Rebooting .Gov

Government's most important "product" is information, but the last major upgrade in how the United States disburses and receives information from citizens was in 1994 when Gingrich put the Congress on the net and Clinton did the same with the White House. This policy proposal uses the Government Printing Office as the center for a 4-point plan that would dramatically change how the U.S. Government presents itself to the world.

The First 100 Days

The Government Printing Office (GPO) could be used as the basis for a "revolution in governmental affairs" that could achieve dramatic results in 100 days, transforming the way citizens interact with their government:

- The Washington Bridge. Immediately hook up all federal hearing rooms in Washington, D.C. to the Internet to provide live, broadcast–quality video as bulk data. Services such as YouTube, CNN.Com, and many others would process and present this information to the public. The service would start immediately with the executive branch, but would also be offered to Congress and the Judiciary as a service.

- Open Source America's Operating System. Immediately make available in bulk key GPO "products" such as the Congressional Record, Federal Register, U.S. Code, and many others. Create and release in bulk a digital collection of all federal court cases, administrative proceedings, and other primary legal materials. Begin immediately with historical materials, and then offer ongoing service to the Judiciary to help them fix their PACER problems.

- Create a .Gov Cloud. Put several petabytes of disk and processors in a facility to provide immediate outsourcing capability for the executive branch. For example, if an agency doesn't have access to instant messaging, blogging services, or video servers, this cloud could deploy resources quickly without an expensive procurement and design process. Use this "cloud computing" as a way of educating the agencies on a new way of conducting their computing business.

- Go Beyond FOIA. Submit legislation to the Congress that would codify the principle of bulk access to government data as a fundamental job of government. This legislation would be based on the "8 principles of government data" that were established by a group of 30 of the leading Internet practitioners in the field.

Long-Term Change

The 100–day push could be used to create a real transformation over 4 years:

- Fully digitizing all government information, including the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

- Changing the interaction between government and citizens from a one–way stream to a two–way stream. For example, citizens should be able to participate in public proceedings, helping to suggest changes to legislation or questions to witnesses before Congress.

- Rebooting .Gov and making it one of the top 10 destinations on the Internet.

Significant groundwork has been done already on many of these steps. For example, the Washington Bridge plan was endorsed by the Bush Administration's Public Printer and the details were vetted by senior engineers from Cisco Systems, Google, and Sun.