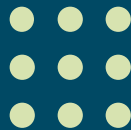


# 21st Century Networked Local Government

## Author

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Prepared by  
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*“Twenty-first century government is enabled by technology—policy is inspired by it, business change is delivered by it, customer and corporate services are dependent on it, and democratic engagement is exploring it. Technology alone does not transform government, but government cannot transform to meet modern citizens’ expectations without it.”*

*—Transformational Government, a UK government publication*

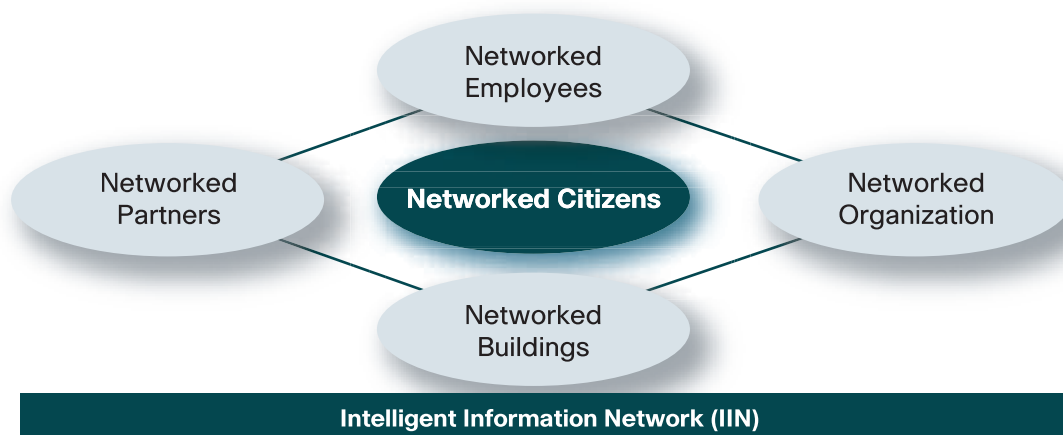
## Executive Summary

Twenty-first century government will be transformed by the use of technology. Local governments will be able to offer greater choice and deeper personalization of services. They will be more flexible and better able to achieve the policy outcomes they seek in areas such as health, education, and public safety, while their staff will be freed from paperwork and empowered to deliver real value to citizens.

Thinking through the concept of the “21st Century Networked Local Government” offers every local government an opportunity to assess past investments in e-government and develop strategies to drive real benefits. The 21st Century Networked Local Government will be one that has transformed its relationships with citizens through convenient, consistent citizen interaction, cost-effective, citizen-centric services, and greater empowerment and involvement of its citizens. It will also have transformed internal processes with greater employee productivity and optimized processes that eliminate silos of separated services and resources. Finally, it will have taken partnership-working to a new level, allocating tasks to the most appropriate party in a series of tightly knit relationships that enable the different partners to function as a single, networked organization.

FIGURE 1

### 5 Elements of Transformed Local Government



The five key elements of this vision of a transformed local government are:

- **Networked citizens**—this encompasses the actual delivery of services and the way citizens interact with their local government.
- **Networked employees**—this introduces new ways of working, including mobile working to increase efficiency and improve use of existing resources.

- **Networked organization**—this delivers tangible and sustainable benefits to the local government in terms of efficiency and enhanced collaboration across a rich canvas of applications and solutions, such as IP telephony or instant messaging systems.
- **Networked partners**—this brings other local governments, key suppliers, and commercial partners into the process, transforming the way a local government and its strategic partners interact, collaborate, and deliver value.
- **Networked buildings**—this involves the development of intelligent buildings that understand who the occupants are and which services they require.

This vision involves transforming every aspect of the way local governments operate, with the network enabling local governments to respond efficiently and effectively to the many demands they face.

## Challenge

### Improving Efficiency While Controlling Costs

Local governments face a range of different challenges. Driven by their public-service mission, they recognize that there are many areas—from care for the elderly to reducing antisocial behavior—where they would like to broaden and enhance the services they offer. They also recognize that citizens are expecting more convenient and quicker service in all areas of their lives. The fundamental challenge, however, is delivering all this potential improvement while maintaining or reducing the amount of local government tax citizens have to pay. Sometimes this drive for efficiency is reinforced by targets from central government. For example, in the United Kingdom, local authorities have been told they need to generate efficiency gains of 6.45 billion pounds by 2007/8, which is equivalent to a 7.5 percent efficiency gain over a three-year period.

Such targets reinforce the other pressures that are driving a strong efficiency agenda in local government, but it is important to recognize that efficiency is not just a matter of cutting costs. Local governments have a mission as community leaders that involves becoming dynamic, flexible organizations in touch with their citizens' views and requirements, and being able to respond to them quickly and effectively. At its heart, the transformation challenge is about effectiveness just as much as it is about efficiency.

## Solution

### Using Technology to Transform Operations, Deliver Value

Cisco® and its Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG) have years of experience within private- and public-sector organizations, and a track record of delivering effective solutions for public-sector customers on every continent. IBSG has developed the concept of the 21st Century Networked Local Government as its vision for the future. This vision highlights the different areas where local governments can use technology to transform their operations and deliver greater value to citizens. Different governments will tackle different areas at different speeds, but it is

important that they take a portfolio approach and launch at least some projects in each area if they eventually want to achieve comprehensive transformation.

Five core concepts provide the foundation for the vision of the 21st Century Networked Local Government. The first and most important of these is the idea of the “networked citizen.”

Increasingly, governments are recognizing the need to place citizens at the heart of all they do, and to develop solutions on this basis. The logic is exactly the same as for customer-centric solutions created for the private sector. If you begin with your most important element—the citizen/customer—you can work back through the organization and its partners to arrive at an efficient, customer-centric ecosystem that supports the delivery of effective, sustainable solutions aligned completely with the needs and expectations of the end user.

**Networked citizens** are individuals who can interact with their local governments across multiple channels in ways that are most convenient for them. The citizen interaction network may encompass anything from Websites and call centers to booths in shopping centers and improved access to services for citizens actually visiting their local government’s premises. The key is that the services are easily accessible via channels that are simple to use.

The experience of dealing with local governments is enriched by the fact that whichever channel is chosen for the communication, the internal view of the citizen/customer is consistent—no more endless referrals to different departments, each requiring a repeated explanation of the issue in question. Citizens can have faster access to correct information, leading to swifter resolution of problems or queries.

Citizen-centric services are developed in response to clearly articulated needs and expectations. For example, where home visits are required, government employees can be equipped with laptops or PDAs that connect via wireless broadband links to the headquarters infrastructure, enabling them to find information and answers quickly. With this kind of technology, many queries or problems can be resolved on the spot, instead of requiring multiple visits or additional work when the employee returns to the office.

E-accessible services can make vast resources available to citizens via Websites, kiosks, and contact centers, accelerating the processes involved in a huge range of activities. Planning applications, for example, may involve many different departments—planning, building services, legal, and others—all of which can be reached through a single online portal. Services can even be made proactive, sending alerts to citizens when there is progress with any issue they have raised with the local government, or offering new services relevant to their specific needs.

These processes also drive cost efficiency, helping citizens find the communications channels that work best for them and directing the expertise within the local government to where it is most productive. Time and effort are stripped out of the process of resolving even minor issues, making life easier both for citizens and for government employees. The result is greater empowerment of citizens served by the local government, with a larger sense of involvement that feeds back into policy-making, leading to even bigger improvements in service development and delivery. The more

involved your citizens are, the more relevant your services become, creating an even greater sense of involvement and belonging—and so the virtuous circle develops.

To give full expression to the concept of the networked citizen, local governments must embrace the idea of the networked local government. This idea is made up of the four other foundational elements of the 21st Century Networked Local Government: networked employees, the networked organization, networked partners, and networked buildings.

**Networked employees** are workers whose productivity is maximized by an environment that provides them with real-time information personalized to their particular job role—and by a range of tools for collaborating with colleagues. As a result, the knowledge of one is the knowledge of all. No longer tied to a desk, these employees can be productive anywhere via mobile devices such as PDAs or tablet PCs. A few work permanently from home, enabling their employers to secure hard-to-recruit staff or to make work an option for the otherwise excluded. Many more work occasionally from home, which facilitates workplace flexibility while increasing productivity. Staff and managers use Web-based dashboards to monitor progress—everyone can see current performance, and emerging issues and alerts are automatically generated (for example, when it begins to appear that a case may not be handled within the published target timeframe). Instant messaging, Web-based virtual meetings, and Cisco TelePresence enable even physically separated teams to share ideas easily and quickly, allowing key projects to move forward much faster than in the past. E-enabled training keeps all staff up to date with the latest information, while also cutting the cost of training both in terms of expenditure and time away from the office.

Driving the development of the networked employee is the concept of the **networked organization**. Here the network enables processes to be optimized across the whole local government organization, rather than just within particular departments. This applies to business processes and to infrastructure. The convergence of voice, data, and video services—such as closed-circuit television (CCTV)—onto a single, IP-based network can eliminate substantial operational and capital expenditures, while the standardization of platforms across departments can simplify network management and generate still more cost efficiencies.

The next step is the move toward **networked partners**, through which the processes of other local governments, key suppliers, and partners are joined into a seamless whole. As with departments within the local government, standardization and collaboration among external organizations can reduce costs and accelerate cycle times for all parties, ultimately leading to improved delivery of services to the networked citizen. There are also potential savings and improvements to be made by using the network to tap into services that others can provide better or more efficiently than the local government itself. Each local government needs to examine all its activities and ask whether it needs to perform them itself or whether there are other organizations that are better placed to provide them. The integrated infrastructure can then be used to give real-time insight into how these services are being delivered and to ensure that directly provided and partner-provided services are seamlessly coordinated.

With the development of **networked buildings**, local governments can extend the value and benefits of the ICT infrastructure across all of their built assets. Networked buildings are structures

where all services—which can range from security, asset protection, and access privileges to intelligent and dynamic heating, lighting, and multimedia services—are provided across the same IP network. Remote management and monitoring of the assets can save local governments substantial sums and help prevent problems as well as remedy them. In addition, networked buildings can be more energy efficient and have lower carbon footprints.

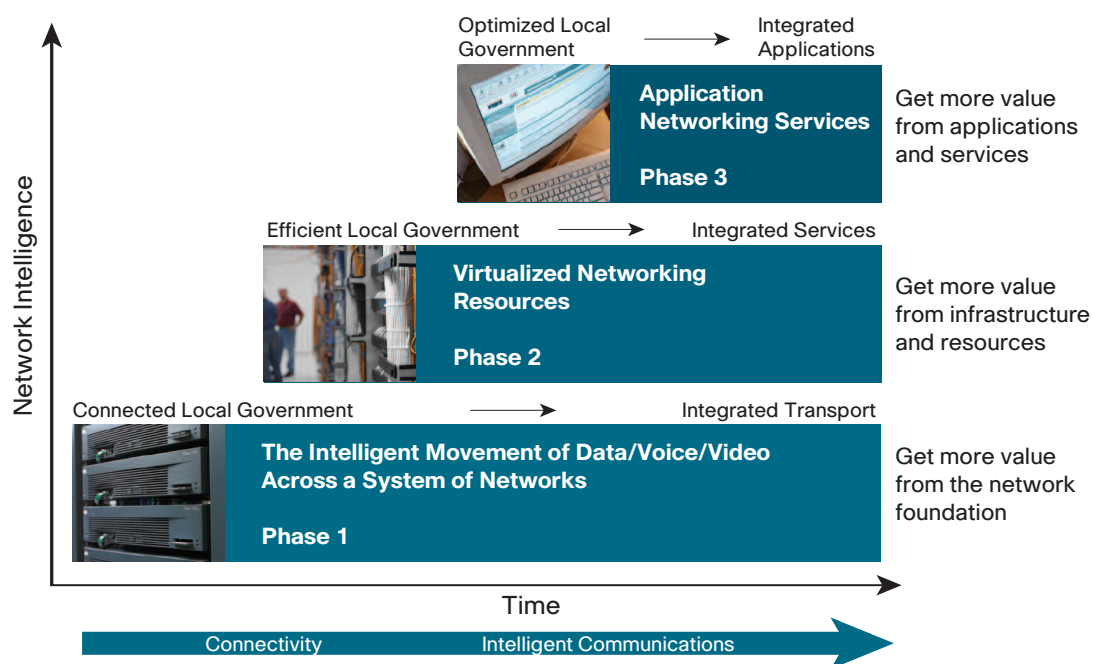
## Solution Core

### The Intelligent Information Network

The technology that makes all this possible is founded on the Cisco concept of the Intelligent Information Network (IIN), a vision of a more intelligent IT infrastructure that drives enhanced IT and business-process optimization. Cisco's IIN strategy defines a three- to five-year roadmap for increasing business value by boosting investments in the network. The goal is a resilient, integrated, and adaptive network infrastructure that reduces complexity by taking a systems approach, enabling the network to participate actively in application and service delivery. The business value is realized through three phases that run in parallel: Phase 1, integrated transport, delivers increased value from your network foundation through consolidation and convergence (for example, convergence of voice and data, or voice, data, and video); Phase 2, integrated services, enables you to get more value from your IT infrastructure and resources through virtualization (for example, by creating virtualized storage capacity rather than having dedicated, underused storage for each

FIGURE 2

#### Cisco's Technology Vision: The Intelligent Information Network (IIN)



application); Phase 3, integrated applications, which we are just entering today, enables you to get more value from your applications and infrastructure services (for example, by having the network recognize the importance of key messages or transactions, and giving them priority). Cisco's vision of IIN allows you to provide an ICT architecture capable of underpinning the delivery of strategic objectives, enabling the transformation from connected, to efficient, to optimized.

## In Summary

The 21st Century Networked Local Government is not an absolute solution or a fixed technological path based on proprietary standards. It is genuinely a vision, a collection of ideas that show how local governments can work in the future, even with the financial and political pressures that governments face. It also is a concept designed to bring about a revolution in thinking about the way local services are structured and delivered—an idea that recognizes networking technology has the capability to bring about radical transformation.

The 21st Century Networked Local Government envisages the development of truly citizen-centric services that reach empowered and involved citizens. These services are delivered by highly productive and motivated employees working for local government agencies that enjoy continuous, large-scale efficiency gains. These are made possible through unified, optimized government processes and effective partnerships, making the idea of fully integrated local government a practical reality.

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## MORE INFORMATION

The Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the global strategic consulting arm of Cisco Systems, helps Global Fortune 500 companies and public organizations transform the way they do business—first designing innovative business processes and then by integrating advanced technologies into visionary roadmaps that improve customer experience and revenue growth.

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