



Oregon GovSpace

“The place where state agencies, employees and their partners build online communities.”

Sponsor

Department of Administrative Services:
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Digital Government: Government to Government

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State of Oregon

<http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/EISPD/EGOV>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The agencies of the State of Oregon operate in a loosely federated business model. Challenges over the last several years have led many to conclude that a new capacity for collaborative multi-agency planning and action was needed to address these challenges.

The use of collaboration and social networking (Web 2.0) software-enabled tools had been introduced to agencies by early adopters and by younger professionals. These tools were being used in several agencies but not across agency or jurisdictional boundaries. Further, agencies had concerns about allowing expanded use of their systems by other agencies since their systems contained proprietary and sensitive information. Nor was the newly established Oregon State Data Center prepared to develop and host a suite of collaborative software for all agencies to use to support collaborative multi-agency planning and subsequent action. Their agenda was full with operational matters and the application service provision was beyond their scope of operations.

In October 2007 Oregon's Department of Administrative Services, Enterprise Information Strategy and Policy Division (EISPD) weighed the business needs for multi-agency collaboration and planning and the range of alternatives, and decided the appropriate course of action was to pilot a vendor-hosted, web-enabled suite of collaboration software. EISPD's E-Government Program manager negotiated a contract with a highly-rated Portland, Oregon-based vendor, Jive Software, to host and provide a "Software as a Service" (SaaS) pilot service. Two-hundred (200) state staff and business partners participated in that first successful six-month pilot completed in September 2008. Since that first pilot experience, word-of-mouth promotion continues to create increased demand for this collaborative, multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional planning forum. The contract has been extended and the number of participants continues to increase at a rate of approximately 20% per month. Current participants include over 1,200 individuals representing over 100 different state agencies, local jurisdictions, and non-government organizations – and in one case, members of a national industry group, the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO).

This level of adoption is already having a positive impact as even more candidate areas for multi-agency collaboration and planning emerge. Deployment of this web-based technology has prompted the agencies of the State of Oregon and their business partners to explore and refine cross-agency collaboration and government to government planning practices on a scale not previously possible.

The expectations for this effort have been exceeded. The State of Oregon has created an ongoing forum for multi-agency collaboration, planning, and communication – now called "Oregon GovSpace." The state has gained the valuable experience needed to gauge the feasibility and potential return-on-investment of other future "Software as a Service" opportunities.

Oregon GovSpace has opened the door to new possibilities in multi-agency collaboration, planning, and action.

DESCRIPTION

Problem Statement: The agencies of the State of Oregon have planned and acted independently throughout the state's history. As the complexity and interdependence of government operations has increased, the need for methods and forums for collaborative planning and action (in person and virtual) also increased. With the emergence of software-enabled social networking tools in the corporate environment and in private lives of state staff, various agencies have adopted these tools to support their internal planning and action.

Barriers, Challenges, Opportunities: None of the agencies using various forms of collaborative software to support collaboration and planning were able to allow their systems to be used by all agencies, since individual agency systems contained sensitive information that needed to be kept confidential for a variety of reasons. Also, the culture of state government in Oregon did not easily enable or support cross-agency collaboration as a standard practice. Hosting a social networking solution at the newly formed State Data Center was considered however, other operational priorities were ranked higher at that time.

Issues or Problem Context: At the same time, those taking an enterprise view believed there was a compelling need for a service that would be available to all agencies for multi-agency collaboration. The State CIO and E-Government manager identified the need to connect agencies using collaborative planning methods and web-enabled software tools. Also, the return-on-investment of a dedicated system to provide a forum and replicable model for collaborative, multi-agency planning, communication and action could not be evaluated without relevant experience.

Assessment and Decision Process: An evaluation of a range of options for a pilot offering was conducted. The evaluation determined that deployment of an externally provided service was necessary and appropriate. It would allow volunteer participants to experience and "test-drive" the functionality and capabilities of an enterprise class collaboration tool directly, without a substantial front-end investment and ongoing expenses for software and infrastructure. Evaluators also believed a voluntary pilot experience would prove to be more beneficial in the long run. If successful, participants would serve as promoters of the service and subsequent collaborative, multi-agency planning methodologies. A decision was made to focus on a collaborative software suite of tools provided as "Software as a Service."

Solution Selection: The contractor, Jive Software, was selected through the state's existing portal services provider, based on several central criteria. The use of a single vendor with the expertise and training capabilities to introduce the practices and tools on an enterprise basis was a fundamental feature of the agreement making the pilot effort feasible. Jive Software was also capable of incorporating system requirements that participants identified during the pilot, by making near real-time updates to the operating environment.

That approach had the additional benefit of allowing the participating agencies to experience collaborative, multi-agency planning and action without the requirement for a large commitment of money upfront, and/or a dedicated technical infrastructure and ongoing maintenance costs. State leaders and agency participants were then able to focus on the experience of the planning forum, without having to also consider a significant and ongoing cost base. The minimal administrative costs were absorbed at first by volunteer members from the various forums. Later, one administrative staff member from the E-Government Program was tasked to spend half of their time to ensure that administrative, policy, and security practices were consistently applied. Training was provided by the vendor as part of the agreement. The training curriculum was consistently upgraded based on the experiences of the participants and requests received from participants during the pilot effort.

Solution and Major Solution Elements: In October of 2007, DAS' E-Government Program manager contracted with Jive Software to provide a suite of vendor-hosted, web-enabled collaborative (Web 2.0) software for a six-month pilot of two-hundred (200) seats. This pilot was conducted to estimate the feasibility and demand for such a tool. The joint pilot was envisioned as an opportunity for both parties (Jive and the State of Oregon) to explore the use, practical application, and organizational benefit of an enterprise-level "Software as a Service" (SaaS) solution for collaboration and social business networking in a state government setting. The selection method and contract met Oregon's procurement criteria as defined in state law and administrative rule.

Project Management, Definition and Control: The original threshold of two-hundred (200) prototypical volunteers was reached very quickly after the introduction of the service in October 2007. While the E-Government Program manager served as Project Manager and operational sponsor, participants in the pilot held various project-related roles.

On a practical level, throughout this effort teams were relatively free to function as they chose with very little oversight from the system providers at Jive Software or the State of Oregon. The State of Oregon has been and remains accountable for ensuring that access to and use of the system is appropriate, although individual users continue to be subject to the state's acceptable use policy.

On a periodic basis, system performance and the growth in the use of the collaboration software suite is reported to the state's leadership, decision-makers, users of the system, and potential users of the system. A governance body comprised of the heads of stakeholder agencies oversees the continuing development of the service.

Policies, guidelines, and necessary terms and conditions for use of the system have been developed to be in line with the state's acceptable use policy, and through the harvesting of participant's experiences, and other available examples from around the world.

Length of Time in Operation: The service, now called “Oregon GovSpace” has been in use since the 200-user pilot phase was completed in September 2008. To accommodate the emerging demand, the original contract was extended and the number of seats expanded, to allow many more state government-oriented teams to form naturally using Oregon GovSpace as their principle on-line collaboration forum.

SIGNIFICANCE

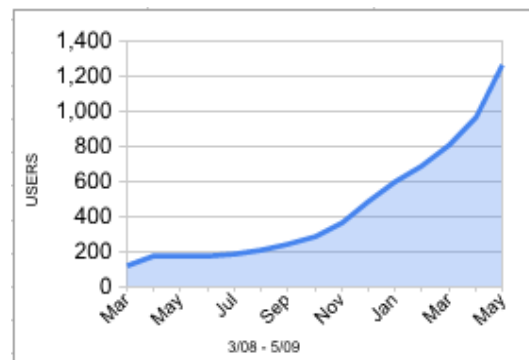
In General: As a practical matter, agencies have begun to appreciate how the use of Oregon GovSpace lessens the need for expensive and time consuming “terrestrial”/in person meetings. They have found that concept development in a web-accessible 24x7 forum provides a far more efficient and cost effective planning medium. Anecdotally, it appears that when meetings are held on these concepts, the nature of the meetings shifts from concept development, to a review and finalization of work product, and to mutually planning next-steps.

Policy, Strategy and Goal Alignment: Because of Oregon GovSpace, a baseline for the calculation of return-on-investment is now more feasible. In the near term, there is no plan to shift to another service provider. In the mid-term (18 -24 months), Oregon’s E-Government program services are expected to transition to a new operating model. The best long term model for the provision of collaboration tools will be evaluated as part of this effort.

A variety of policies and guidelines about the appropriate use and optimization of Oregon GovSpace have been created. More are on the way. In a state government setting policy guiding the use of Web 2.0 tools must address a range of requirements of law including: public meetings; public records and records retention; e-discovery; data classification; and acceptable use. The terms and conditions of use now spell out the agreement made by each participant during the online registration process. Some policy issues are still under development including whether a hosted SaaS collaboration environment can adequately protect level 3 and level 4 classified data. The use of Oregon GovSpace is focused on collaboration, knowledge sharing, planning, communication and subsequent action. It is not currently considered a permanent storage location for documents and artifacts. Those are to be housed in an appropriate agency repository.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT

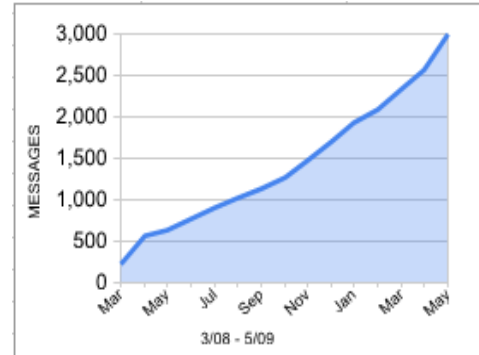
Impact of the Project: The rate of growth in the use of the system has remained at approximately 20% per month since the end of the pilot phase. Over 1,200 participants from approximately 100 different states, local and national organizations use Oregon GovSpace. The continued growth rate in use is remarkable given that participation has remained voluntary



and promotion continues almost exclusively by word-of-mouth.

Participants include: managers and staff from various state agencies; participants from other governmental jurisdictions in Oregon; vendor partners; and even members of the national industry group, the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO).

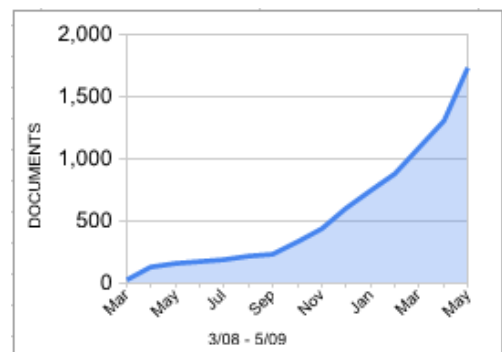
Agencies have welcomed the light weight, easy to use project collaboration capabilities. For project specific communication and increased visibility, stakeholders can view a multi-project dashboard; see task assignments, due dates, overdue tasks, issue tracking, versioned project documents, and a calendar of project milestones.



A sampling of projects using Oregon GovSpace include: the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Program; the Board of Property Tax Appeals (conducting state and county property tax appeals); personnel coordinators; information sharing between the various parks; a group focused on development of an e-Courts initiative; the Employment Department and Community Colleges collaborating on workforce development; a group working to create an Oregon Fire Fighter Certification portal; multiple e-commerce store projects for various agencies; a cross-agency team focused on the development of an enterprise architecture; a group undertaking the development of an Oregon Wireless Inter-operability Network project to consolidate four major public safety radio networks; a group focused on sustainability across state government; a group from the Public Employees Benefit Board and Oregon Educators Benefit Board; and multiple training and information sharing efforts. Of note, the executive team overseeing the allocation of state and Federal stimulus funds across Oregon is now using Oregon GovSpace to undertake their vital work.

The range of beneficiaries of the collaboration and planning conducted in Oregon GovSpace includes: executives; subject matter experts; stakeholders; vendor partners; other governmental jurisdictions; the Oregon State Legislature.

Before Oregon GovSpace was initiated collaboration across agency boundaries was seen as a laborious, multi-week or multi-month process conducted largely via face to face meetings. Collaboration via Oregon GovSpace is now seen as a way for agencies to accelerate multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional work. Agencies are aware that Oregon GovSpace can be used to avoid the delays associated with sequential face-to-face meetings. Software-enabled social networking does not eliminate the need for face-to-face meetings, but does tend to make those meetings, when held, more productive since much more is accomplished in advance of the meeting.



Participants have noted that concepts require shorter development time because of the 24x7 opportunity for collaboration.

The long term impact of the wholesale use of a web-enabled social networking and collaboration suite is efficiency in conducting multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional planning and action. That efficiency has made such planning more plausible and thus the number of candidate areas is increasing.

Project Alignment with NASCIO Priorities: Oregon GovSpace aligns with many of NASCIO's State CIO priorities including:

“Priority Strategies, Management Processes and Solutions”

- **Consolidation:** Oregon GovSpace consolidates the support infrastructure needed for collaborative, multi-agency planning, and action.
- **Shared Services:** Oregon GovSpace provides an essential shared service in support of cross-agency collaboration for all agencies.
- **Budget and Cost Control:** Oregon GovSpace produces a variety of cost control and optimization practices, the most significant of which is supplanting the need for costly travel, and travel-related expenses with the potential for 24x7 web-enabled collaboration, conserving both time and money.
- **Security:** Oregon GovSpace enables collaboration within the context of a secure Sungard-hosted environment.
- **Green IT:** Oregon GovSpace directly reduces the need for travel and other energy-costly practices.
- **Transparency:** Oregon GovSpace provides an essential tool in creating the transparency needed to accomplish root cause / root solution analysis, planning and action.
- **Governance:** Oregon GovSpace provides the forum and practices necessary to establish and sustain a viable multi-agency (enterprise) governance model.

“Priority Technologies, Applications and Tools”

- **Web 2.0:** Oregon GovSpace is the embodiment of the benefit and potential that can fall from Web 2.0 capabilities.
- **Green IT:** Oregon GovSpace provides a forum for collaborative planning and action that directly promotes sustainable practices.
- **Mobile workforce enablement:** Oregon GovSpace, because it is made available on a 24x7 basis via the Web, allows collaboration from anywhere any time.

Outcomes – Transformation of Government: Participants now have the experience needed to successfully plan and act in a multi-agency virtual setting. While the business model of Oregon state government is still decentralized, in practice a culture has been established for effective multi-agency planning and action. A fundamental shift has occurred that is now bearing other, more substantive opportunities.