

## Going Green: Using Technology to Save Resources

**Moderator:** Liz Nastasi, Financial Services Commission of Ontario  
**Speakers:** Brian Smithies, Ontario Public Service (OPS) Green Office  
Paul Sommerville, Toronto Hydro  
John Marman, Financial Services Commission of Ontario

### Brian Smithies

Brian Smithies, the first presenter, described some of the “greening” practices which have been underway as a result of the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Green Transformation Strategy. The OPS Green Transformation Strategy was approved in 2009 and established targets and action areas to reduce the environmental footprint of the OPS. It includes Target reductions, Green Business Practices and a Greening of the OPS Culture. Mr. Smithies then went on to discuss a number of Green Office Initiatives such as the OPS Green Print Strategy and Paper Reduction, e-Business Transformations, and Smart Travel.

### E-Business Transformation – Ministry Innovations

Progress reports for ministry innovations are made available on the OPS intranet. Every Ministry is profiled as well as a number of agencies which have been involved in notable work or high-profile initiatives. Some of the Ministry innovations which the OPS Green Office is overseeing are:

- reducing the staff-to-printer ratio to 5:1
- mandating double-sided printing
- eliminating paper fax machines
- encouraging the use and prevalence of print shops in order to consolidate big jobs and reduce paper usage

The Legal Services Branch of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services was recently profiled for its achievements in promoting a greener culture. In particular, the Branch has succeeded in streamlining reference materials and loading them onto an online database thereby reducing high density storage.

### Smart Travel

In 2009, Cabinet approved a set target to reduce emissions from OPS buildings and vehicles by 2014/2020. Mr. Smithies indicated that most emissions are from buildings which are outside of the control of the OPS; however, the strategy has focused on how to make travel more efficient. The OPS fleet is comprised of more than 5000 vehicles and through the Greening Strategy, more than ¾ of the fleet is now comprised of hybrid and/or electric vehicles. An anti-idling technology was also introduced in 68 vehicles and overall fuel consumption has been reduced by 4.5 million litres since 2007. The Green Office has also introduced Smart Travel – a virtual meeting system in order to encourage more environmentally friendly ways of travelling. Through the system, staff can utilize the environmental efficiency calculator to determine how much time/accommodation/travel they can save if they were to use a virtual meeting method. Mr. Smithies advised that often times, savings as a result of virtual meetings can be impressive.

### Greening OPS Culture

Mr. Smithies mentioned that the OPS Green Office holds a number of events and initiatives aimed at leveraging employees’ interest to change behaviours and workplace culture.

Mr. Smithies discussed ways in which agencies can take advantage of opportunities to further “green” their workplaces. He suggested:

- implementing “green” business practices by reducing travel through the use of virtual meetings;
- reducing paper by utilizing electronic processes, trying paperless meetings, and working with building maintenance/property management personnel to conserve energy;
- “greening” the workplace by implementing green projects and initiatives, encouraging green employee behavior, starting a green team;
- raising environmental awareness by hosting events, communicating achievements and profiling results; and
- championing green leadership by developing organizational performance goals and sharing best practices with peers.

### **Paul Sommerville**

Paul Sommerville of Toronto Hydro discussed how to introduce hearing technology into the hearing room.

He stated that at the Ontario Energy Board, steps have been taken toward making all of its rooms electronic-friendly spaces. This began with the requirement that parties are to ensure that materials are filed in electronic format. These materials eventually go on to form the electronic evidentiary record and it is this record which finds itself inside the hearing room.

In the hearing, adjudicators can enjoy the use of a simultaneous transcription regime where evidence is transcribed on an ongoing basis as it is given. Within this system there also exists the possibility to make live annotations. In general, evidence may be displayed on a screen in electronic form and witnesses are able to refer to exhibits in real time. All material is then captured on the electronic record while at the same time being available to all parties in the hearing room.

This electronic record facilitates cross examination as witness statements are clearer as a result of being transcribed right away. Ultimately, cross examinations are materially improved and focused.

The electronic record also facilitates questions from the adjudicators as it makes it easier to bring a witness back to an answer they previously gave. Clarification is made easier.

Finally, Mr. Sommerville discussed how the electronic record makes decision writing easier as a transcript is available by/at the end of the day. In this way, he stated, evidence becomes immutable.

Decisions at the Ontario Energy Board are archived which improves overall advocacy before the agency and also general professionalism and the capability for precedent.

Mr. Sommerville concluded by mentioning that through electric innovation, the website and tools employed by the Board facilitate a fountain of information from which counsel and adjudicators alike can benefit.

## **John Marman**

John Marman of the Financial Services Commission of Ontario spoke about the idea of a paperless office and why it is a goal many have aspired to, but has yet to come to fruition.

He began by discussing the Gartner Hype Curve which measures the life and popularity of different technological innovations. The curve begins with a trigger (a new invention) which is highly anticipated and is glorified to the point of inflated expectations and then eventually falls to a low point of disillusionment. The technology then climbs again the upward slope of enlightenment and finally, the innovation reaches the plateau of productivity. Examples of such technological phenomena are: speech recognition software, cloud computing, 3D printing and quantum computing.

Mr. Marman stated that, unfortunately, there are no transformative technologies that can assist us to achieve the goal of a paperless office.

The Financial Services Commission of Ontario has implemented a number of initiatives with the intention of reducing paper such as:

- reducing the use of printers and fax machines, and also desktop printers
- doing more double sided printing
- requiring the mandatory e-filing of insurance and applications for agent licenses, rate submissions, pensions filings
- the development of DRCD (an online mediation case summary tool)
- utilizing e-calendars and online booking for meetings; and
- utilizing tablets for executives

Mr. Marman concluded his presentation by discussing the merits and shortcomings of two tools which the Financial Services Commission of Ontario has utilized in order to reduce the amount of paper used in the office: digital signatures in Microsoft Office and document scanning.

Digital signature capability is standard in the 2007 and 2010 versions of Microsoft Office. Mr. Marman praised this feature for its security as it requires a certificate and locks a particular document so that once a signature is made anyone who subsequently modifies it invalidates the signature.

The use of document scanning in the pension area at FSCO is in the pilot stage; Mr. Marman identified some of its findings thus far. FSCO has found that that scanning is a poor alternative to paper documents as scanned documents are not searchable and require a strong governance regime to ensure that scanned documents can stand up to scrutiny in court.

## Questions and Answers:

1. What are the challenges which exist surrounding records retention? It is a reality for many administrative agencies which sit in various locations around the province and do not have electronic assistance such as the system which Mr. Sommerville spoke of and with parties who cannot participate fully.
  - a. Brian Smithies: Mr. Smithies acknowledged that people who work in archiving have a huge issue before them with respect to paper storage and digitizing paper documents and moving towards an electronic records management system compatible with the Act. This issue is partly with respect to realty and space. He noted that space is now at a premium and there is more demand for office space than there was before. He mentioned that this seems to be an ongoing discussion which will have to continue over the next three years.
  - b. John Marman: FSCO is starting to utilize virtual meetings and other videoconferencing capabilities but he acknowledged that smaller communities will likely not be able to take advantage of the technological opportunities that we enjoy in Toronto. He noted that wireless Internet access and wireless technological capabilities may be pervasive in rural and/or small communities and will have to become an option later.
  - c. Paul Sommerville: Mr. Sommerville indicated that simultaneous transcription may be a solution to this problem because it may not be dependent on a permanent installation of technological components. Issues may exist surrounding some capabilities, but one can use a system based on a live transcriber with a correcting transcriber in another location which could be nearby or could be far away. Another strategy he identified which might be useful is increasing the use of tablets in meetings in order to reduce the amount of paper used. Evidence can be read on a table, annotated, and then saved for future reference. Mr. Sommerville did recognize that for some tribunals, these strategies may not be useful or practical, but he encouraged them to investigate whether or not they can be done.
2. In relation to the CPP/OAS Review Tribunals specifically, the largest challenge they experience is communicating with appellants who are elderly, ill, and low-income and cannot use technology or with limited access to technology across Canada and sometimes in other countries. How can those at these tribunals better communicate with this population and accommodate their needs?
  - a. Brian Smithies: Mr. Smithies felt that those in such a marginalized position must be reached out to in the conventional sense and must be accommodated.
  - b. Paul Sommerville: Mr. Sommerville suggested that accommodation may be achieved in the way that information is received and stored at the tribunal.
3. How do the panelists recommend storing very sensitive information currently on a server in the archives department and which is dependent on old, out-of-date software to access?
  - a. None of the panelists were able to provide any assistance to the audience member in relation to this question. At issue was the software needed to access the information and use it later; if the software is no longer available, even if the information is removed from the server in archives, how is it to be accessed at a later date?
4. How hard is it to create searchable decisions and/or opinions?
  - a. John Marman: Mr. Marman suggested that there are low cost services which are available to perform this but the difficulty and cost will depend on whether decisions are to be searchable on an internal basis only or will be available to the Internet as a whole.