



Center for  
Technology in Government

# Digital Government Research Program and Transatlantic Research Partnerships

US National Science Foundation

# NSF

- Independent Federal Agency
  - *Created in 1950 - To promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes.*
- \$5.5B annual budget
  - 95% goes to universities
- Basic Research - equipment, people, education
- All science and engineering disciplines
- External peer review is the key to funding decisions

# Digital Government Research

## Mission and Vision

- A carefully managed program to engage and support CS/IT and Social Science researchers in exploring issues at the intersection of research and practice.
- Brings together researchers and government program managers to tackle problems of common interest, opening new avenues for scientific investigation and leading to strategic knowledge for government agencies
- Inherently interdisciplinary, cross-sector, expensive, collaborative, time consuming
- Focus on topics that are both realistic and risky.
- \$60M in 200 grants over last 8 years plus \$5-8M from agencies
- \$10M annual funding, now part of “intelligent systems” cluster

# Digital Government Model



**Digital Government Research Projects  
Strategic Approach to Bridge  
The Gap**

# Example Government Domains

- Information infrastructure
- Archiving and preservation of government data
- Public comment and decision-making
- Public safety and law enforcement
- Crisis management and emergency response,
- Environmental policy
- Human services
- Democratic practices – citizen engagement, community and IT, voting, legislative processes, e-rulemaking, mediation & dispute resolution

# Participating Agencies

## (An Incomplete List)

- Bureau of the Census
- Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Center for Disease Control
- Coast Guard
- Dept. of Education
- Energy Information Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Forest Service
- General Services Administration
- Library of Congress
- National Archives & Records Administration
- National Cancer Institute
- National Imagery & Mapping Agency
- National Institute of Justice
- National Science Foundation
- National Telecommunications & Information Admin.
- US Geological Survey
- USDA (NASS)
- Various State, Local, Tribal, Regional, International gov't

# DG Outreach and Education

- Actively building a new multi-disciplinary, cross-sector community
  - Workshops (3-4 per year)
  - Press releases, newspaper articles, magazine theme issues
  - Professional association panel presentations
  - Many agency briefings
  - Incubated the Digital Government Society of North America
    - Annual conference: dgo200x (about 200 participants)
    - DG Online line monthly e-newsletter
    - <http://www.dgsociety.org>

# Workshops

1. The Virtual Citizen: A Civic Exploration of the Role of Identity in On-Line Governance
2. The Challenges of Statistical Digital Government
3. Some Assembly Required: Building a DG for the 21st Century
4. Distributed GeoLibraries: Spatial Information Resources
5. Intelligence and Security Informatics - Annual Workshop Series
6. Digital Government and E-Rulemaking
7. Workshop on Digital Archiving and Preservation
8. ICT for Sustainable Development
9. National Workshop on Internet Voting
10. Responding to the Unexpected
11. Information Technology Research for Crisis Management
12. Geographic Information Services Within a Digital Government
13. Biodiversity and Ecosystems Informatics
14. Digital Government: An Urban Research Agenda
15. Elections Systems Standards
16. Research and Development Opportunities in Federal Information Services



# Transatlantic Partnerships

- Supplemental grants for US-EC engagements
  - 10 funded to connect existing ICT research projects on both sides (2 were focused on e-government)
  - New round of supplements does not include e-gov due to change in EC priority areas
- US investigators invited to participate as unfunded partners in EC-FP6 projects (Roadmap 2020 and and Demo-net)
- Funding and focus differences are major challenges but the intellectual engagements are fruitful and ongoing

# Building an international DG research community

- Grant to US Center for Technology in Government to enable more grass-roots partnerships through:
  - four international working groups,
  - annual PhD institute,
  - reconnaissance and evaluation
- Emerging partnerships with China
  - First joint workshop held October 2006
  - Supplemental grants will be available soon

# On-Going DG Programmatic Challenges

- Time consuming-- hand-holding, facilitating introductions, creating venues to encourage academic-gov't partnerships
- Managing expectations, providing services to gov't. & research partners
  - For government agencies -- no “deliverable” - a research grant is not a contract
  - For researchers--keep the agencies informed and engaged, work on feasible projects
  - User involvement, evaluation of results
- Technology and knowledge transition--
  - Life beyond the grant, need to operationalize results and lessons
- Multidisciplinary proposals - a challenge for peer review
  - panel composition must reflect variety of disciplines in proposals
  - Involve gov't staffers in solicitation, review, management