The following sections provide additional information and issues for discussion. Participants will provide us with comments, questions, and suggestions to particular issues or problems.

Services: From Emergency Help to Health Care

The Federal government provides a range of services from disaster relief and public safety to health care. Already, information technology is being used to help deliver these services. Fishing licenses are being issued from electronic terminals and reservations for a campground in a National Park can be made on-line. Governments at all levels are creating electronic systems like California's "Info/California" kiosk based service delivery that, so far, includes twelve State agencies, two county governments and the US Internal Revenue Service. The US Postal Service has been a leader in kiosk-based service delivery and continues to expand its use of kiosks.

In the public safety arena, for years the FBI's National Crime Information Center has helped State and local police catch fugitives from justice no matter where they attempt to hide. And each year the American people and governments at all levels must cope with natural disasters—tornadoes, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes. Property is destroyed and, most tragically, lives are lost. In times like these how can governments best deliver the services that are needed? How can information technology assist governments and the public in these times of need?

Questions related to services: As electronic delivery systems evolve what government services should they provide and where should they be located—in libraries, schools, shopping centers, community centers? When are kiosks a good idea? How should these services be paid for or funded? What types of services would be best provided by using information technology?

Benefits: From Social Security and Food Stamps to Small Business Loans

Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, Aid to Dependent Children, and care to disabled veterans are some of the major Federal benefits programs. Can governments deliver these benefits more quickly and efficiently while maintaining the accountability and security of the programs and the dignity of the recipients?

Each year some \$500 billion in cash payments and food assistance are provided to needy Americans. Most of these entitlements are delivered by checks or vouchers—paper and postage—while some are directly deposited electronically into bank accounts—no paper, no postage. But, many recipients of this form of assistance do not have bank accounts. In these instances, how can we take advantage of emerging technologies, avoid paper and postage and thus save time and money? An answer may be electronic transfer of benefits to a credit card-like benefits card. This is actually being done in several states right now.

Systems using bank-like automated teller machines and retail point-of-sale terminals (scanners already installed in many grocery stores) are undergoing testing in six states (Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) and are planned in thirtyone more. This year Texas goes on-line with the nation's largest electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system. Elsewhere, eight other southern states are joining forces to create the first regional system and every month since 1993, Maryland's "Independence Card" program has delivered some \$57 million in food stamps, welfare and childsupport benefits to 170,000 households statewide. No paper, no postage, and no lost or stolen checks.

Of course, entitlement programs are not the only types of government benefits. Also included are small business loans and grants for educational projects and agricultural research. For example, notices of National Science Foundation grants are available on-line. They may be downloaded and printed by the applicant at his or her ease. When an application is completed, it may be submitted to the National Science Foundation by electronic mail. The whole process has been made more efficient and user-friendly which ends up saving the taxpayers' money

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Questions regarding benefits: What do people think about the pilot EBT projects in Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, and Pennsylvania? What have people's experiences been with the Maryland EBT program? How can governments continue to improve the delivery of other benefits? Which enabling technologies should we pursue? Are added safeguards needed to protect from fraud and abuse or will electronic transfer make controls easier?

Information: From Declassified Secrets and Travel Aids to Satellite Weather Maps

Government agencies at all levels collect, maintain and disseminate an incredible array of information. It ranges from routine data relating to consumer products to vital weather information. It

includes layers of regulations that apply to small businesses, major corporations or even government agencies themselves. We know the information is out there, but how do we find it? Until recently, our only option was to write or call the agency that had the information. Of course, first we had to figure out which agency that was. And then we waited.

All of that is changing. In December 1994, the Federal Government Information Locator Service (GILS) was launched. As it evolves, more and more Federal data will be at our fingertips. This locator service is similar to the card catalog at the local library, only it is electronic and on-line. GILS allows one to search on-line using a specific set of key-words of interest to locate appropriate subject matter. For example, suppose one had an interest in a major construction project and its effect on wildlife habitat. Using GILS, one could locate the various environmental impact statements. In addition, one might also locate pertinent satellite photographs.

Even declassified secrets are available electronically on the Department of Energy's OpenNet service. More agencies will follow. The National Archives and Records Administration is developing a government-wide declassification database.

One information source which is quite useful when planning to plant or harvest crops, or when planning a day at the beach, is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) national weather forecasts. These forecasts are available for any city in the United States which has a NOAA weather station. At last count, there were over 150 city forecasts available from NOAA's on-line computers.

For businesses, the Department of Commerce provides a bulletin board which contains timely economic information. For companies involved in export activities with Mexico and Canada, such items as export and import levels for particular product categories, such as paper products, from these two countries are easily available.

For the academic community, the Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census provides a bulletin board containing detailed demographic information about our country's citizens. For the medical community, the National Institutes of Health provide a bibliography of medical and scientific articles which allow physicians and scientists to remain up-to-date with the latest advances in medicine.

Questions regarding information dissemination. What level of effort should the Federal government devote to electronic dissemination of