Transforming Technology Needs into Deeds: A Clerk’s Perspective.

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Three Required Components to Legislative Technology Development.

- **End users (a.k.a. Clients)** – i.e. Chamber leadership, individual legislators, staff, state agencies, and constituents.
- **Administrators (a.k.a. Dreamers or Innovators)** – Clerks, Secretaries, chamber leadership, and state agency heads.
- **Information Technology (a.k.a. Brain Trust or Developers)** – project managers, programmers, trainers, and magicians.

**Expectation** - Create new cutting edge and useful technology by: accurately defining all processes and downstream effects, obtain all proper approvals, tread lightly on history while resisting the urge to embrace antiquity, observe specific goals, milestones and deadlines, be agile, conduct open participant discussions weekly, appreciate war stories and precedents, know when to stop innovating, and above all...meet the highest level of objectives and perform miracles with very little time, resources, or money.
As a Clerk or Secretary, what role do I play with technology development?

The Legislative Clerk or Secretary:
- Is the Chief Administrative Officer for their legislative chamber, providing leadership and members with guidance for administrative and personnel matters.
- Manages the flow of legislation such as the introduction of bills, organizes the amendment and calendar processes, directs the engrossing and enrolling of legislative measures.
- Assists legislators and staff with procedural issues and rule-oriented troubleshooting.
- Leads initiatives for many procedural and technology enhancements for the legislative process.
- Communicates data to the public.
- Other duties as assigned.
How does the Texas House develop technology?

• We don’t just replicate or replace the paper record.
• We embrace dynamic use of data.
• We do our best to create systems that can fit into our existing chamber rules and office protocols.
• We diagram the possible consequences and problems that may occur.
• We try to provide at least four or more practical improvements to our client’s (members/staff) existing work processes.
• We routinely solicit legislative community input...being open to ideas but without promises to design specific for everyone’s individual office processes (community benefit approach).
• We invite our skeptics to be part of the project.
Basic considerations for successful collaboration in the legislative environment:

• Keep the vision to five minutes or less.
• Start a whisper campaign during the project within the community to stimulate discussion.
• Never hesitate to discuss your vision with any and all who may be affected or involved.
• Expect milestones, weekly visits, and open dialogue.
• Recognize your limitations and identify where to stop the process of innovation for your project.
• Install your IT team as observers on the floor during the session.
• Pledge to learn the processes and vocabulary of other participants and promote reciprocal learning opportunities of your needs and processes.
• Always consider how your innovation will affect the other chamber?
• Be a project’s Evangelist!
My approach to prosperous technology development?

- Manage the relationship with legislative leaders.
- Strive to not use technology as merely a replacement for a piece of paper.
- Be prudent as a project leader, closely aligning technology with existing chamber rules and office protocols.
- Develop an interest in the process that stimulates creativity and application troubleshooting.
- Focus on providing a minimum of four improvements for your target user.
- Solicit community input...but resist designing a process only for individuals.
- Invite and engage any potential skeptics early to be part of the project.
Proposing technology for archaic processes…good or evil?

• More paper records will be retired and processes streamlined.
• Wrestling with the ever present quandary of “What is the official record?”
• Users will increasingly become the data entry point in legislative systems.
• Promoting a lack of socialization in a very people-oriented environment.
• Creation of more reporting tools that organize and revolutionize the way legislators and staff communicate with constituents.
• Elected members and staff will embrace real-time data and the process speeds up…sometimes eliminating traditional human controls.
• House Rules will have to be modified/adopted at the beginning of a session to enact procedural changes.
Expectations and Hopeful Outcomes

• Multiple presentations and staff interactions to produce widespread acceptance for this new idea. - (Technological Evangelism)
• Implementation into the work environment must be on time.
• Early technology adoption will provide opportunities for streamlining parliamentary rules and encourage future technology development.
• Obtain quantifiable feedback on the idea from legislators to promote majority buy-in and fine tune future innovation.
• Institutional changes are difficult, but successful technologies can create widespread data confidence and pride in the institution.
• Creation of new legislative technology will stimulate group thinking, cost savings, and innovative solutions for all participants.
• When new leadership is expected, implementation is still pending final approval.