

Washington State: Enterprise Ontology

The Employment Security Division (ESD) manages Unemployment Insurance and Claims and have a very active program to help people get back to work. We were engaged to help them determine a strategy for integrating into what had become three major systems all geared toward getting out-of-work workers back to work.

One system was essentially an extension of the State's Welfare system and dealt with TANF recipients. Another was an extension of their claims management system and the third was a system for the general public. Pretty much everything about each of these systems was different, down to what they called the person who was looking for work: in the TANF system he or she was a 'parent,' in the Claims system he or she was a 'claimant' and in the public system a 'job seeker.'

We built an ontology that reconciled all these views. This project occurred just as the recession was picking up steam, and the State had put a moratorium on capital spending on software projects. To address this, we created a plan that divided what was needed into 19 small projects budgeted at a few hundred thousand dollars each. They were able to fund the initial projects out of the operations budget and were able to proceed despite the capital spending freeze.

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