Chapter 27
Performance Measurement and E-Reporting: Exploring Trailblazing Programs

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ABSTRACT
Public sector performance measurement systems are often designed by high-level administrators and agency staff. In many instances performance reports are treated as internal documents or provide limited information of how government actions impact the lives of citizens or fall short of expectations. Performance measurement and reporting approaches, however, are gradually changing to include citizens in the process and to communicate results in a more robust way to the public. This chapter explores the topic of e-reporting and the potential it offers to engage the public in the assessment of government performance. Three exemplary programs are examined: Virginia Performs, Maryland’s BayStat, and King County AIMs High. Each offers useful techniques for describing program objectives, showing government progress, making data available, and exploring interactive mechanisms that support data manipulation or customization. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future areas of research.

INTRODUCTION
Measuring performance and reporting results is a central concern for governments around the world. Elected officials want to show results to increase transparency, validate policy decisions, reduce cynicism, and build trust in government actions. Public administrators are central to the performance measurement and reporting process as they collect, interpret, utilize, and report performance information. Even more important is the role of the public, as citizens want to see the tangible results of government programs funded by their tax dollars.

Much is known about the promise and pitfalls associated with measuring public sector performance. Performance measurement, for example, is widely recognized as a management strategy capable of producing systematic assessments of how much and how well government performs.

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A spate of research and professional association publications present strategies and showcase best practices that promote it as a management tool. Many of the challenges of measuring performance, as well as the factors that can facilitate performance measurement in public organizations, have been carefully studied and are widely discussed in published academic research and redressed with professional association activities and training. Other research highlights how citizens can be engaged in the performance measurement process to align government decisions with citizen preferences.

As performance measurement has advanced in the field of public administration, e-government has also evolved as a mechanism that can share information, support web-based transactions, and transform government through collaborations in a virtual or electronic space. It can play a vital role in the strategies government uses to inform the public and interact with citizens. Most importantly, it is a mechanism that can make the results of public measurement efforts available to the public via e-reporting. For this examination, e-reporting is defined as a government strategy for making performance information and results available to the public. Offering interactive functions, e-reporting is conceptualized as including features such as the use of graphic displays of complex information for easy comprehension by non-governmental audiences, the availability of raw data for manipulation and mapping, or other report-generating devices for citizens to customize their own performance report.

This chapter explores how performance measurement and e-government strategies intersect with increasing public demand for transparency in government and for tangible results from government spending and services. It begins with a discussion of the ability of performance measurement to measure agency performance and the potential for engaging citizens in the process. E-government is introduced to highlight the uses of technology and its transformative potential to inform and involve citizens their government. And finally, e-reporting is presented as an intersection of performance measurement and e-government, in the sense that reporting results can be done through innovative uses of technology. Three leading models for e-reporting in the United States are presented as exemplary programs that are reporting performance results to the public via sophisticated e-reporting strategies. The efforts of Virginia Performs, Maryland’s BayStat, and King County AIMS High of the State of Washington are profiled. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future areas of research and considerations for public administrators who are interested in advancing an e-reporting strategy in their jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND**

**Performance Measurement and Reporting Practices**

Performance measurement is touted as a management tool that public administrators can use to measure and account for agency performance to elected officials and the public. Standing the test of time, performance measurement is deeply rooted in public administration history as it has served as cornerstone of municipal reform of the progressive era (Williams 2003), scientific management (Taylor, 1912), total quality management, scorecards, and other subsequent management approaches. More recently, it is advertised as the means to promote results-oriented government with public administrators using it to assess how much and how well public services and products are delivered (Moynihan 2008; Callahan 2004).

Performance measurement systems can improve management decision making with indicators that capture efficiency, effectiveness, and/or service quality and results. Some performance measurement systems, for example, can be designed to promote efficiency (getting more with