Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery

Day 5

Bridging the Gaps in Public Service and Public Service Delivery
Module 5.4
Socio-Technical Systems
Socio-Technical Systems

• Based on socio-technical theory – Trist, circa 1967.
• At the foundation of social innovation, design thinking and innovation
• Contrasts with traditional methods that first design the technical component and then fit people to it
• Traditional methods often lead to mediocre performance at high social costs
Transitioning to Socio-Technical Systems (STS)

- Transitioning from a traditional work design or organization to one based on STS principles requires a transitional structure for managing the change process:
  - Helps employees gain new skills and knowledge
  - Facilitates the learning necessary to make the new design work
  - Involves considerable innovation, learning and change and is usually both different and more complex than either the old or new design
  - Never really complete but continues as new things are learned and new conditions are encountered
  - The ability to continually design and redesign work needs to be built into existing work teams.
    - Members must have the skills and knowledge to assess their work unit continually and to make necessary changes and improvements
- STS designing rarely results in a stable work design but provides a process for continually modifying work to fit changing conditions
Case 5.4 Overview - Healthcare.gov

• This case study highlights the challenges faced by the US Department of Health and Human Services in implementing a website to provide consumers with access to a health insurance marketplace.

• The case draws attention to the combination of factors that jeopardized the project and those innovations that were critical to turning the project around.
Case 5.4 Instructions Healthcare.gov and a Sociotechnical of Innovation

• Group Formation
  • We will form 3 groups
  • Count off by 3’s
  • Move to your small group location

• Group Assignment
  • Refer to Case Instructions for 5.4.

• Group Process
  • Refer to Case Instructions for 5.4.
Plenary Discussion

Insights from Healthcare.gov and a Socio-Technical Systems View
Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery

Thank You!