INSIGHTS

VERMONT
INFORMATION CONSORTIUM

INSIDE

Executive Summary

I'll always remember the first interview I had with NIC seeking a project manager role in Montpelier in 2006. The interview was not conducted in an office, but in the lobby of the Capitol Plaza Hotel across the street from the beautiful granite capitol building, and because of the hotel setting I can remember thinking: Is this a real company? Of course, at that time the NIC Vermont subsidiary was brand new, the state's IT architects having decided just that fall to sign a self-funded contract with NIC to move eGovernment forward, which meant that the new portal in Montpelier had no physical office yet; it was indeed a true "startup."

But it didn't stay that way for long. With assistance from the home office in Kansas, the three of us who worked for the portal in 2006 hit the ground running. Inside of the first six months, the Vermont portal office built and launched four robust Web services: a Homestead Declaration service for the Tax Department, an online Court

VIC By the Numbers

Over its first seven years, the Vermont portal's achievements have been significant. Several Web services have become mainstays for Vermont citizens and businesses, including two Tax services that now account for more than 90 percent of all business tax filings and 60 percent of property transfers, respectively, and several DMV services that have similar adoption rates, including DMV Express, which now processes more than 220,000 vehicle registration renewals online annually.

Moving online with VIC has also meant significant cost savings for the state, with more than $10 million in IT cost avoidance achieved by building services through the self-funded model.

$10,000,000
IT COST AVOIDANCE
THROUGH SELF-FUNDED MODEL
SINCE 2007

54 DEPARTMENTS
250+ TOWNS
SERVED

OVER $2 BILLION
SECURE PAYMENTS
PROCESSED

220K+
VERMONT VEHICLE
RENEWALS ANNUALLY
THROUGH DMV EXPRESS

Featured Application: Electronic Current Use – eCUSE

What is eCurrent Use?

In early 2015, the Vermont Department of Taxes launched a comprehensive online workflow service for landowners to apply and enroll their land online to the department's successful Current Use Tax program. The online service empowers landowners, consulting foresters, and town clerks to input and track important information about land parcels to help manage the program more effectively for the Department of Taxes and all stakeholders overall.

Features

eCurrent Use is convenient and easy to use with clear and attractive navigation, enhanced functionality, and upgraded security features. The workflow application features several custom services hand-tailored for individual stakeholders and their unique roles in the process, such as those for County Foresters and Town Clerks. Due to the complexity of the program, the service allows some landowners to send in their paper applications for a fixed period of time, and have them entered into a back-end administrative service.

The application also reduces costs for the department, which no longer needs to commit copious hours of valuable time to handling paper applications and related documentation, cash, and checks; and it provides a comprehensive back-end service to streamline communications among all parties involved.

What Can be Done in eCurrent Use?

- Vermont Landowners - affording the opportunity to complete Current Use applications online and pay their application fee with a credit card or e-check directly from the service.
- Consultants - will bridge the gap between consultants and landowners. The service provides an easy way for consultants to help landowners because they will be able to log in and help complete applications on behalf of landowners.
- County Foresters - County Foresters play a big role with applications that have declared Forest Land; thus, we created a custom service to approve Forest Management Plans and send decision results automatically to the Tax Department.
- Town Clerks/Listers - A custom service allows a work queue for municipal offices to review and finalize applications, then record liens in the town land records electronically.

Meet the PM–Lauren Chouinard

Lauren Chouinard

Vermont Information Consortium would like to introduce our project manager, Lauren Chouinard. Born in Berlin, Lauren is a native Vermonter and a lifelong resident. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Norwich University, and spent the first years of her career after college working in their admissions office. She has been with VIC since August 2013 and in that time has been involved in managing the successful development and deployment of numerous services for the Departments of Motor Vehicles, Taxes, and Health, and is the portal's resident expert in over-the-counter payment processing.

Lauren enjoys everything her home state has to offer, from horseback riding to camping and community events. Recently she and her husband Trym bought a house in Barre, the neighboring town to Montpelier, formerly known as the "Granite Capitol of the World."

As project manager, Lauren is focused on bringing the latest innovations in Web services to strengthen state government's ability to interact with its citizens and businesses. If you have any questions, thoughts, or new ideas, feel free to contact Lauren directly:

Lauren Chouinard, 802-229-4171, lauren.chouinard@egov.com, 147 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602. ■

New and Upcoming Services

- Meat handlers licensing - Agency of Agriculture
- eZPay4kids payments - Office of Child Support
- Break-open tickets - Department of Liquor
- eCurrent Use - Department of Taxes
- Enterprise eLearning - Liquor Control, e911, Libraries
- Teacher license payments - Agency of Education
- Driver's education certification service - Agency of Education & DMV
- Default CMS template - State of Vermont

Security Incident Response: Don't Rush the Notification Timeline

One of the primary concerns when dealing with a security breach is notification to appropriate impacted parties. And, as security breaches and compromised personal information have become nearly a constant in news headlines, there are an increasing number of laws and regulations related to notification in the event of a security breach. In fact, 19 states either introduced or considered security breach legislation in 2014. This year, the Florida Information Protection Act of 2014 was passed, requiring notice to be provided to affected individuals as soon as possible, but no more than 30 days after discovery of the breach. The previous law had a 45-day requirement. Also this year, Kentucky became the latest state to enact security breach legislation, leaving only a few states without any laws requiring notification of security breaches involving personal information.

In connection with any crime scene, whether it is a cybercrime scene or a physical crime scene, notification about the incident is important. In a physical crime scene, it can take days or even weeks to collect toxicology reports or receive conclusive autopsy findings. In general, the public understands and appreciates the time required to collect, analyze, and report the findings of physical crime scene evidence. However, we are seeing something quite different in a cybercrime scene scenario, where expectations are continually being set for companies and cyberforensics professionals to provide immediate and detailed information about a security incident. With a cybercrime, much like with a traditional crime scene, a thorough review of the evidence is essential and a necessary part of the process before any conclusions can be drawn. Despite the expectation, it is advisable to use caution and avoid communicating information too quickly, as this information may eventually turn out to be erroneous or inaccurate. Accordingly, do not rush evidence collection and analysis simply to provide immediate information to the public. Accuracy is paramount, and it is not appropriate to jump to conclusions or make assumptions when you are in the midst of a security breach. Understand state breach notification laws and notification requirements set by federal law, or industry standards, such as the Payment Card Industry's Data Security Standard. In addition, make sure sufficient facts have been gathered before making a public

"With a cybercrime, much like with a traditional crime scene, a thorough review of the evidence is essential and a necessary part of the process before any conclusions can be drawn."

statement. Providing too much information that turns out to be inaccurate could complicate your ability to effectively manage the breach and your credibility. While it is not always avoidable (i.e., you must comply with the law), guard against misstating information by rushing the notification timeline or you may run the risk of having to recant and explain earlier statements provided.

In connection with a physical crime scene, a command post is often established to serve as a location for team meetings as well as the location from which media updates are communicated. In addition, a team is formed and specific roles and responsibilities are assigned regarding the reporting of updates. Setting up a command post may also be a good idea for managing a security breach, depending on the magnitude of the issue. This can go hand in hand and be leveraged with executing on a thorough incident response

plan, which should serve as the guide for handling a security breach, including specific roles and responsibilities for multiple teams, notification, and communication.

One of the first things an incident response plan should establish is identification of the incident response team members. Often, team members identified in the plan include the highest leadership levels within the organization, communications personnel, security and IT professionals, and frontline operations employees. The plan should also clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each incident response team member, including specific action items with associated timelines. Finally, on an annual basis, the plan should undergo a comprehensive review and modifications should be made, where appropriate, and employees should be trained on how to effectively carry out the plan. This will help ensure that the plan is up to date and that incident response team members are prepared should a security incident occur. This will also help alleviate any pressure to report findings immediately as the plan should be followed to guide the communication timeline.

Again, even as new legislation continues to tighten security breach notification timelines that you will be expected to follow, it is not advisable to rush the communication process during a security incident. The best response will stem from taking the necessary time to gather and analyze the cybercrime scene evidence, as well as following a detailed incident response plan. ∎

Executive Summary

Payment application and a comprehensive Attorney Licensing service for the Judiciary, and a Motor Vehicle Record retrieval service for the Department of Motor Vehicles.

In the years since, the Vermont portal has kept up the pace, continuing to expand eGovernment in significant ways for the state. Our collaborative partnership has resulted in more than 160 services and websites since 2007, spanning nearly all agencies, departments, and branches and creating more than $10 million in IT-related cost avoidance for Vermont state government. Along the way we have developed an expansive content management system for website development, a robust Amber Alert notification service, and the nation's first online cost savings calculator. In 2009 and 2010, the state was also awarded Best of the Web Awards by the Center for Digital Government for its state Web portal, www.Vermont.gov, which was designed and developed by VIC.

In the years since that first meeting in the Capitol Plaza Hotel, I have had the good fortune to see the portal grow in these and countless other ways. Now staffed by eight talented Web professionals and with the full resources of NIC at its disposal, VIC is committed to growing eGovernment to increase convenience and efficiency for all Vermonters. Upcoming innovations include an enterprise eLearning platform, a single sign-on identity management solution, and a flexible new CMS template (see article on right) for future websites. With technology ever changing and the demand for online services continuing to grow, the Vermont portal is poised to move boldly to meet the future needs of Vermont, and I'm proud to be part of this team.

Jamie Gage
General Manager, Vermont.gov/VIC

VERMONT
INFORMATION CONSORTIUM

147 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

(802) 229-4171
VT.gov

New Template for the Content Management System

One of the best examples of the fruitful partnership between the state of Vermont and VIC can be found in the Web content management system, first launched in September 2007. In the years since, this system has allowed Vermont to build, launch, and maintain convenient, user-friendly, and media-rich websites for a multitude of departments and agencies such as the Departments of Motor Vehicles, Human Resources, Children and Families, Public Safety, the Governor, and Speaker of the House.

After several years and rolling out more than 80 websites for the state, the time was right in 2014 for a bold redesign powered by a brand new template. VIC partnered with the chief marketing officer and our contract administrator at the Department of Information and Innovation to ensure the new template met the specific and varied enterprise needs of Vermont state government.

In order to achieve maximum flexibility – and without sacrificing brand consistency or ease of rollout for the state – the new system was built from the ground up. The huge increase in recent years of mobile traffic and new technologies such as smartwatches and Internet-connected cars required that the new template be responsive to a variety of screen sizes and platforms, and as future-friendly as possible. Thus, the portal and its partners did extensive market research to bring forward many current best practices in eGovernment website development through the new template.

The close collaboration between the state of Vermont and VIC was instrumental in delivering a flexible and attractive new template to serve on the state's needs. The new template provides a robust platform for all agencies to not only provide information but also to enhance the stream of communication between state government and the citizens it represents – a key goal of the portal and of eGovernment in general. VIC offers this system and hosts government websites at no cost to the state because we believe in the importance of governmental transparency and freedom of information, and as a testament to the strength of the self-funded partnership that we have forged with Vermont. ■