

Governor Michael O. Leavitt
Office of the Governor
210 State Capitol
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Governor Leavitt,

I hereby respectfully submit my resignation as Chief Information Officer of the State of Utah effective December 31, 2002.

With recent events, I have come to realize that I have become an impediment to implementing our vision for eGovernment and an efficient and effective information technology infrastructure. The conversation has increasingly become about me instead of the important work that needs to be done to benefit the citizens of Utah. Because of that, I have decided to step aside.

As I look back over the last two years, there is much to be proud of. We have created a unified branding and common look and feel for the state web site, including a standardized set of URLs based on utah.gov. We have created a single computer directory of state employees to facilitate a unified system of authentication including email addresses for every employee that use the utah.gov domain name. We have begun the eREP project to build a new eligibility system which will be a model for the rest of the States in interoperability. We have started to create cross agency eGovernment applications such as the one-stop business registration system. Dozens of new services have come online and Utah has continued to be well regarded and rewarded for its eGovernment initiatives. The recent process and organizational changes you instituted are beginning to bear fruit and give me great hope that our vision of a 24/7 government that is efficient and effective can be achieved.

Even so, the road ahead is long and poses significant challenges. In the latest Information Technology Commission meeting, I presented a document which I entitled "Road to the Future."¹ The document portrays a vision for not only the kinds of business possibilities that abound in an organization that makes effective use of IT, but also the strategic steps necessary to get there.

Such a future is not inevitable. This vision can only become a reality if we, as a state, have the political will to make it happen. IT in Utah was given an "A" grade in *Governing Magazine*, and rightly so. But, to remain a top-performing state we must vigilantly monitor progress toward the realization of our vision and make course changes where necessary to achieve it. The remainder of this letter points out a few specific roadblocks that must be dealt with now if we are to make this vision a reality.

Align Statute with Governor's Vision of CIO Responsibilities

One of the frustrating parts of being CIO is that the Governor has very different ideas about what the CIO can and should do from what the legislature and, in particular legislative staff, feel the CIO can and should do. This is a fundamental structural problem that will continue to cause problems if it is not solved.

Part of the problem is that the CIO has none of the traditional management tools at his disposal: the CIO cannot hire or fire, cannot reassign people to specific projects, cannot

¹ Road to the Future, "[http://www.windley.com/docs/Road to the Future.pdf](http://www.windley.com/docs/Road%20to%20the%20Future.pdf)"

change budgets, cannot change resource levels and so on. This makes it difficult to build a culture and create an effective IT workforce.

Other structural changes that should be considered include:

- Establishing the authority in the CIO's office to create and enforce adherence to a statewide IT enterprise architecture and strategic plan. The current statute makes the CIO a collector and approver of individual agency plans rather than giving the CIO the authority to establish plans.
- Ensuring that the CIO has the ability to establish policy and rule, where appropriate.
- Abolishing the ITPSC in statute but retaining a similar body to review and recommend IT policy for the executive branch.
- Abolishing the IT Commission and replacing it with a new, smaller group specifically directed to develop and recommend IT policy that can be adopted by all three branches of government.

The CIO's office has created a detailed document for consideration by the next legislature that outlines these issues and more. I encourage you to work with the Legislature in this next session to see that the CIO statute is properly aligned with the goals and expectations you have for the position.

ITS Reformation

Since taking the job as State CIO, one theme has been consistent: agencies are not happy with the level of service or the reliability of the service they get from ITS, the State's central IT organization. If we are to make progress in our vision, ITS must be seen by its customers as a preferred place to buy IT services. Without a healthy central services organization, interoperability is very difficult and excessively costly.

ITS management has recently developed a roadmap that describes its plan for becoming a customer-focused organization that is known for offering reliable services at costs that are at or below market. I believe the plan is the right one and will result in an ITS that is up to the challenge of our vision. There is much work to do here and the road is not easy, but it is one of the most important tasks before the State. As with any complex organizational reform, there is likely to be complaining, angst, and fear. If we simply try to manage the noise, we will miss an important opportunity to make a significant and important improvement to the State's IT organization. I urge you, the Cabinet and the Legislature to support the ITS efforts to reform and improve.

Fragmented Technical Infrastructure

In many places, our technical infrastructure is fragmented. We are making progress in some areas, but we must move more quickly. One example of fragmented infrastructure that delays our progress and limits our possibilities is our fragmented system of networks. ITS runs a wide area network. UEN runs another. Each agency runs a separate LAN. We also have fragmented the management and operation of our data centers, servers, and desktop infrastructures. This leads to inefficiencies, but more important makes interoperability more costly and difficult to achieve. The solution is not simply a matter of setting standards. While setting standards may increase interoperability and decrease the time we spend rolling out new applications, it will not be efficient. The State must, collectively, make a determined effort to reduce fragmentation wherever possible. Tackling this problem now may seem like it puts

some immediate gains out of reach, but I believe it is a sacrifice that will pay large dividends in the future.

Data Policy, Rules, and Statutes

Some of the most vexing issues facing the State as it moves toward greater interoperability involve statutes, rules, culture, and attitude. The past several years have seen some progress in this area, but much remains to be done. The State should begin to catalogue the data it collects and build common data storage standards and data exchange standards. This effort must be collaborative with other states, local governments, and the federal government. Utah can be a leader in this important area if we make it a priority.

A Bias for Single Function Applications

No matter how good people's intentions and the feelings for cooperation, it's often easier and faster to build a single purpose application inside an agency than to go through the pain of finding partners, building common requirements, and building an application that serves multiple groups and provides for interoperability. The problem is that our current budgeting and planning process views each of these projects separately. In fact, the IT issues are mostly hidden in larger line items and have to be teased apart. The current CIO statute is an attempt to attack some of these issues, but in fact, the CIO's office has neither the authority nor the personnel to tackle this problem head on and drive multiple use applications and interoperability. The Governor and Legislature need to develop budgeting and funding models that reward and encourage joint applications development rather than discourage it.

Fix the Fundamental Problems with State IT Salaries

The State pays IT workers too little. DHRM data suggests that we are at least 17% below market. Moreover, recent events show clearly that state IT employees are not content with their salaries. This problem has been masked by the downturn in the economy. Presently, we are able to attract and retain our talented IT professionals because there are few other options, but that will not last. If we do not address this problem, it will continue to eat away at staff morale and competence levels until it threatens the ability of the State to conduct its business effectively. This may seem like an impossible task in light of current budget realities, but it is possible to fix this problem within current budget limitations if IT were organized differently.

I offer these recommendations as a roadmap to keep Utah among the top performing IT states in the nation. I am saddened to step down from this position at this time of great change and opportunity. I think that there are exciting times ahead for Utah and that the future of IT is bright if we hold the course. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Phillip J. Windley
Chief Information Officer