The U.S. Experience with Streamlining and Integrating UI Delivery Networks: An Evaluation Synthesis

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Executive Summary

Purpose

- This study provides practical input into the review of UI operations by presenting a scan of the U.S. experience with streamlining UI delivery networks and integrating the delivery of UI with other programs.
    - In particular, it identifies applications being adopted or tested in the U.S. — and draws together available information on the assessment of these applications and the lessons learned.

Background

- The goal in Canada is to design an integrated, affordable, highly flexible and decentralized service network for UI.
- The consideration of automation and new technologies is a major part of the development of a new service delivery network in Canada.
- In the U.S., each state administers and delivers its own UI program. As a result, the states are using or experimenting with a variety of automation, new technologies and methods of program integration for their UI delivery systems.

Key Findings

- Few if any states are really re-engineering their UI systems. The emphasis tends to be on improving specific components of the existing delivery network, rather than achieving systemic efficiency gains through a re-design of the Ml delivery system.
- At the present time, there is a lack of hard estimates to demonstrate or compare the cost-effectiveness of various applications of automation and new technologies. The main exception is Colorado's estimate that its new system of processing initial UI claims by telephone is costing about 20 percent less than the old system of visiting the local UI office.
- Despite a lack of information on cost-savings, it is possible to identify the range of applications being used or tested in the U.S. — and to draw some lessons learned. Some of these findings are summarized below.

The Potential For Efficiency Gains and Service Improvements

- About 75 percent of the states are developing or using automated telephone systems known as a voice response system (VRS).
    - The use of a VRS for general inquiries (e.g., how do 1 apply for UI?), claim specific inquiries (e.g. where is my cheque?), and the filing of continued claims is gaining wide acceptance among state governments and claimants.
    - The use of telephone processing for initial claims is still a matter of debate. Currently, the two main models are the Wisconsin system of combining VRS automation with telephone claimstakers, and the Colorado system of telephone claimstakers.
    - The U.S. experience provides a number of lessons, such as:
        - cal1 management is critical to the success of a VRS, and requires separate lines for inquiries and claims;
        - it is best to begin with the inquiries line, because a fully operational inquiries line is needed to prevent the claims line from becoming filled by callers with routine questions; and,
        - the convenience of a cal1 system for initial claims can increase take-up and the filing of marginal claims (Colorada experienced a 7 to 12 percent increase in take-up).
- About half the states are experimenting with kiosks (i.e., self-service terminals located in convenient sites), but mostly for Employment Services rather than UI. Experience with kiosks in sophisticated or multi-use applications is still quite limited.
    - Kiosks appear to have considerable potential — but success requires hardware and software that match the use of the equipment.
- A few states are using the type of artificial intelligence known as expert system technology. Expert system software is designed to gather key facts from users and render certain decisions on the basis of these facts and programmed rules. The U.S. experience for UI and other programs indicates

that:

- expert system technology may be particularly useful for federal programs (e.g., by helping to ensure consistency in the application of program rules);
- are better suited to decisions involving simple questions that are answered by facts or mathematical calculations; and,
- may encounter difficulties in gaining user support.

- Only a few states offer the option of a direct deposit of benefit payments. Practical issues seem to be impeding the application of this technology to UI. For example:
  - interest among UI claimants may be quite limited (e.g., due to the delay in the first cheque); and,
  - the potential for cost savings may be limited (e.g., some banks may require that recipients of direct deposits also receive a notice in the mail).

Implementation Issues

- U.S. experience highlights the importance of having a clear plan of the whole delivery system before going ahead, particularly in the case of major changes.
  - The plan should ensure that the changes are well tested, and implemented in stages that allow adequate time to work out technical or programming problems that occur with each new application.
- If new applications are implemented during a recession or when other changes in UI are being implemented, it is important to factor in the prospects for major shifts in demand for program services.

Human Resource Management

- The experience with major changes in Colorado and Wisconsin indicate that advance planning for human resources is an important part of managing the transition (e.g., including information sessions, focus groups and re-deployment options).
- On-site staff need to be well trained before a new technology or system is implemented. Also, user positions need to be well staffed and well supported.
- The transitional problems encountered by Colorado indicate the importance of having realistic estimates of initial staff requirements. When in doubt, it is better to have a large initial staff that can ensure good service at the start, than to encounter service problems and a lack of trained staff.

Innovative Partnerships: The National UI Information Technology Support Centre (ITSC)

- The ITSC in College Park, Maryland, offers a useful mode1 to support the development and use of best practices. The Centre was established by the U.S. Department of Labour, and represents an innovative partnership of federal, state and private sector participants. Its mandate is to work with interested states to support the introduction and use of new technologies.
  - Many of the projects underway at the Centre Will provide useful information regarding the actual and potential use of new technologies and automation.

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Introduction

- This paper draws from evaluation studies, contacts in the U.S., and other sources of information to highlight the experience of various U.S. states with streamlining UI delivery networks, and integrating the delivery of UI and other programs. The results provide practical input for UI re-engineering and program integration in Canada.
- The paper includes:
  - a brief discussion of UI re-engineering and program integration in Canada;
  - an overview of activities in the U.S. states;
  - a detailed consideration of new technologies and automation being developed or applied in various states to streamline the delivery of UI;
  - a detailed consideration of program integration and site rationalization in various states; and,
  - a summary of lessons learned.

The New Service Delivery Vision for Canada

- Work on a new service delivery vision is being guided by the following principles:

- focusing more on clients and their needs;
- reflecting local priorities; and
- making the best use of technology to provide efficient and effective service to Canadians.

- The goal is to design an integrated, affordable, highly flexible and decentralized service network. Components of the network could include:
  - Human Resource kiosks (i.e., self-service terminals located at convenient sites across the country);
  - self-service access through computers, interactive television and telephone;
  - Local Human Resource Centres involving a smaller group of multi-skilled employees who would help clients in a responsive, cost-effective manner; and,
  - Canada Human Resource Centres involving larger offices that would provide leadership and functional support to local offices.
- A number of new technologies are being pilot tested or implemented in various locations of Canada. Examples include:
  - rationalizing call centres and, where possible, co-locating the call centres for UI and Income Security Programs (UI call centres provide information through access to operators plus automated responses to basic questions);
  - testing the use of touch-tone telephones and automated kiosks to take initial UI claims;
  - testing the use of touch-tone telephones to take reports for continued claims;
  - testing the use of automated/direct deposits to deliver payments — particularly for claimants submitting continued claims by telephone;
  - testing the use of document imaging;
  - automating jurisprudence; and,
  - automating the exchange of information between UI and welfare.

Overview of State Activities

- In the U.S., each state administers and delivers its own UI program. Therefore, the state governments determine UI eligibility, pay benefits, hold appeal hearings and collect the tax revenues that fund UI benefits. The principal functions of the federal government include:
  - establishing the national goals and objectives of the UI program;
  - ensuring that state laws are consistent with federal requirements; and,
  - allocating funds to state agencies to cover the costs of administering UI.
- Table 1 at the end of the report provides a current summary of the types of technologies and automation being used or tested in each state. The table indicates that:
  - virtually all states have online initial claims and claim histories;
  - most use some scanning technology (either full-form scanning or bar codes) to lift information and create electronic files;
  - about 75 percent are developing or using automated telephone systems known as a voice response system (VRS);
  - about 75 percent have applied at least some automation to their appeals process;
  - a few states are currently using the type of artificial intelligence software known as an expert system;
  - most states have central printing of UI cheques — and a few are attempting to introduce direct deposit systems; and,
  - about half the states are experimenting with kiosks or self-service terminals — but mostly for Employment Services.
- Table 1 also provides current information on the degree to which various states are involved in integrating the delivery of UI and other programs:
  - almost all states are co-locating local offices for UI and Employment Services;
  - states are also in the process of setting up One-Stop Career Centres to integrate the delivery of a wide range of programs and services provided by government and non-government agencies;
  - most states are increasing their capacity to share data across programs; and,
  - some states are examining ways to eliminate the collection of duplicate data (e.g., through the use of a common data base or the single intake of certain data).
- The federal U.S. Department of Labour is supporting the use of new technologies and delivery integration in a number of ways, such as:
  - funding automation projects;
  - funding the establishment and operation of the National UI Information Technology Support Centre (ITSC) to work with interested states to support the introduction and use of new technologies; and,
  - providing grants for the planning and implementation of One-Stop Career Centres that provide access to services under a wide range of employment, training and education programs.
- Although most states are applying new technologies, the emphasis is on making discrete changes in their delivery systems rather than on the radical rethinking and redesign implied by re-engineering.
  - The concept of re-engineering involves undertaking a complete restructuring of program delivery, or a group of processes, to achieve dramatic improvements in performance.
  - By contrast, the states are seeking to improve productivity and customer service by automating certain existing processes or components of their delivery system.
  - In the case of claimstaking, for example, states are eliminating the use of written forms by directly keying initial claims information into the computer. However, this approach typically involves taking the existing forms and putting them onto a computer screen, rather than looking for more fundamental ways to improve this and other parts of the delivery network.

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Experience with new Technologies and Automation for UI

- This section highlights the U.S. experience to date with examples of new technologies and automation in the areas of:
  - information/inquiry systems;
  - claims taking activities;
  - continued claims;
  - automated payment delivery systems;
  - expert systems;
  - investigation and control;
  - performance standards; and,
  - general administration.
- For each of these areas, the discussion presents some of the models being adopted or tested in the U.S. -- and available information on the assessment of these models and lessons learned.
  - Where possible, the impacts of these technologies are assessed according to their ability to provide more accurate, efficient, cost-effective and timely service for UI customers. These assessment criteria are customer-focused and results driven. As such, they are consistent with the principles guiding the new service delivery vision in Canada.
  - It should be noted, however, that our discussions with U.S. contacts and key personnel at the ITSC indicate that hard data regarding these assessment criteria is still quite limited. Therefore, the following discussion draws together the information that is available, and also notes areas where further studies are underway.

Information and Inquiry Systems

- Three main types of information/inquiry systems are being used or tested in the U.S.:
  - telephone operators located at call centres;
  - automated telephone inquiry systems; and,
  - automated self-service kiosks.

Telephone Operators Located at Call Centres

- Colorado has telephone operators located at a centralized claims centre to respond to inquiries and take initial claims. The call system was introduced statewide in April, 1991. By 1992, however, concerns about the length of waiting times led to the setting up of two separate telephone lines. Since then, one telephone line has been used for claims taking and a separate line has been used for inquiries.
  - Separating the claim and inquiry lines has aided the management of incoming calls, reduced claimant waiting time and improved the level of service.
  - In managing the call centre, priority is given to the line for claims taking. Therefore, the average waiting time is allowed to be longer on the inquiry line. The average length of an inquiry call is three to four minutes.
  - Many calls on the inquiry line are asking whether a cheque has been mailed.
  - The Colorado call system is discussed in detail in the section on initial claims.
- Colorado is expanding its telephone services to include a VRS system for inquiries and continued claims. If the state was starting today to introduce new technologies, it would probably implement a VRS for inquiries and continued claims before introducing a telephone system for initial claims.

Automated Telephone Inquiry Systems

- In states using a VRS, or considering the use of a VRS, the system usually includes the capacity to answer:
  - basic questions about the UI program (e.g., the location and hours of the nearest local office, what to bring to the local office); and,
  - questions about claim status (e.g. whether a claimant's cheque has been mailed and the amount of the cheque).
- There is particular emphasis on using VRS technology to deal with inquiries about claim status, because of the frequency of these types of calls. Providing this service usually involves linking the VRS to a data base of claimant records, and enabling claimants to access key parts of their own records through a touch-tone telephone.
- States using a VRS for information/inquiries generally report that their systems work well and improve customer service by increasing access to information.
  - The automated inquiry system in Wisconsin was implemented between December, 1993 and April, 1994. The average length of an inquiry call ranges from 2.25 to 2.57 minutes. Since routine questions are answered by the VRS, local office staff are more available to deal with complex questions.
  - About 80 percent of the calls taken by the automated inquiry system in Maryland are asking whether a cheque has been mailed. The VRS handles this type of question in about a minute. Under the old system of calling the local office, callers often found they were getting a busy signal for days.
- One of the important aspects of a VRS for inquiries is overall call management.
  - In Washington state, the volume of calls to local offices increased after the VRS was introduced because callers were being referred to the local office whenever the VRS could not handle a question. Local offices found that their old telephone technology could not handle the

additional calls.

- In Maryland, calls to the local offices decreased with the introduction of the VRS because a few telephone operators are located at the VRS call site to handle questions that the VRS menu cannot answer.
- In Wisconsin, the number of inquiry calls received by local offices has not declined, but the type of inquiry has changed. The VRS handles the routine questions, while the local office handles the more complex questions.

- To help identify and resolve start-up problems, states generally recommend thorough testing of new information/inquiry systems. They also recommend a staggered implementation schedule that applies a system in only a few new areas at a time.
- Several states (e.g., Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Ohio and Alaska) began the use of a VRS by first applying these systems to inquiries.
  - Minnesota concluded that the main payoff for a VRS in their state was in continued claims, rather than inquiries. Therefore, they are expanding their system to include the taking of continued claims.
  - In the case of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Alaska, the approach is to phase-in the use of a VRS for continued claims and inquiries by beginning with inquiries. Pennsylvania has completed the full implementation process and found that the phase-in approach aided the process of identifying and resolving start-up difficulties (including technical and programming problems).

Automated Self-Service Kiosks

- As indicated in Table 1, many states are experimenting with kiosks for Employment Services. The kiosks have key boards or touch screens that provide access to interactive services.
  - Washington state is obtaining positive and highly visible results in using kiosks to improve access to information on job openings.
  - If more of these experiments are successful, there is potential to expand the use of kiosks to other programs, including the provision of UI-related information.
- Pennsylvania is one state that is testing the use of multi-use kiosks. These kiosks serve a wide range of functions. For example, they provide information on job openings, UI and tax rules. They also enable users to renew their driver's license and apply for a fishing licence.
  - Pennsylvania has found that kiosks located in public areas (e.g., malls) need to be more secure than kiosks located in local offices. This increases the cost of applying this technology because the price of a secure kiosk is about U.S. $20,000, compared to U.S. $5,000 for a kiosk located in a local office.
- Some states report problems with their kiosks.
  - The kiosks in Iowa, for example, are registering a lot of down time even after 6 months of operation. It is still uncertain whether the problem is with the hardware or the software.
  - Nebraska has encountered major disputes with the contractor.
  - In Minnesota, there are disagreements over how kiosks should be used.

Potential Implications for Canada

1. *An automated telephone inquiry system* is able to improve customer service and reduce calls to local UI offices by handling routine questions, particularly questions regarding claim status. However, call management is very important to the success of these systems.
   - The inquiry line should be kept separate from call lines used for claims.
   - Although most routine inquiries can be handled by an automated response, a few telephone operators should be linked to the VRS to deal with questions that are not part of the automatic menu.
2. *Automated self-service kiosks* appear to have considerable potential, although success depends on choosing hardware and software that match the use of the equipment.
3. Successful implementation of a *new information/inquiry system* requires thorough planning and testing.
   - Thorough testing and a staggered implementation schedule are important ways to identify and address start-up problems.
   - If the plan is to implement a full telephone system for inquiries and claims processing, it is best to begin with the inquiry system. If the inquiry system is not functioning well, the telephone lines for claims processing are likely to be filled by callers with routine questions.

Claims Taking Activity

- Three main types of claims taking systems are being used or tested in the U.S.:
  - in-person filing at a local office;
  - telephone processing; and,
  - automated self-service kiosks.

In-person Filing at a Local Office

- The traditional way of taking an initial UI claim involves collecting information from new claimants at the local office.
- While many states continue to use this method for some or all initial claims, new technologies and automation are modifying the traditional process.
  - For example, on-line systems for initial claims and claim histories enable local office staff to key computer information while speaking with the claimant.
  - In Indiana, claimants enter own information at PCs located in the local offices.
- Existing systems can impose limits on the potential for using some types of new technology. For example when the ITSC made initial assessments of client/server implementation, they found that existing system infrastructures may not support client/server architecture. Also, the cost of updating system infrastructure can be prohibitive given current budget constraints and high conversion costs.

Telephone Processing

- Several states are developing or using methods to process initial claims by telephone. The main motivation for telephone processing is increased

customer service, higher customer satisfaction and cost reduction. The four main models in this area are:

- North Dakota's call and visit system;
- Colorado's centralized call system;
- the decentralized call system being pilot tested in California; and,
- Wisconsin's system of combining the use of VRS and telephone claimstakers.

- In North Dakota, the initial claims process begins with a telephone call to an 800 number. At the call centre, an operator takes basic information (e.g., name, social security number and reason for separation). Following the call, the local office is notified and schedules a visit by the caller to collect the rest of the information.
  - North Dakota has been using this approach since the 1970s, and finds that the system is a convenient and relatively inexpensive way of servicing their rural population. The call and visit system enables the local office to manage its workload, and is particularly useful in the case of large layoffs.
- Colorado was the first state to replace in-person filing at the local office with telephone processing. The calls are taken by a central claims unit located in Denver. With the introduction of centralized telephone processing in April 1991, local UI operations were closed. Although local Job Service offices remain open to provide employment services, these offices are no longer involved in processing UI claims.
  - The call system enables claimants to initiate all transactions associated with the establishment of new claims over the telephone with the aid of claimstaking staff. For confirmation, a prepared form is mailed to each claimant. These forms must be reviewed and signed by the claimant, and returned to the Denver central office before payments can be processed.
  - Over 96 percent of initial claims are taken by telephone. The rest are taken by mail through bulk claims for major layoffs by large employers.
  - Although claimants can initiate claims over the telephone, persons who are not exempt from work search must visit a Job Service office to register for work and to review their job-finding strategy.
- The U.S. Department of Labour has conducted an evaluation of the transition to centralized telephone processing of UI claims in Colorado. The evaluation compares performance indicators before and after the transition.
  - Before the centralized call system was introduced, UI claims could only be initiated by visiting one of the 26 full-service Job Service Centres or fourteen satellite offices. Continued claims were centrally handled, with claimants mailing claim forms to the Denver central office on a bi-weekly basis.
  - The evaluation study found that the level of accuracy for initial claims was not adversely affected by telephone processing. However, some aspects of performance did decline. In particular, there were longer first payment time lapses for claims within the state.
  - The call system encountered major problems when the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program (EUC) went into effect late in 1991. Under the EUC, persons who had exhausted their benefits could come back into active status. The telephone service had been designed to handle up to 40,000 calls per week — but weekly calls suddenly rose to 300,000 by January 1992. Average waiting time rose from 3 minutes to 75 minutes. One part of the solution was to establish separate lines for information and claims taking, because about one third of the calls were general inquiries.
- The Department of Labour evaluation also conducted a telephone survey of about 900 claimants. One sample had initiated claims under the old system and the second sample had initiated claims under the new system.
  - The survey found that filing a claim by the call system required about half as much time as the old system.
  - The survey also found that about 7 percent of the claimants who used the telephone service indicated that they would not have filed for benefits under the old system of going to a local office. More recent information indicates that UI take-up may be as much as 12 percent higher in the case of telephone processing. The number of denied claims is also higher. This suggests that some claimants respond to the convenience of a call system by filing marginal and short-term claims.
- Recent discussions with state officials indicates that Colorado's call system has produced a number of benefits.
  - Reduced staff requirements and the closing of local UI offices has achieved significant savings. The call system is estimated to cost 20 percent less than the old system.
  - Centralization has improved the ability to train and manage claimstaking staff. The use of a single site also makes it easier to improve procedures and telephone scripts. Through training, Colorado has compressed calls to file initial claims into about seven and a half minutes. The claimstaker is polite but moves the caller quickly through the required information.
- Colorado's experience highlights a number of lessons.
  - The initial claims process can be nearly paperless.
  - Active management of the call site through the use of an automated call distributor and separate lines for information and claims reduce the waiting time and improve customer service.
  - Training and continuous improvements are necessary ingredients to success.
  - Over 90 percent of claimants are satisfied with the call system.
  - Introducing a call system at the same time as other major changes in UI can lead to major problems.
- California is pilot testing the taking of UI claims by telephone in 5 northern locations. The pilot dates are between January 1994 and June 1995. A new pilot is scheduled for the spring, summer and winter of 1995—to test telephone filing in a metropolitan area (i.e., in San Diego and Ventura locations).
  - Potential claimants call a local telephone number. An automated call distributor allows the calls to be routed to the first available claimstaker. The claimstaker gathers all claim information from the caller, and keys the data into the computer during the telephone interview. Forms that verify eligibility are mailed to the caller, along with a handbook containing benefit information.
- The issue of fraud has been a major consideration in the California pilot projects. Fraud prevention activities include:
  - asking basic questions for identification (e.g., questions regarding name, date of birth, prior addresses, social security number, base period employers); and
  - examining the potential use of Personal Identification Numbers (PINs), voice recognition equipment, and blocking telephone numbers from

other states.

- Preliminary results for the 5 northern locations indicate that, on average,:
  - waiting time (being on hold) is less than 1 minute;
  - filing a regular claim takes 6 minutes; and,
  - filing an interstate, military or federal claim takes 11 minutes.
- The fourth major model is the Telephone Initial Claims Project underway in Wisconsin. This system has been piloted since February 1995, with plans for statewide implementation in the fall.
  - The system is to have two UI call centres. One located in Madison and the other in Milwaukee. These call centres are expected to eliminate the need for UI local offices by fiscal year 1996.
  - For callers with touch-tone telephones, the basic information is entered by VRS. Once this is done, the call and the information given to the VRS are simultaneously transferred to a UI specialist for the completion of more complex information and benefit rights information.
  - Callers using a rotary telephone are immediately transferred to a UI specialist.
  - The UI specialist can access wage records and drivers licence information to help confirm the identity of the caller.
- The Wisconsin model essentially takes the existing claims procedure and automates it. Wisconsin officials predict that their model will achieve cost savings similar to the Colorado model (i.e., savings of 20 percent). However, it is too soon to say whether the reduced UI staff time will pay for the increased level of technology (including the costs or hardware, software and maintenance).
  - The ISTC is undertaking a post implementation analysis of the telephone processing systems in Wisconsin and California. The study will review how well the systems are saving costs, increasing customer satisfaction and meeting other goals. Their report is planned for the end of September.
  - The ISTC is also developing a claims taking simulator to assess the costs and benefits of taking claims by telephone as compared to current procedures. The simulator will also provide a way to test various claims taking approaches and telephone scripts for length of time, ease of use and claimant reaction. The simulator will be ready by the end of September.
    - Early simulation results suggest that a voice response unit (VRU) takes about twice as long as a telephone claimstaker to ask the caller for certain information. In the case of a VRU, some of the additional time is to explain how the caller should enter the information by touch-tone telephone.

Automated Self-Service Kiosks

- Oregon is now using about 120 kiosks for employment service information while looking at a possibility of submitting UI initial and continued claims by kiosk.

Potential Implications for Canada

1. There is considerable interest in the U.S. in processing initial UI claims by telephone. The reasons include:
   - convenience for UI claimants (e.g., no travel time, no transportation costs, no parking fees and no child care expenses); and,
   - processing of initial claims by telephone is seen as complementing telephone systems for inquiries and continued claims.
2. The choice of model is still a matter of considerable debate, however. Currently, the two main models are the Colorado system of telephone claimstakers and the Wisconsin system of combining VRS automation with telephone claimstakers.
   - The Colorado system is estimated to cost 20 percent less than the old system of in-person filing at a local office.
   - The ISTC post implementation analysis of the telephone processing system in Wisconsin (due to be available in September) will add important information to this debate.
3. The use of a call system for initial claims can increase take-up and the filing of marginal claims. In Colorado, there has been a 7 to 12 percent increase in take-up plus an increase in the number of denied claims.
4. A call system raises the issue of what type of work search system to put in place to meet UI program requirements. Consideration of this issue becomes particularly important if a call system is to be accompanied by a major reduction in the number of local UI offices.
5. The problems encountered during the implementation of Colorado's call system highlights the importance of:
   - planning for increased caseloads during a recession;
   - anticipating potential problems if the call system is to be introduced at the same time as other major changes in the UI system; and,
   - using pilot tests and staged implementation to help minimize start-up and transition problems.

Continued Claims

- Two main types of continued claim systems are being used in the U.S.:
  - mail-in claims; and,
  - automated telephone processing.

Mail-in Claims

- The traditional way of submitting a continued claim involves mailing in weekly or bi-weekly status reports. Some new technologies are helping to streamline this method.
- A number of states use bar code scanning (e.g., Alaska, Minnesota and Pennsylvania).
  - In Minnesota, bar codes appear on cheques and forms used to continue a claim. States report that this is an inexpensive way to track forms and aid data entry.
- Other states use full form scanners (e.g., Alabama, New York, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, North Dakota and Oregon).
  - In Maryland, for example, the scanner reads the social security number, key dates and answers to key questions. The scanning process

generates a computer record and flags anything that requires the attention of clerical staff. Only about 10 percent of the scanned documents require manual interventions.

- As a lesson learned, states suggests that forms to be scanned may need to be re-designed to meet the needs of scanning equipment. To minimize errors, the forms should be changed before the scanning system goes into operation.

- Several states are going to an imaging system for documents (e.g., Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon).
  - An imaging system is considered to be more accurate than scanning. It eliminates the need to retain a hard copy or a micro fiche version of the original because it takes and stores an electronic picture of each document. Also, it facilitates creation and managing of a UI system based on electronic records and files.
  - Maryland is implementing an imaging system for quarterly reports, wage records and continuing claims. The system will combine imaging with some OCR scanning to lift certain information from the documents to the mainframe. The new system is expected to increase efficiency, particularly where imaging and scanning replace manual processing. However, estimates of potential cost savings are not available.
  - The cost of imaging is considerably more than scanning. Although other states are interested in imaging to improve records management, some find that such a system would only be cost-effective over the long term.
- A number of states report considerable satisfaction with high volume, cut sheet lazer printers (e.g., Indiana, Mississippi, Nebraska and Maryland).
  - With these printers, states have been able to streamline the printing of forms. They have also been able to streamline mailing and reduce costs by combining their mailing of cheques and continued claim forms.

Automated Telephone Processing

- As shown in Table 1, a large number of states have recently started to use a VRS or are installing these systems for continued claims. Most of these states seem to be offering claimants a choice between a VRS and mail-in claims.
  - Maryland plans to operate a dual system which allows claimants to file continued claims by either mail or VRS. Once operational, the state expects 75 percent of clients to use the mail system, and 25 percent to use the VRS.
  - In Wisconsin, 85 percent of continued claims are filed by telephone.
- The general view is that claimants like having access to a VRS and that these systems are well suited to continued claims because most of the information is numeric or simply "yes" or "no".
  - In Wisconsin, feedback from claimants indicate that 90 percent rate the new system as good or excellent.
- Iowa provides an example of a decentralized VRS, with 15 VRUs located in field offices and 5 VRUs at head office. Their experience points out several lessons.
  - It is important to have an effective method of managing calls when the host computer goes down. In Iowa, the VRUs take off-line calls and then transfer the information to the mainframe. Their system also has a "roll-over" capacity which transfers calls to the head office when a local unit goes down.
  - Introducing a VRS requires considerable expertise for both hardware and software, because VRUs need good programming.
  - Other states have also noted the importance of hardware and software expertise and compatibility. In Tennessee, for example, the VRS had to go through two mainframe computers.
- South Carolina has a VRU in each local office so that callers can use a local number. The information is then transferred to a central location for processing.
  - South Carolina implemented its system in 5 or 6 waves, rather than in all local offices at one time. This approach allowed time to work out the problems encountered at each site.
  - By contrast, New York started its VRS in 45 locations to provide state-wide coverage. This approach was considered to be a maintenance nightmare. Also, the on-site people were often not well equipped to identify and resolve problems. As a result, there was a lot of down time.
  - The VRS in Virginia operates in a central site. Their experience highlights the importance of understanding the limitations of hardware and software. They found that the first VRS they tried was too small and could not be extended.

Potential Implications for Canada

1. Although there is wide spread interest in taking continued claims by VRS in the U.S., there is not much hard evidence to compare the cost-effectiveness of this approach with an automated mail-in system.
2. Experience with automated telephone processing highlights the importance of technical support and managing calls. In particular, it is important to:
   - ensure compatibility among various parts of the system;
   - have good hardware and software expertise; and,
   - ensure no information loss in the event of hardware or software problems.

Automated Payment Delivery Systems

- Only a few states offer the option of a direct deposit of benefit payments (e.g., Iowa, Minnesota and Oregon).
  - Iowa offers a direct deposit system for VRS users. North Dakota is planning to survey claimants using its VRS to determine interest in a direct deposit system.
- The first payment made by direct deposit is usually slower than a mailed cheque, because of the time taken to set up a direct deposit with the banks. Oregon estimates that the delivery of the first cheque is two days behind the mail service. In Minnesota, the delay can be longer.
  - After the first cheque, however, direct deposits can occur the same day as the continued claim is received and processed.
- The states offering direct deposits find there is not much take-up of this option. This result is probably due to a number of reasons:
  - the delay in the first cheque;
  - a lack of promotion;

- not everyone has a chequing account (e.g., chequing services are often used in the inner cities); and,
- unemployed people seem to have a preference for receiving benefits in the form of a cheque.

- At the state level, there is also some reluctance to introduce direct deposits because:
  - some banks require that claimants receive a notice in the mail, and this eliminates the potential for saving on postage; and,
  - there may be some legal issues (e.g., the courts have not yet tested whether making a withdrawal from a bank account is the same as cashing a cheque).

Implications for Canada

The early experience with *direct deposit systems for UI* in the U.S. indicates that some practical difficulties are impeding the application of this technology. For example:

- interest among UI claimants seems to be quite limited; and,
- it is not clear how much cost-savings can be achieved, particularly if banks require that recipients of direct deposits also receive a notice in the mail.

Expert Systems

- Expert system technology refers to software designed to provide a form of artificial intelligence. The software gathers key facts by prompting the user through a series of questions, and renders certain decisions for the user on the basis of these facts and a set of programmed experiences or rules.
- Since 1987, The U.S. Department of Labour has funded five expert system demonstration projects. These projects were undertaken to determine the feasibility of using expert system technologies to aid the day-to-day operation of UI.
  - The projects were located in Kansas, Maine, Missouri and Texas (which had two projects). Oregon has also experimented in this area.
  - Kansas, Maine and Oregon tested systems to aid non-monetary determination.
  - Oregon also tested a system to determine disaster unemployment assistance.
  - Texas tested two systems. One designed to assist claims examiners and one to determine employment.
- The U.S. Department of Labour has conducted a formal evaluation of the Kansas expert system which was designed to assist in applying UI rules regarding voluntary quits. The evaluation found that the expert system:
  - was able to gather facts and render decisions with reasonable accuracy;
  - helped to structure interviews so that information necessary for the determination of eligibility was collected, extraneous information;
  - ensured that decisions reached were consistent with state law;
  - could be operated by relatively inexperienced personnel; and,
  - could be used as a training aid.
- Regarding acceptance of the expert system, the evaluation noted that:
  - the initial attitude of claimstakers ranged from indifference to open hostility—although their comfort level increased as they realized that the system was not designed to replace staff or reduce the "people factor"; and,
  - deputy examiners were slow to realize the benefits of the expert system.
- At the present time, expert systems for UI are being used in only a few states.
  - Rhode Island uses an expert system for disputed claims and reports that the system has achieved consistency in applying rules across the state.
  - Alabama has recently implemented a claims taking system in eight offices. Their users have given the system a good report. In particular, they found it helpful in focusing the claimstaking interview.
  - Florida has an expert system for adjudication. However, they have encountered a number of problems getting started and will probably require additional resources to bring this application into the mainstream of their delivery system.
- The U.S. experience with the use of expert systems in UI applications offers a number of lessons learned.
  - The general view is that expert system technology can work well for relatively simple questions that are factual or involve mathematical calculations. However, expert systems that involve many variables, judgements or questions of intent become too complex to work well in day-to-day operations.
  - Setting up a system requires plenty of help from the vendor, programmers and consulting services.
  - Systems that fail to gain user support are much more difficult to integrate into the program delivery process.
- To assist the development and use of expert systems for UI in the U.S., the ITSC has undertaken to identify expert system applications which are candidates for sharing among states.
- Experience in other program areas suggests that expert systems may be easier to develop and apply to federal programs than state programs. In the case of a federal program, an expert system is more readily transferrable from one region to another.
  - Texas has achieved considerable success and good publicity with an expert system for a federal program to provide disaster assistance.
  - The Texas system has also been used by Florida, Louisiana and California for disaster assistance.
  - The U.S. Department of Labour considers expert systems to be a potentially useful approach to providing better and more consistent service, particularly for federal programs.

Potential Implications for Canada

1. It may be easier to develop and use expert systems for UI in Canada than in the U.S. because Canada's UI is a federal program.
2. The U.S. experience suggests that expert systems can be potentially useful, particularly for federal programs, because this type of technology can:

- render accurate decisions;
- help to structure client interviews;
- ensure consistency in the application of program rules; and,
- simplify certain parts of program delivery -- particularly areas involving simple questions that are factual or involve mathematical calculations.

3. The U.S. experience also highlights the importance of gaining user support for expert systems.

Investigation and Control

- Three ways in which states are using new technologies and automation to aid investigation and control are:
  - automating aspects of the appeals process;
  - sharing data across programs; and,
  - experimenting with VRUs.

Automating Aspects of the Appeals Process

- About 75 percent of the states have automated all or a portion of their appeals process. These systems seem to be working well.
  - In some states (e.g., Illinois and Kentucky), automation is used throughout the appeals process.
  - Others (e.g., Montana, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Vermont) use an automated system to tracks appeals.
  - Some (e.g., Nebraska and Texas) use automation to help schedule appeals.
- The automated appeals system in Texas was developed around three co-ordinated programs:
  - a program for notices facilitates the entry of a received appeal into the host data base;
  - a scheduling program schedules proceedings before the Appeals Tribunal; and,
  - a host communication program brings forward data from the host mainframe for the purpose of manipulation on a PC.
- Maryland is developing a local area network (LAN) based system. They are also using a bar code system to help manage files and track each case. Their system is reported to have resulted in reduced clerical support, added to quality control and standardized all legal documents.
- In 1993, Wisconsin undertook an issue resolution project and an issue resolution appeals project. In response, the state is:
  - establishing a VRS for employer reports and basic appeal questions;
  - continuing the process of eliminating paper files by capturing information electronically; and,
  - consolidating 25 adjudication sites into 4 sites.

Sharing Data Across Programs

- Another way in which states are using new technologies and automation to aid investigation and control involves data sharing across programs. As indicated in Table 1, there is data sharing in most states.
  - In Wisconsin, claimstakers will be able to access drivers licence information to help confirm the identity of callers filing initial claims by telephone.
  - Some states have online access to data for certain agencies such as the welfare department and the Internal Revenue Service.
  - Also, most states provide information from employers' wage records to other agencies on request.
- Sharing data across programs is an area where states are planning to make further progress over the next few year.

Experimenting With VRUs

- A primary cause of overpayments is claimants returning to work but failing to report their earnings.
- Several states use a mail-in post card system to obtain hire reports from employers. In 1992, Maryland reported that they were receiving about 25,000 record of hire forms per year (usually about 80 per day).
- Some of these states are considering the use of VRUs to take hire reports.
  - Maryland is examining the potential for replacing its post card system with a VRU system.
  - Georgia is already using VRUs. Employers call on the same line as UI claimants, but they press a certain code and then enter their employer account number, the hire date, the social security number of the person hired and date of birth.
- The ITSC is examining the potential for using VRS technology to replace manual post card systems for hire purchase reports. The results of this project are expected in September.

Potential Implications for Canada

1. The U.S. experience indicates that there are considerable opportunities for using automation to streamline the management and processing of appeals. However, hard evidence on the cost-effectiveness of using automation and new technologies in this area is still quite limited.
   - Wisconsin provided one estimate when it predicted that its new system for filing and processing appeals will save about U.S. $0.5 million per year, with a payback period of 2.5 years.
   - Since states are generally not taking a re-engineering approach, additional cost savings may be possible if automation is part of a full-system re-engineering.
2. In the U.S., data sharing across programs is becoming an integral part of the investigation and control process.
3. Automation is also being used to help identify cases where UI recipients fail to report a return to work. In the U.S., the current emphasis is on experimenting with the use of VRUs to take hire reports from employers.
   - In Canada, it may be useful to consider a wider range of models, including a mail-in system linked to the collection of other information regarding new employees.

Performance Standards

- Currently, the performance testing of telephone systems for information and claim processing tends to emphasize waiting time (time on hold) and processing time. In this area, performance testing is aided by the fact the automated call distributors used to route callers to the first available representative can also keep statistical data on how many callers are waiting in the queue and how long they have been waiting.
- The recent Government Act regarding performance and results is generating considerable interest in performance and customer perception of performance.
    - In this area, the Department of Labour is working with a group of state and regional representatives to develop a way of measuring/assessing performance. Their work will include a national survey of UI clients to determine customer satisfaction among people in the program. The survey is planned for next year.
- A number of states are also reported to be undertaking projects to develop ways to measure and monitor customer satisfaction.
    - Wisconsin is planning a study of voice/data performance monitoring. The purpose of the study is to develop an approach to measure and track the systems performance of remote claim telephone sites.
    - California plans to establish a co-ordinated ES/UI measurement system to measure customer satisfaction.
    - Florida is developing an assessment process and strategies for using customer satisfaction data as the basis for continuous improvement. The process includes obtaining information from UI claimants. The information is to be used to develop customer service standards.

Some Potential Implications For Canada

Given the current interest in performance standards in the U.S., it would be particularly useful to monitor the developments in this area.

General Administration

- Colorado provides the most dramatic example of managing a major change in program delivery. In that state, all local UI offices were closed with the 1991 introduction of a centralized call site for the processing of initial UI claims.
    - Prior to centralization, one-third of operations was located in central Denver, another third located in the Denver area, and the remaining third in other parts of the state. Majority of the central/suburban Denver workforce was moved to the central call site. Remote offices moved less staff to the processing centre.
    - The change was disruptive to office operations and field staff. However, the state also reports that centralized staff have advantages for training and management (e.g., improvements in procedures can be made more quickly and telephone representatives can be moved from the inquiry line to the claims line to meet a rise in calls on the claims line).
    - Colorado has a deliberate policy of having more experienced and better trained claims-takers. This has led to better quality of claims being taken and greater claimant satisfaction.
- Wisconsin is considered to be the most forward looking in terms of managing the transition of human resources. To minimize disruption and avoid layoffs, Wisconsin developed a three year plan during the early stages of its streamlining initiatives.
    - The three year plan included information sessions and focus groups for staff, as well a redeployment opportunities.
- Other states are keeping local UI offices but co-locating UI and Employment Services in the same office. In some states (e.g., Rhode Island, Vermont, Ohio, Florida and Illinois), this includes cross training and cross utilization of the front-line workforce. As discussed in the next section, states are now planning to move more in the direction of one-stop centres.

Some Potential Implications For Canada

The experience with major changes in Colorado and Wisconsin highlights the importance of human resource planning as a way of reducing disruption and avoiding layoffs.

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Experience with Program Integration and site Rationalization

- This section highlights examples of delivery integration being tested or implemented in various states. The discussion focuses on:
    - local office integration;
    - data integration; and,
    - centralized printing of cheques.

Local Office Integration

- In most states, local UI offices have been co-located with Employment Services for a number of years. As indicated in Table 1, about 60 percent of the states have co-located all or virtually all of their local offices for UI and Employment Services.
    - In a number of states (e.g., Florida, Illinois, Rhode Island and Vermont) the front-line staff is being cross-trained to work on both UI and Employment Service functions.
- States are now focused on the concept of one-stop centres, which deliver a wide range of programs and services at a single location. The Department of Labour is supporting this type of integration by awarding grants for the planning and implementation of one-stop career centres.

- These centres would provide access to the services and information offered under a wide array of employment, training and education programs -- including initial assessments of skills and abilities, self-help information relating to career exploration and skill requirements for various occupations, and labour market information.
- These centres include either UI programs or access to UI services (e.g., through a VRS).
- States are planning to include various programs in addition to the core Department of Labour programs. Examples include Food Stamps, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and community programs.
- As of January 1995, 19 states have received planning grants and 9 states have received implementation grants.

Data Integration

- Data sharing is generally done through formal agreements at the state level.
  - These agreements provide a basis for sharing data among state agencies in respect of UI, Employment Services, child support and other state agencies.
  - At the present time, data sharing still involves some batch access systems rather than online access.
- States generally have the capacity to generate large operational and evaluation data bases. Also, there is a growing interest in developing common intake systems.
- The general view is that automated systems facilitate the development of data entry and retrieval systems. Also, increased automation can assist in the building and operating of common data bases and single in-take systems.
  - Where ES and UI data are currently on different systems, however, establishing a common data base can involve re-writing the existing systems. This can be a costly process.
- The ITSC is preparing an assessment of electronic data interchange (EDI) technology for UI applications. This project is focused on Workers Compensation in Florida and wage reporting pilots in Texas. The ISTC is also preparing guides to selecting EDU communication services.

Centralized Printing of Cheques

- As indicated in Table 1, most states make use of central printing for the printing of UI cheques. Many of these centres also print the cheques for other unemployment programs, and some print cheques for all state programs (e.g., Florida).
- The general view is that the central printing of cheques works well, especially when combined with high volume laser printers.

A Summary of Lessons Learned from the U.S. Experience

- The U.S. experience highlights a number of lessons regarding:
  - the potential for efficiency gains and service improvements;
  - implementation issues;
  - human resource management issues; and,
  - the National UI Information Technology Support Centre.

The Potential For Efficiency Gains and Service Improvements

- Few if any states are really re-engineering their UI systems. The emphasis tends to be on improving specific components of the existing delivery network, rather than on full system re-engineering. As a result, the use of automation is not cross-functional in design, and potential opportunities for systematic efficiency gains may not be fully realized.
  - The computer network analogy is that different Local Area Networks (LANs) are developed for specific UI activities, but they do not necessarily talk to one another.
- Although experience in the U.S. has not ruled out the use of the types of technologies and automation examined in this paper, several cautions can be noted.
  - The use of telephone processing for initial claims is still a matter of debate—while the use of a VRS for inquiries and continued claims is gaining wide acceptance among governments and UI claimants.
  - Experience with kiosks in sophisticated and multi-use applications is still quite limited.
  - Expert systems are potentially useful, particularly for federal programs, but may encounter difficulties in gaining user support.
  - Direct deposits seem to lack client support, at least in the early stages.
- At the present time, there is a lack of hard estimates to demonstrate or compare the cost-effectiveness of various applications of automation and new technologies.

Implementation Issues

- The U.S. experience highlights the importance of having a clear plan of the whole delivery system before going ahead, particularly in the case of major changes.
  - New changes should be well tested. Pilots continue to be good testing vehicles.
  - The implementation of new technologies should be organized into manageable pieces.
  - Each stage of implementation should fit well with the other stages being developed or implemented. For example, if certain forms need to be changed to facilitate a new technology, this should be recognized and done before the new technology is introduced.
  - Also, it is important to build lots of time into the implementation schedule for working out any technical or programming problems that occur

with each new application.

- Linking new technologies to an existing system can sometimes be difficult. Therefore, issues of compatibility and limitations should be examined very early in the process.
- If new technologies are implemented during a recession or when other changes in UI are being implemented, it is important to factor in the prospects of major changes in demands on the delivery network.

Human Resources Management

- Users need to understand re-engineering and how it affects work flow.
- Advanced planning for human resources is an important part of managing the transition, particularly in the case of changes involving relocations.
- On-site staff need to be well trained before a new technology or system is implemented. Also, the user positions need to be well staffed and well supported.
- It is important to have realistic estimates of initial staff requirements. When in doubt, it is better to have a large initial staff that can ensure good service at the start, than to encounter service problems and a lack of trained staff.

Innovative Partnerships: the National UI Information Technology Support Centre (ITSC)

- The ISTC in College Park, Maryland, offers a useful model to support the development and use of best practices in a devolution setting. The Centre was established by the Department of Labour, and represents an innovative partnership of federal, state and private sector participants. Each of the principal partners bring important expertise to the project:
  - the state of Maryland contributes state experience in UI initiatives;
  - the Mitre Corporation contributes program management and system engineering;
  - the Lockheed Martin Corporation contributes information systems methodology and laboratories; and,
  - the University of Maryland contributes training and the worldwide web.
- Many of the projects underway at the Centre will provide useful information regarding actual and potential use of new technologies and automation, including the areas of initial claims taking, UI appeals automation, expert systems, hire reports and electronic data interchange technology.
- To fully develop its potential, the engineering and operational expertise of ITSC is being supplemented by evaluative expertise (Mathematica Inc.).

Table 1: Summary of State UI Delivery Systems

Summary of State UI Delivery Systems

State	Information/ Inquiry System	Voice Response System	Scanning/ Imaging	Online	Auto-mated Appeals	Expert System	Payment System	Integration/ Co-location
Alabama	installing a VRS with inquiry capacity	installing a VRS for continued claims	continued claims; full-form scanning	initial claims and claim history	partial	for claims taking	central printing of cheques -- for UI and UI related benefits	some local offices currently combine UI and ES; applied for a grant to develop one-stop centres; data sharing between UI and ES

Alaska	planning a VRS; initial phase will be VRS for inquires about claim status; experimenting with self-search screens for ES	planned; starting with inquiries about claim status; will then expand to continued claims	using bar codes and light pens for continued claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	central printing of cheques -- for UI and UI related benefits	all local offices are combined UI and ES; common intake of data for UI and ES; planning more data sharing by 1996
Arizona+		no	initial claims	initial claims and claim history	yes			most local offices are combined UI and ES; some sharing of data
Arkansas	current focus is on mainframe conversion -- will consider new technologies once conversion is complete							all local offices are combined UI and ES
California+	VRS for inquiries	for inquiries		initial claims and claim history	no	uses Texas system for disaster assitance		virtually all local offices are combined UI and ES; some data sharing
Colorado	call centre has a line for inquiries	developing a VRS for inquiries and continued claims	continued claims	initial claims and claim history	developing a client/ server system to handle all aspects of appeals	no	centralized printing of cheques; also prints cheques for other programs	local UI offices were closed when UI operations became centralized; UI centre located in Denver
Connecticut	installing a VRS with inquiry capacity	installing a VRS for inquiries and continued claims	continued claims	initial claims and claims history		no	centralized printing of cheques --just UI	all local offices currently combine UI and ES; implementing one-stop career centres; some data sharing across certain programs

Delaware	no	for continued claims; considering VRS for initial claims	continued claims	initial claims and claims history	no	no	centralized printing of cheques -- centre also prints cheques for other unemploy-ment programs	all local offices combine UI and ES; can provide data to other agencies by batch or online
Florida	no; experimenting with kiosks for ES	for continued claims and claim status; planning to extend system to initial claims	for continued claims	initial claims and claims history	yes	being developed for adju-dication; uses Texas sytem for disaster assistance	centralized printing of cheques-- centre prints cheques for all Florida programs	increasing the number of local offices that combine UI and ES; 3 one-stop centres for employment -- eventually will add welfare
Georgia	VRS with inquiry capacity: experimenting with kiosks for ES	for continued claims and inquiries	VRS replaces scanning; some imaging	initial claims and claims history	yes	one application in employer liability area	centralized printing of cheques -- just UI	all local offices combine UI and ES; some data sharing
Hawaii+	no	no	initial and continued claims	initial claims and claims history	yes			some data sharing
Idaho	developing a VRS for inquiries; experimenting with kiosks for ES	developing a VRS for inquiries and continued claims	no	initial claims and claims history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques -- just UI	all local offices combine UI and ES; some sharing of data
Illinois	considering use of kiosks	no	scanning for initial and continued claims; considering imaging	initial claims and claims history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques -- centre also prints cheques for other unemploy-ment programs	all local offices combine UI and ES; front-line staff is cross-utilized; next phase calls for the integration of all ES and UI services; some sharing of data with other agencies

Indiana	experimenting with kiosks for ES; eventually will expand use to include information on UI and other programs	no	initial and continuing claims	initial claims	no	no	centralized printing of cheques -- just UI	all local offices combine UI and ES; implementing one-stop career centres; expanding common intake and capacity to share data
Iowa	VRS for claim status information; experimenting with kiosks for ES	for continued claims and claim status information	continued claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques; direct deposit for VRS claimants	all local offices combine UI and ES; implementing one-stop career centres; developing data sharing
Kansas	planning a VRS with inquiry capacity; used kiosks last summer to support disaster recovery	planned for inquiries and continued claims	no	initial claims and claim history	yes	conducted a demon-stration project; did not implement	central printing of cheques -- just UI	most local offices are combined UI and ES; some data sharing
Kentucky	considering VRS with inquiry capacity; experimenting with kiosks for ES	considering a VRS for inquiries and continued claims	looking at imaging	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques -- just UI	most local offices combine UI and ES; have exchange of information agreements with other agencies within state
Louisiana	no	no	for continued claims	initial claims and claim history	partial	uses Texas system for disaster assistance	centralized printing of cheques	almost all local offices combine UI and ES; pilot project for common intake of data
Maine+	experimenting with kiosks for ES	planned	planned	initial claims and claim history	yes	conducted a demonstration project	cheques; considering direct deposits	local offices combine UI and ES; some data sharing

Maryland	VRS has inquiry capacity; developing self-service terminals	for inquiries; setting up a VRS for initial and con-tinued claims; considering a VRS for initial claims	scanning initial and continued claims; converting to an imaging system within next year or two	initial claims and claim history	yes	being examined	cheques; consideringan electronic transfer system (but at least a year away)	most local offices combine UI and ES; implementing one-stop centres; data stored in state data centre; data can be viewed by staff involved in other programs
Mass.+	VRS probably has inquiry capacity; experimenting with kiosks for ES	yes	planned	initial claims and claim history	under-taking an extensive automation project	no	centralized printing of cheques	almost all local offices combine UI and ES; implementing one-stop career centres
Michigan+		no	planned	initial claims and claim history	no			all local offices combine UI and ES
Minnesota	VRS for inquiries; early testing of kiosks	for inquiries; starting to use VRS for con-tinued claims	scanning initial and continued claims; bar codes appear on forms and cheques	initial claims and claim history	no	tried some applications--but not being used for UI	mainly cheques; offers option of direct deposit	most local offices combine UI and ES; implementing one-stop career centres; ES/UI automation allows state programs to share common data base
Mississippi	experimenting with kiosks for ES	interested	installing scanners for continued claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques; centre also prints other cheques from same agency	some local offices combine UI and ES; some data sharing
Missouri+	VRS probably has inquiry capacity	yes	some	initial claims and claim history	yes	location of a demonstration project		all local offices combine UI and ES

Montana	VRS will have inquiry capacity; experimenting with kiosks for ES	implementing a VRS for inquiries and continued claims; developing a telephone call system for initial claims	no	initial claims and claim history	yes	no		all local offices combine UI and ES; some data sharing
Nebraska	planning to install VRS with inquiry capacity; some testing of kiosks for ES	planned for inquiries and continued claims	no	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	cheques	all full-service UI centres are combined UI and ES; most data sharing is with Job Service; welfare agencies have some access
Nevada+								most local offices combine UI and ES
New Hampshire	no	planned	no	initial claims and claim history	partial	no	cheques	local offices combine UI and ES
New Jersey	developing VRS with inquiry capacity; experimenting with kiosks for ES	developing VRS for inquiries and continued claims	continued claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques -- centre also prints cheques for disability insurance and certain other programs	most local offices combine UI and ES; centralized data processing with capacity for data sharing
New Mexico+		no	some	no	no			most local offices combine UI and ES
New York	VRS has inquiry capacity; testing kiosks for ES	for inquiries and continued claims	initial claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	cheques	most local offices combine UI and ES; moving to shared data

North Carolina	VRS provides claim status information; planning to extend system to general inquiries	for inquiries and continued claims	initial and continued claims; going to imaging	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques; centre also prints cheques for certain other programs	all local offices combine UI and ES; some sharing of data by batch and on line
North Dakota	introducing a VRS with inquiry capacity	installing a VRS for inquiries and continued claims	no	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques -- just UI	all local offices combine UI and ES; some data sharing; has common data base for ES and UI
Ohio	introducing a VRS; initial phase will be VRS for claim status and general information inquiries	introducing a VRS for inquiries and continued claims	scanning; looking at imaging	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques -- just UI	all local offices combine UI and ES; implementing one-stop career centres; some data sharing; looking to expand on-line access
Oklahoma+		planned	initial claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	cheques	all local offices combine UI and ES; some data sharing
Oregon	VRS provides claim status information; using about 120 kiosks for ES -- considering initial filing and continued filing of UI by kiosk	for inquiries and continued claims; considering a VRS for initial claims	initial and continued claims; testing imaging for continued claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	conducted a demon-stration project; not introduced	central printing of cheques -- just UI; has direct deposit system	all local offices combine UI and ES; sharing of files among major programs

Penns.	initial phase for VRS was general inquiries; phase II added capacity for inquiries about claim status; experimenting with multi-use kiosks that include UI information	planned for inquiries and continued claims	use bar codes on mail claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	tested a system for non-monetary determin-ations	centralized printing of cheques -- centre also prints cheques for certain other programs	most local offices combine UI and ES; some sharing of data; looking to go to common data base for UI and ES
Rhode Island	VRS has inquiry capacity; experimenting with kiosks for ES	for inquiries; planned for continued claims; considering a VRS for initial claims	no	initial claims and claim history	planned	used for disputed claims	centralized printing of cheques -- centre also prints cheques for certain other programs	local offices combine UI and ES; working on integrating several client tracking systems
South Carolina	experimenting with kiosks for ES	for continued claims	VRS replaces scanning	initial claims and claim history	partial	no	centralized printing of cheques -- centre also prints cheques for certain other programs	most local offices combine UI and ES; sharing of data across programs
South Dakota	no	implementing system for initial claims and re-opened claims	no	initial claims and claim histories	no	no	centralized printing of cheques -- centre also prints cheques for certain other programs	all local offices combine UI and ES; data shared with JTPA and social services
Tennessee	VRS provides claim status information	for inquiries and continued claims; interested in a VRS for initial claim	VRS replaces scanning	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques	almost all local offices combine UI and ES; some data sharing
Texas	installing a VRS with inquiry capacity	installing a VRS for continued claims	for initial and continued claims	initial claims and claim history	yes	did two demon-station projects; has developed an expert system for disaster assistance	cheques; interested in direct deposit	most local offices are combined UI and ES; implementing one-stop career centres; some data sharing

Utah	VRS has inquiry capacity	for inquiries and continued claims	cheques carry a bar code	initial claims and claim history	yes	no	centralized printing of cheques	all local offices combine UI and ES
Vermont	VRS has inquiry capacity; testing self-use terminals for ES	for inquiries and continued claims	no	for initial claims and claim history	yes --tracks appeals	no	cheques	all local offices are combined UI and ES; some data sharing
Virginia	VRS has inquiry capacity; experimenting with kiosks for ES	for inquiries and continued claims	no	for initial claims and claim histories	yes -- mailing out of decisions	no	cheques	almost all local offices are combined UI and ES; certain agencies can access data
Washington	VRS has inquiry capacity; experimenting with kiosks for ES	implementing system for inquiries and continued claims and claim status inquiries	for initial and probably for continued claims	for initial claims and claim historiesyes	yes	no	cheques	all local offices are combined UI and ES; some data sharing
West Virginia+	experimenting with kiosks for ES		some scanning; looking at imaging	for initial claims and claim histories				most local offices are combined UI and ES; some data sharing
Wisconsin	VRS has inquiry capacity; experimenting with self-service workstations for ES	for inquiries, continued claims and initial claims	some	for initial claims and claim histories	yes	no		implementing one-stop career centres
Wyoming+								all local offices and combined UI and ES

Notes:

ES Refers to Employment Services.

+ Indicates that some informationwas taken from a compendium prepared by the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies Inc. (ICESA). The compendium is dated October, 1993.

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