Year in Review

Our look back at the events that shaped 2006.

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A look back at the issues and events that drove government IT in **2006**.

BY **SHANE PETERSON** AND **STEVE TOWNS**

POLITICAL FALLOUT FROM OPEN SOURCE cost Massachusetts CIO Peter Quinn his job. Cities throughout the nation jumped on the muni wireless bandwagon. Issues such as Real ID and electronic medical records moved to the front burner for many IT officials. And that's merely the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Welcome to our review of the events that shaped government IT in 2006.

As usual, state and local CIOs faced more than their fair share of challenges. IT consolidation continued throughout the nation, carrying with it all of the thorny cultural issues and upsets that accompany organizational change. Technology leaders also struggled to make vital information more open and mobile, but at the same time more secure — an often conflicting mix of requirements, especially on tight public-sector budgets.

On the brighter side, CIOs and elected officials received solid evidence that IT investments are paying off. The Center for Digital Government's 2006 *Digital States Survey*, released in October, shows double-digit growth since 2004 in the number of citizens and businesses using the electronic channel to transact business with their state governments.

All that to say this: Using technology to reform government isn't easy. That much will be apparent on the following pages. But citizens and constituents certainly appreciate the results.

E-Waste Epidemic

Computers have an average life expectancy of three to six years. After that, it's often time to pull the plug, leaving consumers with a problem: What does one do with the old when bringing in the new? Chances are the local landfill won't take it.

As computer use continues to increase dramatically, the United States will face more and more electronic waste considered toxic and unfit for burial. For this reason, Congress initiated a working group to determine a course of action.

But devising federal legislation could take a while. In the meantime, California, Maine and Maryland have enacted their own laws to effectively handle electronic waste.

These differing state laws, however, could create confusion for global electronics manufacturers — confusion that could be minimized or eliminated with a single, unified nationwide system.

Minneapolis 311
Minneapolis residents gain easy access to city information and services through the city's **"One Call" 311 system,** launched early January.

Information Sought
U.S. government officials ask a federal judge to order Google to turn over some of the information it collected in Internet searches.

Oracle Acquires Siebel
Oracle completes its acquisition of Siebel Systems.

Operation: Operability

The 9/11 attacks triggered a nationwide scramble to develop interoperable communications among emergency responders. But Hurricane Katrina left officials scratching their heads over the utter disappearance of even basic communications.

Radio system failures meant local first responders couldn't communicate easily among themselves, let alone with the outside agencies that arrived on the scene to help.

Experts say these shortcomings point to the need for more attention on ensuring the availability of radio systems during major disasters, or at least to creating plans that guide first responders when radio communications fail. Furthermore, they warn that public policymakers must address the issues that hinder radio operability when it's needed most — a dearth of available radio spectrum and the failure to anticipate worst-case scenarios.

Ultimately the challenges of radio operability and interoperability are intertwined. To succeed, policymakers and emergency responders must tackle both issues: building radio systems that withstand worst-case disasters and linking to systems used by other agencies.

> **"We understand that politicians are going to do whatever they can within the law to get elected."**
>
> — **Alan Gerber,** professor of political science, Yale University

Peter Quinn Resigns

Massachusetts CIO **Peter Quinn** resigns effective Jan. 12. His departure marks the end of a long-running dispute over an architectural framework and open standards for technology in the state.

In early 2005, the Massachusetts Information Technology Division (ITD) said it would begin working on an Enterprise Technical Reference Model (ETRM).

The ITD's commitment to several "open initiatives" as overarching themes of the ETRM sparked a political skirmish that resulted in Quinn submitting his resignation letter. The ETRM directed executive-level agencies to create text, spreadsheet and presentation documents in the OpenDocument format, which is based on open, not proprietary, standards.

The move threatened to freeze out Microsoft because the company's suite of office applications doesn't support OpenDocument, and the ITD's OpenDocument decision set in motion a series of political events. Microsoft began lobbying Massachusetts lawmakers against adopting the OpenDocument format. In November 2005, the chairman of a Massachusetts Senate committee conducted hearings to determine whether Quinn and the ITD had authority to set policy for executive branch agencies. The Massachusetts secretary of state also questioned the ITD's ability to set policy for state records.
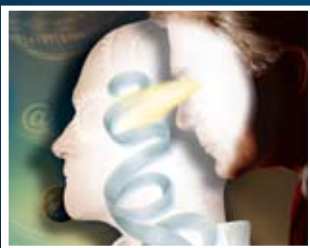
Then *The Boston Globe* ran a story questioning Quinn's travels to several technology conferences, stating it raised the issue because some conferences were sponsored, in part, by IT companies that stood to benefit from the OpenDocument decision. Massachusetts investigated Quinn's travels, later exonerating him of all allegations of impropriety.

E-Passport Testing
Live testing of **e-Passports**, which contain contactless chips with biographic and biometric information, and wireless readers capable of pulling data from those chips begins Jan. 15 at the San Francisco International Airport. The test was a collaborative effort between the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

Zeroing In

Sometime in the future — or possibly once or twice already — you will receive a mailing from a political campaign. Unlike mailings you've received before, this one will list issues that truly resonate with you. In essence, it will read like its creators know you personally. And in a way, they do. They know how old you are, how many kids you have, what your income is, what magazines you read, and probably whether you have dial-up or broadband Internet access.

Who are these people and how do they know so much about you? Is it some shadowy government operative exploiting your personal information? Nope. Instead, it is most likely a campaign manager for one of your district's congressional candidates. And he didn't get all your information through some sinister network of spy satellites and black helicopters — he took advantage of something called microtargeting.

The term microtargeting sounds straightforward enough, and in many ways, it is. Its effectiveness in campaigns is almost impossible to measure, but it is widely regarded as the only way future campaigns will survive.

Soon, your city council candidates may deliver text messages with information specific to you directly to your mobile phone. Some are even attempting to create a way to deliver TV commercials that are produced for individual viewers. Such tools would dramatically alter the way political campaigns are organized.

New CIO for New York State
New York Gov. George Pataki appoints **Michael Mittleman** as the state's CIO and Meg Levine as director of the Office for Technology. Mittleman replaced the state's first CIO, Jim Dillon, who left the position in December 2005 to join Unisys.

Computer Crime Survey
The FBI releases results from its **2005 FBI Computer Crime Survey** — its largest survey on these types of issues. The FBI found that nearly nine out of 10 organizations experienced computer security incidents in a year's time, and that 20 percent reported they had suffered 20 or more attacks. Viruses (84 percent) and spyware (80 percent) were the most common occurrences, according to the survey.
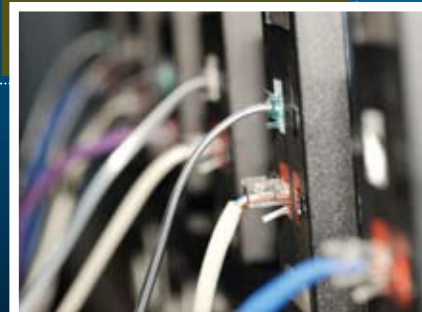
Coordinated Aid

In the wake of **Hurricane Katrina,** Alabama officials work with the nonprofit Data Management Institute for Technological Excellence to develop a system to manage the influx of money, goods and services donated to hurricane victims. The result is the Alabama Volunteer and Donations Database System (AVADDS), which collects detailed information from people who want to donate money, goods or services to disaster relief. Officials describe AVADDS as a virtual community that helps individuals and agencies collaborate on relief and recovery efforts.

"We are not going to prevent all sex crimes, so we should try to prevent the most crimes we can.**"**

— **John LaFond,** recently retired law professor, University of Missouri-Kansas City, and author of *Preventing Sexual Violence*

On the Rise
By 2007, total global offshore spending on IT services will reach **$50 billion,** Gartner predicts.

BlackBerry Battle
An ongoing patent-infringement case threatening the future of **BlackBerry** devices returns to court Feb. 24, as a federal judge considered an injunction to shut down the popular mobile e-mail service to more than 3 million U.S. customers.

Electronic Tether

Seth Chamberlin, 25, had a penchant for hanging around high school and college campuses, and exposing himself to girls and young women. Now Chamberlin has the distinction of being the first offender caught by a California pilot that tracks high-risk sex offenders with GPS monitors.

Chamberlin was back in jail in fall 2004 — he has served time for four similar offenses since 1998 — after a GPS device attached to his ankle revealed that he violated his parole by coming within 100 feet of a Southern California high school and spending time on campus at University of Redlands.

California's two-year, state-sponsored GPS program began in July 2005, and is among several initiatives nationwide that use satellite monitoring technology to track convicted sex offenders. It's a movement that picked up steam after pedophile John Couey kidnapped, raped and killed 9-year-old Jessica Lunsford in Florida.

Couey was a convicted sex offender, and was required to register as such by Florida law, but he didn't. And in essence, he was free to roam northern Florida and attack Lunsford. Police finally located him in Georgia a month after the abduction.

The episode, and the resulting fallout, prompted the Florida Legislature and Gov. Jeb Bush to pass the Jessica Lunsford Act, a law that increased sentences and authorized the spending of about $7 million to cover the mandatory GPS monitoring of sex offenders.

Spying Records Released
A federal judge orders the Department of Justice to release records related to the National Security Agency's controversial **domestic spying program** by March 8, or else explain the legal basis under which the records cannot be

Muni Wi-Fi
Philadelphia finalizes a contract with EarthLink to provide low-cost Wi-Fi service covering 135 square miles to serve Philadelphia residents. Mayor John Street announced plans in mid-2004 to involve city government in creating a citywide wireless infrastructure that would offer broadband Internet access to residents for roughly $20 per month.

Philadelphia, with a population of 1.5 million, was the first big city to play an active role in building a municipal wireless network — a trend that soon was followed by San Francisco, New York and other major municipalities. Big-city projects mark a shift in municipal wireless activity. Originally these initiatives offered a way for small communities to deploy Internet connectivity they couldn't get from private companies. Now large cities promote wireless initiatives as a way to streamline government operations, strengthen public safety and link underserved citizens to the Web.

Dual Vision

The 700-unit Jordan Downs housing development in the lower east side of Los Angeles has one of the highest crime rates per capita in the city.

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) plans to install 12 surveillance cameras throughout Jordan Downs and along the streets adjacent to Jordan High School. The goal is to create a safe environment for local students and law-abiding residents of the housing development.

But the cameras aren't just about surveillance — they will provide wireless Internet access to more than 2,000 residents of Jordan Downs in an effort to bridge the digital divide.

The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Commander Charlie Beck, assistant to the director of the LAPD's Office of Operations, explained that the LAPD used the same funding source to deploy a closed-circuit television project in MacArthur Park, noticeably decreasing crime in the area. In fact, in 2005 the park was recognized for having the highest reduction of crime statistics per resident in the United States. Beck said the DOJ wanted something similar for the new project.

Legislating Net Neutrality
U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden unveils new legislation to ensure **"Net neutrality,"** or equal delivery of Internet content to consumers and businesses. The legislation would prevent network operators from charging companies for faster delivery of their content to consumers over the Internet or favoring certain content over others.

NJ CIO Steps Down
New Jersey's CIO Charles Dawson announces his resignation. Dawson, CIO since 2002, resigned after state legislators questioned his oversight of New Jersey's $500 million in annual IT spending, according to *The (N.J.) Star-Ledger.*

Michigan Bundles
Michigan launches MiPC, a program to help make personal computers more accessible and affordable for all citizens. MiPC (pronounced MY-PC) bundles everything a citizen needs to start computing at home, including a warranty, toll-free technical support, a printer, affordable Internet connection, interactive training and financing to spread the cost over time.

Network Readiness Index
The U.S. tops the rankings of *The Global Information Technology Report 2005-2006's* "Networked Readiness Index" for the third time in five years, maintaining its position as a leading country in the area of innovation and information and communication technologies.

The Price of Privacy

Pat Crick is like many of the foot soldiers in the nation's war against identity theft.

The recorder of Allen County, Ind., has marching orders to remove all Social Security numbers from county records. What she doesn't yet know is how that task will be executed or how much it will cost.

In 2005, the Indiana Legislature passed a law requiring counties to cease accepting documents containing Social Security numbers, and were given until the end of 2011 to redact them from stored computer records.

Starting in 2008, it will be an infraction for recorders' offices to disclose any documents containing Social Security numbers. The legislation also requires counties to assess a $2 fee for each new document submitted to help pay for redaction technology.

Crick said prior to the Legislature tackling the issue, employees in her office were brainstorming on how to expunge Social Security numbers from files because they heard civil complaints about numbers appearing on public documents — especially veterans concerned about their discharge forms.

Indiana is one of seven states that have passed or are considering privacy rights legislation, forcing government officials like Crick to cope with the technological challenge of redacting all Social Security numbers from public records.

New Chicago CIO
Chris O'Brien leaves as Chicago's CIO and is replaced by Hardick Bhatt, former deputy director of IT planning for the Traffic Management Authority, a division within the Chicago Police Department.

Rat Race
E-mail is still the No. 1 online activity. A new study, however, shows that performing searches is a close second.

"Open Data Formats"
Minnesota becomes the latest state to signal an interest in open formats for government agencies. State Rep. Paul Thissen introduced a bill in Minnesota's Legislature requiring the state's executive branch agencies to "use open standards in situations where the other requirements of a project do not make it technically impossible to do this."

Rush Hour

If cell phone signal traffic monitoring technology continues building steam, we all may be acting as traffic probes on the highway.

Missouri is the latest state to implement a program that measures traffic congestion on major roads based on the average time it takes drivers' cell phone signals to pass from one cell tower to another.

Georgia, Maryland and Virginia completed limited rollouts in select cities, but in February, Missouri became the first to carry out a statewide implementation, covering 5,500 miles of its busiest roads — generally interstates and numbered routes.

"Missouri motorists will be better informed than anyone else in the country on which roads to use and how long the drive will take," said Pete Rahn, director of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), in a statement.

At a cost of $6.2 million for two years, the cell phone system will provide traffic monitoring at a fraction of traditional method prices, according to MoDOT.

"With this new technology," Rahn said, "we'll cover many more miles of highway without any new equipment."

MoDOT estimates that over the long run, cell phone traffic monitoring technology will cost less than one-sixth of traditional traffic detection costs.

" [Tele Town Hall] is a way of delivering a message for literally pennies compared to dollars. " — **Rep. Dan Lungren,** R-Calif.

Phone Home

In late 2005, Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Calif., initiated the very first Tele-Town Hall — a modern take on the town hall meetings of yore.

He and Rodney Smith, founder of a company called Tele-Town Hall Inc., worked together, pooling 25,000 constituents in Lungren's 3rd Congressional District, a convoluted mass stretching from the Nevada border to just north of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Through voice over Internet protocol technology, Lungren used the "Tele-Town Hall" to telephone a small group of those 25,000 constituents. When a person answers the phone, he or she hears a message explaining that the call is an invitation to participate in a conversation with their member of Congress, and is asked if he or she would like to participate.

If they choose to participate, they can communicate with Lungren in real time, just as if it were a traditional town hall meeting. Lungren said he used the Tele-Town Hall system seven times, and during those sessions, more than 50,000 people were contacted, with hundreds actively participating.

Chatting in China
The use of **instant messaging** continues to grow in China, with research companies estimating that the user base will hit 100 million between 2006 and 2008, according to Analysys International.
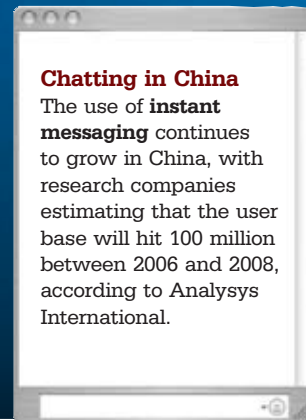
» **FACT:** Microsoft added an enhanced satellite view, along with other features, to its local search product — Windows Live Local — formerly known as Virtual Earth.

april »

> "We can all use the system to manage the same event or multiple events, and in doing so, have a common operating language."
>
> — **William Clare,** planning section supervisor, Wisconsin Emergency Management

All Hands on Deck

Every year Tampa Bay, Fla., hosts Gasparilla — an outdoor event filled with pirates, boats, parades and more than 400,000 people.

With an event this size, emergency management personnel have learned to expect the unexpected. To keep the event sailing smoothly, preparedness, organization, collaboration and communication are imperative.

This year, Tampa tapped a new resource, E-Sponder, for help.

E-Sponder is a collaboration and communication

Web portal that provides real-time shared information during planned or unplanned events involving several large jurisdictions or agencies, said Maj. John Bennett of the Tampa Bay Police Department, Special Operations Division.

E-Sponder contains a GIS component that allows users to quickly map information, a valuable tool for real-time or corrective action planning, said Bennett.

Protections Rejected

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce rejects a bid to include strong "Net neutrality" protections in a telecommunications reform bill slated for a vote in the House in May.

Firefox Use Grows

Market share for the open source **Firefox** Web browser exceeds 10 percent, according to Web analytics firm Net Applications.

A Real Dilemma

Challenges await state governments as the May 11, 2008, deadline approaches for implementing drivers' licenses that meet the Real ID Act specifications.

But many states, including West Virginia, forged ahead and developed secure licenses they hope will converge with specifications eventually handed down from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The Real ID Act requires states to implement advanced security features within drivers' licenses — some of which are still undefined by the DHS. After 2008, states must verify a photo identity document or a nonphoto document that contains the applicant's full legal name and date of birth. States

also must verify the applicant's name, primary address, date of birth and Social Security number.

Specifically how those verifications are made remains undetermined. "We're kind of in a Catch-22," said Dave Bolyard, director of drivers' services for West Virginia. "We're a little reluctant to spend money on a project that we don't know whether we'll be in compliance or not."

West Virginia began adding advanced security features to drivers' licenses in August 2005, after a two-year development period. Bolyard said the state is consulting with Viisage, an identity-verification technology vendor, to meet the eventual act requirements.

Moving Medicine Forward

In July 2004, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a landmark, 10-year plan to build a Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) to link health records nationwide. The plan's success, however, depends on eliminating paper medical files and creating an electronic health record (EHR) for every American.

Developing EHRs — which, like traditional patient files, would contain detailed information about an individual's

medical care and health history — is a high-visibility issue for the HHS because of skyrocketing health-care costs and the dramatic impact they have on public-sector budgets.

One study found that a national implementation of interoperable electronic health information could save $77.8 billion annually, according to the HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

It's clear that EHRs and a national health IT strategy can play a huge role in streamlin-

ing the delivery of health care to patients across the country. But roughly two years after the HHS launched its NHIN initiative, widespread adoption of EHRs is far from smooth.

> "I think this is probably what President Eisenhower faced when trying to grow an interstate highway system that all of us can use and travel on." — **Pat Wise,** vice president for Healthcare Information Systems, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, discussing electronic health records
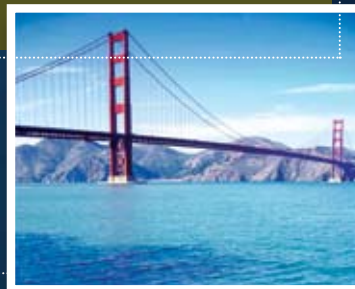
Illinois CIO Departs

James Matthews, Illinois' CIO, leaves his post. He was replaced by Rafael Diaz, who served as deputy CIO for the Illinois Department of Central Management Services.

North Dakota CIO

North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven appoints **Lisa Feldner** as the state's new CIO.
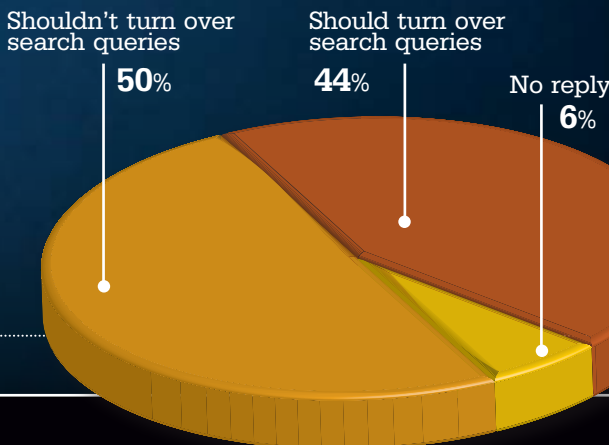
San Francisco Wi-Fi

San Francisco accepts a bid from EarthLink and Google to provide citywide Wi-Fi services for residents and visitors.

Surrender Your Searches

Not everyone agrees that search engines should comply with a recent government order for information about citizen search habits, according to a national poll of 800 U.S. respondents. The views were as follows:

Shouldn't turn over search queries **50**%

Should turn over search queries **44**%

No reply **6**%

Follow Up

In May, Gov. George Pataki said 26 regional health-care networks across New York received $52.9 million in grant awards as part of the Health Information Technology initiative to expand use of technology in the state's health-care system. In October, Pataki said the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved New York's waiver request — providing up to $1.5 billion in federal funding for state health-care reform initiatives.

Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services began developing the Kentucky e-Health Network to let health-care providers share patients' medical information electronically without compromising privacy. State officials say the network will allow faster and more accurate information sharing, reduce mistakes, lower administrative costs and improve patient care.

In September, Louisiana demonstrated its prototype Louisiana Health Information Exchange with live data to representatives from the federal government. Physicians transmitted patient information in an electronic health record between a hospital and a clinic — a demonstration a year in the making.

Mapping the Future

As local and state governments in the Gulf Coast struggled in summer 2005 to provide up-to-date information in Hurricane Katrina's wake, two programmers in Austin, Texas, took matters into their own hands.

Twenty-four-year-old Jonathan Mendez, a software engineer from New Orleans, and 23-year-old Greg Stoll created Scipionus.com. The Web site is a "visual wiki" — a Google map of affected areas overlaid with dozens of site-specific comments — in the same way that *Wikipedia* is a publicly produced and edited document. Individuals who were in New Orleans went to the Web site and posted statements

such as, "Hynes Elementary School. 8/30. Ten feet of water inside."

Scipionus, which drew tens of thousands of visitors, is just one example of a revolution under way involving digital mapping and Web applications.

As hobbyists and Web developers gain access to mapping tools and geospatial data, they are rediscovering the excitement and entrepreneurial spirit the Internet originally spawned. It's part of the emerging geospatial Web, which could take the form of anything from city maps overlaid with health data to maps of city subway systems developed for digital music player downloads.

> **"Given the political uproar over disclosures of call-detail records to people who later turn out to be unauthorized, we must be careful."**
>
> — **Kathleen Dunleavy,** spokeswoman, Sprint Nextel

Young Cyber-Sleuths

Just a few months separate Kim Cardona from late nights in the library and final exams, but she believes she already found her professional niche.

A December 2005 graduate of Sage College of Albany, N.Y., Cardona hopes her internship

at the New York State Police Computer Crime Unit is the beginning of a career in computer forensics.

That's precisely the aim of the CyberScience Laboratory's Embedded Intern Program, which helped Cardona land with the New York State

Police to develop expertise in the computer crime-fighting arena — an area sorely lacking in trained personnel.

The National Institute of Justice's Office of Science and Technology established the CyberScience Laboratory (CSL) in 2000 to provide training and act as a resource for state and local law enforcement agencies for cyber-crime investigation and technological assistance.

Eventually CSL developed an in-house internship program and began embedding interns in cyber-crime labs — hence the Embedded Intern Program. CSL places top-notch students at crime labs across the country each semester. Each intern is paid $12 to $15 per hour (based on experience) with funds from the National Institute of Justice and is assigned special tasks or a specific project that helps develop an interest in pursuing a career in the field.

Daily Phishing
In the second half of 2005, phishing attempts made up one in every 119 processed e-mail messages, according to Symantec. This translates into nearly 8 million phishing attempts per day, up from 5.7 million in the first half of 2005.

Veterans' Data Stolen
The Department of Veterans Affairs announces that personal information on as many as **26.5 million** veterans was stolen from an employee's home. The employee took home a laptop containing names, Social Security numbers and dates of birth for millions of veterans and some spouses.

Communication Breakdown

Early on Dec. 23, 2005, Jason Cochran of Eastvale, Calif., secured his 10-month-old son Wade into a car seat in the family's SUV. He left the engine idling while he ran inside to get Wade's 3-year-old brother. Moments later, Cochran came out to find the SUV— and the baby — gone.

When the Cochrans called 911, they told responders there was a cell phone equipped with a GPS chip in the vehicle. If police could track the phone, they could find the car. However, when the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called wireless carrier Sprint

Nextel to obtain the location information, the company wouldn't release it.

Although the incident ended happily — the thief eventually abandoned the SUV and the baby was safely returned to his parents — it's still unclear why sheriff's deputies couldn't obtain the location data from Sprint Nextel.

Was it a case of a privacy policy gone awry or simple human error? No one seems sure, but the episode has left law enforcement and wireless carriers seeking better ways to work together in life-threatening situations.

> **"There aren't enough computer forensics programs available to grow people in the profession."**
>
> — **Robert Hopper,** computer crimes section manager, National White Collar Crime Center

FCC Declines Privacy Probe
The FCC declines to investigate whether telecommunications companies have broken consumer privacy laws by sharing phone call data with the NSA, saying the classified nature of the program prevents the FCC from investigating.

Poo Power
A San Francisco garbage company begins a pilot program that picks up dog droppings and tosses them into a methane digester — a tank in which bacteria feed on feces to create methane gas, which could then be piped to gas stoves, heaters, turbines or anything powered by natural gas.

When Disaster Strikes
The launch issue of *Government Technology's Emergency Management* profiled **Disaster City,** a realistic training facility in College Station, Texas, that prepares emergency search and rescue teams.
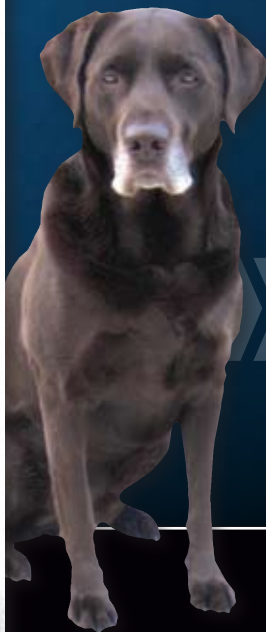
Technology and the Three R's

More than half a millennium after Johann Gutenberg introduced the printing press to medieval Europe, many educational institutions still rely on little more than the printed word to educate the next generation. Technology, many believe, is the next printing press — capable of opening countless doors for people who would otherwise find them locked.

Therefore, districts such as Linwood Public Schools in New Jersey have created comprehensive technology plans. In Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia School District teamed with Microsoft to build the School of the Future.

But others have taken dramatically different approaches. Ben Chavis — the fiery director of the American Indian Public Charter School in Oakland, Calif. — eliminated PCs and Internet connections, and returned to the basics.

Can technology really change the way we teach our children? Is it the next step for human enlightenment? Or is it an unnecessary distraction?

According to the federal No Child Left Behind Act, students should be technology literate by the time they complete eighth grade. Not every child, however, has equal access to technology. Often, schools in affluent neighborhoods offer students a richer technology experience than schools in poorer districts. Moreover, a technology gap exists — and some say continues to grow — between America's middle and lower classes.

Many observers believe technology can improve learning — but only if it is correctly deployed and thoroughly understood.

Follow Up

In *Technology and the Three R's*, we looked at whether technology in schools was living up to the promise of enhancing children's education. One of the feature's most intriguing figures was Ben Chavis, director of the American Indian Public Charter School (AIPCS) in Oakland, Calif. Chavis is nationally recognized as a highly effective but controversial leader in education, with his tough-love style of discipline and belief that technology distracts more than it educates.

Earlier this year, Chavis told *Government Technology* that AIPCS had been nominated for a national Blue Ribbon award — a Department of Education award given to schools meeting the highest standards of achievement.

In September, AIPCS officially received the Blue Ribbon award — the first Oakland public school to win in the 23 years the award has been given. However, the feisty administrator doubts other schools in the area will follow his lead.

"The other schools won't come to see what we're doing," Chavis told *The Oakland Tribune*. "They're so dumb."

> "We collect a lot of data here, and sometimes people's eyes glaze over if you just give them the numbers."
>
> — **Amy Barasch,** executive director, Family Justice Center, New York City
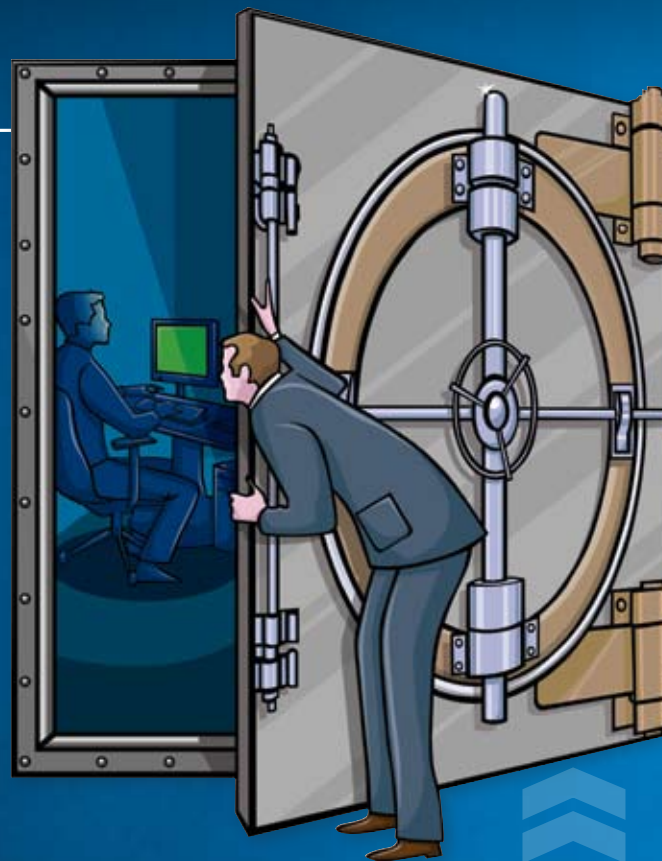
No More Hiding

Imagine a multitasking driver slams into your vehicle on Route 5, breaking your leg.

It's a horrible day, but thank goodness it wasn't your fault. Then you find out the other driver doesn't have insurance. Assuming you don't pay extra for uninsured motorist coverage, a pricey medical bill or faint hope from some ambulance-chaser awaits you.

Georgia is one of several states reducing its uninsured motorist claims by implementing insurance compliance databases requiring insurance companies to report when a motorist starts or cancels a policy. The databases also enable police to electronically check a driver's insurance status in real time.

Satisfaction with these systems varies, however.

Georgia boasts of success — the uninsured motorist rate was cut from 20 percent to 2 percent in less than two years — while Colorado legislators want to terminate the contract with the state's uninsured database vendor.

Putting Violence on the Map

As an academic researcher at Columbia University in 2003, Tracy Weber used GIS to study the effects of Agent Orange and other herbicides on soldiers who served in Vietnam.

Today, as director of grants and interagency coordinator at the New York City Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), Weber applies the same technology to protect city residents against domestic abuse.

New York City voters created the OCDV in 1991 through an amendment to the city charter to address domestic violence issues. Working with a variety of city agencies, community organizations, health-care providers and others, the OCDV creates policies and programs, monitors the delivery of domestic violence services, and raises awareness of the problem.

Weber uses GIS applications to study patterns of domestic violence reported throughout the city; analyze the effectiveness of domestic violence outreach programs; and offer easy-to-understand presentations to city agencies, nonprofit organizations and elected officials.

California Overhauls Payroll System

State Controller **Steve Westly** announces the start of the 21st Century Project to replace California's 1970s-vintage payroll system. The project is the largest payroll technology plan ever undertaken in state government, Westly's office said, and is projected to save taxpayers $20 million per year.

AIG Confirms Breach

Insurance provider **American International Group** (AIG) confirms the theft of a file server and other hardware holding the personal information of approximately 970,000 potential customers.

Data Standard Ratified

International standards group OASIS announces that a new standard, the Emergency Data Exchange Language-Distribution Element, has been ratified to ease data sharing during times of national or international crises. The standard is expected to help local, regional, tribal, national and international organizations in both the public and private sectors exchange data.

Texas Border Watch

Texas Gov. **Rick Perry** creates a "virtual border watch" program. With voluntary participation of private landowners, Perry said Texas will use $5 million to place hundreds of surveillance cameras along criminal hot spots and common routes used to enter this country.

» **FACT:** A report by Mediamark Research Inc. suggests that spending time online and engaging in other digital pursuits helps children ages 6 to 11 develop the skills, knowledge and self-confidence they need to fully participate in the world around them.

Quid Pro Quo

In early April 2006, Nevada officials announced the Nevada Shared Information Technologies Services project (NSITS), designed to radically reshape the way jurisdictions protect critical applications from failure in case of a disaster.

The NSITS will let governmental entities tap shared-use facilities to safeguard IT assets. Nevada officials said the problem is that individual government computer facilities and systems can only handle basic backup and systems recovery technology, leaving agencies and information systems vulnerable in a disaster.

In Florida, eight local governments formed a disaster-recovery co-op called the Florida Disaster Recovery Collaborative, said Bob Hanson, CIO of Sarasota County, Fla.

The participants have spent the last 18 months testing the disaster-recovery collaborative concept and sorting out issues associated with getting the collaborative up and running.

Follow Up

A feasibility study for the Nevada Shared Information Technologies Services project was launched in early October, said Nevada CIO Terry Savage. Results of the study will be formally released in February or March 2007, Savage said.

In Florida, Sarasota County CIO Bob Hanson said in October that the Florida Disaster Recovery Collaborative was very close to completing its first fiber connection across the state. The fiber connection links Sarasota to Martin County, Hanson said.

The collaborative is focusing on education and outreach, and orchestrated a session on the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) with plans for a similar session on service management.


2006 Digital Counties

County governments make better use of IT each year, according to the 2006 *Digital Counties Survey*, an annual study by the Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties. The winners are:

500,000 or more population:
Orange County, Fla.

250,000-499,999 population:
Richland County, S.C.

150,000-249,999 population:
Roanoke County, Va.

Less than 150,000 population:
Charles County, Md.
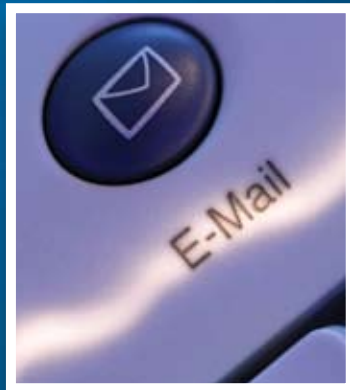
Daily Dose

Internet users worldwide send an estimated 60 billion e-mails daily, many of which are spam or scam attempts, according to Deutsche Telekom.

> **"We can't have our kids every day. This is one tool that will help mitigate that issue."**
>
> — **Michael Gough,**
> *InternetVisitation.org*

Web Traffic

The following sites are **top traffic generators** for Google, according to HitWise.

1. MSN
2. Yahoo
3. eBay
4. MSN Search
5. Yahoo Search
6. MapQuest
7. My Yahoo
8. Amazon.com
9. Wikipedia
10. Ask.com

World-Beating Wi-Fi

An independent research and field audit of Taipei's muni Wi-Fi network shows it to be the world's largest, according to JiWire, a Wi-Fi firm. The network covers Taipei's 134-square-kilometer downtown area, home to nearly 90 percent of the city's 2.6 million people.

Nurses Without Wires

In northern San Diego County, 24 public nurses employed by the county's Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) participated in a pilot that tested wireless tablets and a Web-based referral system to improve health services for HHSA clients.

Before the pilot, public health nurses dealt with an 18-step, paper-based process; it sometimes took months to process referrals and reach people in need.

Time was spent retracing steps and making phone calls to get the right information; traveling from client homes to the office was time consuming, and administrative tasks required office time and often created duplicate entries.

The tablets contain each nurse's client database, which provides patients' vital statistics and medical histories. The tablets' portability lets nurses schedule appointments, fill out forms, record pertinent follow-up information for later retrieval, and perform other administrative tasks remotely.

Rollout of the online referral system to all 150 public health nurses in San Diego County was scheduled for September. Costs will be recouped in the next fiscal year, and the agency expects to save $2 million per year thereafter.
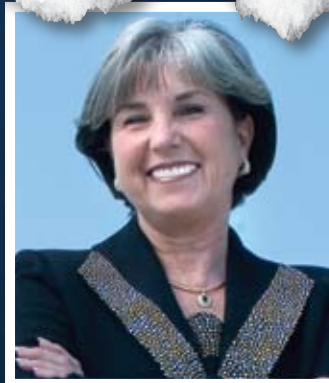
Los Angeles CIO Retires

Thera Bradshaw announces her retirement after 33 years of public service, including four years as L.A.'s CIO and general manager of the city's Information Technology Agency.

Virtual Parenting

When Michael Gough's ex-wife moved from Utah to Wisconsin with their 4-year-old daughter Saige, Gough asked the judge for a special concession in the custody agreement: virtual visitation rights — permission to contact Saige electronically when a face-to-face meeting was not possible.

The judged scoffed, but Gough didn't give up hope of having regular contact with his daughter. Instead he found instances where other judges prescribed electronic communication and compiled a package of evidence. He demonstrated how such an arrangement would work and convinced the judge it would benefit his daughter. Gough won the right to contact Saige electronically if he couldn't see her in person.

Now he is championing legislation nationwide and in Canada to help noncustodial parents maintain long-distance relationships with their children.

Formatting for the Future

Massachusetts leaders had a simple idea: Government documents produced by word processing, spreadsheet, database or presentation software belong to the public record, and therefore, should be created and stored in open formats that aren't tied to a particular program.

To create government documents using open data formats, the agencies making those documents must use nonproprietary software tools. This is where Massachusetts' simple idea got complicated. It meant a massive shift away from the dominant proprietary desktop software suite — Microsoft Office.

The threat of that change set off a pitched battle that led to the resignation of state CIO Peter Quinn a few months after the proposal to adopt an open data format. And with the dust still not settled in Massachusetts, another state — Minnesota — is exploring a move to open document standards.
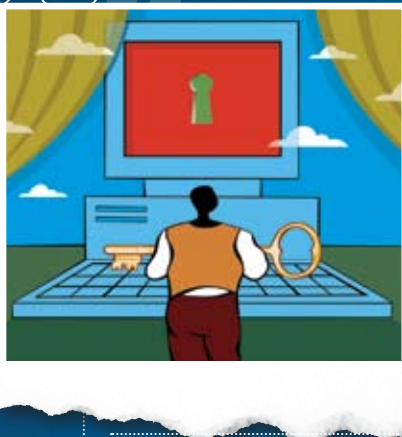
New CIO in Boston
Mayor **Thomas Menino** introduces William Oates as the city's new CIO. Oates was formerly senior vice president and CIO of Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc.

More VA Data Thefts
A second incidence of personal information theft from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) occurs. Unisys Corp., a VA subcontractor, informs the VA that a desktop computer containing personal information on some veterans was missing from the company's Virginia offices.

Dianah Neff Leaves Philly
Dianah Neff resigns her post as CIO of Philadelphia to join Civitium as a senior partner to lead the company's international practice. She had served as CIO of Philadelphia since 2001.

Follow Up

In Minnesota, the coverage of the open data legislation introduced in the Legislature prompted discussions from industry representatives and within state government, said Rep. Paul Thissen, author of the bill. The bill didn't make it out of committee during Minnesota's legislative session. "I do plan to introduce a revised version of the bill in January [2007]," Thissen said. "The bill will look different — particularly in the area of identifying standards — and it will undoubtedly evolve during the legislative process. We are still working out the details. I am not certain how the bill will fare."

Meanwhile, the situation in Massachusetts continued to fester. Louis Gutierrez, who was named state CIO in February to replace Quinn, resigned in October. Gutierrez sent a strongly worded letter to his boss, the secretary of Finance and Administration, which was widely quoted in newspapers and magazines. Gutierrez attacked the state Legislature for not funding IT projects in the state.

Eyeing Auto Thieves
For police officers, finding a suspected stolen vehicle is a random process that involves a little luck — it's akin to finding a needle in a haystack. Police officers single out a car they think has been stolen and scan its license plate.

New license-plate-reading technology, however, is taking luck out of the equation by actually hunting for stolen vehicles. The technology scans both moving and parked cars, reads and matches the license plates with stolen or wanted plate numbers in a database, and notifies the officer via an alarm — all within seconds.

Several police agencies tested the technology, and the initial response is positive.

The Ohio State Police Department was one of the first agencies to deploy the technology, outfitting a local turnpike with two stationary Remington Elsag license-plate-reading devices in 2004. State police have since recovered 69 stolen vehicles thanks to the system, according to Sgt. Craig Cvetan, a police spokesman.

The Anne Arundel County Police Department in Maryland also deployed one mobile unit on a covert patrol car in January 2006 and had recovered 11 stolen vehicles as of late May 2006. The police department plans to add three more units in coming months, said Sgt. Tom McFarland, adding that those units will be mounted on marked patrol cars.

Many other agencies were preparing to deploy mobile units on squad cars in May 2006, including the Seattle Police Department, which has tested the device and is ready to roll the technology out.

Show of Support

On the day *The New York Times* published an editorial stating "local governments are filling a leadership void at the federal and state levels" when it comes to wireless Internet access, Georgia Gov.

Sonny Perdue sat down in his office and quietly proved the nation's leading newspaper wrong. As of June 2006, nearly 250 cities nationwide had launched some kind of wireless service with virtually no support from state governments. Now Georgia is one of the first states in the country to push this growing trend to a new level of acceptance.

The governor made his move on May 19, announcing the availability of funding to help Georgia communities establish wireless broadband networks. But on June 6, he revealed why this initiative was of such importance to the state. "We still want Wi-Fi to be local government led," Perdue said. "But the role of the state as a partner is to inspire, encourage and 'incentivize' local governments to do what we believe will benefit their communities in our state."

Perdue described the funding as seed money for a handful of cities that, hopefully, will lead to a broadband build-out across the state.

Follow Up

The Georgia Legislature appropriated $4 million during its 2006 legislative session for three communities to start Wi-Fi networks.

After judging 17 applications the state expanded the number of winners from three to six. Georgia cities Augusta, Decatur, Dublin, Milledgeville, Thomasville and Gwinnett County split the money based on various factors including the square mileage and population density of each community.

Most of the winning communities will deploy Wi-Fi connectivity in select regions where they expect high usage, said Jeff McCord, director of Intergovernmental Relations for the Georgia Technology Authority.

"They're not going to be hotspots so much as hot districts. For example, in Augusta they're planning to do mostly a contiguous area around downtown and out to the west a bit," McCord said.

september »

Virtual Collaboration

During the early part of this decade, state governments were eager to deliver electronic services to citizens, and as a result, Web portals became the rage. These portals eventually gained in sophistication, and now emergency management and law enforcement officials hope to use the technology to raise the bar for communication — both within their jurisdictions and regionally.

Whiteboard and radio systems that alienate agencies from one another have been the norm in emergency management functions, but the portal is a way for law enforcement and emergency responders to transcend traditional communication barriers. Portals allow for extensive planning before an event occurs and comprehensive review after the fact, as data can be captured and saved. They're also a way private and public sectors share information about cyber-threats in ways not seen before.

Lori Getter, crisis communications manager for Wisconsin Emergency Management, which is working on a portal project, said agencies are using portal software to assess damages, locate emergency responders and manage resources.

> "**Everyone is getting on the bandwagon for emergency operation center software.**"

— **Lori Getter,** crisis communications manager, Wisconsin Emergency Management

Going Once, Going Twice …

Steve Nash doesn't like to think back to the spring of 2004.

Nash, chief of the engineering and management services section of the Division of Operations in Montgomery County, Md., worked long hours with a consultant to develop software to assess bids from competing electricity suppliers. But Nash and his operations team quickly realized they had a glitch.

Bidding was halted, the consultants fixed the software problem and the county successfully awarded contracts for some of its accounts. But the "meltdown," as Nash calls it, underscored the need for a more sophisticated approach to the energy procurement process when contracts came up for bid in 2006. Montgomery County turned to the World Energy Exchange, an online reverse auction run by Worcester, Mass.-based World Energy Solutions Inc. Unlike a traditional auction where customers bid incrementally higher amounts, a reverse auction creates an environment in which suppliers bid their prices down to win a contract to supply a commodity.

Over a two-day span in March 2006, Montgomery County held 68 auctions and received 292 bids. More than $125 million in contracts were awarded, with terms ranging from 12 to 36 months. The county estimated the cost avoidance for all the contract terms to be more than $24 million.

Procuration Nation

Procurement — what is purchased, how it's purchased and for how much — is always under scrutiny. It has always been a thorny, paper-rich procedure for government. The fact that procurement professionals exist attests to the fact that when democratic governments buy anything, it is generally a complicated affair.

Until a few years ago, little had changed from the days of writing purchase orders with a feather pen by candlelight. Every purchase left a paper trail. In the 1990s came the idea of e-procurement — a process wherein government acquires goods electronically.

Like many Web technologies that emerged in the late 1990s, e-procurement was ahead of its time, but not by much. State governments were investigating or even piloting e-procurement systems when the dot-com bubble burst, sending most running back to traditional purchasing methods. But in recent months, e-procurement has experienced a second-coming, which is partially attributed to a new approach to the procurement process known as strategic sourcing.

Elevated California CIO
SB 834, passed by California's Legislature and signed into law by the governor, contains provisions to elevate the state's CIO to a member of the governor's Cabinet.

E-Voting Vulnerability
Three computer experts from Princeton University find major security flaws in a popular **electronic voting machine**. After analyzing the machine's hardware and software, the researchers said the Diebold AccuVote-TS voting machine, slated for action in 375 counties in the November 2006 elections, is vulnerable to criminal attacks.

> "**The idea is to get the private sector, the public sector, state and local governments, and the federal government to have a way to post cyber-security attack information to a secure portal.**"

— **Mike Gusky,** chief information security officer, Louisiana

Dodgy Drivers
A new study discovered that, despite knowing the risks, a majority of U.S. drivers still **talk on their cell phones while at the wheel.**

All the Time **6%**

Sometimes **67%**

Never **27%**
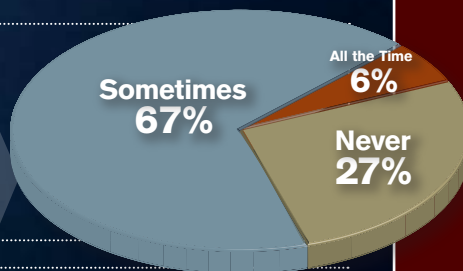
Virginia Promotes Telework
Virginia Gov. **Timothy Kaine** signs an executive order to create an Office of Telework Promotion and Broadband Assistance to encourage and promote telework activities for public and private employers, and to expedite the deployment of "last-mile" broadband technologies statewide.

Mobile Money?
More than **95 percent** of urban Japanese consumers have a mobile phone, and a new *osaifu keitai* — or "wallet phone" — promises to eliminate cash cards by incorporating a chip into the cell phone that stores everything previously held in the wallet.

The Line Government Won't Cross

It's difficult to find a government executive who endorses the politically suicidal measure of moving state jobs overseas. But some analysts say the practice is too financially advantageous to pass up — particularly in this time of expensive new state integration projects.
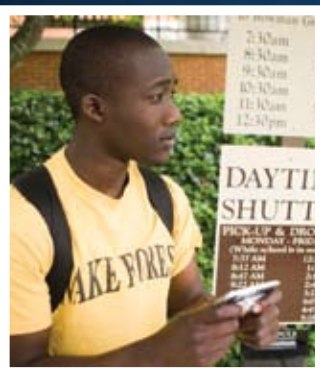
The question set off a firestorm of legislative attempts to ban the practice in 2004. All but five bills failed because states didn't want to sour relations with foreign countries, said Michael Kerr, director of the Enterprise Solutions Division for the Information Technology Association of America.

Kerr said legislators now try to guard against offshore outsourcing in more subtle ways.

Most private-sector contracts now include some offshore outsourcing — a fact repeatedly pointed to by those advocating that governments follow suit. Many economists and organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce say offshore outsourcing and the resulting global economy ultimately increase employment in the United States. Some supporters argue that government offshore outsourcing would advance the trend of privatizing government functions and providing taxpayers more for their money.

Opponents say offshore outsourcing contradicts one of governments' primary goals — promoting citizen employment. And several prominent state CIOs say they can save money and produce better results by using internal staff or domestic labor.

Gaining Mobility
North Carolina's Wake Forest University (WFU) first linked technology and students in 1996, when the university distributed IBM ThinkPads to all of its students.

Now, WFU is testing a new technology link, and this time, the device of choice is a smart phone PDA running PocketPC. In the first phase of a pilot, during the 2005-2006 school year, the phones were distributed to 100 students. In 2006, the pilot's second phase, as many as 500 students, faculty and staff received phones.

The 2005-2006 "Mobile University" pilot programs — or "MobileU" — looked to test the phone's potential benefit for students' academic and social lives, and determine the range of integration for an individual communication device with campus services.

Two in a Row

Michigan continues to lead the nation in applying technology to the art of governance, ranking first in the 2006 *Digital States Survey*.

Conducted by the Center for Digital Government, the *Digital States Survey* is a comprehensive biennial study of technology use by state governments. The survey measures progress in deploying online services for citizens and businesses, developing strategic plans and policies, and adopting effective IT architectures and infrastructure.

Michigan, which also topped the Digital States in 2004, scored well across all survey categories this year. A massive IT consolidation effort launched several years ago continues to pay off in the form of efficient enterprise applications and shared resources.

2006 Digital States Top 10

Michigan	South Dakota
Virginia	Kentucky
Ohio	Wisconsin
Utah	Tennessee
Arkansas	Arizona

EMRs on the Rise
Nearly 24 percent of physicians reported using full or partial **electronic medical records (EMRs)** in their office-based practice in 2005 — a 31 percent increase from the 18.2 percent reported in 2001.

Topping the Spam Charts
The United States continues its reign as the **top spam-relaying country,** even as zombie computers gain European momentum, according to the Dirty Dozen report by Sophos.

"We had the challenge of building a system to fit 64 different business models, and in essence, having 64 different counties telling us what they wanted.**"**

— **Ron Huston,** CIO, Colorado Department of Health Services

Weathering the Storm

During the last six years, Colorado braved a blistering storm of IT project adversity.

The trouble started with the deployment of the Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS), an effort by the state's Department of Human Services and Department of Health Care Policy and Finance to replace several legacy systems with a single integrated program. That system's rocky rollout — along with several other high-profile IT project difficulties — prompted state lawmakers to pass a series of project management reforms this year.

A Colorado lawmaker involved in the legislation said the reforms make needed changes to the management of major government IT projects. Colorado's CIO said the bills strengthen oversight and planning by involving his office more thoroughly in IT project life cycles. Others, including the CIO of the Colorado Department of Human Services, said the measures could be a step in the right direction, but their effectiveness will depend on how they're implemented.

»FACT: Big vehicle owners are willing to make sacrifices to gas up their guzzlers — 35 percent of truck owners have deferred major purchases, 55 percent have reduced dining out, and 58 percent have decreased vacation and travel just to fill their gas tanks. *— BIGresearch*

Tangled Web?

For thousands of years, dooms-day predictions have been a favorite pastime for those struggling to find their way in a changing world. Early Christians saw the fall of the Roman Empire as a sign of the end. Medieval Europe thought the Black Plague announced the coming Apocalypse.

One of the most famous predictors of the world's end was Nostradamus. His prophecies inspired countless others who even today predict the end is nigh.

In the Information Age, a growing chorus of activists fears a calamity is set to befall the online world. In the past, many who foretold of the coming Armageddon based their claims on little more than religious fervor or mysticism. Today, however, those who believe the death of the Internet is at hand make their cases with a compelling, if emotional, set of arguments.

The fear is that without something called Net neutrality, the Internet will cease to be the open, unbiased and largely unsupervised online dimension we've come to know and love. Net neutrality advocates claim that unless Congress intervenes, the Internet will be transformed into a tiered, prejudiced and centralized network with the exclusive purpose of extracting as much profit as is possible from every user and content provider.

Are these warnings of online fire and brimstone worth heeding? Or are they, like so many in the past, little more than misguided fear mongering?

Net neutrality is perhaps one of the most ambiguous terms yet contrived in an era of technology-related misnomers. Its definition varies significantly depending on who's doing the defining. But it comes down to whether giant telcos and cable companies like AT&T, Comcast and Verizon will control the Internet's destiny, or whether Congress will pass federal laws restricting the types of business models they can follow.

Mistaken Identity

A survey by the Identity Theft Resource Center and Fellowes Inc. found that nearly **40 percent** of respondents said identity theft is most likely to occur through online exchanges. In reality, online exchanges represent only 9 percent of the crime, and the majority of identity fraud occurs through paper documents and stolen information.

"We can't predict the future of Internet technology, and we don't want to limit any future innovations."

— **Joe Brenckle,**
communications director, Senate Commerce Committee

Online Doctors

More than half of all U.S. adults are likely to seek health or **medical information online** this year, according to a Harris Interactive survey.

Good Call

If administrators want college students to hear them loud and clear, they'd better keep up with the times.

"Students don't want to read e-mails from us. They don't want to receive letters from us," said Karen Pennington, vice president for Student Development and Campus Life at Montclair State University in Montclair, N.J.

Members of the rising generation check their cell phones to find out what's new. So four years ago, Pennington asked Edward Chapel, Montclair State's associate vice president of IT, to look into how the school could use the ubiquitous devices riding in students' backpacks or clamped to their ears.
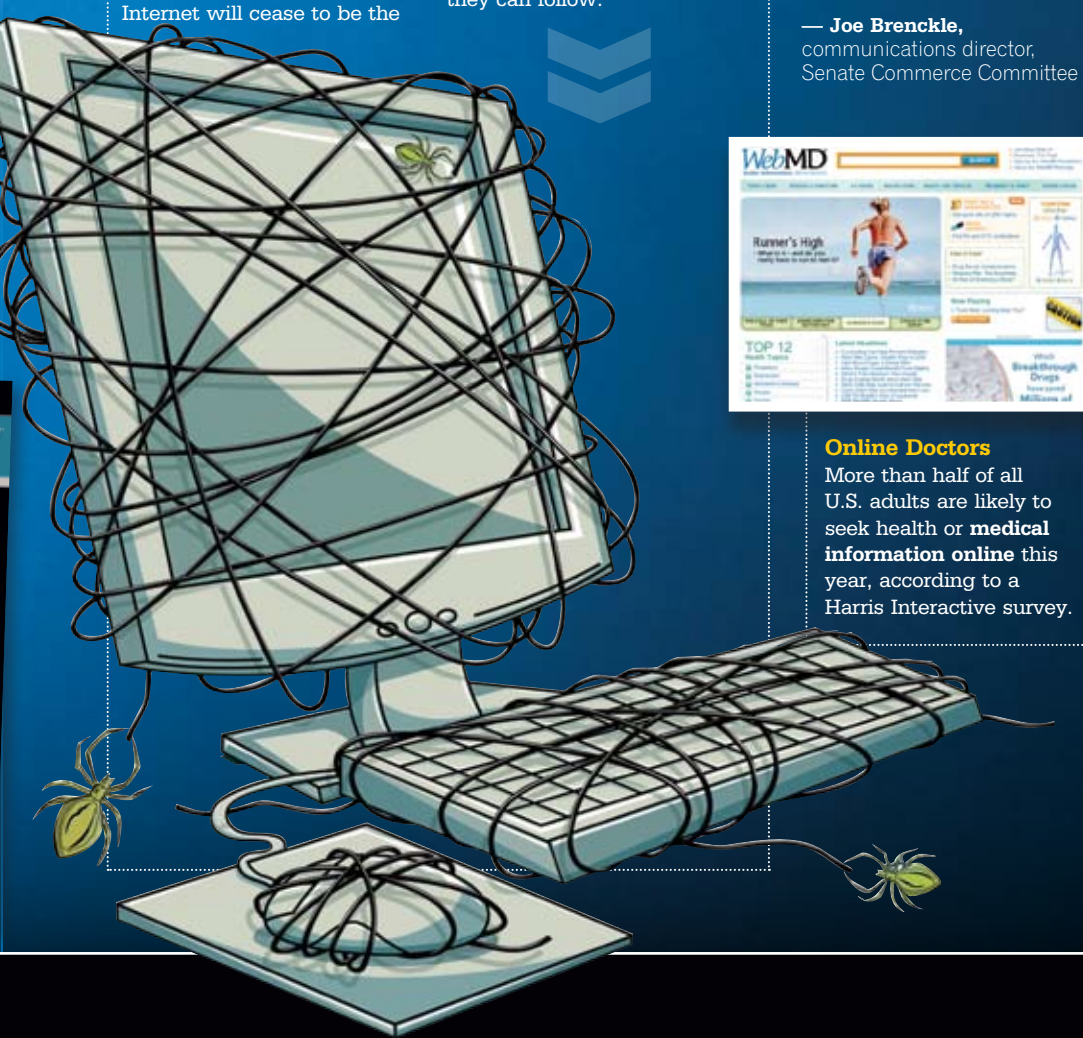
Today students at Montclair State use cell phones to get all kinds of information from the university and their peers. They can check what's on the dining hall menu, broadcast text messages to groups of friends, locate the nearest shuttle bus in real time, get the word on cancelled classes or contact campus police if they feel unsafe. In the future, the university might use its Campus Connect wireless data service to deliver recorded academic lectures and "your laundry is dry" alerts.

Cyber-Crime Jumps

Japan reported 1,802 cyber-crime cases in the first half of 2006, a nearly **12 percent increase** compared to the first half of 2005, according to the Japanese National Police Agency.

Phone Banks

Just a few years ago, people cringed at the thought of calling a local government agency to deal with an issue.

Everybody knew the drill — you call; somebody picks up the phone and drones a greeting; you start to ask your question but get put on hold, often before you even finish speaking; you wait; you wait some more; your spirits soar when somebody finally picks up, only to mutter something about transferring your call to the "right department"; then the painful process starts over.

These days, calling city or county offices is a different experience. Since the late 1990s, a growing number of local governments have built 311 call centers to field customer service requests. No matter the circumstance, a person need only dial 311 to reach customer service agents who direct the inquiry where it needs to go.

Until recently, local governments operated their own, stand-alone 311 systems, but that approach may be changing.

Miami and Miami-Dade County, Fla., opened a consolidated 311 system, as did Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, N.C. Both 311 systems went live in mid-2005, and officials from both areas said the consolidated systems have produced positive results.

SACWIS Struggles

By the end of 2006, only three states have managed to fully comply with a long-standing federal mandate — designing, building and deploying a statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS). Twenty-three states have operational systems in place, but haven't achieved full SACWIS compliance, while 16 states still have systems in development.

A 'Real' Nightmare

With little more than a year and a half to go before **Real ID Act** regulations take effect, most states remain largely in the dark when it comes to what, exactly, they're supposed to be doing. The legislation, which was passed in 2005, mandates that states

roll out new drivers' licenses that conform to a set of federal security standards. The trouble is, the federal government has, as of press time, not clarified what those standards are. The text of the legislation hints at embedded technology — possibly radio frequency identification or biometrics — and also requires the new IDs be "machine-readable." The Department of Homeland Security says clarification will come at the year's end, but with unknown costs to states (guessed to be in the billions), millions of citizens needing new licenses, and a deadline of May 2008 — better instruction from the federal government can't come soon enough.

> **"If a 9/11-like disaster would happen today, in most jurisdictions we would still have to use runners to communicate among first responders."**
>
> — **Viktor Mayer-Schönberger,** associate professor, Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government

Super Security

In February 2007, more than 70,000 people are expected to gather at Dolphin Stadium in south Florida's Miami-Dade County for **Super Bowl XLI**, and in preparing for event security, various entities are simultaneously ramping up overall emergency preparedness efforts.

To tackle the safety and security goals, more than 70 government agencies have struck alliances. Among them are the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD), the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEM/HS) and the Super Bowl XLI Host Committee. Maj. Carlos Gonzalez, assistant director at the Miami-Dade OEM/HS, explained that these agencies have collaborated previously for other events, and that the MDPD is the lead agency for security at the Super Bowl.
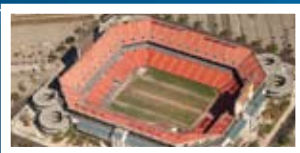
Super Bowl planning has resulted in a reinforcement of emergency management processes in general throughout the agencies in Miami-Dade County, said Robert Parker, director of the MDPD. "The relationships formed with other agencies have been enhanced; lines of communication have expanded; individual and collective roles have been identified; and probably the most beneficial are the joint training exercises which have been conducted, and will continue until Super Bowl week," he said. "Most of the planning, coupled with the training, has a tremendous application to disaster planning in general, which benefits everyone."

— *Government Technology's Emergency Management,* fall issue

Takin' Care of Business

More than three-quarters of the states offer business **registration renewal online.**

Online Assistance

The number of states allowing citizens to apply and check the status of applications for public assistance benefits grew by **50 percent** over the past two years.

Citywide Wi-Fi Heats Up

As the year draws to a close, a citywide Wi-Fi network craze is under way. Proponents promise increased economic development, mobile applications that improve agency efficiency as well as citizen access to wireless Internet service.

Almost everyone wants in on the action. But most cities are still looking for the right business model to make it all work.

Large telecom providers are seducing densely populated cities with offers to completely cover the costs of new wireless infrastructures. The provider attaches the necessary antennas to the city's streetlights and becomes the sole Wi-Fi provider on that network. Theoretically the provider recovers its investment — and more — with

a windfall of subscriptions for service.

The model offers a seemingly free lunch, allowing big cities to tout citywide Wi-Fi access while barely doing any of the legwork. Meanwhile smaller cities, like Corpus Christi, Texas, are funding the infrastructure themselves. They recoup the investment by leasing broadband capacity to Internet service providers.

Trouble in Paradise

Earlier this year, a magnitude **6.7 earthquake** rocked Hawaii, its epicenter six miles from Kona. The earthquake was the biggest to strike Hawaii in 23 years, and was felt throughout the state on all neighboring islands, collapsing buildings and roofs, damaging roads, causing widespread power outages, and triggering landslides.

Immediately after the quake, officials launched a response involving county, state and federal resources. Constantly under the threat of natural disaster and separated from the mainland by thousands of miles of ocean, the Hawaiian Islands have developed a collaborative culture of response that often ignores jurisdictional boundaries.

"Right off the bat we had strong county, state and federal government cooperation," said Troy Kindred, administrator of the Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency. "Everyone on the island knows everybody and there's a cooperation that you don't see on the mainland, and it makes everything easier."

As the year draws to a close, Hawaii is on the road to recovery, Kindred said, and the County Civil Defense Agency is working with FEMA, which is on hand for as long as people continue to make claims. Roadways are being fixed, and it's hoped that many repairs — including major infrastructure repairs to the harbor — will be done by the end of 2006, he said. "There are no catastrophic failures here, and life is going on," he said. "With the damaged roadways now, it takes a lot longer to get from point A to point B, but it's livable."

— *Government Technology's Emergency Management,* fall issue