

NCSEA Tech Scrum - 8/14/19 1-5 pm

Notes

For Internal State Use Only

Introductions

- Good mix of folks who identified as "mostly technical," "mostly program," and "50/50"
- Good mix of folks who attended the systems symposium in Feb 2019
- Today's "Scrum" session was suggested by states to NCSEA representatives after the February 2019 Symposium. Request was to have state business and IT but no vendors and no OCSE. Cynthia was asked to facilitate scrum as the only OCSE representative, since she is a prior state director.
- Communication from today's Scrum is confidential; plan is to have NCCSD post PowerPoints on their website, just as they did for the 2019 Systems Symposium
- 20 States represented today: Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Ohio, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Vermont, Wisconsin
- Many agree that having another systems symposium in Feb 2020 at the NCSEA Policy Forum is a good idea, with same group as last year (State Directors, State Business, State IT and OCSE, no vendors)
- Amy Sparks from "A Visual Spark" is doing a visual graphic record of the meeting
- NCCSD has a System/Data Analytics workgroup that meets every other week. One of the meeting is with OCSE, no vendors.
- Cards- Yellow and White were provided for those who might need to leave early and miss the last session:
 - Yellow- Fed/State Collaboration- questions, ideas, concerns
 - White- Ideas or questions for vendor for the NCCSD Workgroup's Vendor information sessions on refactoring/replatforming and 'low code-COTS' system modernization approaches

Session 1: Level Set: History of System Requirements and Options Now

- Refer to PowerPoint
 - 12 states have completed a modernization
 - 7 Options Now
 - Transfer
 - Well known longest standing
 - Enhancing Existing
 - Usually adding components now
 - Refactoring & Replatforming
 - Refactoring means using a code translation/converter tool to update to a newer software without changing the behavior (e.g. COBOL to Java)
 - Often requires a platform change as well to support the new software (replatforming)
 - Replatforming has many flavors
 - Custom
 - Enterprise
 - When a state or agency wants a consistent architecture for multiple systems.
 - Low Code/COTS
 - Takes advantage of an accelerator low code platform configured with other components. A lot of API's.

- Hybrid
 - Pieces and parts from various states. Combination of various approaches.

Session 2: Refactoring/Replatforming (RR). Mississippi and Tennessee.

See PowerPoints for both states

Mississippi - Lyndsy Irwin, IV-D Director; Beverly Williams, Agency Systems Manager

- What's your project? How does your state define RR?
 - Replatformed 5 systems (SNAP, TANF, CW, CS and FITS) including child support (no refactoring) - migrated from a mainframe (adabas) to a server-based Linux/Adabas environment. Language is Natural.
 - Phase 1 - Assessment (\$226K for all 5)
 - One major finding was Document generation software incompatibility
 - Phase 2 - Conversion (~ \$3M for Child support) (took one year)
 - We only made the changes that were absolutely necessary
 - CS was not COBOL; Natural language seems to work well with these projects
 - The other agency systems having issues were COBOL
 - Optional Phase 3 - GUI screens front end, Chatbot (CUI), Enterprise Service Bus (~\$700K for child support)
 - Use Jira
 - Lean - agile methodology
 - Organizational Change Mgmt
 - Genbot does not interface with systems at this time, but the plan is to interface it with the child support system eventually.
 - Optional Phases 4 and 5
- Why did you decide to follow that path? Business and Tech perspective.
 - Business
 - Limited funds to modernize
 - In old system, no flexibility to make improvements
 - Will pay for itself in 5 years
 - Cost for maintaining 5 mainframe system expensive
 - Tech
 - Better security needed
 - Mainframe is expensive to maintain
 - Flexibility to improve system with new technology (i.e., green screen to GUI, etc)
 - Software was old – findings from Audits and Security
- What has gone right (+)? Wrong (-)?
 - Procurement
 - Business
 - - 2.5 years from start to signed contract; was responsibility of umbrella IT agency
 - - Communication didn't start with the business from the beginning as it should have
 - Tech
 - + Great vendor (Cambria Solutions, Cronus, Software AG) partnership, but
 - - Vendor's contract didn't call for them to perform testing other than just running jobs with no abends, and we didn't learn this until right before testing was scheduled to start.
 - - Vendor ran jobs did not test the files all the way through on their side. This was not the replatforming vendor mentioned above, but another child support partner.

- - Didn't have the flexibility in the contract to change hardware/software that was initially chosen, but didn't meet our needs
 - - Important to focus more on training - we didn't receive the training at the right time
 - Project
 - Business
 - + Once past initial contract testing issue, testing phase was well thought out, organized, and went well
 - + Change requests accepted until a couple of months before conversion which allowed for continued enhancement
 - - Lack of communication plan with Public Affairs Department and how to communicate with the public when issues arise. A well-developed communication plan, especially if issues arise, is needed.
 - - Having an emulator issue with Software AG – mouse no longer works and this is a big issue for staff
 - + Good overall work plan
 - Tech
 - + Contractor took care of the data conversion and it went really well. IT participated to be able to take over.
 - + Easier to integrate with other systems
 - + Great support from the project vendor and external partners, with some exceptions.
 - + Once we got over the initial contract testing issue, overall, extensive testing, and testing with the business side went well and prevented issues later
 - - Selected emulator software lacked some functionality
 - -No proper editor for large files or files with packed data
 - -Change request need to be built into the contract
 - What are you most worried about going forward?
 - Funding for enhancements
 - Local IT now responsible for backend support (instead of state umbrella IT department)
 - Succession planning and cross training staff

Alaska comment: Hugh Towe from Alaska had to leave very early, but gave a quick comment on a new approach they think is promising. (Alaska gave a presentation at the Feb System Symposium in which they laid out some of the challenges they encountered with replatforming.) They changed their initial replatforming/refactoring plan due to problems and have now migrated to the same platform as Mississippi. Hugh stated that they are test driving using the NaturalONE coding language, and it is proving much better since it's more like human speech. They have Natural and COBOL, but they are rewriting the COBOL programs in another language. He did say that they were having the same emulator problem previously encountered by Mississippi's offices ran by the private contractor who uses Bluezone as their emulator, where a mouse cannot be used. (Note: Software AG was able to assist the Mississippi private offices with resolving this problem and have now also helped Alaska resolve that problem. Mississippi State Staff is still having a problem using the mouse via the emulator Powerterm.)

Tennessee - Patti Wood, Director of Operations, Child Support & Sherron Brown, Director of Operations, Agency Systems

- What's your project? How does your state define RR?
 - Looking at an enterprise modernization for several programs (TANF, CS, and Child Care). Issued an RFI for ideas on how best to do this.
 - Moving from 23 year old legacy operating system (mainframe) and programming code to a web-based newer operating system (Linux) and programming code.

- Taking our case mgmt system off of our mainframe and making it web-based. Major communication point for users: “If it's broken in the old version, it'll be broken in the new one (until we make enhancements)”.
- 5 Phase approach
- In phase 1 and 2 now
- Project just started in April 2, 2019 and should finish in October 2020
- Why did you decide to follow that path? Business (B) and Tech (T) perspective.
 - Business
 - Risk factors: RR is low risk
 - Cost: RR is cheaper
 - Change management: much slower change since enhancement will be in phases
 - Program functionality of our system is good
 - Feasibility study recommended RR instead of full replacement
 - Used a vendor for the feasibility study and cost benefit analysis
 - Tech
 - Feasibility study outcomes pointed to RR
 - Reduced/lower risk
 - Don't have to recertify
 - There was/is an Agency goal of: Enterprise System Modernization
 - Federal partners got behind us
- What has gone right (+)? Wrong (-)?
 - Procurement
 - Business
 - + Great RFP, because we pulled from others state's RFPs and lessons learned and had the right stakeholders at the table (business, IT, exec leadership). Note that PAPD was all programs but RFP was just child support.
 - + Had end goal in mind before RFP was released
 - + RFP required that the successful vendor had to have done RR for another IV-D program.
 - + Went through workflow process
 - Tech
 - + Adequate funding (using incentive funds for this project, saving other funds for subsequent modernization)
 - + state technical involvement
 - + experienced vendor selected
 - - procurement release schedule (took longer than anticipated in order to get federal and state partner input)
 - + Stop other changes unless federally or state mandated (or internally approved tasks)
 - + Analyzed what is coming in from the field and would be a quick fix before moving it into production
 - + State project prep started before the ink was on the contract
 - Project so far
 - Business
 - + Strong RFP
 - + Steering Committees (weekly and monthly with Execs)
 - + Planning and Preparation: great communication with vendor
 - + Initial component build (originally asked vendor to do demos of the 157, and case initiation, but changed the latter to order entry)
 - + Wanted demo to mirror the size, scope, complexity of the project to show the product would work.

- - IRS letter for vendor to access data took awhile
 - Tech
 - + Good governance structure and oversight (steering committees and teams)
 - + backfilling project staff
 - - Environments have been a challenge - didn't know we needed to have a sandbox and a separate QA environment (in addition to test, production, etc)
 - - Vendor is sometimes moving faster than the state is ready for (great problem to have!)
- What are you most worried about going forward?
 - Timeline
 - Executives have said only 3 years to get project done, including enhancements
 - Frontline expectations (making sure that staff doesn't get disappointed with the result)
 - Communicating what will happen middle of October next year
 - Future enhancements (making sure we are capturing these and prioritizing them within the time our leadership has given us)
 - Stay focused
 - Scope creep (have found an issue with our macros so now we have to solve for them)

Session 3: Low Code/COTS Platforms (LC). Maryland and Indiana.

See PowerPoints for both states.

Maryland - Kevin Guistwite, IV-D Director. (Note: Additional speaker, Agency CTO, unable to attend because of family emergency, see PowerPoint for more technical details of project)

- Status
 - The Maryland Total Human Services Integrated Network (MD THINK)
 - Clarification: This is a more of a Custom approach: Straight java build instead of a “low code” approach.
 - The shared technology (data, imaging, security, etc.) for all of the human services programs has been completed. Child support build is just beginning (finalizing requirements for different modules and starting development on a couple of modules)
 - Plan is to begin first phases of certification during pilot and then finalize once they go statewide
 - Cloud based integrated platform
 - Using agile approach
 - Est. Cost \$57M (portion of shared services + the child support piece)
 - Schedule
 - On boarding developers now
 - Finish the overall design January 2020
 - Pilot late next year
 - Start 1st phase of certification
 - Rollout scheduled for winter 2021
 - Finish certification by end of 2021
 - Note that approach is not to have one prime “DDI” vendor. State is acting as prime, and hiring vendor staff (developers, etc.) as necessary.
- Why did you decide to follow that path? Business (B) and Tech (T) perspective.
 - At an enterprise level:
 - More efficient delivery
 - Higher quality services
 - Minimize redundant data entry
 - Less paper

- One integrated platform
 - Consumer portal
- At the child support level:
 - Wanted to consolidate 4 siloed child support systems
 - Central registry, dash board, imaging, and case management
 - be able to support tablet and mobile devices
 - Allow workers to do real time data entry
 - Share information across programs- need to know what can be shared and how?
- What has gone right (+)? Wrong (-)?
 - Project
 - Business
 - + Contest to come up with a catchy name to engage staff
 - + New intranet site for communication and change management
 - + Mini-retreats/working sessions to complete business requirements (business and IT working side-by-side)
 - + local office enthusiasm, support, and involvement
 - + great SMEs from the field
 - + opportunities to enhance system to remove manual workarounds
 - - time, resources, and meetings
 - Retirements, a few people as SMEs for many different areas AND they're the same ones that are key to day-to-day ops
 - Working on fine-tuning the meetings to make sure they are useful
 - - MOUs, contracts, agreements
 - Some of the changes we want to make for the child support system require changes to other agency MOUs, contracts, so reviewing and prioritizing this work
 - - Understanding what the federal certification actually requires
 - - learning and adopting the Agile Methodology
 - + No RFP
- What are you most worried about going forward?
 - Meeting the timeline and finding the right resources
 - Making sure the business requirements get completed
 - Need to do more team building and making sure IT understands the business need
 - Effectively onboarding new developers
 - Fine tuning scope
 - Getting the Organizational Change Management right
 - Understanding Agile
 - Keeping performance up

Indiana - Kevin Jones, Agency CIO; Adam Norman, IV-D Director

Note that Indiana is in the middle of their system replacement procurement, evaluating vendor responses at this time, so information discussed was particularly sensitive.

- What's your project? How does your state define Low Code/COTS?
 - A low code API led Architecture Platform
 - Modular
 - This way we can use an ERP for our financials, and a case mgmt system from a different source, and so on. If needed, goal is that it'll only take a year for us to switch and reintegrate a module
 - Configurable (clicks instead of code)

- RFP asked for at least 60% configuration and responses have met this request
 - Continuous improvement model
 - So we don't have to *ever do* a system replacement or big modernization project because we'll be continuing improving and upgrading
- Why did you decide to follow that path?
 - Business
 - Executive leadership
 - Cost
 - Market options
 - Needed a product that was more efficient, more user friendly, more cost effective
 - Tech
 - Modern architecture that we can continuously improve
 - Modularity and flexibility
 - Leading edge technology
 - Ability to start with a minimum viable product
 - Not held hostage by vendor or a product
 - Configurable (clicks vs code) in 12 months
 - Updates 3x a year
 - Ability for continuous improvement
 - Pub 1075 already met
- What has gone right? Wrong?
 - Procurement
 - Business
 - + Stakeholder engagement from the beginning
 - + Continued collaboration with stakeholders (note that Indiana is state-administered, county-operated with 92 counties. County services are delivered by independently elected Prosecuting Attorneys and Clerks of Court in each county, so county engagement in the procurement process is critical).
 - + organization transformation efforts - making sure the business understand the technology enough to understand where we're going and why we're going that way in the project
 - Exceptions for partner
 - What is required
 - Working together
 - Who you are as an organization?
 - What are you trying to accomplish as an organization?
 - Tech
 - + great RFP responses - creative - admit they've never done it but lay out how they plan to do it and that they plan to partner with the state
 - + organizational transformation - getting all our business units and technical folks familiar with the platform so they understand it
 - + Requirements that knowledge transfer starts day 1; State staff to be embedded with the vendors
 - + paid a minimal amount to train all IT and business staff that will be on project on Agile Methodology (8 weeks) and many are now certified
 - Project - still reviewing RFPs, so this hasn't started
 - Business
 - Tech
- What are you most worried about going forward?
 - Keeping the organizational transformation going

- Indiana proposed this architecture which will be a new option, so the state must remain heavily engaged with vendors for project success - this is a long and heavy haul
- Ensuring good collaboration among all stakeholders

Session 4: Federal-State Collaboration Suggestions

What can OCSE do to better help states?

Note that like comments have been grouped, but list is not in any priority order.

1. Better instruction on the APD process, including a template for each type. 2010 document is too confusing. Need an “APD for Dummies” Guide. APD review timeline needs to be shorter.
2. More consistent communication from OCSE on systems; regular conference calls or webinars so states can keep up to date on what others are doing.
3. Resource library from OCSE available to the states specifically around system modernization stuff (RFPs, APDs, Feasibility Studies)
4. A glossary of IT definitions and acronyms
5. Some analysts are very collaborative and helpful and will review drafts of APD docs, RFPs, etc. and are true partners where others seem to only want to see the final product and then they reject it. Could we encourage/require all analysts to use the former approach?
6. There seems to be a lack of consistency overall with the analysts when giving answers and/or guidance to states.
7. Can OCSE change certification process (for newer approach projects) to be more incremental? Goal would be to save having to pay DDI vendor to stay around for many months after they are done. This will support the Agile methodology – have feds review during UAT every six months.
8. Revamp certification guide and make the certification requirements higher level to give states more flexibility on how they meet the requirements. Some states feel they are spending time/money coding specifics or functionality that will never be used, just to get certified.
9. Another OCSE System Symposium would be good, getting updates on projects that have been presented before and new projects; make sure to just include new info.
10. Can OCSE assist with communication to state CIOs, in particular the message about good, early communication with their business partners?
11. Is there an opportunity for either OCSE or a consortium of states to negotiate a procurement with one of the no-code or low-code vendors?
12. Can OCSE provide a standardized system to the states to reduce the overall and duplicative system costs? (2 comments along this line, both from technical staff)
13. The states moving off mainframes learned that they still need to keep a mainframe channel because of communicating with OCSE systems.

Also, on the need for continuing communication theme, especially including both the business and the tech staff, there was discussion on efforts by NCSEA, WICSEC etc. around Infinity Groups and listservs that would include both the state business and the technical staff.

Feedback on NCCSD Systems WG Vendor Presentations questions to ask:

- What is your continuous improvement model for the platform you are offering me? Will I benefit from those efforts without major costs to me?
- Many of the platforms seem to be creating the same old silos on a new platform. Is it possible to have one casefile for each person/family across the systems (child support, SNAP, TANF, family services, etc.)?
- The plan for the vendor demos currently consists of 9 vendors who will have 45 minutes each to present.
- Dates are October 18, October 25 and November 1. 1-4:30 pm
- Reach out to Carla West and Robin Arnell if you are interested in joining the NCCSD or want to participate in the System demos by vendors.