



What exactly is a modern application?

The job of the Bureau of Technology is to maintain and modernize applications and infrastructure. So, what does a modern application look like?

- **Design:** Application design is about more than looking slick. Minimalist websites such as **gov.uk** taught a new generation of government IT employees that building good applications is about the experience of using an application. There is an increased focus on bringing in the people who will ultimately use the app and letting them try things out to provide feedback, AKA "user-centered design."
- **Iteration:** Another feature of modern application development is constant improvement. An often-heard criticism of government applications is that by the time they're finished, they're out of date. The only way around that is constant improvement: either by using a non-customized product that a vendor is committed to improving (think cloud email), or by using modular, adjustable apps.
- **Elasticity:** Modern applications most often live in the cloud or in hybrid-cloud environments. Though there are many advantages to building applications that live in the cloud, one of the main advantages is that the size of the back end — the data and processes happening behind the scenes of what you see on your computer screen — can grow or even shrink as needed.

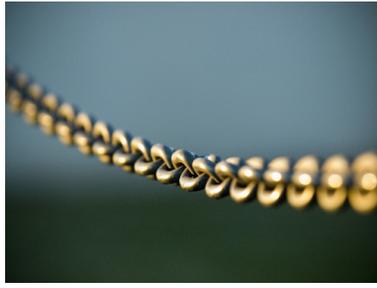
The First Year of the BIG FOUR +1

Year 1 of the Big Four +1 is in the books. Where are we?

- **Integrated Revenue:** A centralized collection of revenue has been established for Animal and Rabies Control, the Law Library, the Medical Examiner and the Criminal Apprehension Booking System (CABS).
- **Integrated Property:** The team has completed the inventory of current processes. In FY2017 they are moving on to define the new system and determine how iasWorld will be tailored to handle the operations of Cook County. Then, in the second half of 2017, development and testing will begin.
- **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP):** The ERP Dept. within the Bureau of Finance is rolling out core financials Countywide in Q1 of FY17. BOT is supporting the application after roll-out as the ERP Dept. continues working toward the next wave of the project.
- **Cook County Time (CCT):** The time and attendance project continues its Countywide roll out to the remaining agencies in Q1 of FY17. BOT provides support for the application and timeclocks post-launch.
- **Integrated Justice Enterprise Service Bus (ESB):** The first data exchange will be completed in Q1 of FY2017, automating the transmission of charging data.

What is Blockchain and What's The Plan?

Cook County Recorder of Deeds recently announced that they are experimenting with Blockchain technology for trans-



ferring and tracking property titles and other public records. What is Blockchain and why is it important?

A Blockchain is a distributed database that maintains a continuously growing list of ordered records called blocks. Each block contains a timestamp and a link to a previous block. By design, blockchains are inherently resistant to data modification; once recorded, the data in a block cannot be altered retroactively. This increases security.

The Recorder of Deeds is working with the State of Illinois to explore practical applications of this technology for the deed recording process.

The Art of Vendor Management

The Bureau of Technology is bringing forward and managing more contracts than ever – 75. Getting the most value from those contracts is key for the County's tech strategy. BOT's Contract and Vendor Manager's role is more important than ever in this environment.

By carefully reading the fine print and comparing each contract to industry standards, BOT has realized significant savings. Here are some examples:

- **Microsoft Licenses** – Approximately \$1M in various types of software licenses.
- **Microsoft Premier** – \$180K reduction over next three years and rate lock for expert-level support
- **Sentinel** – Reductions in rates for Network Control Center personnel, Cisco equipment and maintenance \$75K/year

Building and Zoning Online Permitting

In order to improve customer service and efficiency for businesses and residents who reside in the unincorporated areas of Cook County, the Department of Building and Zoning, working jointly with the Department of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), has launched a new on-line permitting system cookcountyil.gov/buildingzoning

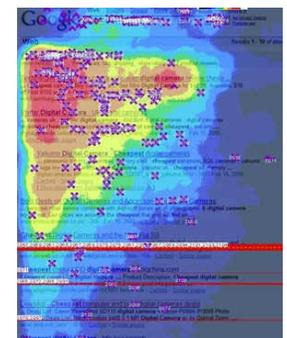
"I am pleased that this new solution to permitting is being offered by Cook County as it improves an existing service, one of our governing principles," Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle said. "In addition to being an important management tool, the online application will allow businesses and residents in the unincorporated areas to receive permits faster and more efficiently."

The permit tracking application has automated the entire permitting process from beginning to end and adds much more than a public interface. The new application also streamlines the workflow for staff. Highlights include an intuitive user interface, online permit status tracking and 100% paperless transactions. Applicants no longer have to come downtown to do paperwork.

Tips for Writing Better Emails

The f-shaped image to the right is the pattern the human eye follows when it needs to scan through information quickly.

Unfortunately, most people are too busy to thoroughly read all the emails they receive



each day. To avoid key information being missed by folks you email, there are a couple of general rules of thumb that will seldom steer you wrong:

1. Get to the point in the first sentence: who, what, when, where and why. What action is needed?
2. Keep your sentences short. Humans, like computers, use memory to process complex input. A shorter sentence is much easier to process.