Government Services on the Web:
"California In-Touch"

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General Outline of Overall Program

Vision

The California State Information Technology Strategic Plan (November 2005) calls for the State to "make government services more accessible to citizens and state clients" by completing a "customer-focused, technology-enabled transformation in service delivery to improve the accessibility, value and cost-effectiveness of services, benefits and information provided to the public, businesses, other government agencies and state employees." (The full plan is available on the State CIO's website at www.cio.ca.gov.)

Generally, consumers and businesses have infrequent, but often mandatory and nearly always repetitive, contacts with government agencies. Transactions such as starting a business, filing taxes, registering vehicles, securing licenses, appearing for jury service, and making legal, business and commercial filings come to mind as examples of the most typical governmental contacts. These interactions occur at the local, state and federal levels.

Government at all levels must do everything it can to improve the quality of these brief interactions or touch-points with California's consumers and businesses. We must adopt and fully implement, in cooperation with our local and federal government partners, a customer-service revolution, shedding the perception of government as large, rude, bureaucratic, self-centered, and out of touch, and replacing that image with a new customer-service model: "California In-Touch."

The California In-Touch approach will put us on a path towards service that is more:

- **Courteous:** Designed to serve our customers needs, regardless of disability, based on customer-focused user testing;

- **Trustworthy:** Fully protects user privacy and security;

- **Responsive:** Provides complete access to relevant information and empowers the consumer efficiently to complete all transactions online at the convenience of the consumer.

This is how California government must be "In-Touch" with our citizens, businesses and other customers in the 21st century.

A key component of this transformation in service delivery involves a complete overhaul, and subsequent continuous renewal, of the State's presence on the Internet. The benefits to the public and state government are substantial:

- For consumers and businesses alike, the Internet is the delivery channel of preference for the 21st century. We must respond to these preferences and to the changes in technologies reflected in these preferences.

- The cost per interaction or transaction on the Internet is significantly lower compared to other delivery channels.

- Full transparency in government information and operations is an immediate byproduct of Internet-based services.

We cannot stand by while the rest of the world is changing. We must set a goal of developing a comprehensive portfolio of online services by 2010.

Governance

The size and complexity of California government, and the great diversity of interests that it serves, make it virtually impossible to conceive of the State's presence on the Internet being managed by a single department or entity. Instead, the State must adopt a "federated" governance and management approach to the development and maintenance of the State's Internet presence in which individual departments own and maintain most Internet content.

Moreover, as a matter of best practice, the State's Internet presence should be developed and maintained by staff who are closest to the programs that own the information to be presented on the web or that have regulatory responsibility for transactions to be processed on the web. This ensures that those who are most knowledgeable about a program and its connections to other governmental entities, and those who have the most direct accountability for program performance, will be fully engaged in developing and maintaining the Internet delivery channel. We want to make the path between the public and the government service provider as direct and short as possible.

However, we cannot simply devolve all Internet development to the departmental and program level. That has been the approach taken over most of the first ten years of California's Internet development, and the result is a proliferation of "stove-piped" web pages that are anything but customer-friendly and, instead of being customer-centric, are department-centric. Tax information and transactions are spread around three or four different departments. Information and transactions for businesses are spread around many different web pages managed by different departments. Even within departments, Internet pages and services are stove-piped in their development and maintenance. Inconsistent data standards frustrate efforts to share data across departments and with the public.

This confused situation can be remedied by building "California Service Centers" that are easy to use and provide customer-oriented access to state, local and federal information and services on a functional or audience / user-type basis. For example, instead of accessing separate websites managed by the Board of Equalization, Franchise Tax Board and Employment Development Department, users should be able to access a "California Taxes Service Center" that ties together all State information about tax filings (and also has links to similar federal and local government sites).

One can readily imagine a series of these subject matter specific and customer-oriented service centers, along with sub-service centers as appropriate. By way of preliminary example, we might develop the following:

- Business Service Center
- Citizen Service Center
- Family Service Center
- Taxes Service Center
- Health Service Center
- Education Service Center
- Employment Service Center
- Natural Resources and Environment Service Center
- Homeland Security and Emergency Services Center
- Justice Service Center
- Legislative Service Center
- Government Service Center

The State's home page (www.ca.gov) will be the "California Service Center" – the master service center for all of State government. It will contain links to all of the other services centers, as well as quick links to the most frequently requested web pages and online transactional services (e.g., vehicle registration, tax filing, park reservations, and so on).

Because these service centers plainly bridge traditional organizational boundaries, it will be necessary to establish special "ownership" responsibilities for the development and maintenance of these service centers. In some cases, a few relevant departments can simply agree jointly to develop and maintain the service center. For example, the Labor & Workforce Development Agency, the Business, Transportation & Housing Agency, and the Department of Food & Agriculture joined together to create a new business portal to provide information about starting, growing, financing, expanding or relocating a business in California (*see* www.calbusiness.ca.gov). In addition, the Board of Equalization, Franchise Tax Board and Employment Development Department have agreed amongst themselves to develop a Taxes Service Center consistent with the approach outlined in this document (*see* www.taxes.ca.gov). In other cases, a single department or agency may be assigned primary responsibility for developing and maintaining a service center (e.g., the Health and Human Services Agency or the Department of Health Services can be assigned responsibility for the Health Service Center), but even here, cross-agency development is probably required (e.g., the

Department of Managed Health Care is within the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency).

Finally, to set appropriate statewide policies and to coordinate the overall development and maintenance of the State's Internet presence, the State must establish a Director of e-Services function with the responsibility for providing strong statewide leadership for the review of business processes that lend themselves to e-government applications and for the exploration and implementation of technologies to improve service delivery. The Director of e-Services will need to collaborate across all of the Executive Branch, with all Cabinet Secretaries, department directors, the Departments of Finance and General Services, and other state agencies to facilitate process reengineering and the application of enabling technologies.

Implementation

To bring the California In-Touch vision to life, we must accomplish the following:

- Adopt Policies and Practices for Web Redesign by Departments
- Establish a Service Oriented Architecture
- Develop Shared Services
- Streamline the Internet Development Process

Policies and Practices for Web Redesign

In a federated development environment, we will ensure necessary and appropriate commonality across the full spectrum of the State's Internet presence by establishing minimum policies and practices for usability, accessibility, navigation, searching, acceptable "look-and-feel," and similar design issues. These policies will provide the general framework in which federated web development will occur, helping departments reach the goal of providing integrated, online services that are more Courteous, Trustworthy and Responsive.

Service Oriented Architecture and Reusability

While most development and management of content and services should occur at the departmental and program level, there are a number of business functions and technical applications that are common to most agencies where there are significant benefits to be achieved from reusing already or yet to be developed technologies and applications. To promote a reuse strategy, the State must adopt a statewide Service Oriented Architecture, which will set statewide standards for development and reuse of technical solutions.

Significant work has already been completed by the California Enterprise Architecture Program to develop a Service Oriented Architecture ("SOA"). A draft SOA has been posted on the State CIO's website for public vetting and comment (click on "Enterprise Architecture" on www.cio.ca.gov). The SOA has been reviewed and approved in concept

by the State Portal Steering Committee and the IT Council ("ITC") at their April 2006 meetings.

Shared Services

The SOA is only the first step in implementing a federated Internet presence. The second key step is implementation of shared services built on the SOA foundation. In a shared services environment, individual departments may decide, based on their assessment of what is in the department's and the public's best interest, to develop and maintain one or more of the shared services, primarily for their own use but with an architecture that permits re-use by other departments (the actual provisioning of those services – i.e., how they will be made available technically and how they will be funded – are issues that have yet to be resolved). A shared services architecture can function effectively and smoothly only if there is a general State web enterprise architecture that defines at a high level how individual departmental web sites can interoperate with the shared services.

We are already considering shared services solutions from existing or planned services that may become available through the efforts of individual departments as follows:

- Identity Management & Authentication for Citizens: DMV Portal
- Identity Management & Authentication for State Employees: DMV Portal and/or SCO's 21st Century payroll project
- Payment Processes: DGS
- Search Engine: DTS Portal
- Default Hosting: DTS Portal
- "Real Simple Syndication" (RSS): DTS Portal

This list will be expanded as individual projects are identified where one or more components of the project qualify for shared services treatment. It should be noted that the shared services architecture may also be used for certain types of functions that, while not common across all of government, are sufficiently common so that a shared services implementation would be advantageous (e.g., licensing functions and transactions which perhaps a dozen or so departments must perform, and web map services for geospatial data sharing and integration).

Internet Development Process

The State is now several years behind other organizations in both the public and private sectors when it comes to our Internet presence. We must catch up.

Departments should be directed to assess their online presence, identify service gaps (i.e., services offered only in person or by mail which could be offered online) and prepare plans to implement by 2010 a comprehensive portfolio of departmental web-based services (i.e., virtually all in-person services and information should also be available online). Department plans should identify not only what information and services will be placed online, but also how the department will encourage and secure end-user adoption.

In order to accelerate the implementation of this initiative, the Department of Finance should give priority and extra weight in the review and approval process to Internet development projects satisfying the following criteria:

- Alignment with a department's own plan for implementing a comprehensive portfolio of online services.

- Adherence to the California In-Touch service delivery model (Courteous, Trustworthy, and Responsive).

- Adherence to design policies, open standards, and standards adopted in California's Enterprise Architecture, including the State's Service Oriented Architecture.

- Utilization of available shared services which have been approved by the Director of e-Services.

- When assuming responsibility for developing and maintaining a shared service, commitment fully to engage all departmental stakeholders who are likely to have an interest in using the shared service.

To streamline the procurement process, the Department of Technology Services will work with the Department of General Services to make Internet Redesign Consulting Services available on an expedited basis to all departments.

By streamlining approval and procurement processes, we can put California In-Touch on a fast track to success.