Moving to the Cloud for Small Cities

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Stan Cooper

- Principal, Cooper Technology
  - Specializing in IT support for small cities and special purpose government agencies
  - 10 years local government service as Director of IT Department for Platte County, Mo
  - Extensive experience explaining technology to non-tech local government managers

D. J. Gehrt, ICMA-CM

- City Administrator, Platte City, Mo
  - 23 years local government experience
  - 7 years service in larger cities (>200,000)
  - 2 years international local government service
  - 14 years small community manager
  - Technology still seems like magic

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How and Why Small Governments May Choose to Transition to the Cloud

Community Comparability

- Population: 5,000
- FTE   35
- General Fund: $2.5M
- Utility Funds: $4.0M
- CIP $2.5M

Police, Public Works, Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste, Parks, Recreation, Community Development, Economic Development, General Administration

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What We Did

- Reduced Servers from 8 to 2
- Moved applications and data to cloud
- Transitioned from PCs to laptops
- Lease instead of purchase office apps
- Returned to "slim client" architecture with both applications and data on cloud

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Why We Did It

- Staff spending too much time on informal IT fixes, taking time from core functions
- Cost of server replacement/maintenance
- Facility dependent in event of emergency
- Continuity of government not supported
- Continual need for desktop IT support
- Vulnerable to Hacking/Cyber Attack

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What We Did

- Assess IT system, create general plan
- Involve departments early, but needs strong and consistent leadership
- Departments research cloud version of their unique applications (PD, PW, Parks)
- Staff sees positive change (new laptops, docking stations, monitor)
- Transition not an option, but know when to compromise

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What We Got Out of It

- Less staff time on IT issues
- Reduced IT support expenditures
- Improved software compatibility
- Virtually eliminated desktop support needs
- Reduced server maintenance needs/cost
- Cut server replacement costs by 75%
- Greatly improved cyber security
- Quantum leap in continuity of government

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Challenges and Pitfalls

- Requires culture change, informal IT "elves" have to be brought on board
- Requires cooperation and assistance from IT staff, IT consultant
- Dependent on Internet connectivity
- Requires leap of faith that the "cloud" does exist and that it will work

Questions/Comments?

Additional Information…

ICMA 2016 | SEPT 25-28
KANSAS CITY
102nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE