Information Access Strategies, Inc. will be producing a Millennium Edition sequel document to the MCMA publication entitled “Information Technology in Michigan’s Municipalities, A Profile and Assessment”, originally published in 1995.

When rereading the original Information Technology document, I was struck by how drastically and rapidly the technology landscape has changed within the last 5 years.

Five-year-old technology information while being obsolete is not useless, as it establishes a baseline of technology in Michigan municipalities in 1995. This serves to document just how much has changed and how rapidly.

Many of the 1995 survey questions asked about acquisitions and plans within the next 5 years. It will be of particular interest to compare the responses of those municipalities who responded 5 years ago to the actuality of what has occurred and why, given that we are now at that 5 year point.

Of particular interest will be how Y2K accelerated change and if GASB 34 will continue the increased momentum.

**Effects of Y2K on Technology?**

Y2K spurred a flurry of both platform and software upgrade activity in 1999, forcing change upon some organizations that otherwise would not have allocated the funds. In that vein, Y2K was both a blessing and a curse.

The unexpected expenditure of Y2K funds may or may not adversely affect technology spending in subsequent years.

Hopefully, many municipalities used Y2K as a lesson in technology planning and have subsequently instituted a cyclic technology equipment rotation program. In addition, municipalities have begun to use alternative financing methodologies, such as leasing, for commodity technology purchases.

**How will GASB34 Affect Technology?**

Many municipalities, left reeling after the Y2K initiative and associated expenses, are now facing GASB 34 which promises to rock the municipal financial software industry further.

It will also be useful to inquire as to the expected effects of the new GASB 34 changes on both the organization as a whole and the software and hardware
platforms. While some municipalities changed financial platforms due to Y2K, others limped along and the required GASB changes will be the factor that spurs change.

Is the Internet Changing Governmental Practices?

Most municipalities have Internet access in one flavor or another and are now struggling with how to safely use the power of the internet.

Yesterday, the question was if the municipality should have internet e-mail, and if so, how.

Today, local area networks and e-mail are a fact of life, where 5 years ago they were leading edge.

The current challenge is how to provide web-based information, or even more progressive, interactive web-based applications, known in technology circles as e-commerce.

Shortly, the public will expect the same level of one-stop-shopping as they currently are beginning to receive in the private sector on progressive web sites.

Integration

Historically, technology solutions have been thought of in terms of departmental applications – financial programs for the finance department, engineering applications for the engineering department.

The enabling technologies that have emerged within the last 5 years now blur the lines between departmental applications and beg the question of how best to share information. Duplication of effort and redundant data entry is one of the largest problems facing municipalities today.

Today’s forward thinking municipalities are thinking in terms of how to streamline information flow from departmental applications into GIS and further yet into web-based applications in order to bring the essentials of government yet closer to their constituents.

Tomorrow, departmentally segmented municipalities will be operating under a handicap.

Survey Topics
Clearly, there is a wealth of information just waiting to be harvested and analyzed.

Topics to be included are:
- General Technology
- Technology Infrastructure
- Procurement Methods
- Effects and Aftereffects of Y2K
- GASB34
- Financial Systems
- GIS
- Internet
- Document Imaging
- Disaster Recovery Planning
- Security
- Public Safety
- Software Applications
- Consortium/Partnership Agreements

If you have topics or specific areas of interest that you would like to be sure are included, please contact Judi Lintott at the League or Roberta Estes with Information Access Strategies now.

**Project Schedule**

The survey work will begin shortly. Expect to see an extensive technology survey from the league in your mailbox within a few weeks.

The success of the survey depends on members responding to the survey document. Yes, it will take some time and coordination between departments, but the process of completing the survey itself should serve as a useful management review tool.

**Publication**

Publication is anticipated before year end.

Look for related sessions at the conference on Mackinaw in September.