

IT Emerging Issues

June 23, 2016

1. MDM Solution – Mike Allen

The State Information Technology Services Division (SITSD) has made changes to the email system that will affect the way all State of Montana email users connect mobile devices to state email accounts. A new Mobile Device Management (MDM) application called Airwatch was purchased by SITSD. The target date for all State email users to have MDM implemented is July 1, 2016. A new Legislative Branch MDM policy has been created to coincide with the new MDM program. The purpose of implementing Airwatch is to improve network security while still allowing users to connect to state email accounts with mobile devices. Airwatch installs an agent on the mobile device that enforces policies and monitors the phone for updates and compromises. Legislative Branch users that want email delivered to their mobile devices will be notified by OLIT staff to enroll in the new MDM program.

2. Web Site Modernization – Steve Eller

The Branch's web presence is outdated and leads to a number of lost opportunities. There is a significant need for a major redesign of the web presence with an updated look and feel. This requires technology that allows for mobile-centric and user-friendly access to information, more efficient web-enabled browsing capability, and improved search functions. OLIT's internal business units are looking for a new content management system with a robust and efficient process to publish web content, reducing the risk of posting incorrect content and providing a more uniform style for pages and links. This project focuses on the use of new technologies and programming language.

3. Visual Basic Upgrade – Steve Eller

The Branch, like many organizations, has a long history of customizing Microsoft Office for specific needs. For many years the standard for doing this was with the Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) programming language. About 10 years ago Microsoft deprecated VBA in favor of other languages, primarily VBA.net (which while similar in name is quite different fundamentally). Most of the custom VBA used in the Branch lies within the MS Access databases, but it is used in other office applications here too. The effort to replace our VBA is a consideration for upcoming years and will be coordinated with other redevelopment projects such as the LAWS II and website upgrade.

4. Data Management/Analytics – Darrin McLean

The information processes in the Branch continue to increase in volume. The toolsets in the Branch have generally not kept pace with the increase in the volume of data. The technology market has, in the meantime, developed tools to process and analyze large amounts of data. The categories of these types of tools include data warehousing, data analytics, data management, and business intelligence. Big data considerations notwithstanding, some of the presently recognized obsolete systems will require replacement with modern, enterprise-level data management and data analytic technologies to support the trending needs in audit analytics, financial analytics, and policy studies.

5. Workflow Systems – Darrin McLean

The Legislative Branch, as with most government agencies, strives to foster openness in government through the presentation of information. The functions of the Legislative Branch have important historical and legal consequences. Because of the increased demand for electronically produced and stored information, the Branch must consider the retention, organization, and retrieval of this information. Effective document management, the need to retrieve data quickly, enabling efficient search facilities, and tracking documents from application through delivery is both a technical and business consideration. The need to improve the planning, delivery, tracking, and reporting of projects, including budgeting and allocation of resources, requires a project management system that will enable more effective management of projects, including but not limited to tracking activities/tasks, achieving relevant milestones, and protecting institutional knowledge.