

NASCIO Recognition Awards: **Digital Government: Data, Information, and Knowledge Management**

**National Association of State Chief Information Officers
2008 Recognition Awards Nomination**

Title: Washington, DC's Data Rich TechStat Program

Category: Data, Information and Knowledge Management

State Nominating: Washington, DC

NASCIO Recognition Awards: **Digital Government: Data, Information, and Knowledge Management**

NASCIO Recognition Awards: TechStat

B. Executive Summary

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) of the Government of the District of Columbia created a performance-based accountability program that examines technical issues.

TechStat provides a solutions-oriented approach by leveraging best-practice research and open communications between functions.

Modeled after Mayor Adrian M. Fenty's CapStat program and similar initiatives across the country, TechStat originated in September 2007 with the Chief Technology Officer's (CTO's) desire to review the efficiency and value of technology spent across the District.

TechStat not only focuses on technology, but a myriad of other issues affecting government operations including procurement, finance, communications, and human resources.

Sessions are largely data-driven, bringing attention to any barriers to successful project completion, and provide an opportunity for the CTO to commit the necessary resources and remove persistent roadblocks. While TechStat is still in its infancy, the District is already reaping the benefits of the program.

C. Business Problem and Solution

Prior to May 2007, IT project management in OCTO followed a traditional format: create specifications and periodically assess progress against them subjectively. This approach resulted in projects that consumed resources, exceeded budget, and failed to meet delivery dates.

As mentioned earlier, TechStat is based on the nationwide ‘Stat’ concept that focuses on enhancing service delivery to residents. TechStat focuses on IT planning, spending, and execution. TechStat is also distinguished from other programs because of its use of the agency’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These metrics measure how well program areas are meeting the CTO’s expectations and the Mayor’s citywide objectives.

In a sixty minute session, the CTO convenes the entire project team to examine data, explore ways to improve services, and agree to deadlines for action items. Each session requires the attendance of the CTO and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and heads the PMO (Portfolio Management Office) to make real-time decisions on resources to keep projects on track. The setting for these sessions is the CTO’s War Room which facilitates roundtable discussions with multiple projected data sets and allows for real-time access to the intelligence necessary to make informed decisions.

TechStat sessions are characterized by lively discussions on critical business issues, technology innovation, and strategic execution. Sessions also allow directors to ensure that their programs’ performance indicators are accurate and meaningful, as well as offer an opportunity to directly connect with the CTO in an unfiltered setting.

D. Significance to the Improvement of the Operation of Government

Before TechStat, OCTO had no regular, systematic, data-rich process for studying and understanding the causes of IT failure. OCTO also lacked the concept of identifying and replicating the sources of success. TechStat has proven to be a powerful engine for improving government operations. Previous sessions have produced the following:

- A new approach to cell phone purchasing: Rather than continuing to purchase an individual plan for each cell phone user, OCTO asked each of our three approved cell phone vendors to pool minutes for all users across the entire District government, yielding substantial savings.
- A reduction in the time required to incorporate each new agency into OCTO's Remedy change management system from 2-2.5 weeks to 48 hours
- Desktop support service delivery assessments with best-practice research comparisons

TechStat sessions are scheduled according to needs and opportunities for improvement. Data driven and solutions-oriented program directors and managers are prepared prior to the session to ensure that the CTO is presented with an accurate assessment of any particular project or program area. Follow-up meetings are regularly scheduled to revisit topics, discuss progress, and identify project delays.

The combination of continuous stock-market performance analysis and data-driven TechStat analysis has enabled OCTO to identify project performance problems early, determine their causes, and get them back on course (or cancel them) rapidly, further avoiding wasteful government spending.

E. Benefits

TechStat’s benefits are increased government accountability, efficiency, and improved service delivery. OCTO leads in aligning agency goals with those of the Mayor, and thereby positioning the District as a world-class city.

Return on Investment

Given TechStat’s relative youth, the demonstrable financial benefits of the program are slowly starting to be realized. The added value of these sessions is most clearly seen qualitatively, as well as in the advancement of agency and District goals. Many session topics are reflective of the Mayor’s vision for the District.

In a recent TechStat session, OCTO reviewed the District’s KPI progress of the deployment of ruggedized laptops for first responders. This session brought together the IT leads from the following public safety agencies: Office of Unified Communications (OUC), Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS), and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). The CTO reviewed the deployment status for MPD (figure 1) and immediately noticed the incongruence between the scheduled and actual deployment figures.

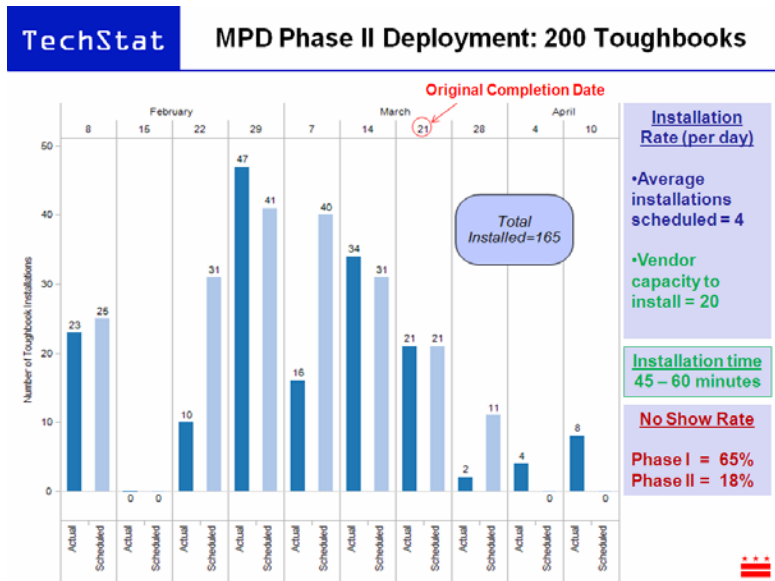


Figure 1

These agencies immediately re-allocated resources, removed communications gaps, and agreed upon new deployment deadlines.