

# CITIZENS @ THE CENTRE: B.C. GOVERNMENT 2.0

A TRANSFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY  
FOR THE BC PUBLIC SERVICE

GOV 2.0



Where ideas work

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**T**his strategy is about the citizens of B.C. and how their changing profile, expectations and needs are changing government. It is about using technology to change how citizens access the services they expect and to deliver those services efficiently. It is about giving citizens back some of their most valuable resource: their time.

It is also about how the BC Public Service must transform itself in response to all these factors. The operations of government and the delivery of public services are complex. Citizens' access to their government and to public services should be simple. This strategy sets out a vision for how the BC Public Service will bridge the apparent gap between the complexity of government and the need for more accessible services to citizens by using 21st-century tools to do our work in the 21st century.

As the BC Public Service has done so successfully in recent years with its

Corporate Human Resource Plan *Being the Best*, this strategy is intended to guide a more consistent, long-term, coordinated vision for how we will apply technology to improve our operations, to improve the experience of working in the public service, and to improve service to the people of the province. The progress made under *Being the Best* has resulted, and will continue to result, in significant improvements to how we manage and support the people who deliver services to the public. But the service delivery challenges faced in the years ahead are not just human resource problems, and they won't be solved by human resource solutions alone. This new strategy is intended to be a parallel plan that will guide the broader transformation of the operations of the BC Public Service that are also needed to meet the challenges ahead. We need the dedication of all employees of the BC Public Service to achieve these goals.

As has been done on our approach to human resources, each government ministry will now be required to work through an annual transformation and technology planning process to clearly demonstrate how the ministry will support the principles, vision and actions set out in this corporate strategy. This model is designed to

ensure a more consistent, corporate approach to managing technology across government, rather than the much more fragmented approach usually taken.

An effective transformation and technology approach needs to involve much more than new tools and systems. Real, substantive transformation will require a thoughtful assessment of changes to policies, practices and legislation to ensure they support the effective application of the technology itself. We have already begun to follow that path, but this plan will take us further and, in the process, test our resolve to change. Most significantly, our success will be determined by our willingness to change as a workforce of about 30,000 professionals. That means we must not only support but actively encourage creativity and new ideas, and we must be serious about working together as one organization. Traditionally, government's operations have reflected its highly divided structure, with every program area built around its own budget, its own systems, its own networks and often its own front counter in communities. Today, we are moving to a more collaborative model to address major issues, drawing on the resources of multiple ministries, external agencies and other levels

of government. We will encourage collaboration while discouraging fragmentation.

Our goal is to move beyond the traditional practices that have resulted in the consistent implementation of band-aid solutions to maintain and modify existing systems rather than taking a more thoughtful, long-term approach. It is time to take a more ambitious and coordinated step forward to change how government delivers on its responsibilities. I know that overcoming the great inertia of past practice is no small task. It requires time and long-term commitment. Some progress will happen quickly and other advancements will take years. Most of all, it requires that the BC Public Service not only change some technologies and policies, but also its cultural mindset.

I have every confidence that we are all up to the task. We have been recognized as leaders on so many fronts in recent years. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this exciting new path for the BC Public Service.

Allan Seckel  
Deputy Minister to the Premier and  
Head of the BC Public Service

DEFINING PRINCIPLE No. 1:

We will  
empower  
citizens to  
create value  
from open  
government  
data.

# The Context for Change

The BC Public Service constantly adapts to meet the needs of citizens and their government. The dynamics of our rapidly changing world demand that flexibility more than ever to ensure the continued efficient and effective delivery of public services.

**T**he rapid pace of technological change is altering how citizens expect to interact with government and access services. The aging of the public service workforce and ever-present fiscal pressures are creating a stronger imperative to modernize government operations through innovative applications of technology. This rising tide of challenges cannot be adequately met with existing policies, tools and approaches. This strategy is the map for the BC Public Service's response to that reality.

From banking to shopping to reading books, more and more people are managing their daily lives on mobile devices and online. Naturally, they increasingly expect government to provide a similar level of accessibility and convenience because it saves them time and allows them to conduct their business when, where and how they choose.

Moreover, the rise of collaborative social media is changing the way citizens interact with one another, with organizations and with information. A growing number of people conduct a significant portion of their lives online in open networks that allow them access to information on their own terms. More and more citizens are becoming active participants in public conversations in addition to being consumers of information and services. The very technologies that make this possible also could open up exciting opportunities for citizens to directly engage with their government. The growing movement towards sharing of data also has great potential benefits as citizens adapt and combine government data in creative new ways.

Moving in these directions is



not easy. Existing policies and legislation to protect personal privacy were not designed to accommodate social media and the potential benefits of more effectively sharing data within government and with citizens. That includes freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation, which was developed decades ago and never anticipated today's technology. For example, identity management and authentication is essential to allowing secure delivery of many online services, but existing privacy legislation creates some barriers to implementing identity management solutions. Solutions to these challenges, however, should not be driven solely by technology but by a careful consideration of exactly what the issues are that need to be resolved to enable better delivery of services.

There are some services that must and should be delivered in person. Similarly, despite the rising public use of technology, not all citizens are comfortable accessing services online and there are some areas of the province where adequate connectivity remains limited. But none of these issues is insurmountable as long as any steps to implement technology solutions are designed to ultimately improve access to services rather than raise any barriers. In the end, the goal is to provide more options for citizens and government to interact, and online tools will add to the existing toolbox at government's disposal.



Against this context of technological change and citizen expectations, demographic analysis indicates that the BC Public Service workforce will see an increasing rate of retirements as many long-serving employees conclude their careers over the next decade. This trend is not limited to the public service, but the average age of today's public service employees is already older than the general population. It is expected that, combined with non-retirement departures, this aging of the workforce will result in more vacancies than can be filled in an increasingly competitive labour market. The BC Public Service is, therefore, expected to become smaller, not by choice but by circumstance.

Ensuring that workplace practices and policies support a flexible, mobile and collaborative work environment is vital to ensuring the BC Public Service remains a competitive employer. As government renews efforts to recruit the next generation of public servants, it will respond to the expectation of younger workers that they will have access to the same sort of collaborative technology at work that they use in the rest of their lives. Introducing more collaborative technologies within government can also

help build a more innovative work culture within the public service that helps break down traditional barriers to enable responsible information sharing.

Demographic shifts mean a smaller public service will be called upon to deliver more services to a larger number of citizens. With increased demand on health services, it is likely that there will be fewer resources in other areas. The public service must pursue smarter solutions that allow more efficient access to the services that citizens, communities and businesses rely on.

Ultimately, citizens want easy, timely access to public services when and how they choose. Meeting those expectations is the motivation behind this strategy. Setting aside the powerful drivers of demographics, fiscal pressures, technological change and shifting citizen expectations, there is one other important force for change: if the public service can apply technology to deliver services that better support citizens and help them meet their needs, it simply should. The public service's primary responsibility is, after all, to deliver the services citizens, businesses and communities





DEFINING PRINCIPLE No. 2:

We will save  
citizens' time in  
their interaction  
with government  
and make it  
easier to access  
better quality  
services.



need to thrive and prosper. If new and more coordinated technology applications can support that goal, then they are worth pursuing. If measures can be taken to improve citizen interaction with the public service, then they are worth exploring. If technology can be adopted in a way that is fiscally responsible or, over time, allows resources to be allocated where they are most needed, then it should be adopted.

B.C. is not the only jurisdiction working to adapt to the modern technological environment. Many other governments are breaking dramatic new ground with comparable visions. Where they are further ahead, B.C. can and will seek to learn from their successes and failures. But B.C. also won't hesitate to be a leader and strive to set the standard for others in building a more modern approach to government.

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Achieving these objectives will require more than just new tools and moving services off the counter and online. It will require much greater collaboration across the public service and into the broader public sector. It will require investment in a thoughtful and strategic manner that ensures the best value for limited resources. It will require citizens and the public service to trust that steps can be taken to improve access to government without jeopardizing safety and security. It will require significant shifts in the culture of the BC Public Service and how it interacts with citizens. But if that can be done, and if the result is improved access to services, then it is the right thing to do.

DEFINING PRINCIPLE No. 3:

We will  
encourage  
collaboration  
in the public  
service because  
it is integral to  
delivering quality  
service to citizens.

# Mapping the Way Forward

In response to all of these dynamics, in the fall of 2009 the Deputy Minister to the Premier established the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Transformation and Technology.

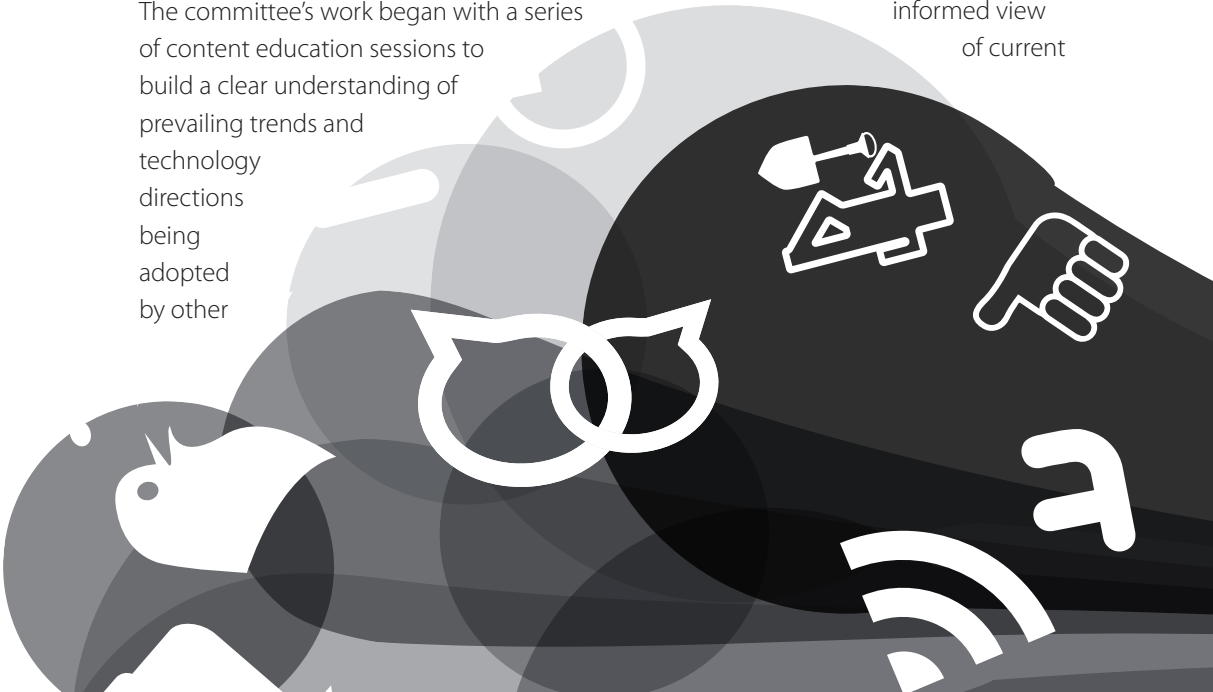
**M**irroring the approach taken with the Corporate Human Resource Plan, which is guided by the Deputy Ministers' Committee on the Public Service, this new executive committee was given a mandate to lead the transformation of government operations and the use of technology with the aim of modernizing government.

jurisdictions. The committee also investigated innovative projects already underway or being proposed across the public service, as well as recommendations on how best to improve the coordination of technology resources. Through this work, drawing on the expertise and current research available through channels such as the BC Public Service's partnership in the Gov 2.0 initiative, the committee developed an

The committee's work began with a series of content education sessions to build a clear understanding of prevailing trends and technology directions being adopted by other

informed view  
of current

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trends and possibilities open to the public service.

With that foundation, work began on determining the goals and actions contained in this strategy. Three central themes emerged that are defined by fundamental shifts in the public service's operating philosophy:

- » Citizen Participation: engaging British Columbians more directly with their government, particularly through improved access to government data and sharing of information.
- » Service Innovation: expanding opportunities for citizen self-service by improving and modernizing the government's online service offerings so they are shaped less by the structure of government and more by citizen needs.
- » Business Innovation: taking a more corporate approach to technology planning and innovation for the benefit of citizens and public service employees.

The individual actions set out in this strategy are grouped within these three themes. The committee also identified three defining principles that drive decisions on what actions to pursue:

1. Empower citizens to create value from open government data.
2. Save citizens' time in their interaction with government and make it easier to access better quality services.
3. Encourage collaboration in the public service because it is integral to delivering quality service to citizens.

Applying these principles, the committee identified the actions in the first edition of this strategy, which will be updated annually. It is important to recognize that many of the actions set out here will be pursued corporately with the goal of providing some consistency and guidance to steps individual ministries will take in transforming their own operations. To facilitate that approach, this strategy also identifies a number of "enablers" that are more foundational in nature, but are essential to make progress on corporate and ministry actions possible.



# Citizen Participation

Inspired in part by the rise of online communities and social media, citizens have an increasing expectation to interact with their government more directly in a dialogue about their communities and their future.

**T**he public service must think about new approaches to citizen engagement when and where this can constructively create benefit for government and citizens, recognizing that it may not be appropriate or valuable in every circumstance.

The path to effective and informed citizen engagement begins with improved sharing of data and information. The public service is traditionally insular in its management of the vast amount of data it collects and generates. Government has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the protection of citizens' privacy and the security of confidential data. But in an age when information sharing and collaboration are redefining expectations of government, there is a growing trend toward making data more accessible in the name of transparency as well as innovation. Sharing non-personal data allows government and others

to benefit from creative combinations and applications of that data by outside individuals and agencies.

The BC Public Service has made some progress on this front, most notably with the sharing of provincial geographic information through GeoBC. But much greater amounts of data are captured, generated and stored across government with no corporate approach to sharing appropriate data sets. The shift envisioned in this plan will see the public service develop a corporate open data strategy based on well-defined criteria and a recognition that this approach will evolve as open data standards evolve. With this approach, citizens and businesses will save time, be empowered to make better decisions, have access to a trusted source of information, and will create value from publicly available information.

But, while open data refers to sharing information held by government, there

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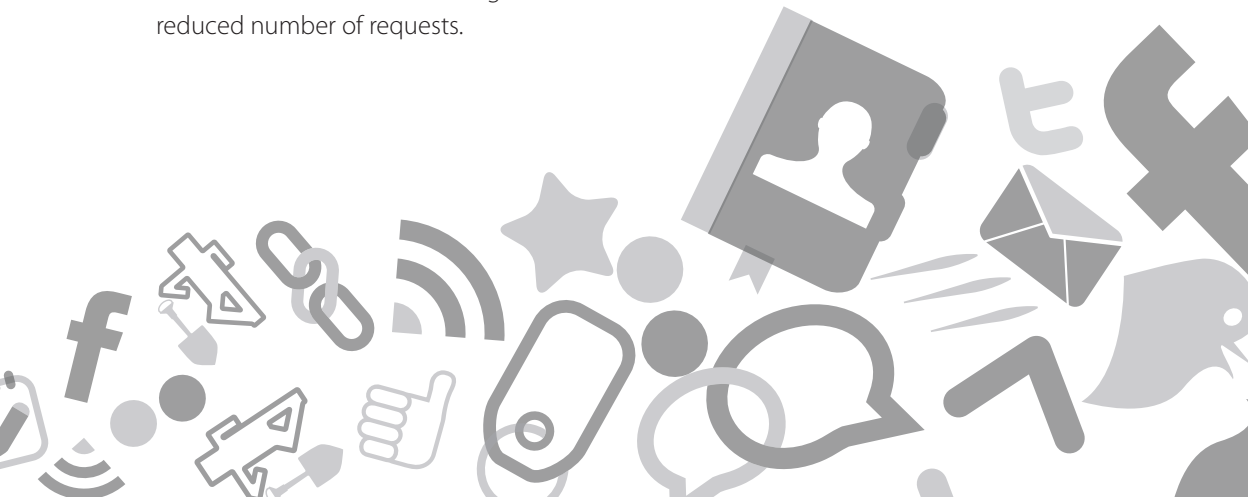


is also a trend toward greater sharing of information about government. Adopting an approach of more open information, the public service can take advantage of social media to give citizens access to credible and authoritative public health, safety, education and other information to improve awareness, understanding and dialogue.

Freedom of information legislation already contains provisions to allow for the more proactive routine release of information, but those provisions are currently applied on a limited case-by-case basis. A strategic approach to proactive and routine disclosure is a necessary component of a broader strategy on modernizing and opening up government. A starting point for government would be those categories of information most requested under general FOI requests. The result will be greater transparency, cost savings and cost avoidance over time through a reduced number of requests.

**To promote citizen participation through the release of data and improved access to information, the BC Public Service will:**

- » Establish a new online resource as the single point of access to data released by government and, over time, the broader public sector.
- » Address data copyright issues to allow the re-use of public sector data by citizens.
- » Encourage citizens to help identify high-value data sets that could be targeted for future releases.
- » Use data sets in new creative ways to provide better value for citizens and across government.
- » Proactively share more information with citizens through online tools.



## B.C. Government 2.0: Citizen Engagement

The new tools of the web offer remarkable opportunities for the BC Public Service to engage with the public to get its best ideas and enlist its best energy to help take on the challenges we share. B.C. is already taking steps in this direction.

In December 2009, the Water Act Modernization process was launched to assist in fostering public discussion to update B.C.'s 100-year-old Water Act. Using a mix of online tools – including government's first policy-oriented blog – and 12 face-to-face workshops, more than 6,000 British Columbians have had the chance to comment, discuss and influence government's approach to improving the Water Act. The web enabled process has resulted in more than 1,000 submissions coming into the policy team at the Water Stewardship Division of the Ministry of Environment.

While the process is still unfolding, the pioneering approach has paid dividends for the public service. Lessons have been learned about how to create conversations with the public online, moderate discussion, respond in comment threads, and analyze what the public is saying. Government benefits by having a better understanding of the public's knowledge and thinking on a subject, and a deeper sense of their preferences. Policy gets stronger as a result.

But not all engagement is about consultation. It can also be about sparking action. In March of 2010, the Climate Action Secretariat, in partnership with GeoBC, the Ministry of Citizens' Services and nine private and not-for-profit sector sponsors, launched the Apps 4 Climate Action contest. The contest challenged Canada's web community to

transform publicly available climate change data into web and mobile applications that can build understanding and encourage people to take steps to reduce carbon pollution.

The contest marks a new direction for promoting government data as a source of social innovation and economic opportunity. The contest will help showcase B.C. technology talent and create a reason for companies and individuals to develop new kinds of 'green' software products that have lasting commercial value.

For the BC Public Service, Apps 4 Climate Action has also helped the public service grapple with the challenges of organizing and publishing data and, perhaps more importantly, the work of reaching out to communities of developers and academics to engage them in imagining the data's potential. Already, their feedback has built B.C.'s understanding of how to make data more open.

Now imagine how this same approach could benefit government and citizens in other spheres. Imagine how new applications that use information about locations of local walk-in clinics could help a family with a sick child get help in the middle of the night. Imagine how more labour market information that is easy to analyze could help students make more informed choices about their career path in ways that make sense to them. Imagine how government and the public could better mark B.C.'s progress towards big goals, like carbon neutrality. And imagine how new opportunities for businesses could be born that apply public information for economic opportunity and the public good.



# Self-Service

Citizens expect and deserve a wide range of services and supports from their government.

The BC Public Service currently provides services to citizens via telephone, online and at more than 200 offices across the province. The types of services available through each of those channels vary widely, and many services are best delivered face-to-face. But as technology takes on an ever more prominent role in citizens' personal lives, they naturally expect government to apply that technology in a manner that delivers the services they want and need.

Research shows that, if given only one service option, British Columbians would prefer in-person service over telephone or online access. But if given multiple options, 60 per cent said they would choose to use online access first, followed by telephone and in-person. In other words, citizens increasingly want the opportunity to use technology to save themselves time. But they also want the comfort of knowing that in-person options are there when they need them.

In response to that reality, where it has made sense, an increasing range of transaction-based services have been moved online in addition to telephone and in-person channels so they can be accessed anytime from anywhere. But citizens are also indicating that more needs to be done. Technology can increasingly be used to deliver services when and where citizens want instead of when and where government wants.

Moving services online has a number of benefits:

- » It saves citizens and businesses time and money.
- » It allows government to redirect resources to the areas of highest need.
- » It encourages greater satisfaction and trust in government and the services it delivers.

The BC Public Service must also ensure its public-facing internet presence

utilizes the latest practices to make it easier and more intuitive for citizens to find information and services. Most importantly, when it comes to services they need, citizens are interested in getting what they need efficiently. They are not interested in having to navigate the organizational map of government to get there. Government is a rigidly structured organization, and it is designed that way to ensure clear accountabilities. But citizens do not necessarily care what agency within government delivers a program or service. They just want effective access and quality service. The public service, therefore, needs to continue to promote collaboration across ministries and with partners to ensure it best meets citizen expectations.

Furthermore, as other jurisdictions are learning, it is not merely enough to make services available online. To truly connect with the citizen, a service must be logical to find, understandable and consistent to use, and recognize the technological resources of the user. Not everyone directly seeks out government websites for assistance or information. Many people now use popular search engines or social media platforms as their doorway to the web. Not everyone uses a desktop PC during regular working

hours. Many now work on mobile devices or other applications to conduct their affairs virtually. Not everyone intuitively learns through the written word and text on the page. Many rely equally on online multimedia tools to illustrate and interpret information for them. To be truly successful in meeting citizens' demands in an online world, that means there should be no wrong door to access government and the services it provides. Wherever a citizen starts, they should easily be able to find their way in, and that way should be as simple, timely and satisfying as possible.

**As a first step, the shift envisioned in this plan will see the BC Public Service move from an online service presence defined by organizational structure to a more citizen and user-centric model.**

**To advance service innovation and improve options for self-service, the BC Public Service will:**

- » Focus on redesigning the main “doorway” to government services – [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca) – to enhance the look and usability, maximize the service experience for citizens, and break down the organizational structure of government.
  - » Pilot the use of innovative Web 2.0 tools and platforms to expand access to online services and content.
  - » Pursue the best practices in search engine optimization, taxonomy, and meta-tagging to assist clients in locating key services, regardless of what doorway they choose.
  - » Corporately foster excellence in user-centred design and content development through shared web development toolsets across government, including improved approaches to content creation and maintenance.
- » Work with ministries to assess their current service environment and collaboratively work towards key service improvements – either through new services, discontinued services or improvements to existing services.
  - » Renew emphasis on user, citizen and stakeholder preferences for self-service improvement, feedback and awareness.
  - » Improve awareness of government services and incrementally bring together transactional services under a single distinctive brand supported by marketing.

## B.C. Government 2.0: Integrated Case Management

Together the Ministry of Housing and Social Development and the Ministry of Children and Family Development spend \$3.4 billion annually on key social programs, such as child welfare, child care, services for children with special needs, income assistance and employment programs. About 4,000 frontline workers and over 12,000 contracted service providers (including foster parents), as well as delegated Aboriginal agencies deliver these services. More than 200,000 individuals and families access these services every year. The information systems currently supporting these services were custom-built almost three decades ago and then modified, patched and added to over the years to meet changing business needs.

This ambitious and complex Integrated Case Management (ICM) project lays the groundwork for transforming service delivery at these two ministries and, ultimately, the wider social service sector. By replacing the aging systems, the ICM system will improve both ministries' ability to capture and retrieve information and to manage individual case files between ministries, while laying the foundation for broader social sector information management.

ICM will also ensure critical case information remains safe, secure and accessible to protect and support the citizens of British Columbia. While government is making the initial significant investment in ICM to support the priority needs of these two ministries, the system has the potential to be extended to other areas of government in the future. ICM will enable service delivery to be founded on a secure, role-based and holistic view of an individual citizen's needs and service history.

By the winter of 2010, the first components of the ICM tool will be available to frontline staff as part of the first of five project phases. But imagine the possibilities once ICM is fully implemented over all five phases. Imagine the benefits of a system that will enable clients to access a web portal to apply for select services, check the status of their applications, and validate and request updates to their information. Imagine the benefits for citizens and staff from across the participating ministries and their service providers when they will be able to access and take action on referrals without repeated phone calls, faxes and transfer of paper files.

With system-supported electronic forms, information can be recorded or updated on a role-appropriate need-to-know basis. By virtue of streamlined processes, information will be more secure. Imagine how much better it will be for clients who will no longer be asked to repeat their story multiple times and for staff who won't be strapped to so many repetitive, bureaucratic transactions, such as entering the same information over and over again on different forms or making repeated calls to confirm referrals. As a result, clients will receive more direct, quality interaction time with staff.

In the end, ICM will provide better tools for both frontline workers and service delivery partners. And, most importantly, the transformations it makes possible will produce better outcomes for clients, through coordinated planning and improved access to effective services.

# Business Innovation

If it is to be successful in establishing a more innovative approach to service delivery, the BC Public Service must also become more innovative and efficient in how it operates internally.

**M**inistries must be challenged to pursue creative new approaches to their work as a consistent part of how they operate day-to-day. That same commitment to innovation will extend towards the employees of the BC Public Service themselves, empowering them to bring forward new ideas for improving operations and service delivery.

Traditionally, business cases to support government IT investments have focused narrowly on the potential for cost savings. But the goal will now be to support a more effective business planning model that also looks at opportunities for collaboration, revenue generation, regulatory improvement, performance monitoring, improving citizen satisfaction and other factors. This more holistic approach will help ensure investments are made where they have the greatest benefit for government and citizens.

Overall, the goal is to not just apply technology to existing practices and processes. Rather it is to re-evaluate those existing practices and determine whether or not they are still valid and, if so, how they can be improved. Technology is wasted if it is only applied to speed up work that shouldn't be done in the first place. That is why this strategy is about transformation as much as it is about technology, because it must challenge the public service to rethink not just how it works but also the nature of that work itself.

No amount of technology can change the fact that government relies on a vast network of talented professionals delivering services on a daily basis in more than 280 communities around the province. Improving the way that BC Public Service employees are able to use technology in their work will have a range of benefits. Ensuring every employee has access to the tools and information

they need to do their job will result in improved productivity and efficiency.

As in all other areas, it is not only the tools that matter. Policies and practices related to how, where and when employees do their work must be updated to ensure they allow public servants to do their jobs to the best of their ability, making the best use of the tools they have. Introducing greater flexibility to workplace policies to support employee mobility will result in improved employee engagement and further increase the competitiveness of the BC Public Service as an employer. And engagement is proven to result in greater productivity, improved services and increased citizen satisfaction.

**To support business innovation at the organizational and employee levels, the BC Public Service will:**

- » Improve the corporate intranet with better access to employee services and new tools to help employees collaborate and share information.
  - » Promote leadership on changing the organizational culture to support innovations in processes and technology.
  - » Encourage better use of the technology tools available to change how the public service works on a day-to-day basis.
  - » Update policies and supports to more fully enable mobile workers.
  - » Make the workplace more flexible both in terms of the physical environment and in terms of workplace policies.
- » Use ministry and sector transformation and technology plans to drive innovation across government in a coordinated manner.
  - » Introduce new guidelines to inform how the public service and its employees use social media tools to support improved productivity, communication and citizen engagement.

## B.C. Government 2.0: Telepresence

As common as videoconferencing is now becoming, most common videoconference technology still has shortcomings. For example, it is still often technically challenging, it still creates a sense of barrier between those communicating and often the placement of cameras and screens makes it difficult to provide even an illusion of eye contact. Enter telepresence, a virtual meeting experience that vastly surpasses videoconferencing by creating the illusion people are meeting face-to-face.

To create this effect, telepresence uses ultra high definition video and life size screens, and the furnishing, decor and lighting are the same in all meeting locations to create the perception that users are in the same room. Moreover, the rooms are easy to use and no technical support is required. Because of these advantages, telepresence creates an experience much more like a real face-to-face meeting. As a result, research has found that telepresence facilities tend to be used more than 60 per cent of their available time on average, compared to a utilization rate of 7.5 per cent for typical videoconferencing facilities.

In May 2010, the government approved a two-year, phased implementation of telepresence rooms in B.C. In year one, four telepresence rooms will be established with two in Victoria and two in Vancouver. In year two, another eight rooms in regional centres will be established, subject to an acceptable evaluation and funding plan. The implementation of telepresence will reduce travel costs by as much as \$1 million a year between Vancouver and Victoria, increase productivity/efficiency, facilitate faster and timelier decision-making, improve executive and employee work-life balance, reduce environmental impact, accelerate business transformation and provide a completely new way to collaborate.

Now imagine how the expansion of telepresence across the province could hold even greater potential benefits. For example, court hearings generally require the defendant to appear in the community in which a crime occurred, but the regional consolidation of corrections facilities means offenders may sometimes need to be transported significant distances to and from hearings. The current limits of videoconferencing make it unsuitable or unreliable for use in courts. But imagine the benefits if telepresence could resolve those concerns and allow more efficient use of courts and resources by not necessarily requiring all parties in a case to be physically present in the courtroom. In addition, in communities where the court space is not fully utilized, imagine how a telepresence facility there could also support connections to other related services not locally available, such as probation officers, mediators or addictions counsellors.

Similarly, as schools become viewed as broader neighbourhood learning centres, imagine how the application of telepresence could have a significant impact. Imagine if it could facilitate distance learning by giving students across the province access to a master teacher in another community, allowing students and their local teacher to benefit from that master teacher's experience. And then imagine how, when not in use for learning, the same telepresence facility could be used by other service providers in a neighbourhood learning centre to support things like connecting a local health provider and patient to a specialist in a regional centre. Wherever it is offered, telepresence could effectively bridge the gap between online and in-person service delivery by allowing a virtual delivery of some services in a way that still involves interaction with a real person in a way that feels more like a face-to-face experience.

## B.C. Government 2.0: The Online Employee Experience

Since 2006, as part of the work undertaken to support the Corporate Human Resource Plan, the BC Public Service has made significant and award-winning strides in the implementation of a stronger corporate intranet presence for its 30,000 employees. Most recently, improvements have seen the introduction of enhanced social media tools behind the firewall, including the creation of a corporate wiki. The launch of an online employee idea forum, Spark, has also provided a new outlet for employees to share and collaborate on ideas for improving the public service and government operations.

These steps reflect the recognition that many of the best ideas for innovation come not from senior leadership but from the front lines of the public service. Increased use of additional social media tools within the public service are now being contemplated as part of this strategy, including the potential for an internal professional network that will enhance employees' ability to collaborate on projects or share information and expertise using the same sorts of social networking technology many use in their personal lives on a daily basis.

For example, imagine if a policy analyst could use an internal microblogging network to request help on a particular topic, and that request could be seen by a researcher in another ministry who has expertise in that area. The two could then connect and collaborate in an online workspace in a way that would be much more challenging to facilitate in a heavily siloed environment where information and expertise are not easily shared between agencies.

Imagine how this same technology could also be used to more effectively integrate new employees to the public service. Upon accepting a job offer from the public service, imagine if new hires could receive access to the corporate intranet. Logging on, they would find a new network profile waiting for them, including introductions to their new team members, access to online orientation materials, and the ability to begin participating in online communities all before their first actual day on the job.

Thinking more broadly, imagine if there was the potential to redefine the concept of what a corporate intranet is, shifting the focus from an online information distribution channel to a vision of a much more collaborative work and information-sharing space that not only keeps employees informed but also allows them to connect and do their jobs better. Within that improved online environment, employees would also have better access to improved human resource systems, better sharing of information and data, and the ability to identify and directly connect with experts elsewhere across government. All of this could save employees time, improve productivity and foster greater engagement and collaboration. And imagine if you could access it all from virtually anywhere you had an internet connection, allowing true mobility that supports better service to clients and higher employee engagement.



# Enabling Transformation

There are a number of factors that influence, and in some cases restrict, the public service's ability to apply technology effectively.

Legislation and policy, particularly as they relate to issues of privacy and information management, challenge government's ability to embrace and apply technologies that were never envisioned when those policies were drafted. Procurement approaches and policies sometimes limit access to more effective tools or restrict government's flexibility to adapt over time. The cost and availability of the technology itself can be a barrier. The adoption of competing or conflicting platforms and tools by different agencies creates inefficiencies that could be resolved through a more coordinated approach.

These and other foundational building blocks must be addressed in order to make the rest of the vision set out in this strategy possible. It is not just a question of purchasing new tools and adding more online services. It is a question of ensuring that government policies and platforms

support not only the current technology options, but the longer-term flexibility that will be required to adapt to the inevitable evolution of new technologies and innovation over time. Similarly, the traditionally risk-averse culture of the public service often smothers the spark of innovation. A culture that better balances accountability with creativity, combined with solutions to the technological and policy barriers in place, will allow the public service to be a much more agile, adaptable and innovative organization that is better able to quickly deliver improved services to British Columbians.

**To support the shifts set out in this strategy, the BC Public Service will pursue a series of strategic enablers that includes:**

- » Integrated Planning: using a corporate IM/IT plan will ensure a more coordinated approach to IM/IT planning that links projects to capital funding based on their alignment to corporate goals.

- » Privacy: an updated approach to privacy-related policies and practices will help mitigate existing barriers.
- » Identity Management: a scalable identity management solution will provide the security and privacy needed to support sensitive online service delivery.
- » Culture Change in the BC Public Service: employees will be actively encouraged and supported in understanding their role in information management, innovation and the use of new technologies and collaborative tools.
- » Procurement and Contract Management: an improved approach to procurement and contract management will provide greater flexibility to adapt to evolving needs.
- » Network and Wireless Connectivity: continued expansion of wired and wireless network capacity and coverage is needed to support all online government services.
- » Web 2.0 and Unified Communications: a consistent framework to support the use of social media and other collaborative tools internally and externally.
- » Corporate Standards: improved corporate standards are critical to ensure successful management of information and service delivery, reducing total service delivery costs, removing duplication of services, minimizing compatibility issues and improving planning.
- » Corporate Policies and Guidelines: using technology will provide improved access to corporate policies and guidelines that are updated as needed to reflect government's transformation vision and support improved integration between ministries and cross-government initiatives.

## B.C. Government 2.0: Effective, Secure Identity Management

People increasingly conduct a wide array of transactions online, from banking to ordering books, and there is value to government and citizens in putting more public services online as well. But moving public services online is complicated by the need to ensure users are properly identified before they can access those services. The level of security needed for many public services is much higher than that needed for many online transactions because of the extremely sensitive nature of the information and data involved.

For most daily online transactions, the service provider relies on an individual submitting a user-created ID and password. But what this approach lacks is any certainty that the person inputting the ID and password is actually the person they claim to be. A greater level of authentication is needed to uphold government's obligation to protect the privacy of citizens. It essentially comes down to the question of how does government know a user of an online service is who they claim to be?

The answer may be found in an approach the B.C. government is currently exploring that would see government issue electronic credentials in much the same way it now issues driver's licences, which are then widely accepted as reliable and credible identification by other public and private sector organizations. This could take the form of the same sort of advanced smartcard technology also being explored by banks and other institutions that require a high level of identity assurance. For example, one possible pilot is to use this technology with a new version of the current CareCard used by all British Columbians to access health care.

Current CareCards are susceptible to fraud and rely only on the possession of the card itself to access health services. But a smart CareCard, combined with a PIN code, could offer a

greater level of certainty and security. Imagine if when a patient arrives at a doctor's office or clinic they could check in with their smart CareCard and that calls up a patient record that could include a photo of the patient. The clinic could then use this information to confirm the holder of the card was indeed the patient. Later, imagine if the patient could use the same card and PIN code as authentication to access their health records online from their own computer, letting them download prescriptions or test results from their doctor's visit securely and with confidence that their personal privacy is protected.

While the technology behind this solution is complex, importantly it is being designed to be scalable so that one card could potentially allow access to a variety of government services while limiting each service provider to only the information needed to authenticate each user. That means government could issue cards that could potentially serve as everything from a CareCard to a driver's licence and allow access to a wide array of online services, all without allowing any one of those service providers to have access to the private data held by another. Citizens could also have some choice in how many cards they want to use, whether it is one card to access multiple services or more than one card. Additional services could be associated with a given card over time, with citizens choosing how they use it.

In effect, this approach is no different than how citizens now use cards to access services that are not online. The service provider requests the card as proof of identity and the citizen provides it in exchange for service. But this smart card approach allows citizens to access a potentially wider range of information and services online at their convenience. Imagine how that could make a smarter government that works better for the people of B.C.

# Conclusion

Government's first obligation is to serve and support the needs, aspirations and potential of the people and communities of British Columbia.

Every action the public service takes, whether in the development of public policy or the direction of its operations, has an impact on its ability to deliver on that obligation. With that in mind, the vision set out in this strategy is intended to help ensure that the BC Public Service is making transformation and technology decisions that make it a more modern, innovative and efficient organization delivering improved service to citizens through a wider range of tools.

Where other jurisdictions set out longer-term multi-year visions for transformation, this plan will be updated annually to allow for the flexibility needed to adapt to changing priorities, opportunities and technology advances. This approach also provides a way to track progress against ministry plans, and ensure necessary incremental steps are being

taken alongside giant leaps forward. There is, as a result, no expiry date to this strategy. Rather it will support an ongoing evolution and transformation of the operations of the public service and the delivery of services to support continual improvement.

Individual ministries, or ministries working together as sectors, will submit annual transformation and technology plans that detail how their work and plans fit with the vision and actions outlined in this strategy. As part of that planning process, they will be expected to collaborate with one another to pursue options for partnership and sharing of resources and technologies. Ministries will be supported in this process by a thorough education program to ensure a clear understanding of the guidelines and expectations for their plans. Those ministry plans will, in turn, inform the next

annual version of this corporate strategy and will be coordinated with other planning processes already in place across government.

This first year of work is very much focused on learning, collaborating and setting the stage for future investments and decisions about how the public service uses technology. With that in mind, employees of the BC Public Service will also be encouraged to contribute to their ministry planning process and to share their ideas to help guide this corporate strategy. That participation will be facilitated through currently available online collaborative tools – the corporate intranet @Work and the Spark idea collaboration site – and others planned for introduction with improvements to the corporate intranet in the year ahead.

And, finally, citizens are also invited to share their ideas for how the public service can transform service delivery to meet their needs. Opportunities will be created to engage directly with the people of the province on how online services in particular can be enhanced and improved.

The success of this strategy will ultimately be determined not by tools and

technology itself, but by how effectively the employees of the BC Public Service and the citizens of the province adapt and apply those tools together to improve the interaction of the people and their government.



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