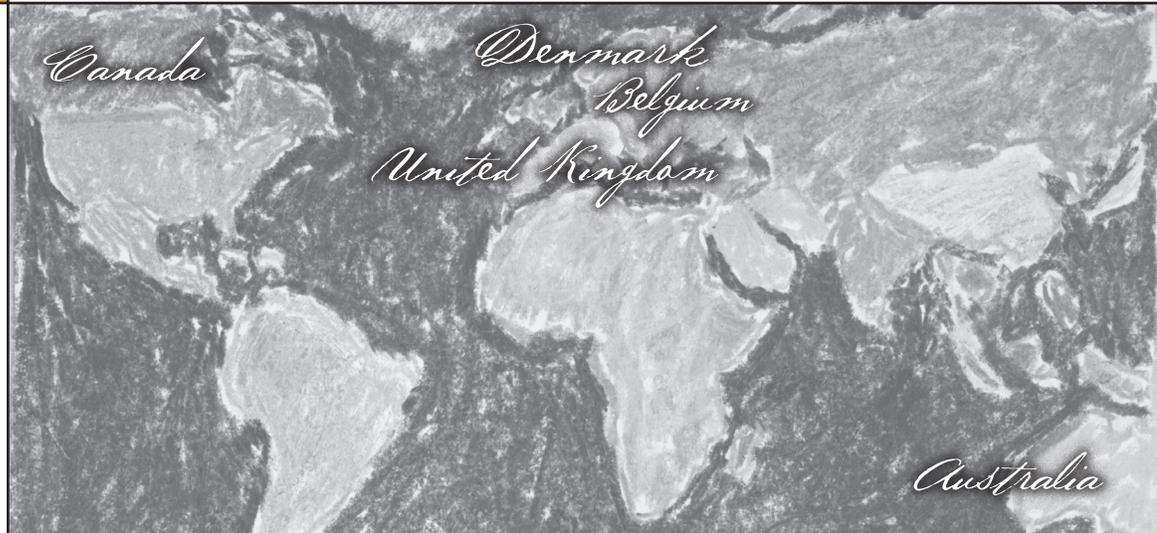




Collaboration: Networks and Partnerships Series

Integrating Service Delivery Across Levels of Government: Case Studies of Canada and Other Countries



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The Business of Government

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the IBM Center for The Business of Government, we are pleased to present this report, "Integrating Service Delivery Across Levels of Government: Case Studies of Canada and Other Countries," by Jeffrey Roy and John Langford. This report examines the progress and challenges in integrating service delivery efforts in Canada. It offers significant lessons for other countries interested in dramatically improving how they deliver services to citizens and businesses.

In the United States, the federal government created a one-stop portal, GovBenefits.gov. This portal serves as a screening tool to help citizens find federal government benefits that they may be eligible to receive. As of mid-2008, it has 28 participating federal agencies and includes 386 programs. However, according to its website: "GovBenefits.gov does not offer application services for benefits and cannot guarantee eligibility for specific programs." In addition, the site states: "GovBenefits.gov is not designed to be a comprehensive listing of all programs for which someone is eligible. Its purpose is to give you a list of benefits you may be eligible to receive and then to provide information about how to apply for those programs."

Similarly, the U.S. Small Business Administration hosts Business.gov as a single portal to federal services that touch American businesses. It partners with 21 other federal agencies to provide government services and information for business, and provides access to many state and local resources as well.

While the U.S. has developed useful resources, it has not made as much progress in integrating service delivery between agencies, let alone between levels of government, as have a number of other countries. Hopefully, this report will serve as both inspiration and a blueprint to U.S. federal and state leaders in the future. Fortunately, other countries have served as a testing ground on which the United States can learn and build.



Albert Morales



Curtis Clark

The authors of this report have noted that the progress to date in Canada at all levels stems from active leadership by career government executives. They describe several steps that the Canadian government might consider as it extends its service delivery integration beyond the federal level. The authors identify the criticality of political leadership in being able to move to the next step. This will likely be the case in the United States as well.

We hope the cutting-edge ideas in this report stimulate an active discussion in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere around the power of the idea of citizen-centered service delivery in an increasingly connected world.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governments across the globe wrestle with a common set of challenges when delivering services. First, how do you ensure citizens can identify and receive a mix of services that are right for them? And second, how do you design a service delivery system that can deliver those services?

While the challenges seem deceptively simple, addressing them is not.

This report examines ongoing Canadian efforts to integrate the delivery of citizen-oriented services across the various levels of the public sector, particularly the autonomous federal and provincial governments. It identifies challenges to, and strategies for, better integrating the delivery of citizen-oriented services across such boundaries. These strategies are based, in part, on experiences from four other countries that are also integrating their service delivery networks. Understanding these common challenges and strategies can help other countries understand how to design and undertake similar efforts.

Global Trends Toward Integrated Networks of Service Delivery

Public services are traditionally delivered through a plethora of government agencies via programs that are not connected with each other. Many times, these programs are delivered by different levels of government, oftentimes with different qualification requirements for service recipients. Increasingly, the services are being delivered on behalf of the government by private and nonprofit organizations through a network. In the midst of this decentralized fragmentation, there is a global movement in both the public and private sectors to be more “citizen- or

customer-centric” in the design and delivery of services. These services are oftentimes delivered through a network of providers organized around a common mission or programmatic outcome, such as reducing childhood poverty or improving education and employment prospects for teens.

The network model for service delivery recognizes the failure of traditional hierarchical government organizations to successfully deal with the complexity and interaction among many of the tough social and economic policy challenges facing societies. It also recognizes the inability of individual agencies or governments to interconnect and reach out to wider community-based stakeholders. In addition, the network model seeks to avoid the inefficiencies inherent in earlier efforts to reorganize government agencies into single large units. Instead, it focuses on engaging existing agencies in joint problem solving without wasting time on reorganization or re-establishment of formal authorities. The rapid increase in technology allows this new collaborative approach to be a successful substitute for the old hierarchical approach to service design and delivery.

Canadian Innovations in Integrating the Delivery of Services

Canada has been a pioneer in adopting a network approach to delivering integrated services. At the federal level, it began in the late 1990s with its “Government On-Line” initiative to put a range of key services online so citizens could transact services with government over the Internet. This effort spawned the “Modernizing Services for Canadians” initiative in 2002, which resulted in a long-term plan of action. These two initiatives contributed to a third service integration effort: Service Canada.

Launched in 2005, Service Canada provides a one-stop point of access for Canadians to a wide range of federal programs and services. In some cases, Service Canada also delivers services on behalf of other government departments and agencies. It has a staff of about 20,000 working in about 600 locations across the country. Complementing its own online portal is a single point of contact by telephone (1-800-O-CANADA), where Service Canada staff can provide immediate assistance or redirection to any public inquiry on any matter of federal jurisdiction. The Service Canada initiative better enables the federal government to design an integrated set of service strategies for specific groups of people, such as the elderly or youth.

In parallel, each of the 10 Canadian provinces has created similar service integration ventures, many of which pre-date Service Canada. This report highlights three as examples:

- **The Province of Nova Scotia.** The province has developed an integrated service delivery strategy led by a separate department, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR). Within this ministry, a separate division, “Access Nova Scotia,” is responsible for managing the interface of external delivery channels between the province and its citizens. Traditionally focused on motor vehicle licensing and renewals, the branding of its provincial services centers as “Access Nova Scotia” reflects a broadening suite of service offerings and a government-wide mentality, one supported by a similar branding online and via an integrated call center.
- **The Province of British Columbia.** The province launched a “citizen-centric service delivery” initiative, Service BC, which operates as an autonomous division within the Ministry of Labour and Citizen Services. Service BC has recently forged an innovative performance-based partnership with a private sector consortium led by IBM Canada to develop a multi-channel delivery network that encourages electronic delivery of services in more efficient and integrated ways.
- **The Province of New Brunswick.** The province empowered a separate crown corporation, Service New Brunswick (SNB), to provide a

single point of entry for both citizens and businesses. SNB has forged service agreements with provincial departments as well as municipal governments to provide more efficient and effective service across the province.

As both the federal and provincial governments create integrated service delivery platforms, the next challenge will be to integrate across the two levels of government and extend the integration effort to municipal and First Nations (indigenous) governments as well.

The Challenges of Integrating Service Delivery Across Levels of Government

Integrating the delivery of services to citizens and businesses across federal and provincial governments is far more challenging than integrating within each level of government, because the Canadian public sector is a political federation that grants sovereignty to both the federal government as well as the 10 provinces.

Traditionally, a federal form of government ensures political independence and separation between levels of government. However, federalism is being redefined in the age of collaborative networks. The more contemporary emphasis is on administrative interdependence and synergistic ties between service delivery systems developed by different levels of government. Because of strong professional links between administrators at the federal and provincial levels in Canada, there is a high degree of informal coordination at the administrative levels between federal and provincial public administrators. But this will likely not be enough.

Interestingly, the global trend toward greater networks and collaboration is relying on federated systems. But instead of “federation” being used to ensure independence and autonomy, it is now being used to provide a governance framework for greater integration. The report examines these trends in several other countries and identifies a series of common challenges and strategies to address them that can be adapted to the Canadian context.

Lessons from Other Countries in Integrating Service Delivery Systems

The experiences of four other countries in implementing integrated service delivery systems may be instructive. Each used a different strategy in their approach to designing and implementing an integrated service delivery system that reflected the needs of their own political context:

- *Belgium* is a political federation, focused on creating identity management and interoperability standards—which helped drive administrative simplification across all layers of government.
- *The United Kingdom's* central government recently granted a measure of domestic autonomy to Scotland. Scotland, in turn, chose to invest heavily in a consultative approach with its citizens and communities to jointly define and design service goals. This section also contains a case study of an English county, Buckinghamshire, which has pursued a pilot to integrate all service delivery in its jurisdiction, including local districts and towns.
- *Denmark* is politically a unitary state, focused on the creation of a common service architecture that reaches across all levels of government. Nationally, it emphasizes online delivery, but municipalities serve as the frontline service integrator offline.
- *Australia* has a political federal system similar to that of Canada. Australia has undertaken many service integration efforts, most notably the 1997 creation of Centrelink as an autonomous public service provider that has initiated a wide range of direct federal-to-local service provider partnerships.

Political Leadership: A Prerequisite to Building Effective Collaboration Across Levels of Government

A key design question in going forward with a network approach to service delivery in a multi-level federal system is how to retain the benefits of political federalism while creating additional value for the citizen through a more collaborative approach to service integration across levels of government and different sectors of society, such as nonprofits.

This cannot be solved by professional administrators. Political leadership is necessary. When the authors examined several service delivery integration initiatives in other countries, they found a common element of their success was that their political leaders had become actively engaged. Based on these observations, the authors believe more direct political engagement in the service innovation agenda in Canada is now a necessary next step. Greater political engagement will allow the eventual formation of new and more collaborative political mechanisms that are necessary in order to underpin the formation of shared and more seamless governance models capable of deepening the alignment and integration of services across levels of government.

Strategies Common to the Successful Integration of Service Delivery Systems

As the authors examined several service delivery integration initiatives in other countries, they found that, irrespective of the political form of government, there seem to be common patterns and strategies from these initiatives that can inform the design and implementation of an integrated service delivery system that reaches across levels of government. These include:

- **Create a collaborative network-based governance framework.** Forge a more robust set of conditions and learning opportunities for accelerating the development of network-based governance mechanisms that transcend traditional jurisdictional silos.
- **Engage citizens and communities in design and delivery.** Engage a wider set of stakeholders including municipal governments, First Nations communities, private and not-for-profit organizations, and service recipients more broadly.
- **Create a common technology infrastructure.** Collaboratively build a service architecture used by all levels of government that emphasizes open standards and interoperable information systems across all government levels as much as possible.
- **Agree on a common identity management framework.** Create a formalized governance framework that emphasizes collaborative

planning and shared forms of accountability. This framework would serve as a foundation for the development of a national system to create a common approach to identify individuals participating in government programs.

The difficult challenge for Canada's public sector leaders is to collaborate politically while at the same time innovate administratively. Both are necessary in order to embrace greater interdependence and more seamless service delivery architectures in a manner that respects—but is not stymied by—the jurisdictional boundaries and the accountability requirements of each level of government.

Part I:

Global Trends in Integrating
Service Delivery

Drivers of Demand for Service Delivery Integration

Two trends are driving a global demand to integrate the delivery of citizen-oriented services across levels of government. First, government agencies are adopting a citizen-centric philosophy in the delivery of their services because they see better outcomes and because technological advances make it easier to do. And second, governments, nonprofits, and the private sector are all increasingly using collaborative networks across organizational and political boundaries to do business because they have found the network model dramatically improves their effectiveness.

Service Integration Efforts Are Increasingly Citizen-Centered

The drive toward more integrated service delivery stems from two inter-related streams of thought and reform that have converged during the past 15 years: first, a philosophy of citizen-centric governance and service that emphasizes better outcomes and performance over process; and secondly, the emergence of the Internet and new digital technologies that underpin electronic government (e-government) and widen opportunities for electronic service delivery.

The emergence of citizen-centric governance is partly owed to a reform movement that evolved during the 1980s and 1990s known as New Public Management (NPM). The NPM movement placed customer service at the core of the public sector mission, instituted business-inspired management flexibility, and used, wherever possible, market and competitive forces in the design and delivery of services. The corresponding emphasis on measuring service and focusing on bottom-line performance improvements underpinned public sector experimentation with new “agency” models—more organizationally autonomous units empowered to

improve service and performance in a particular niche area.

The NPM movement is predominantly competitive and decentralizing in its approach to the design and delivery of services. In contrast, the trends toward e-government and electronic services have brought about a broader and more centralizing mind-set in recent years. As is the case with many online commercial activities such as banking and shopping, the customer-oriented service transformation movement encourages the continual expansion of centralized and integrated online portals (ICCS 2003; Microsoft 2006; Escobar 2007; Dutil et al. 2007).

A core challenge for the design and implementation of e-government’s enterprise architecture is determining the extent to which integration of services should be aggressively pursued through a single service provider (Fountain 2001; Curtin 2003; Culbertson 2005). From a technology perspective, pursuing greater interoperability across enterprise-wide architectures (important elements of a platform for service delivery) for the public sector as a whole has often become a centralizing force (Dunleavy et al. 2005). Yet a significant novelty in this digital environment is the manner by which centralization and collaboration are viewed as interlinked rather than at odds with one another. As one leading review of national government usage of information and communications technologies (ICT) reports:

Governance of ICT continues to evolve toward greater centralization of ICT management and functions. Collaboration continues to be encouraged, with an even stronger emphasis on collaboration across

sectors to create networked government (International Council for IT in Government Administration 2006, 1).

Along with the need for an enterprise-wide perspective on information and infrastructure, public sector leaders also understand that in order to achieve better outcomes (i.e., the citizen-centric portion of the puzzle), frontline flexibility and specialization are of paramount importance. Achieving this balance is at the heart of the service transformation agenda (Allen et al. 2005; Roy 2006a).

Conceptually, then, a number of organizing models for service integration are possible, including:

- **A single service provider:** a lead entity responsible for managing the entire network of delivery channels and service offerings for the government as a whole.
- **One or more service integrators:** multiple service entities with functional or portfolio-based service delivery responsibilities cutting across multiple departments and agencies.
- **A single window (or portal) for service navigation:** a lead entity responsible solely for managing the initial interface or point of contact between a citizen and the government (thereby providing information or redirecting the citizen to the appropriate transactional venue).

Governments continue to struggle to define the optimal model within the boundaries of their own jurisdictions. As a general rule, smaller jurisdictions, often subnational in scope, have found it easier to embrace the single service provider logic than have larger and more diverse jurisdictions. As a continuum, however, the trend across the developed world is shifting beyond the single window model toward some form of integrated and aligned service offerings that reconfigure business models across the front-end interface and back-end processing systems (Millard et al. 2004; Kernaghan 2005; Coe et al. 2007).

Collaborative Networks Are Spreading Across Political Boundaries

With much effort devoted within each jurisdiction to achieving fully realized service integration, why

then is there a need to address cross-jurisdictional issues—most commonly for a country as a whole?

The answer lies in the aforementioned evolution from a pre-Internet world of competition and customer to an online world also emphasizing collaboration and integration. Collaboration stems from the tremendous opportunities for sharing information and aligning (if not integrating) service offerings across different providers. The resulting networked architecture of service delivery, predicated on more seamless governance, is reflected in its earliest iteration in what the UK and other jurisdictions at times refer to as “joined up” government (Batini et al. 2002; Bellamy et al. 2005; Astron 2006; Cross 2007).

But there is no obvious reason why this latter push for more seamless governance would stop at any jurisdictional boundary defined politically by geographic territory. The rhetoric routinely espoused by government leaders suggests a public less and less tolerant not only of government silos within a jurisdiction but also boundaries and separate processes across multiple levels of government.

This boundary-spanning dimension of service transformation has fostered considerable intellectual ferment around the concept of the collaborative or network state. One recent publication hails collaboration as the foundation for a new approach to delivering public services: “It presents the possibility of replacing old rigidities with flexible federations of public bodies that can quickly sense and adapt to changing needs, at the same time creating new forums that bring people and institutions together to identify shared problems and work collaboratively on problems” (Parker and Gallagher 2007).

To implement this vision, governments must collaborate internally from the top to bottom of organizations, as well as across agencies. But the vision goes further than the stated goals of “joined-up government” to call for collaboration across levels of government and, as importantly, with local service providers and users in co-design and co-production. This requires new forms of leadership and network management skills at all levels of government as well as resource-sharing arrangements and governance structures designed to support collaborative arrangements (Bakvis and Juillet 2005; Johnson 2005; Lindquist 2005).

This type of thinking is fed by ideas and concepts from the wired world and, more specifically, by the potential of Internet-based direct democracy and citizen-centered service delivery. By contrast with the NPM customer-oriented roots of service transformation, there is an anti-market dimension to this model of public administration, which sees in integration and alignment of services the opportunity to connect governments, private sector firms, community-based service providers, and service users as *citizens* in the development and delivery of integrated services and through more robust engagement and accountability relationships.

The network model recognizes the failure of traditional hierarchical government organizations to successfully deal with the complexity and interaction among many of the tough social and economic policy challenges facing societies and the inability of individual agencies or governments to interconnect and reach out to wider community-based stakeholders. The network model also seeks to avoid the inefficiencies inherent in earlier efforts to reorganize government agencies into single large units by focusing on engaging existing agencies in joint problem solving without wasting time on reorganization or re-establishment of formal authorities (Goldsmith and Eggers 2004; Kettl 2005).

In this sense, it may be, in part, antithetical to the centralizing tendencies of the mainstream service integration movement, the formal divisions of authority inherent in traditional federalism, and, in Canada at least, the insignificant role accorded to municipal governments in inter-jurisdictional relationships. Governments in Canada and elsewhere are thus left to find a balance between the immediate opportunities and limitations of incremental or transitional change within individual federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdictions, and the longer-term potential for more collaborative and integrated transformational change across sectors and levels of government (Roy 2006b; Borins et al. 2007).

Whether the public is demanding a fully seamless, networked public sector for any given country, or even significant movement in this direction, is a more complex and contested notion (Turner 2004; Dutil et al. 2007). Yet there is evidence to suggest that the public is demanding that governments work together more effectively, across both policy and

service delivery realms (Heintzman and Marson 2005; Kernaghan 2005; Borins et al. 2007). As we shall see, a number of countries are taking significant steps in this direction, charting a collaborative, integrative service transformation strategy based upon a relatively seamless governance architecture featuring formal inter-governmental planning and coordinating mechanisms.

One irony of the digital age may be that countries that are not federations politically may have an easier time embracing the logic of federated and seamless service models across multiple government and sectoral levels. In this context, the term *federated* is used in a technological and organizational sense rather than a traditional political connotation.

Part II:

Integrating Service Delivery
Networks: Progress in Canada

Evolution of Canadian Federal Government Initiatives

The Canadian federal government has undertaken a series of initiatives over the past decade in order to better integrate and improve the delivery of services to its citizens. Similar initiatives have been started at the provincial level. This section describes some of the main efforts that have been undertaken in recent years by federal and provincial governments, setting the stage for a review of efforts to integrate the delivery of services across these traditionally separate administrative and political systems.

The Government On-Line Initiative: Putting Federal Services Online

The Canadian federal government joined the 1990s' global movement toward e-government. The impetus for the major components of the Canadian federal e-government strategy arose from a broader government effort to transform its service delivery system, called *Connecting Canadians*, which was crafted in the late 1990s. That effort led to a 1999 pledge by the government to achieve comprehensive online service delivery by 2004. This effort was called the Government On-Line Initiative. According to Coe:

The Government On-Line Initiative (GOL) was launched ... to provide Canadians with electronic access to key federal programs and services. The initiative focuses on grouping or "clustering" online services around citizen's needs and priorities, rather than by government structures (Coe 2004, 6).

The Canadian federal government championed its progress in this initiative by showcasing a series of citizen satisfaction surveys with online delivery channels¹ and the results of various surveys such as Accenture's annual rankings. Much of this recogni-

tion was owed initially to the government's main portal that, in the spirit of integrated service delivery, is grouped according to clusters of services and specific client groups.² A key objective of GOL was to ensure that the 130 most common federal services were online by 2005. In 2005, the GOL program formally ended, giving way to a broader service transformation effort—Service Canada—discussed below.

By 2004, some 122 of these services were "identifiable" online (meaning access to some information about them was featured on government web pages; the remaining services are internal to government and therefore not conveyed publicly online). Most offerings, however, were informational, rather than transactional, and the ability to fully complete services and make payment remained more limited. Some examples include integrated change-of-address features, online tax-return filing, business registration, submission of select statements of employment, applying for government employment, and a variety of purchases for government publications.³

One challenge facing government strategists was the uncertainty in terms of service offerings across different delivery channels and both the evolution and management of demand levels and supply capacities. Many early online services models floundered on overly optimistic projections for take-up levels, and the government of Canada has been criticized by the federal auditor general for lacking a rigorous business plan to guide GOL: "With only high-level expected outcomes, there is no clearly defined end state for GOL. The government will have difficulty measuring progress and performance...." (Auditor General of Canada 2003, 10). At the same time, however, more recent experiences with user fees

and self-financing delivery models (largely predicated on outsourcing portal-based solutions and their maintenance to the private sector) have begun to demonstrate more sophistication and success, particularly in high-volume transaction areas (Peterson 2005).

Indeed, an argument can be made that, as with many early e-government efforts in the 1990s, GOL was predicated more on enthusiasm and hype surrounding the Internet's spectacular growth than on a well-conceived strategy for multi-channel management and the opportunities and constraints in manipulating these channel offerings over time. Despite this shaky start, the importance of multi-channels and online delivery mechanisms in particular quickly became evident due to the steady migration of Canadians to Internet-based interactions with the public sector. Figure 1 illustrates this trend.

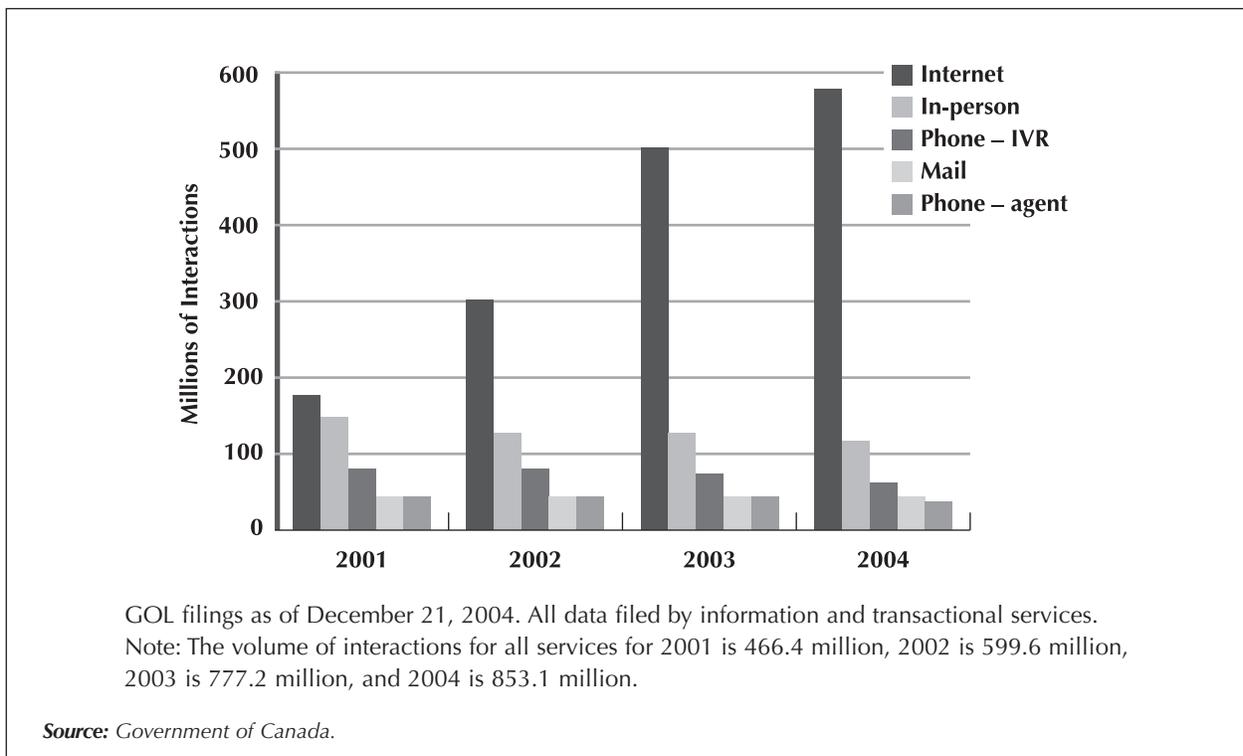
It is once again important to bear in mind the informational nature of many of these "transactions." Yet the growing prominence of online activity both within the public sector and across society generally suggested a widening place for expanding and deepening the integration and functionality of

online service offerings. However, security and privacy issues are both foundational and fundamental to delivering trusted citizen services online. As a result, a centerpiece of the GOL initiative was a component called Secure Channel:

Secure Channel is a portfolio of services that forms the foundation of the Government of Canada's (GoC) Government On-line (GOL) initiative. Secure Channel's primary goals are to provide citizens and businesses with secure, private and high-speed access to all federal government's on-line services, and to provide an environment that enables and encourages departments to integrate with federated common services. Without the common infrastructure ... it provides with respect to security and privacy, Government On-Line's Service Vision of client-centric, cross-government service anytime, anywhere cannot be realized.⁴

In essence, the secure channel represents the backbone for identity authentication and secure information exchange in order to facilitate the completion of transactions online. By 2004, Secure Channel

Figure 1: Volume of Multi-Channel Service Interactions with Canadian Government, 2001–2004



had been deployed across all federal departments and agencies as the basis of a new government-wide network infrastructure—and it also allowed for the small but growing base of online service offerings (among other initiatives, the secure channel underpinned the option for citizens of the first-ever national census online in 2006).

However, the mere existence of the secure channel infrastructure could not alone facilitate the continued integration of services across departments. The vertical structures of separate departments serving individual ministers largely translated into autonomy over interoperability: “silos continue to reign” (Coe 2004, 18). Such findings were indicative of the growing need for more rigorous collaborative mechanisms and the breadth of organizational and cultural change required.

Modernizing Services for Canadians Initiative: Laying the Groundwork for Cross-Agency Delivery of Integrated Services

In recognition of the need for deeper reforms, during the course of GOL the government developed a parallel, though closely related, initiative known as Modernizing Services for Canadians (MSC). In essence, MSC began with service integration and multi-channel delivery within a single departmental unit, albeit the largest in terms of direct service delivery to the public. Residing within Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), MSC represented a three-year business transformation initiative (2002–2004) to build a new foundation for delivering citizen-centered services. It began with a comprehensive inventory of all HRDC policies, programs, services, and delivery capabilities. MSC aimed to change the focus of HRDC from the business of conducting transactions to a new emphasis on building relationships with citizens: “transforming the current complex delivery network into a single integrated service delivery network that provides seamless, multi-channel service to Canadians.”⁵

In May 2002, the Treasury Board (the central agency or management board responsible for overseeing spending plans and operations) approved MSC’s first year plan that focused on global research and internal preparation and planning and ultimately led to

the development of a blueprint for citizen-centered services to Canadians. Central to this blueprint was the MSC vision: *To transform service to Canadians by focusing on what citizens need in a way that supports their full participation in the workplace and community.*

The vision had four fundamental objectives:

- Ensure the integrity of social programs.
- Move from the delivery of separate government programs in silos to seamless citizen-centered service.
- Work together as a collaborative networked government.
- Demonstrate accountable and responsible government.

Whereas the first objective was specific to the mandate of HRDC (a department subsequently divided into two, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Social Development Canada⁶) within which MSC was hatched, the latter three objectives signaled a widening focus on developing new citizen-centric service capacities not only within and across these two founding departments but also across the federal government as a whole (the vision of Service Canada, examined more fully below).

MSC thus became a vehicle to transform a set of services and programs amounting to over \$70 billion annually (via an HRDC network of call centers, processing centers, kiosks, websites and portals, government offices, and third-party delivery agents) within a department of more than 25,000 employees. Indeed, prior to MSC, HRDC had 170 separate and distinct Internet sites, each of which was managed independently. In MSC’s second year, the management of the Internet channel was brought under one roof and the 170 websites were consolidated into one single website. The government estimated that these reforms generated efficiencies of about 15 percent of the annual Internet infrastructure costs (Dutil et al. 2005).

By 2004, MSC was essentially complete as a series of planning and capacity-building measures. Meanwhile, the GOL initiative was also reaching completion. Questions were growing about the future of the Canadian federal government’s elec-

tronic service delivery efforts. These two streams would converge in 2005 with the next phase of the government's service delivery transformation effort, namely the creation of Service Canada.⁷

Service Canada Initiative: A One-Stop Citizen-Centered Delivery System for Federal Services

Today the government of Canada spends an estimated \$3 billion annually to deliver services to citizens. This amount includes many separate departmental service architectures and delivery channels. In many cases, they have until now been created and maintained in an independent and uncoordinated manner. Formally created in 2005, Service Canada is the government of Canada's flagship service delivery vehicle established to improve the interface between the federal government and the public through more integrated and innovative service offerings across a multi-channel environment. According to the government of Canada: *The aim of Service Canada is to provide a one-stop point of access for Canadians with respect to all federal programs and services.*

In doing so, the operational parameters of Service Canada are significant. Implementing this government-wide service transformation required one of the largest reorganizations of the Canadian federal government in its history. Serving some 32 million Canadians and 1.3 million employers, Service Canada today is composed of approximately 22,000 staff who conduct nearly 1 million transactions and deliver more than \$180 million in benefits to Canadians every day.

Citizens can now use a secure channel technology (developed under the auspices of the preceding Government On-Line initiative) called "epass" to establish an online Service Canada account. Once a citizen registers, this electronic credential can be used to access a range of services provided via the Service Canada portal. This includes the ability to view and update, for example, information for employment insurance, the Canada pension plan, and old age security programs. Epass also enables the completion of other services online across government such as applying for a passport and submitting tax returns. While not all Canadian agencies and programs recognize epass, it is becoming a

government-wide standard for citizens to use to establish their online identity with Canadian federal government agencies.⁸

Pursuing this government-wide vision, Service Canada has continued to extend its scope of delivery to include partnerships with other federal government entities as well as other levels of government. Within the federal government, Service Canada is delivering an increasing number of services on behalf of departments and agencies of the Canadian government, including:

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Passport Canada
- Public Works and Government Services Canada
- Social Development Canada
- Transport Canada
- Veterans Affairs

Empowered to reorganize and improve the federal government's service delivery network, Service Canada is pursuing opportunities to:

- Bring the delivery of Government of Canada programs and services together into a single service network.
- Collaborate with other federal departments and levels of government.
- Strengthen regional access to federal points of services and relevance across the country.
- Realize significant savings in both operations and program spending.
- Improve accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency in service.⁹

As Service Canada itself recognizes, realizing these benefit streams requires nothing less than a transformation of governance, both within Service Canada and externally via its partners in government and

elsewhere. Pursuing service delivery on a government-wide basis is therefore a significant opportunity that requires novel approaches. The realization of a service architecture for the entire federal government can be both more efficient by reducing duplication and overlapping processes and more effective by innovatively aligning and integrating service offerings to the real needs of Canadians. At the same time, if not pursued in the proper manner, such an effort can also stifle the creativity and specialization of individual departments and agencies.

The critical link between Service Canada as a new and innovative governance model and the realization of its service delivery objectives lies in its ability to encourage others to collaborate with Service Canada when there is a net benefit in doing so. These benefits would be derived from new, federated governance processes that are more networked than hierarchical, combining the vertical specialization of separate departments (retaining their policy development role and expertise) and the horizontal and comprehensive, integrated delivery network led by Service Canada. The challenge permeates the five core goals of Service Canada:

1. Deliver seamless citizen-centered service.
2. Enhance the integrity of programs.
3. Work as a collaborative, networked government by building “whole of government” approaches to service that enables information sharing and integrated service delivery for the benefit of Canadians.
4. Demonstrate accountable and responsive government.
5. Build a Service Excellence Culture.

The third of the five goals underscores the manner by which building a collaborative and networked government requires new partnerships to successfully build the “whole of government” approaches sought by Service Canada as it moves forward. It also underscores how in doing so, Service Canada’s efforts are intertwined within enterprise-wide dimensions of the Canadian government’s operations as a whole.

Integrating Service Delivery at the Provincial Level

Service Canada's considerable efforts to date reflect a well-established integrated service delivery transformation agenda ongoing at the provincial level. There, some jurisdictions have already leveraged their smaller (and thus often more flexible) administrative architectures in order to create similar service models. Indeed, motor vehicle services and personal property registries are significant sets of core services that provided a foundation for creating an integrative service entity and adding more service responsibilities over time. Also, unlike Service Canada, which focuses exclusively on services to individuals, many of these provincial models also include services to businesses.

Although all 10 Canadian provinces have service improvement initiatives, there is diversity in approaches and strategies. More than half of the provinces have now created a lead service entity of one sort or another to foster government-wide capacities for information sharing and integrated delivery. Following are profiles of three provinces that pursue similar aims using somewhat different organizational and governance approaches. Interestingly, we conclude that the organizational and governance frameworks were less significant than the scope of the services being considered for inclusion.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations: A Separate Ministry

On the country's east coast, the province of Nova Scotia is aggressively pursuing its own path to integrating the delivery of services to citizens and businesses. Rather than being organized as a crown corporation, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) was established in 2000 as a separate department dedicated to improving access to government information and services for

For More Information About Service Delivery in Canada

Service Canada	www.servicecanada.gc.ca
Service Nova Scotia	www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr
Service British Columbia	www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca
Service New Brunswick	www.snb.ca

businesses, individuals, and municipalities. Some of the information and services managed by the department include information registries on motor vehicles, vital statistics, businesses and corporations, and geographic and land data. The department also provides advice, assistance, program support, and property assessment services to Nova Scotia municipalities. Other responsibilities of the department include programs and services related to consumer protection, residential tenancies, petroleum product pricing, driver safety, taxation, and business practices, to name a few.

SNSMR is the primary service delivery arm of the government of Nova Scotia. Its vision is twofold: to become a recognized leader in service excellence; and to become a model in the development and delivery of client-centric programs, services, and information that protect public interests and safety. The corresponding mission of the department may be viewed in terms of the "what"—protecting citizens' interests and safety—and the "how"—by making it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with government.

Within SNSMR, a portion of the department known simply as Service Nova Scotia was renamed "Access

Nova Scotia” in 2007. Access Nova Scotia is a branch of the department that is now responsible for the government’s external customer service delivery. Its new brand emphasizes a “no wrong door” philosophy. Through its approximately 800 staff, Access Nova Scotia deploys a multi-channel delivery network to manage more than 13,000 external customer interactions daily across any one of more than 50 physical locations, a call center, or the province’s online portal.

The SNSMR, the Nova Scotia Worker’s Compensation Board (NSWCB), and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) partnered in 2001 in a collaborative initiative to integrate services across levels of government. The Nova Scotia Business Registry was central to this partnership, resulting in a common business registration number shared across these different organizations. This type of partnership has now been replicated in several other provinces including New Brunswick, Ontario, and British Columbia.

Service British Columbia: A Sub-Unit of a Ministry

In British Columbia (BC), Service BC is a division within the recently created Ministry of Labour and Citizens Services. It is responsible for leading and coordinating the BC Government’s Citizen-Centred Service Delivery Initiative.

The government of British Columbia has placed a strong emphasis on service improvement since the mid-1980s. While there were examples of innovative cross-ministry and cross-jurisdictional initiatives before the turn of the century (for example, Small Business BC), early improvement initiatives focused largely on applying the principles of total quality management to the service-provision activities of individual ministries and even branches. In the early 1990s, for example, this emphasis on improved customer service led to the transformation of the BC Government Agents Branch, an organization that delivered a wide array of government services in one-stop centers in smaller communities across BC. The transformation included the implementation of storefront locations, the deployment of online databases, intensive staff training, and a focus on workplace improvement (Marson 1993).

The service integration drive in BC really took off with the initiation of the new Government’s Core Services Review process in 2002 (ICCS 2003). To meet cost-efficiency and fiscal targets, individual ministries began to seriously consider new ways of doing business. These considerations were provoked by the emergence of citizen satisfaction surveys that showed ample room for improvement, as well as service innovations in other jurisdictions. The integration impetus was also assisted by the rapid development of electronic technologies designed to:

- Open up new service channels.
- Connect new channels to more traditional forms of service provision.
- Provide tools to track and analyze user needs and integrate this information with service provision processes.

This confluence of pressures allowed the government to pursue service transformation both in terms of joining together related services and providing multi-channel access to both legacy and newer “joined up” services.

This favorable environment for service integration was supported by an innovative procurement process called “Joint Solutions Procurement” (JSP). This allowed the government to develop a long-term, flexible relationship with private sector partners capable of helping government agencies deal with complex business problems in a way that works well for both parties.

This new procurement approach—emphasizing results and outcomes and innovative solutions for achieving them—was consistent with a decreased emphasis on static, upfront measures of cost and price and a greater reliance on more performance-driven and collaborative-based technology partnerships. The BC government has since expanded its use of this approach on a government-wide scale in order to pursue government-wide service transformation.

The Divisional Plan for Service BC in 2005 outlined a vision of “a province where consistent, seamless, and innovative access to customer focused government services and information is readily available to all” (Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services, 2).

This was to be achieved through service delivery leadership and innovation in partnership with client ministries. The vision was then expanded to focus more explicitly on a future dominated by cross-ministry and jurisdiction service integration, channel expansion, private partnering and integration and responsiveness to the changing needs and priorities of citizens. The ministry identified very clear service delivery goals to improve cost-effective and efficient access to government services and information by citizens, businesses, and the broader public sector. The goals included creating benefits for these groups by leading cross-government strategic initiatives that drive the transformation of service delivery. Finally, the ministry desired a customer-focused, results-oriented, integrated, knowledgeable team (Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services 2005).

With the endorsement of the deputy minister, Service BC launched a plan to change the service delivery culture across government to make it more "citizen-centered." This involved articulating its own version of Citizen-Centred Service Delivery (CCSD). In its simplest terms, the vision of the CCSD Initiative involves the transformation of BC public services so that they are organized around the needs and priorities of service users. When completed, all services will be organized around key life events and the activities of users. Citizens would be able to access services seamlessly using multiple integrated service delivery channels. The changing service needs and priorities of users would be tracked, analyzed, and responded to, and over time the provision of government services would be cheaper. The CCSD vision continues to drive everything Service BC does.

Service New Brunswick: A Crown Corporation

Service New Brunswick (SNB) is a well-recognized example of effective service integration at the provincial level in Canada. As a crown corporation of the provincial government, it has a dual role:

- To provide the people and business owners of New Brunswick with the greatest ease and access to government services
- To maintain authoritative public information through its three registries (real and personal property and corporate affairs)

The Center for Technology in Government, an applied research center in Albany, New York, conducted a case study of Service New Brunswick in 2006. The case study illustrates how SNB's specialized business model gathers and transforms information into integrated knowledge as a basis for bettering delivery through both codified collaboration (i.e., service level agreements) and more tacit forms of relationship management built upon conversation and joint discovery:

The business development unit meets regularly with all service delivery partners, primarily departments and municipalities, to keep in touch with both existing service relationships and possible new opportunities.... The team tours all agencies with existing agreements, as well as potential partners that provide service delivery to the public, to talk about the next level of services and listen to the concerns of agency staff.... The tours enable a communication of concerns.... (Pardo and Dadayan 2006, 9).

The site visits of agencies enable the SNB team to engage directly with partner agency staff on their joint commitment to delivering public value and to make the point that the question of who delivers that value is less important than the delivery itself. These ongoing discussions enable SNB to craft proposals about how partnering will allow an agency to meet its service objectives or, even in some cases, to "push the envelope beyond those objectives" (ibid.). In 2007 the new premier of New Brunswick announced plans to expand government-wide service integration efforts to other service areas, including a single window for all interactions between private sector companies and the provincial government.

The Challenges of Integrating Services Across Levels of Government: The Canadian Experience

The Next Step: Connecting the Dots Between Levels of Government

All 10 of the Canadian provinces are pursuing service delivery improvements and about half are undertaking service delivery integration initiatives. The challenge now is “connecting the dots” between separate federal and provincial efforts. Progress to date in this regard has been mainly informal, as we discuss, led by professional public servants, although more formal collaboration is on the horizon.

Effective integration, however, faces a number of barriers. A good example is the effort to integrate services for Canadian business. Businesses need a government-wide perspective of what governments at all levels expect of them. BizPaL is a Canadian federal government-sponsored one-stop shop that electronically generates a list of permits and licenses businesses need to operate in Canada. It is a single online source of information for company requirements across all levels of government (federal, provincial, and local¹⁰). However, it does not yet permit a business owner to simultaneously complete different governmental applications through a single transaction, especially if those processes exist at both the federal and provincial levels. Businesses must still enter and re-enter the same data from application to application.

Achieving integration of the delivery of business services online, however, requires creating cross-jurisdictional governance mechanisms across agencies and levels of government. This is a more complicated task in a federal polity that emphasizes separation of powers and autonomy.

The trends toward integrating services and the move toward the greater use of collaborative networks are largely driven by technology. However, these trends are encountering political and scholarly resistance, at least in Canada, because of the nation’s historical roots in a federal form of government that separates authority between the national government and provincial or state governments. This sharing of authority allows the accommodation of regional and cultural differences in a diverse nation. In some cases, such as in Switzerland, the state governments are more powerful than the national government. In Canada, as in the United States, the balance of power between federal and provincial governments has swung back and forth over the decades.

Canadian Federalism Attempts to Balance Geographic, Cultural Differences

Canadian federalism at the outset in 1867 was a reflection of the influence of the American experience on the authors of the Canadian Constitution. The sharing of state authority between central and provincial governments accommodated regional language and cultural interests already reflected in the existence of pre-confederation governments. The intention of the framers may have been to create weak provincial governments, but over time, and particularly over the last half century, there has been a significant growth in the power of provincial governments and an increasing tendency for central and provincial governments to operate simultaneously in areas of jurisdiction that appear in the Constitution to be within the authority of one or the other levels of government.

As constitutional creatures of the provinces, increasingly economically important municipal

governments have become frustrated participants in the contemporary intergovernmental mix. These developments and the concentration of financial power in the hands of the federal government have created complex power- and resource-sharing arrangements and placed an increasing premium on the need for more effective models of intergovernmental relations.

With very few exceptions (Ambrose et al. 2006), reflections on the development of federalism and intergovernmental relations in Canada remain focused on issues such as the shifting balance of power and fiscal resources among federal and provincial governments, the appropriate leadership role of the federal government, the limitations that should be placed on the federal government's spending power, the evolution of executive-dominated federalism, and the capacity of the federal system to contain robust expressions of cultural, language, or indigenous identity (Bakvis and Skogstad 2008, 9). At the political level, contemporary debates on such issues have been focused on adjectives such as "asymmetrical" and, more recently, "open" federalism.

The conceptual flirtation with the notion of "collaborative" political federalism, which began in Canada in the mid-1990s, recognizes the growing interdependence of federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments and is in tune with the NPM focus on decentralization and the development of more flexible, informal, and equal arrangements among governments (Bakvis and Skogstad 2008; Council of the Federation 2003). But the discussion of collaborative federalism to date has focused largely on the "co-determination (by the federal, provincial, and—more recently—northern territorial governments) of broad national policies" such as the Social Union Framework and the 1995 Agreement on Internal Trade (Cameron and Simeon 2002, 49; McIntosh, 2004).

Collaborative Federalism Needs to Embrace Service Integration Across Levels of Government

Political leaders and federalism scholars have paid little more than lip service to the idea of extending the scope of the collaborative federalism model to include cross-boundary activities of service delivery

agencies. There are, however, a series of initiatives related to federal-provincial integrative initiatives:

- The development of labor training agreements¹¹
- The Canada Health Infoway initiative (an effort to create a national health information network)¹²
- The recent collaborative funding of efforts to invest in renewing public infrastructure (roads, water systems, bridges, etc.)¹³

Each of these initiatives is happening largely outside of the political and academic debate about the future of political federalism.¹⁴ Similarly, emerging administrative organizations focused specifically on service integration are also being ignored. In the late 1990s, continuing interaction among senior federal, provincial, and territorial public servants led to the creation of two councils: the Public Sector Service Delivery Council (PSSDC) and the Public Sector Chief Information Officer Council (PSCIOC). A secretariat, the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS), was created to support both councils through promotion of service transformation and research.¹⁵ These councils and the institute represent the highest expression of quiet cross-jurisdictional bureaucratic collaborative federalism.

The continued focus within the mainstream federalism dialogue on traditional topics and high-level policy issues has resulted in a substantial disconnect between the citizen-centered service integration initiatives and networking activities at the bureaucratic, business, and third-sector level, on the one hand, and the focus of federalism scholars and more senior political and bureaucratic executive practitioners, on the other.

The extension of the collaborative federalism model to embrace the world of cross-boundary service transformation would provide a platform for the marriage of thinking about the evolution of federalism to the emerging analysis of the network state and the intense "underground" bureaucratic ferment among governments in Canada around cross-boundary service integration. Ambrose et al. argue that adding the administrative dimension of service integration to the mix would have a positive impact on the management of higher policy issues dividing the country by deepening the economic and social union within the federation from

The Use of Coordinating Councils

The Canadians have formed several coordinating councils and support organizations between levels of government that serve as platforms for common communication among professionals. In the service delivery area, two councils and an institute promote both research and dialogue that contribute to the development of common standards and approaches to integrating services and technology between agencies and levels of government.

The Public Sector Chief Information Officer Council (PSCIOC) and the Public Sector Service Delivery Council (PSSDC)

These councils have both been in existence in their current form since 1998. The 14 federal, provincial, and territorial governments also funded the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service. The individual councils bring together federal, provincial/territorial, and selected municipal CIOs (in the case of the PSCIOC) and leading service policy and delivery officials (in the case of the PSSDC) to exchange best practices, conduct joint research, and evaluate and pursue opportunities to adopt common practices and collaborate on service delivery. Since 2003, the two councils have developed a strong working partnership that is maintained through regular individual and joint council meetings. Subcommittees undertake ongoing collaborative work in areas such as research, identity management, and integrated service delivery.*

The Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS)[†]

In August of 2005, the ICCS was incorporated as a nonprofit organization. The ICCS's board of directors is made up of leaders in service delivery and information technology from municipal, provincial, and federal public sectors across Canada. The mission of the ICCS is to promote high levels of citizen satisfaction with public sector service delivery. The ICCS achieves its mission by undertaking research to identify citizens' service needs and expectations and by assisting the public sector in identifying and applying innovative, best practice service solutions which support quality service across all channels and respond effectively to citizens' service needs.

The mandate of the ICCS is:

- To serve as a world-class center of expertise and a champion for citizen-centered service across service channels and throughout the public sector.
- To undertake research into citizens' expectations, satisfaction, and priorities for service improvement, and to be a repository for knowledge about citizens' and clients' attitudes towards public sector service.
- To measure and monitor the progress of the public sector in improving citizen satisfaction with public sector service delivery, and develop the means to recognize excellence in citizen-centered service.
- To be the custodian of the Common Measurement Tool and electronic CMT in the public sector, and to provide a CMT data repository and benchmarking service for public sector organizations.
- To be a center of expertise in e-government and electronic service delivery.
- To become a center for the development of publications, training modules, and other management tools required by the public sector to promote the improvement of service delivery across the public sector.

* http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/cio-dpi/2006/canada/canada05_e.asp

† <http://www.iccs-isac.org/eng/about.htm>

the bottom up (Ambrose et al. 2006, 10–11). There are further potential symbioses here as both streams of thinking focus attention on the extension of the inter-jurisdictional model to embrace not only provincial, territorial, and local governments, but also First Nations governments and the growing web of non-state actors that either deliver many of the services in question as partners or contracting agencies of governments at all levels or band together in stakeholder organizations representing service recipients.

This discussion is not designed to undermine the significance of political federalism in Canada or any other federation. Many historical rationales of federalism remain: geographic and linguistic diversities and a more operational belief that smaller, separate, and more focused governments closer to their citizenries often yield stronger performance and accountability than a larger and more centralized governing model.

The key design question going forward thus becomes: How can we retain the benefits of political federalism while creating additional value for citizens by adopting a more collaborative approach to integrating the delivery of public services between agencies, the nonprofit sector, and levels of government?

To frame a path toward such a vision, a recent Crossing Boundaries report on citizen-centric federalism provides a four-stage “integrative continuum” meant to shift from the least to the most complex of tasks (Ambrose et al. 2006):

- Co-location of services
- Streamlining services
- Service policy alignment
- Collaborative governance arrangements for integrated services

It is important to stress that the heightened complexity of each stage cannot be viewed purely through the lens of administrative innovation. The third and fourth stages in particular are dependent on political innovation in putting in place new structures and new cultures suitable for an environment of interdependence and more networked governance patterns.

Part III:

Experiences in Integrating Service
Delivery Systems: Lessons from
Four Countries

Introduction to the Case Studies

Public executives across the world face similar pressures to act on network governance initiatives and citizen-centered service transformation efforts. This is more difficult to do in a federal system where different levels of government hold a certain degree of sovereignty. The Canadian federal government and several of its provinces have launched efforts to integrate the delivery of services for their own programs. However, the next step—integrating the delivery of services across levels of government—creates two broad challenges:

- How to *balance* the Canadian federal government's traditional emphasis on jurisdictional boundaries and the separation of political powers in a federal system with a widening need for more seamless and collaborative delivery systems across all levels of government.

This challenge is more immediate. It highlights the tensions between the historical federalist principles of independence and separation of the national and provincial governments versus more contemporary emphases on interdependence and synergistic ties.

- How to *respond* to pressures to extend the scope of service partnerships beyond just federal and provincial actors in order to include municipalities, territorial governments, First Nations communities, the private and voluntary sectors, and ethnic communities at large.

This challenge goes further in both involving and affecting individual citizens as well as the collective performance of communities as a whole.

There is no simple path for navigating either challenge. Numerous factors will likely shape the ration-

ale for (and willingness to) partner across levels of government. In addition, there will be serious issues regarding the capacity of government to effectively design and execute such an initiative. However, the experiences of four other countries in implementing integrated service delivery systems may be instructive. All of these countries used a different strategy in their approach to designing and implementing an integrated service delivery system that reflected the needs of their own political context:

- *Belgium* is a political federation, focused on creating identity management and interoperability standards. These helped drive administrative simplification across all layers of government.
- The *United Kingdom's* central government recently granted a measure of domestic autonomy to Scotland. Scotland, in turn, chose to invest heavily in a consultative approach with its citizens and communities to jointly define and design service goals. In addition, an English county, Buckinghamshire, has pursued a pilot to integrate all service delivery in its jurisdiction, including local districts and towns.
- *Denmark* is politically a unitary state, focused on the creation of a common service architecture that reaches across all levels of government. Nationally, it emphasizes online delivery, but municipalities serve as the frontline service integrator offline.
- *Australia* is a political federal system. It undertook a service integration effort, called Centrelink, in 1997 that has resulted in a wide range of direct federal-to-local service provider partnerships.

Belgium: Creating Common Standards and Integrating Back-Office Infrastructure

Context. Belgium has adopted a federal political system to manage in a complex environment where regional and ethnic tensions have threatened to pull the country apart. The current federal system is relatively new, dating back to a 1993 constitutional accord meant to salvage national unity. The following overview underscores the challenges of working across levels of government:

Belgium is a federal constitutional monarchy, where executive and legislative power is divided between the federal government, 3 [geographic] regions (Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels), and 3 [ethnic] communities (Flemish, French, and German-speaking). Regions are competent for regional matters such as town and county planning, nature conservation, housing, waterworks and transport. Communities are competent for personal matters (health, welfare), cultural matters, education and training, and cooperation between the communities and regions. Each region and community has its own executive and legislative powers in its field of competence, and its own parliament and government to exercise these powers. However, the Flemish Region and Community merged their executive and legislative powers, giving birth to one single Flemish Parliament, one single Flemish Government, and one single public administration, competent for community and regional matters.¹⁶

Despite or perhaps due to such complexity, administrative simplification has been an important government priority. The national government in 2003 launched an initiative, aptly named the “Kafka Plan”

(www.kafka.be), to solicit both problems and ideas for reforming government services from inside and outside of the government. This has resulted in over 7,000 suggestions that have led to the repeal of over 130 pieces of obsolete legislation, significant cost savings, and several awards. Other European governments are now emulating this effort.¹⁷

Agreement on a Common Framework and Technology Platform. The government had undertaken a number of administrative alignment and coordination efforts over the past two decades, reaching across various levels of government. However, 2001 was a turning point. That year, the federal, regional, and local governments signed a formal cooperation agreement to forge a common platform to delivery services electronically.

As a result of this agreement, the federal government reorganized its own technology management functions in order to broaden its reach and explicitly include stakeholders from other levels of government. The agreement was then updated in 2005 with the release of the e-government interoperability framework (BELGIF), meant to promote open standards and administrative alignment not only across all government levels in Belgium but also at a pan-European level.

In 2003, this common framework allowed Belgium to become the first country to launch a national identity management system via an electronic identification card. The card includes a unique identifier for each citizen that now enables electronic data exchanges and service provisions across widening segments of the county’s social security and health care systems.

The Crossroads Bank for Social Security: The Administrative Back Office for Service Integration. A critical element of this identity management system is the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS), an autonomous public sector body. It dates back to 1990, when it was initially established to serve as a repository for information on citizens and employers contributing to or benefiting from Belgium's national social security programs. The Crossroads Bank is accountable to a management board with representatives of the public, companies, and government service providers. Today, it serves as a "service integrator" for all federal social security benefits and integrates these benefits with services provided by regional and municipal governments, as well.

The Crossroads Bank says it strives to:

- Stimulate and to support the actors in the Belgian social sector to grant more effective and efficient services with a minimum of administrative formalities and costs for all the involved; based on a common and concerted vision the actors in the Belgian social sector benefit from the new technologies to improve and reorganize radically their mutual relationships and processes.
- Promote the information security and the privacy protection by the actors in the Belgian social sector so that all the involved institutions and people can have justified confidence in the system.
- Deliver integrated statistical information to the politicians and the researchers in order to support social policy.¹⁸

CBSS views itself as the integrative back-office infrastructure for social service delivery across the country. However, it also enables a more integrative network of front-office agencies and portals across public sector authorities. Because of the cooperation agreement across levels of government on common platforms for technology, CBSS has become the lead operational stakeholder in devising Belgium's new national identification and authentication framework. It projects that it will complete the roll-out of electronic identity cards to all 10.5 million citizens by the end of 2009.

CBSS also manages employer information. The government uses a single identifier for all of its interactions with businesses operating in Belgium.

Streamlined (and increasingly paperless) processes are seen as a critical enabler of economic development. This has alleviated what could otherwise be a crushing regulatory and compliance burden from administrative fragmentation and overlap.

CBSS is now the "single face" of the government, allowing customers, whether citizens or businesses, to provide common information only once. CBSS then makes that information readily available across all segments of the social sector and, increasingly, all segments of the public sector at large.

At present, the CBSS infrastructure links more than 2,000 public and private sector organizations into nearly 200 different types of services. In 2006, more than 511 million messages were exchanged electronically, with a data exchange response time of less than 4 seconds in 98.91 percent of all cases.

Current initiatives under development (many of which are based upon the integrated identity credentials offered by the new electronic card) include:

- A wider extension of the CBSS networked infrastructure across regional, community, and local administrations (and an expanding portfolio of service offerings integrated across these levels) as well as health care providers.
- More generalized systems of automatic benefit processing based on social security status authenticated via CBSS.
- A pre-filled tax declaration for natural persons.
- An integrated electronic workspace for the personnel of all actors in the social sector supporting, among other functions, documents, information, and knowledge management systems, e-learning, and labor relations.¹⁹

Frontline Flexibility from Common Standards and Framework. Belgium's approach to integrating its service delivery has allowed a relatively independent network of front-office service providers across different levels of government to deliver their unique mix of services, but within the context of a common framework of agreed-upon standards. Rather than having any pretense that a single service integrator would be able to fulfill such a role on the front-office side, the Belgian federal government has encouraged and embraced a high degree

of collaboration and experimentation among various service providers:

Service integrators will cooperate closely in order to connect their base services to one another. They will jointly agree on work distribution concerning specific areas such as the development and management of basic services so that on the one hand economies of scale are achieved, and on the other hand so that citizens, companies and their representatives get an assurance that they will not have to go through the same routine several times....²⁰

The Belgian federated approach seems intent on not allowing political separateness (and corresponding democratic accountabilities) to stymie a more networked and integrative approach to the organization and management of service delivery. The ability to do so is owed in no small measure to two central elements: first, the willingness of all levels of government in the Belgian context to formalize a collaborative framework early on; and secondly, the common technology infrastructure provided by the Crossroads Bank to the country as a whole.

United Kingdom: Engaging Citizens to Ensure Services Are Citizen-Centered

Case Study: Scotland

Scotland in 1999 gained a measure of autonomy over domestic affairs within the United Kingdom when it was permitted to reconstitute its own Parliament. It has evolved into something akin to a quasi-federation with a devolutionary agreement empowering the Scottish Parliament with many new policy and service responsibilities for what effectively amounts to a new order of government.

Not unlike the Canadian context, there are now municipal, Scottish, and UK aspects of service integration. Scottish responsibilities resemble those of a Canadian province, including health and education and most matters pertaining to municipal governance. Since devolution in 1999, the budgetary envelope of the Scottish government has grown by more than 70 percent to anticipated annual expenditures of more than £31 billion in 2007–2008.

Engaging Citizens in Designing the Transformation of the Delivery of Services. In 2006, the Scottish government launched a major service transformation initiative. This initiative involved a high degree of consultation and dialogue with key stakeholders involved in the delivery of public services, both inside and outside of the public service, including its 5.1 million citizens. These consultations led to two cornerstones of reform:

- Be user focused and personalized to ensure that services are organized around the needs and aspirations of service users and citizens, and not the convenience of the service provider.
- Drive up quality and encourage innovation—setting high standards, tackling poor performance,

promoting innovation and creativity, and building in continuous improvement.²¹

With regards to consulting the public, the focus was less on gauging satisfaction levels with existing service processes and more about engaging citizens in a conversation about the evolution of public service delivery. This highlighted a series of priorities and concerns that, in turn, informed the key design principles for the new system. Key insights from the users of public services in Scotland included wanting to:

- Be treated as a person.²²
- Know how and where to complain about problems in public services.
- Be involved in designing and deciding about the services in their area.
- Hold public services to account on the things that matter to them.
- Be told when important changes are made to public services.
- Have access to skilled frontline workers.²³

The last point highlighted the importance of focusing on the multi-channel strategy of the public sector in delivering services to the public. This included not only the relative mix of channels (and incentives for using them), but also the degree of tangible presence by government in a given community. Here the inclusion of the third point—the involvement of the user in defining and designing a service—suggests a participatory link between service, policy, and community learning and growth.

Although this link may appear rather innocuous at first glance, it signals a significant change in tone

with respect to how the Scottish government and its citizens discuss service. This significance stems from a willingness by the government to acknowledge a need to step beyond the usual service transformation rhetoric—typically characterizing the public as largely interested only in transactional outcomes—and the types of measures of customer service akin to marketplace experiences.

This approach is being called “Public Value Management,”²⁴ or PVM. It is premised on the greater use of partnership, nuance, and dialogue:

The key point in understanding public value management ... starts with the understanding that preferences are not formed in a vacuum and should not be taken as given. Part of the challenge of public managers is to engage in a dialogue with the public about their preferences but in a way that allows for deliberation about choices and alternatives.... Discovering preferences involves a complex dialogue so that efficiency and accountability are trading partners, not the objects of a trade-off (Stoker 2005, 51).

In short, democratic legitimacy for public sector action is derived from direct forms of citizen involvement in governance. Stoker and others argue that a PVM-stylized approach offers the greatest potential to adequately address the complexity and interdependencies of today’s world—in large measure through direct and discursive public engagement efforts. This view is consistent with those stressing the importance of enhancing the voice of citizens (Peart and Diaz 2007; Dutton and Peitu 2007; Wyld 2007).

In terms of specific mechanisms to proceed in such a fashion, what becomes apparent is that any PVM-style approach to citizen-centric governance is entirely dependent on a robust and shared knowledge management infrastructure enjoining governments and the public (as both customers and citizens).

Knowledge and networked management is therefore more than an internal platform for service integration within a jurisdiction’s government: It is an enabler of shared governance across jurisdictions (a point returned to in the next section).

Empowering Municipalities to Be the Initial Point of Contact and “Gatekeeper.” Based on citizen input, Scotland has prioritized its action and planning on better interoperability across both layers of government and incentives for municipalities to strengthen their role as the frontline public service provider. As a long-term vision, it intends to empower municipalities to be the initial point of contact and primary gatekeeper for citizens into the combined Scottish and UK public sector (not unlike the Danish model reviewed next).

With respect to municipal service innovation, the UK government has been aggressively promoting interoperable networks and standards across a common infrastructure for local authorities in Scotland, England, and Wales. The UK Department for Communities and Local Government has funded the “Government Connects” initiative, which will provide a common platform for shared services and customer services initiatives.

Case Study: Buckinghamshire County

One such example of the UK vision is “Integrated Buckinghamshire,” where both the county and district councils see themselves as “part of a coherent public service provision whilst retaining their local democratic strength and decision making on policies and priorities.”²⁵ A Joint Improvement Board encompasses representatives of the area’s five councils in order to foster an integrative approach to citizen service and community engagement for the area’s nearly half a million residents that includes:

- An integrated office of house approach to simplify contact for customers.
- Integrated frontline service provision where this can deliver improvements and cost savings.
- Use of joint procurement to drive down costs.
- Joining of back-office services where this can produce savings and a better service.
- Integrated community engagement within an agreed framework at the local level.
- A rationalization of consultation to avoid duplication, confusion, and cost.²⁶

The initiative is thus notable for extending beyond what is becoming an increasingly common approach to shared services in back-office functions and embracing a more integrated architecture up front as well. Furthermore, the last point underscores the necessity of viewing service architecture and provision within the broader context of community engagement and two-way relationships between the public and their governments.

Denmark: Devising a Holistic Approach to Design and Deliver an Integrated Service Delivery System

Context. Denmark and Canada share many general traits in terms of the emergence of new service delivery models including and very much tied to an early interest in e-government. Both have Internet and telecommunications infrastructures that are well developed, widely accessible, and (on a relative basis) affordably priced, and both countries enjoy high standards of living.

There is a tradition of strong government involvement in many aspects of societal and economic development in both countries. In terms of e-government specifically, both countries are consistently rated in the highest tier of national performers. In both countries, the desire for improved public service delivery has driven e-government-based reforms, arguably to the detriment of related opportunities such as new models of democratic participation. This was noted in a 2003 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) review of Denmark's approach to e-government:

E-Government in Denmark has so far been heavily focused on service delivery and improvement in public sector efficiency and effectiveness. There has been much less attention paid to the question of how, within a national culture characterized by consensus and a context of generally positive attitudes towards government, e-government can influence people's participation in government (OECD, 2003, 23).

By contrast, there are three stark differences between Canada and Denmark that have exerted a positive influence in shaping ongoing service transformation efforts in Denmark:

- A much more digitally inclusive populace in Denmark across the entire country is proving more receptive to online service delivery models.
- As the OECD passage suggests, citizens have high levels of trust in the Danish public sector. This has led to much lower levels of concern about privacy matters than is the case elsewhere, including Canada.
- The Danish public service delivery model is highly decentralized, with formalized cross-governmental planning and a strong frontline municipal presence for those services requiring a human interface.

Creating an Online Service Delivery System. The nexus of the first two points explains why Denmark is one of the first countries to explicitly embrace a strategy to deliver selected service offerings exclusively online, called "Digitization of the Public Sector, 2007–2010." As a basis for this approach, a new national citizen's portal has been created (www.Borger.dk) to enable each of the 5.5 million Danish citizens to customize their interactions with public authorities via an authenticated and secure identity.

In Denmark it is mandatory for citizens and companies to possess an electronic bank account for financial transactions with the government. The government will only process payments electronically. Near ubiquitous cell phone usage is also expanding interest in and usage of so-called "m-government" (information and transactions via mobile phone). This is facilitated by a high level of cooperation between Danish public authorities and private industries, notably financial service institutions, in order to facilitate common standards and

platforms to pursue opportunities for interoperability and service channel integration. This has allowed a holistic approach to designing the Danish service delivery system.

Collaboratively Developing Common Standards.

Denmark is not a political federation but rather a unitary state encompassing three government levels: the national level, the regions (formerly counties), and municipalities. However, it has a long tradition of strong local government. Rather than power flowing top-down, the principles of decentralization and consensus that underpin Danish government extend to the inter-relationships between governmental levels. For example, e-government began with a formal inter-governmental body to create policy and strategy in an inclusive manner across all government levels:

The project arose from the process of forming agreements between the government (national) and local authorities concerning county and municipal budgets for 2001. Leaders agreed to set up a joint (national) state and local government committee to look at the potential for “digital administration” (i.e., e-government) to enable delivery of better and cheaper public services, and to improve internal administrative procedures (OECD, 2003, 32).

This collaborative dialogue was an important variable in forging agreement on a set of major structural changes to the Danish public sector as a whole. Both financing and policy and service responsibilities for each level of government were renegotiated in a bottom-up manner, with an eye to strengthening the municipal role in frontline service delivery.²⁷ In many respects, then, Denmark is creating a federated service model that joins up all government levels via an emerging multi-channel framework based on a leading-edge digital infrastructure nationally coupled with a frontline service presence via integrative centers managed by municipal authorities.

Australia: Using a Community-Centric Approach to Expand the Scope of Integrated Services at the Local Level

Context. In contrast to the Danish approach, Australia developed its integrated service delivery system in the context of a formal political federation more readily comparable to Canada. It has one central federal service delivery agency—Centrelink—that is becoming increasingly active in the development of community-based partnerships, especially in the realm of human and community services and social development.

International Pioneer in Integrating Service Delivery. Centrelink is well-known internationally in public sector service delivery circles as a pioneer in integrating service delivery. It was created in 1997 and is the largest of several Australian federal government agencies providing services on behalf of, or in concert with, federal, state, and local government actors.²⁸ Rather than serving as the single service integrator and provider for the entire government of Australia, Centrelink is only one of several agencies situated within a ministerial portfolio responsible for human services.

Nonetheless, Centrelink is the cornerstone of the federal service delivery network. It is empowered with formalized governance statutes and operational autonomy to enter into contractual service provider arrangements, including the use of online, telephone, and in-person channels. Centrelink is not unlike Service Canada—an important federal presence in communities across the entire country (with a relatively small population of 20.6 million dispersed over a vast territory).

However, there are jurisdictional differences in terms of service responsibilities and state-provincial roles. As a result, the use of community partnerships has become central to the effectiveness of Centrelink

activities. These partnerships include information and networking centers in rural communities, employment and youth development initiatives, and a variety of more targeted initiatives for women at risk, transitional immigrants, indigenous populations, and others.

Local Partnership Arrangements: The Key to Expanding Scope. A 2005 study of Centrelink's local partnerships concluded that the use of partnership arrangements is an essential element of community development, particularly in smaller and more remote communities, where local capacities may be limited (Winkworth 2005). Using a partnership approach allowed Centrelink to expand the scope of the services it delivers beyond linear provision toward a more collaborative, participatory, and community-centric perspective not unlike that guiding the Scottish transformation effort:

Centrelink is operating in an environment that increasingly requires more than the neutral delivery of government services. Social and economic pressures are transforming communities: urban, rural and regional. The vitality of these communities depends not only on their ability to maintain employment and income, it also depends on the ability of local people to anticipate change, reframe problems, mobilize their community, communicate widely, think strategically, and make informed decisions....

The relationships that representatives of government build with members of local communities and the personal trust engendered by these relationships are critical to this process (p. 33).

The Challenges of Multi-Layered Governance

Arrangements. Centrelink has not been without controversy and challenges in pursuing local partnership arrangements largely due to both the political dynamics of federalism and the governance dynamics of multi-layered governance arrangements. In terms of politics, interviews with Centrelink officials suggest that in recent months the agency's ability to work with state and local governments has been partially compromised by an increasingly tenuous relationship between a federal Conservative government and its mainly Labour counterparts at the state level.

What has proven particularly contentious is an effort to reform the country's employment services regime, in effect a shift from welfare-style assistance to a more intrusive and obligatory workfare-style program. However, Centrelink seems able to carry on with its many partnerships even in the midst of this political controversy because of its operational autonomy. It has been empowered with the authority to act in concert with other stakeholders, including other government levels, when the business case makes sense.

Although it would be naive to suggest that politics does not influence Centrelink operations, especially across levels of government, the partial separation of policy and service functions tempers these influences, allowing the agency to focus on its core mission of service delivery and exploring new service opportunities.

Still, many strategic and operational challenges emerge in any multi-jurisdictional network environment, especially at the community level. Chief among them is a concern that Centrelink underinvests in its support of frontline Centrelink staff embedded within community partnership models. Local partners fear that there are insufficient linkages between these frontline staff, their organizational capacities, and those of the head office.

This point was an important finding in a 2005 audit of Centrelink's Community Consultation program (accepted by Centrelink's senior management):

The ANAO [Australian National Audit Office] found that there was inconsistent contact between the smaller community groups and Centrelink.... Stakeholders

interviewed by the ANAO indicated that, although Centrelink was receptive to ideas from community groups at the national level, this did not translate to effective action at the local level (ANAO 2005, 16).

A similar point was made about the need for better information sharing and planning between Centrelink's head office and its network of frontline providers:

The information about initiatives undertaken (locally) within the community apparently does not filter through to Centrelink's NSO (National Support Office). As a consequence, NSO cannot use such data in strategic planning to identify common issues and trends at the local level. It is important that this data is used at the national level in Centrelink, due to its favorable impact on service delivery (p. 17).

Improving Feedback Loops. The challenges for a national service provider in acting innovatively within communities, while ensuring feedback and learning across the organization, is not without relevance to Canada. One examination of a community partnership involving Centrelink offers a useful dissection of what is required:

- Collaborative partnerships require commitment on both sides and clear and frequent communication.
- In the early stages of a new partnership, both parties need to get to know each other, the philosophies of each service, and limitations such as size and resources available.
- Commitment at a service delivery level is not enough to sustain a relationship. Senior management also needs to be committed to and understand what is required of the partnership.
- Staff turnover within services and government departments means relationships need to be consistently developed.²⁹

Australia's Centrelink commitment to forge new partnerships and enhance feedback loops between frontline providers and agents of local change and head office strategists is important. Its partnership strategy is underscored by the Scottish and Danish

emphasis on national interoperability and online delivery on the one hand, and strong municipal capacities on the other hand.

With respect to its own formal governance structures and capacities to deliver services, it bears noting that Centrelink is an active and integrative service delivery agent and important federal government partner in the governance of indigenous communities. The Centrelink experience also underscores the importance of viewing and pursuing integrated service delivery through a widened lens of policy and service linkages to developmental capacities for both individuals and communities.

Part IV: Applying Lessons
Learned to Canada's Next Phase
of Service Integration

Political Leadership: A Prerequisite to Building Effective Collaboration Across Levels of Government

Canadians have probably gone as far as they can to transform their federal and provincial service delivery systems using cooperative, bureaucratic, and experimental approaches. To take the next step—integrating service delivery across levels of government—will require a more holistic, inclusive, collaborative, and interdependent framework. Only then can the demands for citizen-centered service integration across levels of government trump the sorts of political and operational constraints imposed by a divisive and combative federal system.

Learning from other jurisdictions can help. The cases reviewed in Part III of this report present some important insights into how governments in Canada might collectively address the challenges of integrated service delivery. At the same time, however, a genuinely collaborative and “made in Canada” approach is required, one that should be nurtured as much through bottom-up leadership and community engagement as from government leadership and action.

An encouraging sign has been the recent formation of a more formal working group of federal, provincial, and territorial deputy ministers with service delivery responsibilities. The creation of such a body has already resulted in a greater impetus for more collaborative governance in the realm of identity management, a key foundational component of a more seamless public sector service delivery system. This group is an important complement to the work of the two inter-jurisdictional councils (the Public Sector CIO Council and the Public Sector Service Delivery Council), which also include municipal representatives as well.

Such efforts denote the contours of a new approach to federalism that is more in tune with an era of interdependence and seamless governance arrangements in both the service-delivery and policy-making realms. Through these mechanisms and through greater interaction and dialogue, a more collaborative mind-set should be pursued through such joint initiatives as:

- Expanding knowledge repositories of critically analyzed and shared lessons and experiences from within jurisdictions.
- Pursuing joint ventures in public sector training and professional development, both online and offline.
- Fostering ongoing discursive mechanisms inter-linking service providers at all government levels.
- Investing resources to both stimulate and reward collaborative pathfinder projects that innovatively and meaningfully transcend jurisdictional silos.
- Expanding opportunities for employee exchange and rotational assignments across government levels.
- Undertaking shared consultative efforts within specific localities and regions in order to engage the public as both a service recipient and stakeholder in service design.

Ultimately, embracing interdependence and the building of collaborative governance systems begin with dialogue (Yankelovich 1999). In a democratic context, politicians are the linchpin between the organization of public services and the citizenry, while also providing the mandate to proceed with change. Part III of this report provides many illustrations of the importance of political leadership in

collaborative service innovation across jurisdictions including:

- The political foresight by Belgian politicians to create the Crossroads Bank for Social Security in the very early days of e-government, while also forging agreement for a genuinely federated strategy inclusive of all jurisdictions.
- The Danish commitment to inter-governmental planning in balancing national interoperability and online channels with strengthened frontline municipal capacities.
- The embracing of citizen involvement in Scotland when it undertook efforts to re-design its service delivery system (a political priority for the newly devolved administration).
- The catalytic role of local elected officials across multiple districts and counties in the UK's Buckinghamshire region in forging an integrative service model to transcend back-office and front-office divisions.
- The ability of Australia's Centrelink to offer a more integrated federal government presence at the community level by collaborating directly with local service providers.

Despite strong federal leadership early on in the formation of the 1990s' *Connecting Canadians* agenda, the 2007 global survey of government service delivery efforts conducted by Accenture Consulting underscores the risk of political complacency as an area of concern for the government of Canada (a risk highlighted several years ago by the Government On-Line External Advisory Panel when it recommended that the Prime Minister's Office maintain ownership of the agenda).

The implementation of integrated service delivery initiatives at the provincial level has required commitment from senior politicians. This was a prerequisite not only to creating new service vehicles and empowering them with authority and resources, but also to sustaining efforts to overcome what can often be entrenched resistance to change. Similarly, the city of Calgary became Canada's pioneer in implementing "311," a non-emergency telephone information and referral service for citizens. The 311 service was implemented successfully only because of a strong commitment by the mayor and the active

involvement of elected officials in the design and implementation of this new service model (Dutil et al. 2005).

Launching a national political discourse across levels of government in a country arguably "obsessed" with federal-provincial squabbles about constitutional authority and resource sharing is difficult. The challenges are well known and widely acknowledged (Andrew 2002). Nonetheless, there are limits to what can be accomplished without structural changes that only senior political leaders can sanction. The reluctance of politicians in Canada to embrace identity management as a political issue, as so many other jurisdictions have done, is a serious impediment to moving forward with a genuinely collaborative inter-jurisdictional service agenda. The risk of a widening gap between public expectations and performance results is real.

Consequently, governments—and their leaders—need to embrace a mind-set of interdependence if they hope to chart a comprehensive vision of integrating the delivery of citizen-oriented services for the country as a whole.

Strategies for Integrating Service Delivery Across Levels of Government

Creating an integrated service delivery system that spans levels of government across all of Canada is truly a transformative agenda that requires a holistic prism. Complex matters of governance, knowledge, and people all come into play, and, in a democratic context, politics cannot be left off any such list.

The challenge of collaboratively navigating an environment of growing interdependence across both policy and service realms is a common theme facing public managers at the federal and provincial levels in Canada as well as in other countries. A good deal of administrative experimentation is now under way in many developed countries, with considerable promise for the future. Yet the realization of such promise depends on far more than technology.

To illustrate this point, we identified four non-technology challenges that Canadian governments are facing and related strategies for addressing these challenges. These are based on the experience of several other countries that have undertaken service delivery integration initiatives (see Part III of this report). We expect that these challenges are likely to be similar to those facing governments in many other countries interested in integrating their service delivery systems, and that these strategies may inform their efforts as well.

Create a Collaborative, Network-Based Governance Framework

Collaborative mechanisms for service integration depend on the creation of common information architectures. Fundamentally, though, these mechanisms are more about ensuring the capacity to transform this information into actionable knowledge—shared decisions and integrative and better outcomes.

Shift in the Mind-set of Leaders

This shift in mind-set is not an easy one to make. The distinction between information and knowledge is one aspect of this shift, with some commentators characterizing the latter as “information in action” (MacDonald and MacDonald 2003). The knowledge management challenge in a networked environment is thus closely intertwined with governance in terms of the need for formalized structures and supportive cultures that enable different stakeholders to work together in flexible and innovative manners in pursuit of agreed upon objectives.

Experiences within specific jurisdictions can help shed light on this challenge (while also underlining the daunting scope of the required shift). For example, one recent review of horizontal initiatives at the federal level in Canada highlighted the need to largely abandon command-and-control approaches that typically attempt to ordain change in a predetermined manner. Bakvis and Juillet argue for:

a management culture that relies less on command and control and more on financial incentives, continual monitoring, and ongoing consultation and engagement. Performance reviews and agreements that more explicitly capture the need to work horizontally could also go some way toward initiating a cultural shift (Bakvis and Juillet 2004).

The absence of such a culture severely constrained many of the early pioneering federal Government On-Line projects that were meant to integrate services across departments. It is also proving to be consequential in ongoing uncertainty about the formal mandate and governance regime of Service Canada.

By extension, it has consequences for other collaborative efforts across the federal government. The governance dynamics become more complex and more collaboratively intense as the formation of these sorts of partnerships and networks evolves across multiple organizations and jurisdictions.

Elements of Success

Conceptually, the essential elements of successful collaborative networks have been well identified:

- Members must see themselves as only one piece of the total picture. This requires seeing the points of convergence, not just those of contention. It also means that power must be shared or lost.
- Recognition that building relationships, not accomplishing tasks, is the primary goal in a network, since the task cannot be accomplished without the relationships, and the relationships will outlive any one task that the network might be called upon to address.
- Building relationships requires building trust and breaking down communications barriers that might exist between the members.
- Being able to listen to others rather than merely telling them what to do. This is linked to the ability to build on the different types of expertise available in the network rather than assuming that only you have the expertise needed to make a difference.
- Allow enough time and flexibility to give everyone the opportunity to make a difference. Traditional timelines and roles of authority will not allow for the risks that must be taken in order to develop relationships that will be the basis for establishing innovative solutions.
- Be able to make mutual adjustments, build coalitions, and mobilize support in order to make things happen. Working in a network means that each member recognizes their interdependence and learns how to capitalize on their interdependencies.³⁰

However, translating these conditions into results is a much harder undertaking to achieve—although a growing body of examples is becoming available for study due to the widening use of networked strategies

in today's environment (Agranoff 2003; Reed 2004; Milward and Provan 2006; Treadwell 2007).

One example of an effective service delivery network is the Southern Alberta Child and Youth Network, an initiative whose efforts are entirely dependent on the commitment and collection action capacities of member stakeholders. The network's two primary objectives are to: "develop and adopt a shared vision and purpose," and "identify and create opportunities for positive change in service delivery." A formal evaluation of the efforts of this network demonstrates tangible results that could only have been achieved in a collaborative manner while also underscoring the relevance and importance of many of the elements of networked leadership presented above.³¹

The message for governments is that holistic transformation requires embracing a collaborative mindset in order to realize more seamless service delivery models encompassing multiple public sector bodies and multiple jurisdictions. As the scope of networking expands, so too does demand for workers who can function in an increasingly fluid and complex organizational context.

New Managerial Skills Needed

A global survey conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit, in association with KPMG, is one of many such efforts to articulate the prototype of the future public servant as someone able to navigate complexity both internally and externally. In terms of roles perceived by public sector executives as destined to be most essential in 2020, two areas garnered the most support (62 percent and 32 percent respectively) by a wide margin (Economist Intelligence Unit 2006):

- Complex knowledge-based roles that are primarily outward-facing and require developed communication and judgment skills
- Complex knowledge-based roles that are primarily inward-looking and require developed communication and inward-looking skills (p. 64).

For more holistic and integrative cross-jurisdictional models to take hold, this "outward-facing" dimension to collaborative governance between governments becomes essential. There is a need to extend

the logic of the Service New Brunswick examples to arrangements between or among governments—including site touring, informal conversation, joint discovery, and shared action. These sorts of processes require high-level support frameworks, but the essence of such an approach is more bottom-up and transversal, requiring both individual and organizational competencies that support experimentation and learning.

Smaller jurisdictions, whether provincial, territorial, or municipal, have both important assets and handicaps in terms of recruiting and nurturing the requisite levels of human capital necessary. Fewer resources is clearly a potential constraint, but one that can be overcome by horizontal initiatives across jurisdictions (regionally, encompassing either municipalities or provinces, such as Atlantic Canada). It bears noting that much of public sector innovation and reform continues to be an emergent process—with national reforms shaped by innovations benefiting from the flexibility and nimbleness of smaller, sub-national governments (Goldsmith and Eggers 2004; Stoker 2005; Roy 2006b).

Engage Citizens and Communities in Design and Delivery

Innovative leaders have focused on the strategies and mechanisms for the delivery of public services across levels of government. Increasingly, however, advocates of the network approach to governance insist that governments think and act more creatively about the design of public services, both within and across jurisdictions.

Although governments are no doubt devoting much time and energy to design matters, much of this activity happens from the inside looking out. Client segmentation and user surveys focus on the public as the user and assume a de facto customer is primarily interested in transactional outcomes. Such a view is increasingly being challenged as incomplete, both conceptually and practically, in jurisdictions such as Scotland. In an increasing number of jurisdictions, the focus is on citizens being participants, not just customers, in the design and delivery of public services.

In line with the emergence of a more participative approach to democratic governance and service

design, governments must foster new capacities to collaborate and become better integrated with a number of external stakeholders and partners. Accenture characterizes such interdependence and networking as a service eco-system:

In this new ecosystem model, leading governments also delegate service accountability to the relevant community for a new ability to drive outcomes. Local and municipal governments in turn take the chance to tailor what they do for the particular citizens that live there, leading to new thinking about delivering services not just to individuals, but also to families and communities (Accenture 2007, 8).

This challenge applies to all government levels, especially in countries with a federal political system such as Canada and Australia, where federal service delivery actors play important roles in both individual and community development. Yet it is precisely the nature of such “roles” that requires a broader conversation not only among governments themselves but also across a broader range of stakeholders as well as with the citizenry. The sort of conversation required will need to be structured around questions and issues such as:

- Public expectations about service integration across jurisdictions and how such expectations may vary across different sorts of communities (i.e., urban and rural, northern and remote, First Nations, etc.)
- The appropriate balance between a municipal, provincial, and federal presence at the interface between the public sector and the citizenry (and, again, how this balance may not be uniform across the country in terms of both present conditions and future prospects and demands)
- Linkages between demography, geography, and technology in shaping a community not only as a passive recipient of services but also as a strategic partner in determining how delivery processes can best contribute to policy and development objectives.

This latter point underscores the need to carefully examine the cumulative impacts of multiple service

Tlicho Community Services Agency, Canada

In the early 1990s there was increasing concern among the [Dogrib Aboriginal] people and the leadership about health and social services provided by the government. They were often not culturally relevant and they did not seem to improve the lives of people in the communities. The leaders decided they wanted to take over these services. But they had a problem. They lacked people with expertise to serve on boards and fill staff positions, especially at the administrative level. Being very practical people, they came up with a practical solution. They decided to merge these new services with something they did know something about—how to run their own schools.

In 1997 the GNWT (Government of the Northwest Territories) and the Dogrib leadership signed an agreement to create the Dogrib Community Services Board. As a result of this agreement the GNWT transferred to the Dogrib the responsibility for managing:

- Education services (schools, day cares, services for children with special needs, and student residences)
- Primary health care (treatment and emergency services, the complete range of public health services, home support programs, and dental therapy)
- Child and family services (child protection, foster care, community mental health, residential care, and services for the elderly and handicapped)

On August 4, 2005, with the Tlicho Agreement, the Dogrib Community Services Board became the Tlicho Community Services Agency (TCSA). It became an agency of the Tlicho government and is now in the position to assume even more responsibility for services. The Partnership between the TCSA and the GNWT for service delivery is guided by the Tlicho Intergovernmental Services Agreement (ISA) between the Tlicho government, on the one hand, and the GNWT and the government of Canada, on the other hand. It is the only such agreement in the Northwest Territories and distinguishes the relationship the Dogrib have with the GNWT and federal government from other relationships with regional boards.

Source: <http://www.tlicho.ca/services-agency/history.htm>

delivery strategies from the perspective of the community and to pursue service integration in an open, consultative, and bottom-up manner. Many provinces are experimenting with policy and institutional flexibility for their largest cities while smaller communities, including municipal, territorial, and aboriginal authorities, are increasingly committed to devolution, self-governance, and partnership as the best way forward (such as the UK's Buckinghamshire example described on page 35).

A good example of devolving service integration in this manner can be found in Canada's Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), which has developed an innovative partnership model among the Dogrib Aboriginal communities, their own regional services authority, and the territorial government. The new governance arrangement won a United Nations Public Service Award in June 2007 (see the sidebar on the Tlicho Community Services Agency).

Service design therefore means not only gauging the public as to their immediate levels of satisfaction with existing encounters, but also engaging them in

a dialogue about what sorts of services are most required, and how the selection and crafting of delivery mechanisms can improve community prospects for innovation and growth. Such a participatory approach is particularly essential for evolving multi-channel strategies in the public interest and collective trade-offs among values such as efficiency, employment, and equity.

Whether it is identity authentication or public engagement for service design, the resulting imperative for inter-jurisdictional governance is a more collaborative mind-set focused on community learning and performance (Woodward 2003).

Furthermore, the term *community* need not be exclusively defined in geographic terms. The service delivery ecosystem, for example, implies a stakeholder community both within and outside of governmental confines—often transcending any specific locality. The result is the formation of new communities of practice across and between governments that are by definition non-hierarchical and more networked.

Create a Common Technology Infrastructure

The primary connotation of the term Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) has typically been technological, in terms of forging interoperable electronic systems as enablers of customer- or citizen-centric service delivery. Many strategists, however, would argue for a wider application of the term—to include the alignment of technology and information management planning within a business model perspective of transformational change.³²

Fluid and constantly shifting terminology notwithstanding, the need for common infrastructure has been a key horizontal driver both within and across governments, very much at the nexus of e-government and service transformation. It was this need that led in the late 1990s to the development of the Public Sector Service Delivery Council, the Public Sector Chief Information Officer Council, and the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service.

The informal build-up of pressure for a common infrastructure is also reflected in the growing list of bilateral and multilateral cross-jurisdictional initiatives aimed at either sharing or integrating information. These include portals for such client groups as:

- Senior citizens³³
- Business information via BizPaL³⁴ and Business Registration Online³⁵
- Vital-events information sharing including the newborn registration service launched by ServiceOntario and Service Canada that provides quick and seamless access to parents for birth registration, birth certificates, and social insurance numbers³⁶

This list of initiatives provides important examples of cross-jurisdictional service integration. However, stumbling blocks emerge when attempts are made to stitch a number of these like-minded innovations into a broader quilt (or architecture) for systemic information management and business model planning across the public sector as a whole.

One illustration of these stumbling blocks is the recently revived eContact initiative, a collaborative effort between federal and provincial governments

designed to create a national repository of service standards and shared modeling for more interoperability (Moule 2007). Many past struggles of eContact are attributable to the limited ties across jurisdictions and the difficulties of sustaining and expanding joint initiatives. An important lesson from other jurisdictions such as Belgium and Denmark is that although informal cooperation (of the sort provided by the federal councils) is a useful beginning, it cannot suffice in creating a more systemic approach to identifying opportunities and pursuing these opportunities through joint undertakings.

A greater level of formality is required, within which strategies and mechanisms must be resourced and empowered to pursue shared aims. The need for such formalization explains the emergence of bilateral arrangements such as the recent protocol on public sector renewal signed by the respective heads of the government of Canada and the province of Ontario. With respect to service delivery, both governments have committed to:

- Expanding collaboration in citizen/business-facing services
- Forging a common information technology infrastructure/backbone.
- Establishing a protocol on the exchange of protected/sensitive information.
- Exploring possibilities for service integration.
- Improving relationships with third party agencies³⁷

The importance of this agreement lies in the offering of an explicit layer of high-level support within which collaborative opportunities may be pursued. Nonetheless, Service Canada and Service Ontario now face the important challenge of operationalizing such support into innovation. This requires creating not only interoperable electronic infrastructures but also at least partially integrated organizational infrastructures as well.

The challenge lies in moving toward a more collaborative governance model, which will be required to implement a vision of integrated service delivery. Many early service delivery integration initiatives have been more about *cooperation* than *collaboration*. While these terms are often used interchangeably,

they need to be viewed with a more nuanced eye. This can help underscore the different sorts of expectations and commitment at play:

Cooperation: Informal relationships that exist without any commonly defined mission, structure or planning

Collaboration: A more durable and pervasive relationship involving shared structures and joint authority, a full commitment to a common mission and pooled resources, risks and rewards (Mattessich et al. 2001).

Moving toward a collaborative mind-set and a common technology infrastructure requires a level of trust across jurisdictional boundaries acknowledged to be lacking at present (Entwistle and Martin 2005). A 2006 Public Sector Service Delivery Council study lays out the issue well:

Trust continues to be a significant problem ... public sector organizations as service providers still struggle to trust one another. As such, even if Canadians were perfectly prepared to give governments permission to use and share personal information for the purpose of identification, the goal of integrated, seamless service cannot be met until service organizations establish a level of trust between themselves (p. 9).

Agree on a Common Identity Management System

Identity management in Canada today lies at the crossroads between two approaches:

- A loose, cooperative framework for sharing information and aligning solutions across otherwise separate jurisdictional systems; or
- A set of truly collaborative governance mechanisms underpinned by integrative capacities for decision making

The decision as to which route to take will be consequential in shaping service delivery capacities across levels of government.

A 2007 PSSDC-sponsored Inter-jurisdictional Identity Management and Authentication Task Force

clearly described the need for an appropriate Canadian governance model to underpin any inter-jurisdictional framework for identity authentication and management (IATF 2007). It pointed to three alternative existing models for inter-jurisdictional governance arrangements:

- *The Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators*,³⁸ a nonprofit corporation reporting to a Council of Ministers, supported by a Secretariat and Deputy Minister Council and overseen by a board of federal, provincial, and territorial senior officials
- *The Ministerial Council on Social Policy Renewal*, supported by inter-governmental subcommittees and cross-sectoral councils
- *The Canada Health Infoway*,³⁹ a nonprofit corporation jointly accountable to federal and provincial governments with a board composed of two federal appointees (including the chair), five provincial/territorial appointees, and six directors elected by members (who are the 14 federal, provincial, and territorial deputy ministers of health).

The first and second of these models underscore that the aforementioned *cooperative* path is insufficient for a genuinely cross-jurisdictional system of identity management. A further basis of collaboration is required if more seamless service delivery mechanisms for the public sector as a whole are to emerge.

One potential solution would be to leverage the ongoing federal Secure Channel initiative into a national infrastructure for all levels of government. This option had been preferred by federal officials in recent years. To the extent that it already underpins many online authentication and service channels federally, Secure Channel clearly serves as a technological asset for an enabling national infrastructure linking all governments.⁴⁰ Skeptics, however, point out that the business model of federal Secure Channel remains in flux, and that Secure Channel was not designed in a genuinely cross-jurisdictional manner (being as it was the centerpiece of the federal Government On-Line⁴¹ initiative).

Others point to the Canada Health Infoway as a more appropriate model for a genuinely collaborative undertaking across jurisdictions. The fact that health

care has evolved in a manner largely separate from the more generalized service architectures of governments with very similar and equally important identity management needs is not unimportant in this discussion. If Canada is explicitly committed to electronic health records dependent on new smart cards and electronic identifiers, it is likely worth exploring if and how a single identity infrastructure can best serve all public service agendas.

Nonetheless, consideration of an Infoway-inspired approach also raises important questions about the overall federated architecture for service delivery at all levels and across all channels. The delivery and partnering implications for Service Canada, as the frontline federal government interface with the citizenry, are particularly important (an issue further explored across the case studies presented in Part III). Infoway arose within a health care context characterized by an increasingly federated approach in both contemporary and classical senses—national standards and federal funding mechanisms, provincial jurisdiction politically and organizationally, and an array of regional and local mechanisms engaged in patient care and service delivery. With autonomy and mission, this body is aggressively challenging governments to do more to invest in a national infrastructure that has important repercussions for not only health care but also identity and information management more broadly.⁴²

Federal, provincial, and territorial deputy ministers with service delivery responsibilities met in late 2007 and decided to formally pursue a pan-Canadian framework for identity authentication and management. The intent is that a formal governance body, funding model, and work plan will be in place by 2008.

One important rationale for a pan-Canadian approach to identity management is to ensure some level of technological commonality across jurisdictions, provincially and locally. As such, it is important that discussions pertaining to governance models for identity management systems and other aspects of inter-jurisdictional collaboration that may be required are situated in a broader dialogue on how the country's holistic approach to service models may also impact the broader developmental capacities for communities, the basis of the next challenge.

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Endnotes

1. The results of such surveys are summarized and made available in a very general form in the annual reports for the GOL exercise (http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/organisation/ciob-ddpi_e.asp).

2. There are three main sub-selections from the main portal: Canadians, non-Canadians, and businesses, the logic being that the sorts of information and services required by online visitors generally falls into one of these three camps. Accordingly, with just a few clicks users are more likely able to find the information they seek (www.canada.gc.ca).

3. In its 2005 GOL Annual Report, the government of Canada reports that over 40 percent of individual tax returns were filed online in 2003 (a level expected to increase to nearly 50 percent by 2004) and more than 90 percent of federal job applications are now received online. The report, detailing and profiling all service offerings, is available at: www.gol-ged.gc.ca.

4. http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/text/factsheets/secure_channel-e.html.

5. This quotation is drawn from an internal MSC planning document made available to the authors by MSC managers.

6. In 2004 a new prime minister would spur a re-composed government with a separation of HRDC into new departments, each with their own minister and unique mandate (nonetheless closely aligned and enjoined by subsequent Service Canada plans examined more fully below): Human Resource and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and Social Development Canada (SDC).

7. The formal announcement of Service Canada was included in the 2005 federal budgetary package (as part of an allotment for service improvement initiatives). Cabinet approval for the concept was given in 2005—although a number of machinery and governance issues remained unresolved at that time, most notably whether the entity is to have separate departmental status and its relative powers to work in concert with other departments and

agencies. In whatever form it eventually takes it will likely begin as an evolution of MSC, working primarily as a regrouping of service functions from both HRSDC and SDC. An initial notification of Service Canada was sent to employees of both departments in late May 2005, and more formal public announcements regarding mandates and restructuring are expected in the fall of this same year.

8. For more information, see: <http://www.canada.gc.ca/MGA-MDG/intro-eng.html>.

9. As presented by Service Canada (www.servicecanada.gc.ca).

10. www.bizpal.ca.

11. See, for example, the 2005 bilateral agreement between Ontario and Canada: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/labourmarket.html>.

12. See: Canada Health Infoway, 2015: Advancing Canada's Next Generation of Healthcare, http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca/en/pdf/Vision_2015_Advancing_Canadas_next_generation_of_healthcare.pdf.

13. See "Building Canada—Modern Infrastructure for a Strong Canada," <http://www.buildingcanada-chantierscanada.gc.ca/plandocs/booklet-livret/booklet-livret-eng.html>.

14. Such developments receive very brief recognition in: Johns, C. M., O'Reilly, P. L. and Inwood, G. J. (2007). "Formal and Informal Dimensions of Intergovernmental Administrative Relations in Canada," *Canadian Public Administration* 50 (1) 21–41.

15. For further information on the Institute, see: <http://www.iccs-isac.org/eng/about.htm>.

16. Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens, eGovernment Observatory (2005). "eGovernment in Belgium," p. 31. *eGovernment in the Member States of the European Union* (Brussels, Belgium).

17. European eGovernment News Roundup, May 2006, p. 5 (<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=24776>).

18. Crossroads Bank for Social Security (2007). *E-Government Program of the Belgian Social Security*. (Belgium: <http://www.ksz.fgov.be/documentation/En/UNO-CBSS-v2007.pdf>).
19. Ibid.
20. Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD (2003). *E-Government: Organising for Integration*. (Prepared for the 2nd annual Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Symposium on e-Government, Lisbon, Portugal: [http://webdomino1.oecd.org/COMNET/PUM/egovproweb.nsf/viewHtml/index/\\$FILE/OrganisingForIntegration.pdf](http://webdomino1.oecd.org/COMNET/PUM/egovproweb.nsf/viewHtml/index/$FILE/OrganisingForIntegration.pdf)).
21. Scottish Executive (2006). *Transforming Public Services: The Next Phase of Reform*. (Edinburgh: <http://www.socialworkscotland.org.uk/resources/cpsdl/TransformingPublicServicesthenextphaseofreform.pdf>).
22. This point may carry important repercussions for channel management in a more public-centric world. For example, polling conducted by Service Canada in 2006 found that people preferred the characterization of “citizen” over that of “customer” in dealing with public sector providers. The tendency is to view citizen- or client-based relationships as more dependent on a human interface than on virtual channels. Nonetheless, this view also requires nuance as demonstrated by the case of Denmark, where governments are attempting to balance mandatory electronic channels nationally with a frontline human interface municipally.
23. Source: (ibid.)
24. This new approach is consistent with a shift in the conceptual discourse surrounding public sector service transformation and the broader linkages between democratic performance and accountability and service delivery. Many leading British experts on such matters have been debating the emergence of *public value management* (PVM) as an important new paradigm. It differs from the traditional hierarchical and control-minded public sector model, as well as with the New Public Management model that champions a competitive and customer-focused business mentality.
25. Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council (2007). *Effective, strong and integrated Local Government in Buckinghamshire: A pioneering, pathfinder model for enhanced two tier working*. Buckinghamshire, UK, p. 2.
26. Ibid.
27. It bears noting that even prior to these changes, Danish municipalities were already the primary recipient of income taxes in the country, responsible for a wide array of human and community-based services. Under the new model, enlarged “regions” will focus exclusively on the management of health care.
28. Australian National Audit Office, “Management of the Implementation of the New Commonwealth Services Delivery Arrangements: Centrelink,” 1997, accessed at: http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/1997-98_Audit_Report_18.pdf, May 15, 2008.
29. Queensland Government. Ipswich Community Access Disability Services. Internal and external partnerships close the gaps between clients and community.
30. Mandell, M. (2005). “The Impact of Changing Expectations in Complex Networks” (<http://www.csus.edu/ccp/newsletter/2005/Summer/#challengingissue>). This article is based in part on: Robyn Keast, Myna P. Mandell, Kerry Brown and Geoffrey Woolcock (2004). Network Structures: Working Differently and Changing Expectations. *Public Administration Review*, 64 (3).
31. Southern Alberta Child & Youth Health Network (2005). *Southern Alberta Child and Youth Health Network—Evaluation Report*. (Calgary, Alberta).
32. See several articles in the July–August 2007 issue of *CIO Government Review* (<http://www.itworldcanada.com/publication/CIO%20Gov.%20Review.htm>).
33. See: <http://www.seniorsinfo.ca/>.
34. See: http://bizpal.ca/index_e.shtml.
35. See: <http://www.businessregistration.gc.ca/>.
36. See: <http://www.serviceontario.ca/newborn>.
37. (p.4) Schedule A (ibid.).
38. See: <http://www.ccmta.ca/english/>.
39. See: <http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca/>.
40. Indeed, this observation was made by several attendees of the 2007 Lac Carling workshop devoted to identity management and the PSSDC task force report (www.laccarling.ca).
41. See: http://www.gol-ged.gc.ca/index_e.asp.
42. Canada Health Infoway (2007). 2015: *Advancing Canada’s Next Generation of Health Care* (www.infoway.ca).

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