

## Move 'Joined-Up Government' From Theory to Reality

**Andrea Di Maio**

Governments need to deliver on their vision of integrated, "borderless" government. This requires them to "join up" processes and systems within and across government tiers, process hierarchies and the public sector.

## ANALYSIS

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Most government organizations have nearly finished implementing the electronic government strategies that were defined in the late 1990s and revised once or twice since then. The main goal has been to complement established channels with electronic channels, and to exploit the latter to increase internal efficiency and service levels to constituents. As illustrated in our E-Government Hype Cycle (see "Hype Cycle Shows E-Government Overcoming Disillusionment"), e-government has gone through the Trough of Disillusionment, with few successes and the full potential of deploying e-services not being realized. Now, the objective is to use technology to enable transformation and to "join up" government — that is, to overcome government's traditional structure in departments and agencies to deliver a seamless set of services and integrate processes across organization boundaries.

The term "joined-up government" was coined several years ago in the United Kingdom, when Prime Minister Tony Blair presented the first U.K. e-government strategy. This strategy's goal was to "join up" electronic services by 2005. Since then, the term has been widely used worldwide to describe the integration of services, processes, systems, data and applications necessary to achieve a seamless, citizen-centered government.

Implementing this vision of joined-up government requires articulating a definition of "joined up" to identify the issues that must be addressed. The bad news: The challenge can be daunting if you consider all of the different connections that must be made to achieve a coherent joined-up outcome. The good news: You can manage this challenge by identifying areas of joined-up government, setting integration objectives and priorities for each area, and devising plans to achieve those objectives.

There is no single path to joined-up government. Countries, states and cities, as well as individual agencies and departments, must focus on how they intend to — and how they actually do — progress in each area. "What 'Joined-Up Government' Really Means" illustrates the four areas where integration must occur:

- Within a government tier — for example, between the social security and revenue organizations, or between the revenue and customs organizations (see "What to Expect When Joining Up Services in a Government Tier")
- Across different tiers — that is, between processes and systems that are under the responsibility of different levels of government (federal, state, provincial or local) but within a homogeneous policy portfolio, such as integration between criminal-justice-related agencies at various levels (see "What Joining Up Local and National Government Involves")
- Across process hierarchies — that is, between processes at the operational, management and leadership levels to increase their ability and timeliness in responding to events, as well as the ability to sense changes before they occur to achieve agility (see "What Joining Up Government Policy and Operations Means")
- Between the public and private sectors — such as engaging the latter as a service provider and an integrator, intermediary or value-adding provider in constituent service delivery (see "What Linking Government and Private Sector Services Entails")

"Three Technology Areas Support 'Joined-Up Government'" examines the integration and other technologies required for joined-up government.

Progress in joining up government will no longer be measured through the 1-to-4 or 1-to-5 scales that research and consulting companies, as well as governments, have used for years, primarily for public relations purposes rather than as monitoring tools. In joined-up government, what must be measured is how the four integration areas are covered and the progress in each area (see "It's Time for a New Way to Measure Progress of E-Government").

Better managing the channels through which constituents access government services is part of the challenge of joined-up government. "Analyze Government Transactions to Make Them Citizen-Centric" suggests that governments must better understand how citizens use government services to increase citizens' use of online services and call centers. The simplification of business rules and processes that occurs with joined-up government will help move interaction toward more-user-friendly, automated channels, where the level of skills and effort required on constituents will be considerably lower than it is today.

## Features

"What 'Joined-Up Government' Really Means" — Set and measure progress toward objectives for each level of integration to achieve "joined-up government." **By Andrea Di Maio**

"What to Expect When Joining Up Services in a Government Tier" — Plan and prioritize initiatives on policy, people, processes and technology, depending on which level of integration you want to achieve across government tiers. **By Andrea Di Maio**

"What Joining Up Local and National Government Involves" — Establish and maintain a clear focus on organizational and process changes when integrating across tiers. **By Andrea Di Maio**

"What Joining Up Government Policy and Operations Means" — Clarify accountability rules and implement integrated measurement frameworks supported by adequate corporate performance management tools when performing the vertical integration of processes across organizational layers. **By Andrea Di Maio**

"What Linking Government and Private Sector Services Entails" — Gain the long-term commitment from political leaders and government top executives to establish strategic but flexible relationships with private-sector firms. **By Andrea Di Maio**

"Three Technology Areas Support 'Joined-Up Government'" — Identify the interactive, collaborative and integrative technologies that will have the greatest impact on process, data or application integration. **By Christopher Baum**

"It's Time for a New Way to Measure Progress of E-Government" — Appraise your progress toward joined-up government in the four areas of integration: across departments, tiers and process hierarchies, and between public and private sectors. **By Andrea Di Maio**

"Analyze Government Transactions to Make Them Citizen-Centric" — Involve those who are responsible for business rules and processes with e-government strategies and deployment. **By John Kost**

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