

DATA PROCESSING MANAGERS' ACADEMY III
Class Project

**INFORMATION
SHARING**

October 1993

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I. Background

The 1991 Data Processing Managers' Academy III selected "Information Sharing" as one of two class projects. The project team chose information sharing because we recognized that State information technology (IT) professionals lacked a formal structure and process, as well as incentives, to share critical management and technical information. The project was named "ITSHARE".

The project team predicted the development of an information sharing system would provide the following opportunities:

- Improved strategic and tactical planning
- Better decisions
- Reduction/elimination of duplicate efforts
- Lower costs
- Expanded knowledge base
- Cooperation among State agencies
- Better and faster service to the Public resulting in improved State image.

The project objectives included the ability to:

- facilitate continuous information sharing between Information Technology (IT) professionals in State government; and
- promote interaction among IT professionals.

We required a solution that:

- provides information access to a wide range of IT professionals;
- offers an easy-to-use method/system;
- capitalizes on the State's infrastructure of data center networks;
- provides a repository of IT information, including schedules of current events/activities by interest groups; and
- provides an ability to converse with other IT professionals with similar interests.

The project team examined two alternatives and concluded that an electronic bulletin board system (BBS) best met all the project objectives and functional requirements. In December 1991, the project analysis and plan was documented (refer to December 1991 Information Technology Challenges document) and presented to the California Forum on Information Technology (CFIT).

To evaluate the benefits of a statewide BBS, the team recruited ITSHARE participants from Data Processing Managers' Academies I, II, III and IV, as well as Academy sponsors and managers. The project team sponsored an ITSHARE kick-off to provide a system overview and user training to approximately fifty (50) participants. A six month ITSHARE pilot study was conducted from July 1992 through December 1992.

The team installed the pilot BBS on the existing electronic mail network which links the Health and Welfare Agency Data Center (HWDC) and the Teale Data Center. The decision was made to use HWDC's Totally Automated Office (TAO) software that was already in place.

Following the six month pilot, an evaluation survey (see Appendix) was developed and sent out to all pilot participants. We received twenty-two responses (44%).

II. Attainment of Objectives

Although we believe ITSHARE facilitates continuous information sharing, IT professionals involved in the pilot did not take advantage of this opportunity. In turn, ITSHARE did not stimulate the anticipated interaction among IT professionals.

III. Special Observations

As IT managers, we provide concepts and direction to our staff. For this project, however, we had no staff and had to rely totally on team members and staff from Teale Data Center and Health and Welfare Data Center to perform technical and support tasks. In addition, we all had our day-to-day work responsibilities to contend with, leaving us very little time to commit to this project.

Although the BBS concept is very successful in the technical arena, we feel management is not accustomed to using this mode of communication. Technicians with similar technical questions and concerns become "champions" of bulletin boards because of a common need to share timely technical information.

On the other hand, management information, although valuable to other managers, is not necessarily needed at a common point in time. Information on strategic direction or development projects are not valuable to IT managers until such time as they are ready to embark on that particular issue.

According to our survey results, TAO may not have been the best software to use for this pilot; however, TAO was chosen since it was already installed, contained acceptable basic functions, and was immediately available for use. Many users had difficulty accessing ITSHARE and found further problems navigating through the system.

Unless users are motivated or realize significant benefits, user support and interaction with the BBS can not be realized. Additionally, in order for the information to be current and useful, users must contribute data and initiate interaction among IT professionals in their areas of expertise.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

In order to promote information sharing, a statewide electronic BBS is a good concept and works very well in most technical environments. Our pilot, however, determined that State IT professionals are not yet ready to embrace this concept. We predict the development and implementation of a statewide electronic BBS in the future. However, in order to be successful, the BBS must be directed to the appropriate audience, easy to use, up-to-date and effectively supported or championed.

As of this report, ITSHARE has been discontinued. This report concludes the Data Processing Managers' Academy III class project for "Information Sharing".

APPENDIX

ITSHARE Evaluation Survey

1. Have you used the ITSHARE BBS? YES ___ NO ___

a. If YES, how often?

Daily ___ Weekly ___ Monthly ___ Only once or twice ___

b. If NO, why? (after responding, skip to question 11)

2. Have you used the Conferencing Topics? YES ___ NO ___
(If NO, skip to Question 3)

a. Which topical area(s) did you use?

___ A.USER.GUIDE	___ CASE	___ COMMUNICATIONS
___ DBMS	___ DPMACAD4	___ DPMADV.ACAD
___ DPMGR.ASSN	___ EIS	___ EXEMPLARY
___ EXPERT.SYSTEMS	___ FRONT.PAGE	___ IMAGING
___ INFOCAL	___ ITSHARE.COMM	___ ITSHARE.EVAL
___ LIGHTSIDE.HUMOR	___ PCs	___ QUALITY.MGT
___ QUOTES	___ SQL	___ UNIX

b. Please list any topical areas you would like added to ITSHARE.

c. How would you rate its ease of use?

___ Easy ___ Moderate ___ Difficult ___ Not worth the effort

3. Have you used the Events Calendars? YES ___ NO ___
(If NO, skip to Question 4)

a. Were there any calendars or events which should have been listed, but were not?
Please list:

ITSHARE EVALUATION SURVEY
(CONTINUED)

3. b. How would you rate the ease of adding events to the Events Calendars?
___ Easy ___ Moderate ___ Difficult ___ Not worth the effort

4. If there were any areas of the ITSHARE you did NOT use, please state why.

5. Are there any other services that you would like to see added to ITSHARE? Please list.

6. Did you (or do you currently) have any problems gaining access to the ITSHARE?
YES ___ NO ___
If YES, please explain: _____

7. Did ITSHARE provide information that was applicable to your work in any of the following areas?

- a. Did ITSHARE save you time or effort? YES ___ NO ___
- b. Did ITSHARE facilitate a decision? YES ___ NO ___
- c. Did ITSHARE provide useful knowledge or information? YES ___ NO ___
- d. Did ITSHARE provide you with any new DP contacts? YES ___ NO ___

8. Did you seek any technical assistance? YES ___ NO ___
If YES, were your needs met? YES ___ NO ___
Please explain: _____

ITSHARE EVALUATION SURVEY
(CONTINUED)

9. Do you have any suggestions that may make ITSHARE more useful or easier to use?

10. Did you contribute information or services to the ITSHARE? YES ___ NO ___

If YES, please explain: _____

11. Name: _____

Organization: _____

May we contact you? YES ___ Phone () _____ - _____ NO ___

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO ASSIST US IN THE ITSHARE EVALUATION PROCESS.

PLEASE RETURN ALL COMPLETED SURVEYS BY FEBRUARY 26, 1993 TO:

KIRBY FUKUSHIMA
CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY
600 N. 10TH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814