# Virtual IT, Inc.

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## Franklin County Government Rides the Wave of the Future

*Implementation of a strategic information technology plan allows county government to upgrade
IT systems to accommodate future technologies; eventually offer extensive online services.*

Roanoke, VA –

The citizens of Franklin County, Virginia can look forward to a brave new world of access to local government information and services, thanks to a comprehensive technology plan recently implemented by the county. The future portends online services such as electronic payments, access to real estate information, tax billing and more.

Rick Huff, Franklin County administrator, knew it was time to bring the county's IT infrastructure up to date. "Our system was experiencing trouble – it was crashing and locking up," he says. He credits the Board of Supervisors for understanding that innovations in IT were moving faster and faster, and that Franklin County needed to make an enormous financial investment in order to upgrade its system to offer the types of services demanded by 21st century communities.

Before spending any of the taxpayers' money however, Huff recognized the need to have a strategy. Huff engaged Virtual IT, Inc. to develop a strategic information technology plan to assess the state of the county's IT infrastructure and determine how to transform it to meet the county's current and future needs. "Doing the strategic IT plan helped us to identify what we needed to do to maximize our investment," he says.

Virtual IT, based in Roanoke, is an information technology consulting firm specializing in enterprise architecture, information security and business strategy. One of the firm's areas of specialization is working with local governments. Ranny Grubb, managing consultant for Virtual IT and former auditor for the state of Virginia, led the project. "Strategic IT planning is becoming a necessity as the complexity of technology increases," he says. "In fact, it is a business issue, not a technology issue."

Developing a strategic IT plan is a comprehensive multi-phase process. It begins with a detailed analysis of the baseline state of the IT system, using the Virtual-IT designed "Reference Architecture Model." The next phase identifies key issues of concern, along with recommended courses of action. The final phase is an extensive transition plan with clearly articulated system recommendations and explanations of financial impacts.

For Franklin County's IT director Sandie Terry and her staff, the strategic IT plan has resulted in a dramatic rise in productivity. "My two developers are not only doing their previous jobs," she says, "but they have taken on the roles of converting existing applications to newer technologies that will allow us to support e-government in the future."

The strategic IT plan enabled Rick Huff to move forward also. "It gave us a road map for stabilizing the system and established a goal for more efficiency from our technology," he says. Furthermore, he feels confident that the county has the infrastructure that will support continuously developing new technologies. Greater efficiencies, new services – the wave of the future for Franklin County.

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