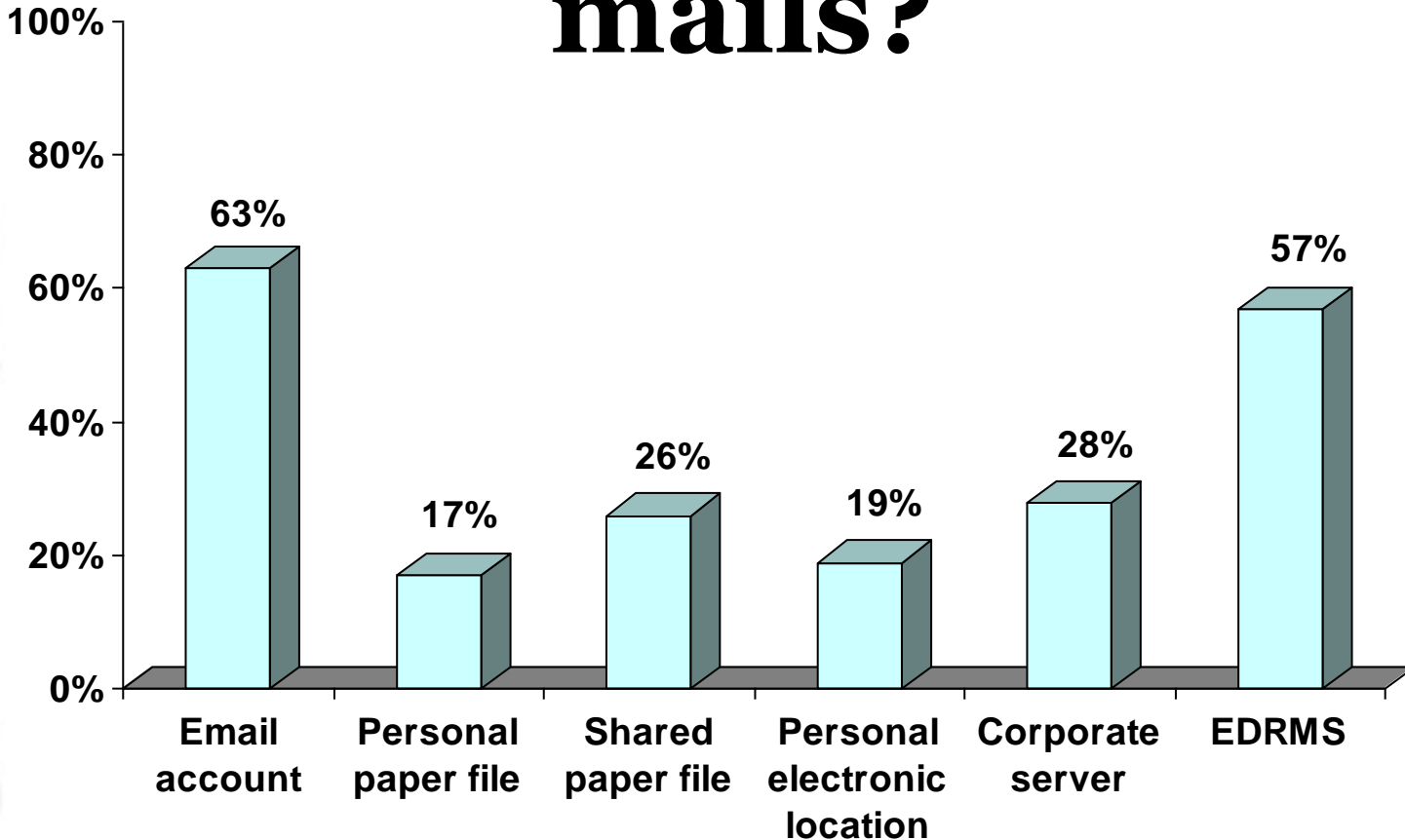
E-mail records management in 21st
Century NZ government



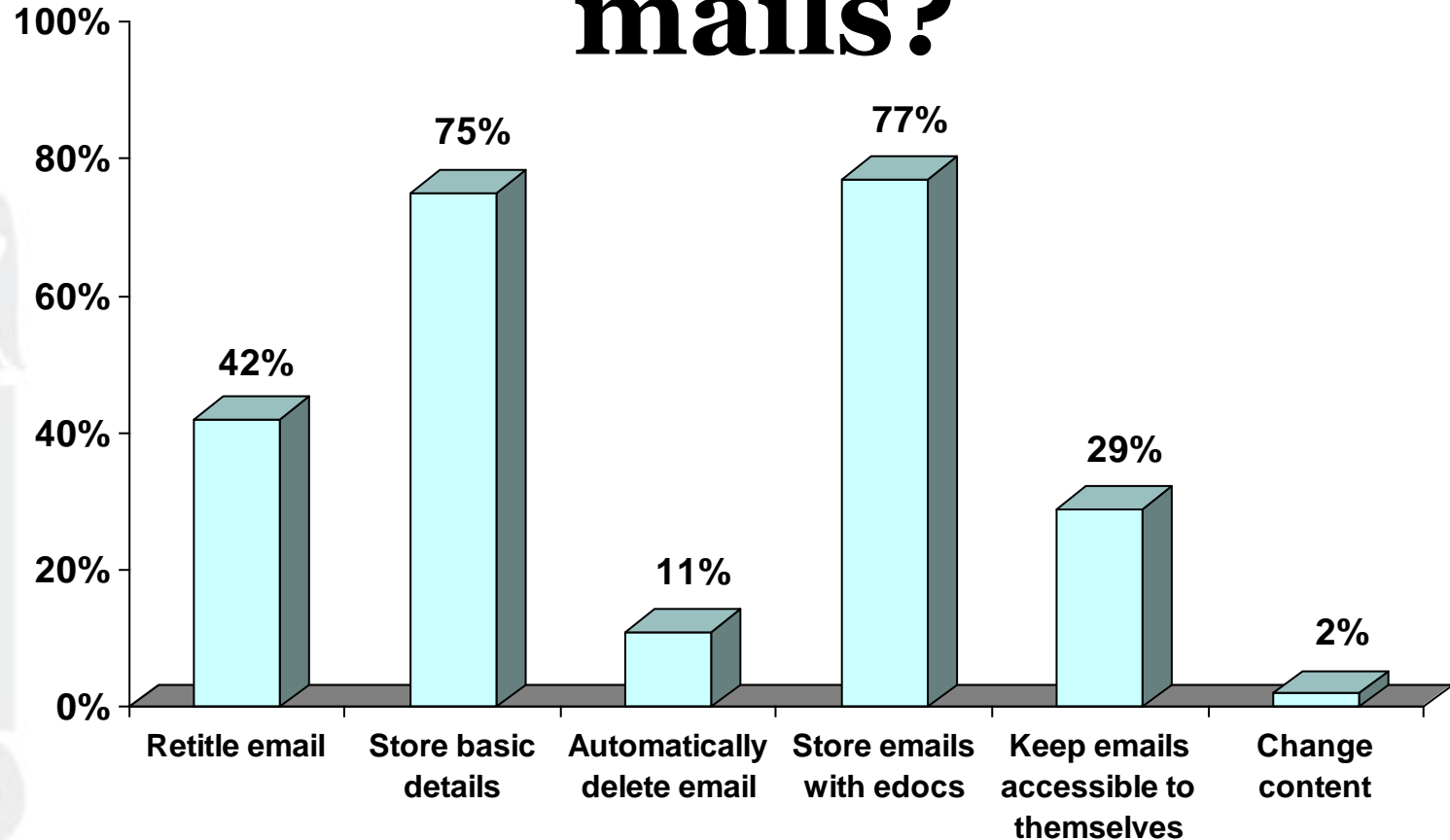
The Public Records Act, 2005

- The Act requires all agencies to create and maintain full and accurate records of their activities and these records must be maintained in a recordkeeping system so they are accessible over time
- No person may dispose of, or authorize the disposal of, records without prior approval from the Chief Archivist
- The Act requires organizations to transfer records of archival value to Archives New Zealand at twenty-five years

How did respondents store business e-mails?



How did respondents manage business e-mails?



Research findings

- Keeping everything leads to searching problems
- There is no systematic storage or retrieval system in government
- Related e-mails and conversation threads cannot always be kept together (e.g. saving related e-mails in different locations in shared drives)
- E-mails and attachments cannot always be saved together
- Who is responsible for storing business e-mails? (e.g. everyone who received the e-mail, people CC'ed?)
- New multimedia attachments may mean larger size limits on e-mail accounts are required
- “We’ve got the technology but we haven’t done the change management and that is huge”

The Value of *E-Government* Research

Empirical research example 2

Cross-Agency information sharing for more effective social outcomes in New Zealand



Research Design

- Qualitative case study research
- Initial selection of 20 case study areas; 8 case studies in 5 case study areas (70 interviews):
 1. **Multicultural Service Centre for Refugees:** Wellington
 2. **Integrated Service Response:** Linwood Service Centre
 3. **High Risk / High Profile forums:** Hawke's Bay, Chch
 4. **Priority Offenders Initiative:** Chch, Papakura
 5. **Electronic Monitored Bail (EM Bail):** Auckland, Hutt/Wellington
- 3 focus group meetings in Wellington and Chch; feedback sessions with interview participants
- Data collection between March 2009 – October 2009

Cross case study findings (1)

- Information is shared on a 'needs to know' basis and justified in terms of ensuring that people know enough to do their jobs effectively and safely;
- Information sharing is strongly related to the trust that a person giving the information has in the person receiving the information to treat it professionally and use it judiciously: without that trust, information is not shared;
- Professionals use different information sets according to their core business needs and use different interpretations of 'valuable' information;
- In all cases, signed consent forms are used by professionals as authorisation to share information;
- Professionals make a distinction between formal or 'hard' information (written, exchanged through formal processes, reduced to core facts) and informal or 'soft' information (unwritten, exchanged between professionals, acted upon as 'real information').
- Professionals relied more heavily on 'soft' information (e.g. advantages re personal & professional safety)

Cross case study findings (2)

- There are clear differences in information sharing practice and procedure between organisations with a Public Safety mandate, and agencies with a Public Service Mandate
- There are strong boundaries around particular data sets (e.g. medical records and child protection records), with strict protection by authorised personnel
- Officials use manual 'work around' techniques to compensate for a lack of technical interoperability of information systems, or no access allowed to personnel from other agencies
- Technical solutions for improved information sharing are available, but unused
- Agencies have different interpretations of the Privacy Act, 1993, and how it should be applied

Designing 21st Century Government: Opportunities for Academia

- The value of empirical E-Government research, qualitative and quantitative
- The value of an interdisciplinary perspective
- Close research collaboration and engagement with government
- Providing independent insights wrt actual changes in the informational fabrics of government
- Providing safe places for government to reflect on fundamental policy problems and issues
- Doing applied research with 'PBRF'-valued outcomes
- Raising a new generation of e-Government researchers