

ICA 41st Conference
Breakout Session 2 Report Back

Martha Dorris

Welcome to the report back session for our second brain storming sessions. I don't know if you recall last year but these entire subjects were selected based on discussions with the National Representatives during our National Representative meeting and city valuation forms so it is definitely important that you give us your feedback. We read every word on every form to make sure that we are providing the kind of programme that you are interested in. So please again look in your binders and do the valuation forms for today.

We have three distinguished speakers today, the facilitators who ran our session, Peter Dale from Australia who is doing the ICT skills; Dave Molchany from Fairfax County, Virginia who is presenting the Use of Social Software; and Edwin Bruce from New Zealand who did our shared services programme so with that why don't we start with the skills?

Peter Dale

Good morning, I've mastered a technology, which is a first for me. Could I first say that as a first time attendee it's been a real privilege and a pleasure to be here and I have been able to take away so much to date and so I would just like to remind people that have been here for multiple conferences what a special event it is and please don't ever take it for granted.

Just before going into the session I would like to acknowledge the work of all of my colleagues at the session. Whilst we were relatively small in numbers the discussion was very invigorating, there was fantastic participation from all and I thought I knew a reasonable amount about this topic but in having the discussion with everybody else around the table there was so much more that I was able to find out and I will be taking a few good ideas back to Australia from the result of this discussion. So to my colleagues at the break out session I thank you very much and I also apologise if I have taken any editorial advantage of some of the points that you made.

At the breakout session that was the set of topics that we discussed. Certainly the first question that we wanted to ask was is it really a skills crisis or are we just going through a phase through the cycle and we'll address each of those points very quickly in the slides.

We came to the conclusion that if we were going through a cycle we weren't going through the usual cycle. But this cycle if it is a cycle has been going for so many years that we do need to take care of it. I don't think that we are in crisis yet but we are getting closer to impacting on service delivery and just as a local example from Australia we are finding that a lot of agencies are really eating into their contingency

arrangements in both timing and funding in order to meet some of the issues that have arisen from the skills issues.

If it is not just business as usual, if it is not just part of a cycle we probably are going to require some intervention. I won't go through all of the dot points at the bottom but they are some of the issues that did come up in our discussion.

We talked about a number of initiatives that governments are undertaking to try and improve the supply of ICT skills towards them and certainly we are looking at alternate entry levels of recruitment and one of the things for example that we have done in Australia we have gone beyond graduates and we have gone to apprentices so we are taking people straight out of school and we are giving them a mix of study and practical on the job experience and turning them into the ICT people that we require to deliver government services.

A number of the countries and I think the UK was in that boat said that they are looking at alternate methods of senior level recruitment and I think around the table we agreed that it was becoming increasingly hard to recruit CIOs of the calibre that are required to lead ICT organisations today and there are a number of examples put where even when large salaries were offered and a number of the countries reported that ICT CIOs were receiving far more in remuneration than some of their colleagues in other areas of administration but even with those large amounts we were finding that it was still very hard to recruit people to work in the government sector.

We are also looking at different recruitment pools and certainly people are trying to bring in other skilled people who may be skilled in accountancy or in programme management and turn them into ICT people.

I think it was Singapore that mentioned that one of their methods of attracting more people was to do regular benchmarking of government salaries against industry. It meant that they are a year behind but it kept them far more competitive in terms of their ability to offer attractive salaries to ICT people and I think everybody made mention of the fact that we are all having to use greater use of contractors and of outsourcing and whilst we acknowledge that that was probably a good solution at present there was that concern raised that there could be unintended consequences down the track if we haven't really thought through why we are doing it and what we are going to do to rectify the situation if indeed it needs to be rectified.

How are governments managing demand? We looked at that because there was a bit of concern but even though we were doing a lot on the supply of skill side that may in some instances not be sufficient in order to meet the demand that our government programmes place upon us. And so you can see that use of architectures, the re-use of components, developing shared services or common services were some of the common things we have looked at. Again I think it was Singapore that noted that they had established some central pools of expertise and I apologise if I have got that slightly wrong but my understanding is that there are those central people who are available to be farmed out on specific projects or to smaller organisations should the need arise.

Scheduling was the other point there in terms of, I know that in Australia we are looking at when there are major whole of government role outs of particular pieces of

software that we are going to look at the scheduling to see that we can take advantage from the experiences of one and then role that into other implementations.

We did talk about our stakeholders and their importance as stakeholders at that and it was agreed that we really need to concentrate on our agency heads, perhaps even on our ministers but the normal people that we would expect to see in the skills arena also arose.

Is ICT skills availability impacting on trust in government and the answer was Yes and there were two main issues that were talked about there and one is that if we don't deliver timely services, if we don't deliver them within cost and perhaps most importantly if they are not quality, the end user whether it be internal to our organisation or the citizen themselves will notice that and that does have an affect of trust in government.

It was also noted that whenever we do have a major problem with the implementation of a system because of the accountability processes that are available in government administrations are always publicly scrutinised and publicly discussed which again has that impact on the trust in the community.

So lastly to the meat of it, is there a role for ICA and the answer was Yes, we believe that it would be quite useful to have some case studies or report done on government CIOs or national CIOs and agency CIOs perhaps some case studies that talk about their relevance, the rationale for introducing them, the role that they play, their skills and competencies that are required, the process that a country went through to establish them or their office and the benefits that have accrued at having them and certainly after we heard this morning's speakers that is probably very topical in terms of making sure that we understand how we are positioning our CIOs or our national CIOs so that they remain relevant to the organisation and can be leaders into 2010 and beyond.

We noted that there was an existing ICA workforce study group and it was most fortunate that Michael from Taiwan who is leading that group happened to be in our discussion group and it was thought that it would be best if we could link the work that we have described here into the work of that particular study group that already exists.

So the next steps that we saw were to expand the scope of the ICT workforce study group to work together and I think it will probably need to be some of the people in this discussion group to package up the requirements of the work that we would like the study group to do but certainly we discussed that we would be tapping particular countries on the shoulder to ensure their voluntary participation in this exercise but I think we would also certainly welcome anybody providing some input to what might be useful should we proceed with some of this work. We will approach volunteers – certainly we think that with something of this nature we should be able to turn it around fairly quickly. And I apologise again because of imposing the time frame but I think early 2008 should be something where we can start to get something out on this. Again, I would like to thank all of the members of the group, because it was really tremendous and an invigorating discussion.

Just going to talk a little bit of our experiences discussing shared services which is a subject that is both new and dear to my heart because I've been doing it for the last three years, and secondly its a subject that many jurisdictions are tackling at the moment, and have done so for a number of years also. Six in the group, as usual // so I apologise if I don't represent necessarily all the views correctly but you do what you can in the time available.

We had a pretty diverse group studying and discussing this area. In most cases people have experiences of implementing shared services of some sort or another, some of them successes and some of them failures, and we will get on to that in a moment. The way we ran the session group was – I gave a few minutes just on my recent experience in New Zealand, a brief statement about some of the challenges that we found, and then we opened the floor up to a range of shared services, those that were successful and those that were failures, and why they were failures and successes.

A definition: we didn't spend a lot of time agreeing it, in fact we didn't really spend much time on it at all but shared services ranging right through from the infrastructure level, networks and so on, right through to shared information assets. But again, we could have spent time debating whether or not a centralised service was a shared service and so on but we thought it was more useful to cut to the chase and try to glean some experiences from other people. Tons of examples that I use, building a commercial business in New Zealand, implementing government-shared network, touching all agencies. Couple of things I would like to draw on here and I am not going to draw on all of them but first and foremost, in my experience the person that's going to lead a shared service experience has got to have both the tenacity and courage because for many shared services it takes years to overcome the barriers in government, significant effort dealing with the politicians, significant effort getting the budgets necessary to actually drive these shared services forward. At least, that's the experience in New Zealand: each shared service initiative has required the right people with the right skills and the right vision to drive these things forward, and to be prepared to put their reputations on the line over a number of years. Probably the second thing that I would draw on is that when moving to a shared services environment, particularly at the infrastructure level moving into a 24/7 industrial strength set of services is non-trivial.

Okay, we spent a bit of time discussing where/what some of the shared services were and why some of them were successful and why some weren't successful. There is quite a diversity here, everything through from payroll, HR, finance systems and so on but clearly some of the messages in terms of succeeding will build on existing services, and share them rather than start from scratch. And we hear that story a couple of times. In terms of shared offices, again if there are efficiencies to be gained then those can be successful. Re-using information assets, again if there is an existing asset to be re-used and you are not building it from scratch and the organisation is either legislative, willing and able to provide and support that shared service then there is an opportunity there. Equally, there are funding challenges, and there are different goals and objectives of organisations then these shared services initiatives will typically fail. Interesting to say, we had examples of both successful HR and payroll delivery and unsuccessful and in some cases, and we have probably all experienced this, poor inadequate service will lead ultimately to failure. In many cases, we had examples where a particularly service has been mandated or there is a small choice or the private sector is delivering a superior to government, and all of

these will lead to successful engagement. Interestingly, I found that in one example that was provided around the population register, yes successfully used by public and private organisations, however, ongoing challenges around the pricing of a shared service in some of the interoperability challenges, particularly for those applications that have been around for a while. In fact, pricing is one that has come up numerous times and in my own experience, actually getting the right mix of pricing for service levels and maintaining a pricing structure that's appropriate.

Some of the challenges and the responses: typically the shared services initiatives don't start from a position of nothing; there is no green grass. You've got to assume there is some existing infrastructure, there will be all the nuances of the agencies that want to use the shared service they are all being made to, there will be challenges around integrating with existing services and so on. You got to understand that, right up front and be prepared to fight the fight. We talked about 24/7 but ultimately that means you've got to start getting your architectures clear and building a robust service. There is a whole range of things here; finances is kind of an interesting one, several shared services that I've seen established and within the experience of the people participating in this making sure you've got adequate capital and operating, able to price so that you can recover your costs, have got transparency in the service levels that are being used to deliver the services, and so on.

Of particular interest, I thought, was having to overcome some of those barriers or resistance to change, which typically is embodied in many organisations of multiple levels where people aren't prepared to give up their autonomy, where you have got technical experiences and have got a lot to lose, the usual stories. Probably the other comment there: all things to all people or one size fits all. There is a balance there where you try and meet the individual requirements for each agency for a shared service or alternatively where you just put one shared service in and everyone else is expected to use that, and neither of those works particularly well so its about striking a middle balance and I thought the dialogue around getting an understanding the basic workflow processes and getting agreement on this and then building shared services around a sub-set of those agreed with processes is probably the way to go, but it was pretty useful. And last but not least, this is a classic when you start looking at shared services around government: the delivery of those services within an agency typically occupies .5 or .25 or .75 of a person, how do you remove that from an agency when you want to consolidate? It's quite difficult and quite challenging! Again, areas such as governance, having clear governance with clear accountability, giving stakeholders a vested interest in the shared service and an ability to actually influence direction is all quite important. When you see the // shared service do you set it up and hope they will come? Or do you get support?

A set of obligations before you build the shared service. In New Zealand, you have to demonstrate there will be success before you're allowed to build. That presents its own challenges. We had a little discussion about almost the so what factor of this relationship between the provision of shared service and trust in government. I think ultimately that shared services whether from the inside or whether a public facing set of services, government being seen as one organisation, in our view would certainly enhance trust in government. Effective and efficient use of text // dollars. I mean the // simplistic, // from the outside in many cases is that shared services save money. Not all the cases from our experiences but nevertheless.... A bit of a discussion over whether or not when you consolidate into shared services internally, whether you,

particularly around those services that involve large collections of data and information. Again, is there a loss of transparency? Because moving data around one system is quite different to having to go through a process to move data around multiple systems. It is a subtle but really interesting point, in my opinion. We won't spend much time on the rest but nevertheless there are some relationships there between a perception of government doing a good job and enhancing trust.

Last words: everyone in the working group had the opportunity to make some comments, which is appreciated and valued. I asked for a last word from everybody and these are the range of comments I got (I won't read them all but I was particularly enamoured with the speak softly and carry a big stick comment because I thought that was so typical of the way we do things in government). Sometimes I wonder if we build // better the other way round. Picking up from the previous discussion over skills, and at some stage the drive towards a consolidation of shared service coming from a pure lack of skills, or a skills crisis, again that is my own personal view. It would have been interesting to see if there had been //. Really, really, really important that if you set up a shared services organisation you focus on your core business, it is so tempting to get outside of your core business and that's when you start building these little mini empires and before long if it is successful you end up selling it to the private sector, they deliver the service to government and then five years later you've started all over again and agencies build their own because the private sector organisation isn't delivering.

Bottom line conclusion: shared services are inevitable. The many characteristics that will lead to success or failure, I've seen several examples given of successful shared services for say, payroll but also unsuccessful ones. So really it's going to come down to those skills in implementation that support the governance, and a whole package of characteristics. Drive towards increased efficiencies in government, indeed the labour shortages may provide the // to get on with some of these shared services because we simply won't have the skills or the dollars to actually pay for highly distributive delivery of services. And finally, the shared services // information will probably require some special consideration going forward because I think we are increasingly going to see that and perhaps this is a topic for next year. In closing, thank you again to the people that came and participated, it was an interesting and useful discussion.

Okay, I'm leaving you this wireless // can you all hear me? I would like to thank my group also, we had a great discussion about social media where about 15 people participate and I think we came up with some pretty interesting ideas. Please feel free to walk around because I can't read small print so this is much easier. First of all we talked about what is social media? And we talked about social media, the definition describes online technologies and practices, and the people used to share opinions, inside experiences and perspectives with each other. And whether some of the examples, I think we've all heard of these, were Compedia, MySpace, U2, //, Facebook, // and a lot of different technologies go with that, blogs, message boards,

pod casts, wiccies, dlogs, they are all ways to share information to network and to literally get ideas moving, and moving at a very fast rate and many times completely around the world and to places where basically ideas and topics wouldn't normally reach. So it's a very powerful medium that can literally send information everywhere. Traditional media are newspapers, television, radios, books and CDs that we're used to working with can't be changed but social media is interactive, it is instantaneous, it's always moving, social media allows for realtime feedback, people want continual feedback for the ideas they have. Anyone can publish social media, which is a danger that I will talk about in a little bit and social media is infinite, with no limitations on length or quantity. It's also evergreen, almost always these things exist forever somewhere, so another thing to be very careful about when using social media. Social media is linkable, and easily re-used. Something you say can show up all over the world in different contexts, something also to be very conscious about as you actually utilise this, and you can see things that link to things that weren't even a part of your discussion. People can literally re-use what you say in multiple ways. We talked about what is used today in government, blogs which are mostly moderate discussions, there was no-one in our group doing a pure blog where people could actually have a topic and respond back and forth without any moderation. Everyone was moderating the discussion, choosing what was posted and what was not posted with clear rules of basically how the blog will work. // used a lot which is basically a really simple syndication, the ability to give web information updates automatically to people who subscribe, pod casts were used a lot, text messaging, for especially in subscription base for specific topics was used, and video and photo-sharing was another area that was used by the people around the table. Things to look at for tomorrow: one interesting idea was facebook which is now used by a lot of young people to share their own interest identities that are set online with others, could be used internally as a // bank, literally to show people what they can do for your organisation, that was a really good idea. Wikis also, where internal information in customer services was an interesting idea. Literally on your helpdesk, your call centre, people could be using Wikis to literally get definitions and information out to people calling in, you could also create Wikis that were used online so that people that just wanted to find information out could literally go to your site and go through your own private wikipedia to get the information they wanted. Google Maps used for marketing localities was a great idea, many people already doing that. Using Second Light, does everyone know what Second Light is? Anyone not know what Second Light is? Good! Using Second Light to show urban re-development so literally taking those tools that people use to create virtual realities and create a virtual neighbourhood or virtual city or virtual urban re-development, and have citizens come in and take a look at that from a perspective of literally seeing what it would be like to get comments and input. I thought that was a great idea. There were other interesting ideas of social media and how they could be used. But the bottom line was everyone is doing something with social media, whether they want to or not. And basically there are a lot of interesting things you can do with these tools internally with government and also working with your customers to make things better.

One thing we really talked about was things change quickly, you have to keep up to date and don't invest too much time or money on any one thing because tomorrow may be // or there might be something else that you might want to get involved with. So you really have to look at these tools to determine how you use them and almost have a new type of // of how you use and dispose of tools to actually create the social media interaction with your customer base. I thought that was an interesting idea.

The best approach is to actually understanding how people use social media, one was focus groups and user dialogue and an interesting part of the dialogue that came from Canada was do people really want government in their personal space? Do they want us in my space or anywhere else they might go to do other things, is government appropriate there? So that's an interesting thing to talk about. Using surveys was great, using new tools to conduct research and literally going where the potential customer is to ask questions, actually become part of the community and see how people like government service or government information through these different channels. Using outside groups such as NGOs to conduct independent research for you, we talked a little bit about this this morning, about how effective they could be about showing not a government face to give feedback for you. And then using tools in-house to get familiar with them, creating your own internal blog, your own internal pod cast, your own internal phasebook or wicipedia, etc so you can actually understand them before you actually roll them out to your customers. Now, there is another great idea that came from Canada, really the bottom line is to determine what will work for your customers and localisation topically talked about many ICA meetings ago is very important, what works in one place will not work everywhere so you can't just pick these tools and start using them, you really have to match the tool to your customer. And from our representative from Rand Corporation yesterday, you have to link technology to appropriate service or information, there are some things that work best in one medium and will not work in another, so you really have to the research and understand the tools to make that work.

Positives is a social media, to connect to people that may not be reached otherwise, a new channel for inclusiveness can be created. You can get messages out effectively and efficiently to many, many people, you can obtain buy-in from customers so that interactive features, the wonderful thing about all this is that it is interactive and you can literally get on the spot responses from people. You can increase the effectiveness internally by using these tools internally as well as externally. You can use social media to improve government as it gives new channels of communication to people and groups who are normally not heard from during the discussions of issues. Many people just will not discuss because they are not comfortable with the media we use today to conduct discussions. This might pull in people that just would not respond to government, and answer questions and interact, and I think that is a really important point.

Social media can provide new ways to discuss issues and create forums and focus groups. One thing that we tried to do a lot on government is to talk continually with people about new concepts, this is a wonderful way to do that, so social media can be very positive in literally connecting you to your customer. And your customer to you, because it is both ways.

Now, some negatives, and there were negatives. And they were all things that were cautions really. There are not any journalistic standards applied to social media. Government needs to understand this and analyse content and determine direct responses. Journalists literally have rules; we're all used to working with journalists and understand the rules. Bloggers, and other people, they just create data, have no rules. They say anything they want, they don't check their facts and basically it's out there. As a government, you probably have people today who read the papers, read the internet, etc to find topics about your government and what people are saying

about you politicians, etc. You also have to check the blogs, etc and you have to determine what kind of response you are going to make, it may not be worth it to respond to a blog because basically its flying so fast you may not want to say it. On the other hand, if you don't watch the blogs and other things that really are talking about your government you may miss things that you must respond to. Remember, this is evergreen, someone can put something out there that is completely false and it can live forever so you may actually want to make a response but you really have to organise that into your communications outreach that you have today to ensure that you are making an appropriate response, you're not overacting and you're not actually calling attention to things that may be missed anyway. So you have to have a very good approach to this.

Politicians and the press may be tempted to relax standards when using social media. This is something that we see continually. A politician does not realise that you can go out to a blog and just say anything. And the next day it is on the front page of a real newspaper, it's very easy just to say things online and you need to be very careful about that. What you say will live forever and it may end up in the legitimate press. Journalists, unfortunately, are forgetting their standards. We have occasion, especially in the United States on // are printed. A very good example is Virginia Tech, the shootings there, the information came directly from social media to begin with, it was completely false, it was reported in all our major news outlets and around the world before someone had to come back and correct it all. The shooter was not the person they thought it was, the person that was actually targeted, as the shooter was a totally innocent bystander. This is something that journalists have to be careful about; we may need to remind them a bit about their standards. Press can use social media contents as fact, again we need to determine an appropriate response, our press will print things that are incorrect, we do need to respond to that because with the official press we really do need to have retractions, etc. There are times and resource cost to government that need to be recognised when social media is used as a communication tool. None of this is free, there are no free lunches when you actually put a blog and you do all kinds of online chat and you do pod casts, etc someone is doing that in your government. There is a cost to that, and you actually factor that into the use of these tools.

Social media tools can change in government, and it may not always be a positive change, including a feeding of direct access to decision makers and pressure to have instantaneous action taken. Government needs to be ready for this. Not everything that people want is good for them, not everything that people ask government to do needs to be happening instantaneously but because of this new media people are expecting instantaneous response to what they want. There is a thing called Representative Government and they are forgetting that they as an individual do not drive government. We have to just really think about that as we look at this new media. Social media can amplify the voice, especially interest groups and make their opinions appear to be the majority. That is another thing we need to do, even though there is a strong sentiment one way we need to use all other ways of canvassing public opinion to make sure that we are not being driven by one special interest group that has found the best way to get their message out.

So a few negatives - almost all of them go back to government being prepared to work with new media and ensuring that basically it is used effectively and it does not hurt the government or the people we serve. Every government we had was creating

policies, policies to use social media, internal processes for actually scaling through and determining how we react to it, ensuring that we basically don't let small groups drive government policy, and we really did talk about the fact that there needs to be a line between politics and government work. It's not wholly appropriate for the staff to be promoting political agendas.

Conclusions and recommendations: social media tools are beneficial to government, communication for both internal and external customers, and there are very powerful tools to connect people. Social media has the power to change government communications and how a government interacts with their constituencies. Social media can increase trust in government and has the power to transform government by changing the relationship between government, its constituents and the press. Social media can radically change the role of the CIO, I think the comments we heard about this morning is CIO morphing into an information manager? I believe that this is going to force that because someone has to understand how information is used across the entire organisation, all departments that are actually creating information, storing information or disseminating information need to basically have a global look and this is going to drive that because you have to be so careful about what is being said about your government and your programmes. We all believe, everyone in the group believes, ICA should continue its exploration of this topic in future conferences. So that basically was // pictures for you, this is 1975 of us and media and technology. These are the things we got to use which were basically //, phones, TV, // track players. This is us today with all the wire// technology that we can use personally, and this is us tomorrow, there will be no difference, it will all merge. And we will finally get to something I learnt about in Gartner Group in 1996, we will have ubiquitous IT and ubiquitous communications, regardless of where we are, every device we have will be available to everything that happens, basically in the media area.

Martha Dorris

I would like to thank all the panellists. ICT skills, we had some good questions to ask, it is real or perceived problem? I know that we've been talking about in the US and as its not addressed now it's going to begin impact service delivery. I think the skills are both driving and impacting the shared service delivery and in terms of social media I think it's in its infancy. I know last year we asked everybody at the conference how many people were using it and there were almost none. This year we are all putting our tail in the water and next year who knows where we will be? We talked about how fast its moving, tread carefully and share your experiences with each other as we go forward so that we are all.....don't get ourselves into trouble while we're using this. One of the things I didn't mention yesterday, we're in the beginning stages of creating a contest for the citizens to do a U2 video to talk about what they want from government, the government services, and then people could vote and then we would have a winner so I would be glad to keep everybody informed on how that works. It worked last year in the Superbowl and one of the best commercials at the Superbowl, I think it cost US\$13 for 4 bags of Doridos so its a very inexpensive way to do some marketing for your programmes. So with that, I think all the areas people were interested in following the progress over the next year in some way talking about it next year, please join me in thanking our facilitators and our ICA guest.