

# GOVERNMENT

## **Introduction**

Technology is an intentionally extensive term. Defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica as “the application of scientific knowledge to the practical aims of human life,” technology comes from the Greek word “τέχνη,” which translates to “art, skill, cunning of hand.” This term encompasses everything from the hand tools of our ancestors to artificial intelligence applications today.

Governments using technology to affect the lives of constituents is nothing new. Hammurabi leveraged new carving technologies to codify Babylonian laws in 1754 BCE, and New York City built the first line of subway in 1904. This short paper examines modern trends embraced by governments to integrate technology into management and outreach. [1]

## **Background**

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis popularized the phrase “laboratories of democracy” in reference to the innovation of states. This is one of the chief arguments for federalism; theoretically, different states have the freedom to implement variants of economic and social innovation, and then the other states can embrace the novel ideas that work. Though states retain this power, cities and municipalities also enact key experiments in governance. The examples highlighted in this paper mostly pertain to local government, though they could likely be scaled up for states or for the entire country.

## **Examples**

### *Washington DC*

Washington DC developed the Grade.DC.Gov to solicit feedback from constituents. According to the District, “this program enables [citizens] to submit comments about certain District agencies and view how District residents graded those agencies. The goal is to help [citizens] better engage with [their] government and help government agencies to improve the quality of their services.” [2]

Another example of responsive governance by Washington DC is their Lab @ DC team. Based in the Office of the City Administrator, the Lab is a team of data and social scientists that both develops and tests policies. The Lab orchestrated two iterations of Form-a-Ploozza, an initiative that brings the public and governmental agencies together to revise the city’s forms. Forms are one of the most common ways constituents interface with their government, and DC brought the voices of those effected in on the development process. [3]

Ideally, governments can take increased public interaction as a model and leverage it to create public programs grounded in public insight.

### *Louisville, Kentucky*

To better coordinate sanitation services, the city of Louisville offers junk pick-up reminders to residents through GovDelivery, segmented by location. After signing up online for GovDelivery, residents can opt to receive emails or texts. More than 12,000 households have signed up to receive alerts one week before and then one day before junk is scheduled for curbside pickup. By directly communicating pick-up dates for residents, Louisville increased efficiency in its call center, cutting the number of calls to its 311 center regarding pick-up dates by 45% since 2013. The provision of behavioral nudges, like text message reminders, is a hot topic in social science, and it is increasingly embraced by municipalities. [4] [5]



### *Florida*

At the state level, just like the city level, communication is key. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission enacts quarterly reengagement campaigns. These reengagement methods vary, but they center on existing subscribers who opt in for the Commission's outreach. These may be individuals who hunt, who wish to learn more about red tide, or who access one of the varied services the Commission provides. The Commission's broad mandate, which includes conservation, hunting regulation, research, boating guideline administration, and some law enforcement activities, necessitates varied outreach, typically via email, to the diversity of individuals affected. [6]

### *New York, New York*

Internet access creates opportunities: the ability to access information, to seek out new jobs, to connect with other people. However, more than 60 million Americans don't have access to internet in their homes, having to go to a local library or other institutions to complete internet-dependent tasks, like submitting some homework assignments or paying online bills. To provide increased internet access to its citizens, New York launched LinkNYC, the largest, fastest public WiFi network, updating the city's 7,500 payphones for a new era of connectivity. [7] [8]

### *The Future?*

Artificial intelligence, such as AI, entails the creation of computer systems that can think, react, and learn like humans. Innovations in AI could revolutionize office tasks, handling large amounts of paperwork, providing customer service, and overall phasing out a chunk of human labor providing by cities. The implications for law enforcement are salient; AI could provide surveillance and even facial recognition of suspects.

Deloitte consultants estimate that AI technology will could free up to 1.2 billion working hours every year, a value of approximately \$41.1 billion. AI may ultimately affect every workplace, and governments are unlikely to be an exception. [9]

### **References**

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