

**Modeling the Social and Technical Processes of
Inter-Organizational Information Integration**
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PLATO Royalty Lecture Series
Digital Government: Information Technology serving the Public Good¹

Theresa A. Pardo
Deputy Director, Center for Technology in Government
Research Assistant Professor, Public Administration and Policy
Affiliate Faculty, Informatics, University at Albany, SUNY

Integrating information can have important benefits for the public sector. The arguments for integration within programs like public health and safety are compelling. Providing state, local, and federal public health officials with real-time access to the same information for crisis response, for example, reduces the time required for well-informed, balanced decision making. Integrating and sharing information in these settings, however, involves complex interactions among social and technological processes. These processes often involve new work processes and significant organizational change. They are also embedded in larger political and institutional environments, which shape their goals and circumscribe their choices. Program managers and policy makers must establish and maintain collaborative relationships in which knowledge sharing is critical to resolving issues of data definitions and meaning. System designers and developers must regularly overcome problems related to the existence of multiple platforms, diverse database designs and data structures, highly variable data quality, and incompatible network infrastructure. Outstanding questions include:

1. What are the critical factors and processes involved in integrating information across levels and agencies in government? In particular how do IT and social factors interact?
2. How do the factors and processes vary for different types and degrees of integration?
3. Can the processes be modeled in ways that improve our understanding of information system development and of interorganizational collaboration? Do these models contribute to new theoretical insights for developing and implementing advanced applications of IT?

Theresa Pardo is Deputy Director of the Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany, SUNY. She has a Ph.D, in Information Science from the University at Albany. She is a co-developer of the highly ranked *Government Information Strategy and Management* curriculum at Albany. The program focuses on the policy, management and technology dimensions of information and technology use in the design and delivery of government programs. Theresa has published articles, research reports, book chapters and case studies focusing on information technology innovation in the public sector. More information can be found at www.ctg.albany.edu.

Required Reading For Seminar. Pardo, T. A., Cresswell, A. M., Dawes, S. S. & Burke, G. B. (2004). Modeling the social & technical processes of interorganizational information integration. *Proceedings of the 37th Hawaiian International Conference on System Sciences*. Los Alamitos CA: IEEE Computer Society Press.

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