

MS. SWIERENGA: Hello, everyone. I would like to welcome you to Michigan's World Usability Day. Thank you for being here today. The weather held up for us and it's been wonderful to see so many of you come out for this event. This is the fourth Michigan World Usability Day, the fourth World Usability Day in general, and our sixth conference here at the Usability and Accessibility Center.

World Usability Day is a rapidly growing international celebration. There's more than 40 countries involved today, 43 the last I heard, 170 cities, and it's expected that 50,000 participants will be doing some kind of event today. So it's kind of an exciting thing for Usability and Accessibility professionals to be involved and to have participated in this event. We join people in major cities like New York, and London, Hong Kong. There are some first-time events that are being held in Reunion Island (sic.), Pakistan, Estonia, Peru. So it's exciting to see how this is expanding.

It's also an honor to host the presentations here today and the workshops here this morning, to host this event at Michigan State. We've also had a number of other events, or two other events, as the overall World Usability Day is growing. I would like to just mention those since they are happening in the state. There's Chad Esselink from Ford and Tim Kiernan from Jackson National Life are up at Michigan Tech. presenting there.

And there's going to be an event this evening in Ann Arbor. And there are some people here today; I see Laurie Kantner from Tech. Ed., who will be presenting there for the Michigan Usability Professionals Association. It's going to be a roundtable of 15-minute presentations from a variety of companies on usability topics. So I'd really like to encourage you, if you haven't had enough this afternoon, to drive on over there this evening. I have details if you need them.

In the interest of time I'd like to just start introducing Ken Theis and then when he's finished I'll acknowledge our sponsors and do a little more welcoming. But I'd like to make sure that we get as much time from Ken Theis as we can. He must leave for an important meeting, commissioners meeting, and we know that he needs to be at that. So I'd like to just go ahead and introduce Mike—I mean Ken, Ken Theis, sorry. I'm so used to my assistant director Mike Elledge. Hi, Mike.

Ken Theis, he's the Chief Information Officer for the state of Michigan and the director of the Department of Information Technology. He and his agency of 1,700 employees are responsible for developing technology and making the services, getting them delivered to agencies across the state, and then the executive branch. He's also responsible for setting the strategic direction for state government technology

and insuring the timely delivery of agreed-upon IT services. He reports directly to Governor Granholm and serves as a cabinet member. He came to the state of Michigan from General Motors Corporation where he's held several key business and technology and leadership positions. He was recently named in the Premier 100 List by Computer World Magazine, placing him in Best of Class, and one of the ten top technology leaders in the country. Let's give Ken a warm welcome, and thank you for being here today.

MR. THEIS: Good afternoon, everybody. How are you guys? I am so glad to be here, and actually you can call me Mike, you can call me anything you want. I've been called worse. But I really am happy to be here today because of a couple reasons. One, I was at the Ohio State University a couple of weeks ago, and when they found out I was from East Lansing I wasn't—I'm not sure I'm going to get re-invited again. And then I noticed, looking at the meeting schedules in the hallway today, there's another meeting downstairs called "The Ugly Man On Campus." So I'm glad I'm not down there right now. But, really, I'm excited, and Sarah, thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

I have one of the best jobs that you can ever imagine. As the Chief Information Officer for the state, and looking at some of the complex issues that Michigan is dealing

with, especially with some of our economic and financial challenges that have been in front of us, we have a wonderful opportunity from an IT perspective to really fundamentally change and transform how government provide services to its citizens, to all of you, and to our businesses. And that's really what I want to talk about today, and how does usability come into that picture, because at the end of the day it's just not about throwing technology at processes and making us more efficient and more effective, but it's really doing it uniquely, doing it in a personalization way that really is in alignment to the priorities of that citizen or to those businesses. So I'm really excited to have the chance to talk to you a little bit about what we're doing on that front.

So, my key message is today, we're going to talk a little bit about some of our usability imperatives, some of the things that we're doing within state government, and where we're going, going towards the future, and then talking about re-defining information technology; how can we get technology to go from, you know, really from a Web perspective, really from static to transactions, but now to true, true interaction with citizens from a personalization and from a unique perspective. Talk about Michigan's roadmap. We have been on a very aggressive roadmap in transforming what IT does each day and day-in to support the ten million citizens that we have in this

great state of Michigan. Talk about our vision, where we're going from an organization and how transforming IT services and usability fits into that goal and those objectives. And then I really want to talk about how do we leverage IT because I think what's very unique are the opportunities that are in front of us, especially as government, because in most cases all of us deal with some levels of government. But at the end of the day do you really care if you're working with the City of Detroit or the State of Michigan, or Macomb County? You really don't care, right? For the most part, you're looking for specific services. So I think the opportunity for us to transcend IT services across traditional government boundaries is just an excellent opportunity for us to really streamline government services to our citizens and to our businesses.

So what are we doing? At the end of the day, if you take a look at our citizens within Michigan, one in five today in our state have some form of disability, and that's extremely important to recognize. It's also important to recognize the diversity of our citizens within the state. Our diversity trends are changing, are changing from, you know, whether it's changing from race, or gender, or age, are some critical factors that we need to remember. The bottom line is that we have 1.4 million citizens that are deaf or hard of hearing. We have 50,000 individuals that are legally blind. And we also face a

significant digital divide, which means it's not only just one thing to get that information to provide those services, but we also have to remember, right, there's still a large percentage of citizens out there today that don't have access, do not have access to the Internet. I know in a wonderful, beautiful facility like MSU, that's hard to believe, but unfortunately, it's true. When you take a look at it, Michigan actually trails behind the country as it relates to percentage of citizens that do not have access to some of these critical services via the Web. So we've got to look at these different initiatives and how do we go after putting those things together.

So the bottom line is this. Redefining IT usability, as we all know, in the IT world, is something that's typically overlooked. Or, if it's not overlooked, it comes way back in the back-end processes when we're about ready to go into production, if somebody says, hey, have we ever had anybody really look at this, and is there any, you know, are we really trying to hit the target. And that's a challenge I think all IT organizations have. I can tell you managing a very large IT organization in state government, supporting almost 4,000 critical applications; it's a day-to-day challenge. For us, it's about integrating usability as a standard, as a business requirement, and as building it into your methodologies. And that's a huge paradigm shift, especially for those of us who

have been programming out there for a number of years. And really, it's really been trying to raise the bar to everything that we're doing. And we'll talk specifically about kind of this migration.

Everybody remember when the Web came out?

Michigan.gov was introduced as our single portal in 2001. In 2001, what was the major focus? Content, right? Just get static content, right? We've got more static content than I-I don't even want to tell you how much static content we have, right? It went from that to, how do we provide online services, right? It was all about online services, right? Well, today we've got 300 separate, disparate online services, right? So if you want to renew your driver's license, you want to get a driver's plate, you want to pay your taxes, you want to pay your ticket that the strooper-tripper--trooper gave to you on I-96-- don't go there. I know this is a young crowd but be good. But the bottom line is, you can do that, but today, what happens? Those online services are all disparate and they're all over our Web in Michigan.gov. So you've got to go under the Secretary of State and you've got to go and say, hey, I want to get my driver's license, I want to, you know, pay that ticket, right, so I need to go under State Police and pay that ticket. It's all good stuff but at the end of the day how do we take it to the next step? How do we try to personalize it? Most of our

Web front-ends are typically reflective of our organizational structure, right? So you got a sales organization, you've got a services organization. And for us, we've got 19 state agencies, all the way from state troopers that pull you over to Lottery, right, that pays out big money every week - which, by the way is still our number one hit on Michigan.gov on a daily basis.

There's a lot of Michigan citizens looking to hit it big and not work anymore, I think. But the bottom line is, you know, we have to re-center and re-center our critical information around our users. And, believe it or not, government has citizens and has customers, and it's the ten million citizens out there, it's the 5,000 employers that we have in the organization. Those are our customers. So how can we do that and how can we bring that together, and we'll talk about that. And then we'll talk about transcending traditional boundaries, and that is - we talked about it a little bit earlier - I do business with the city, the township, the state, the county. At the end of the day we're citizens. We just want to do one interaction, and we'll talk about that.

So, at the end of the day, integrating usability as a standard. We talked about that. Obviously, again, we talked about Michigan.gov, going from static to online services, but really now taking it to the next step. Of the ten million citizens, none of us are alike, and all of us have different

interaction points with the organizations, specifically with Michigan government. So at the end of the day, how do we offer that personalization and that customization, yet trying to make sure that we can have an overall enterprise solution that we can realistically maintain. That's that sweet spot that we're consistently looking for. Obviously, usability testing with groups - MSU has an awesome usability lab. Sarah and her team have done a fantastic job. We've learned a lot. We copy things. Actually, in the IT sector we don't talk about stealing, we talk about knowledge re-use. So, we've learned a lot. Actually, I have a number of my team members that are in the room. The Department of Transportation, which I know is a theme for this conference, has really been a great leader within our organization in replicating some of the great things that MSU - I know Fidelity and a few other organizations are doing on a daily basis - and we're trying to use that. The good news is we've got it in one of our 19 application portfolios. Our goal moving forward, right, Chuck and Amy and folks, we're going to try to move this as an enterprise solution. So it's something that we're doing throughout our life cycle process, throughout our systems development life cycle process, and standardizing that process throughout the whole thing. Obviously, we've got our standards, standards look and feel, within our web development. That's important, right, because folks want to be

able to come through and understand how to navigate. How many folks have seen great Web sites, right, that's got so much content on that front page. You have no idea how to navigate through that, right? If you want some good examples, Michigan.gov has some really good examples of that as well, unfortunately. And then obviously we need to provide screen reader capability, screen magnification, you know, and those type of technologies. Whether you're using tools like JAWS and those type of things, but we need to make sure we're providing content and transactions and interacting with our citizens with different ways and different tools because we all have challenges. Whether we have disabilities or we don't have disabilities, we need to make sure we're meeting the needs of all of our citizens and not just some of our citizens. And the big issue for us is this: Putting this in our standard system development life cycle and trying to put that into place so that, again, it's not something that's an afterthought. Huge paradigm for folks that have been doing IT for a long time, right? Well, what do you mean? I've never even had to worry about it. Now, we've got them worrying about it but they're worrying about it too late in the game. Now, we've just got to move it up throughout the methodology life cycle.

The other thing is looking at redefining IT. We talked about a lot of different opportunities of how we try to

bring information technology together. I think information technology, we've all been taught, at least I was taught, you know, there's business processes and then there's IT, and IT supports business processes. Well, it's very cool what I've seen in the last 20 years where IT is today. It's very close of crossing that barrier, of almost in some ways looking at IT to transform my business processes. We're almost, in some cases, IT is actually transforming those business processes before the processes are redefined. And that's a very unique opportunity to not just pave the same old cow path. So, a lot of the things we're doing, right, working with Oakland County on an e-health application, right, it's a great opportunity to take state-of-the-art technology that's utilized in a local area and bringing it to the state and transforming it. But again, a lot of this is looking at how do we provide technology solutions that are meaningful to citizens. How many times do you look at something and you say, wow, that's really good data but I wish I had this other data. And Michigan Drive is probably one of the great examples. Michigan Drive is a tool that we put together, because we used to put out a lot of information, lane closures, construction, right? You could get all of this disparate information. But when you talk to citizens, what do you guys want to know before you jump out on I-96? Is it open? Yeah, exactly. You want to know, not only is there a construction

site on there, but is the traffic moving, right, and, you know, what are the estimates. And today, believe it or not, you can go on Michigan.gov and go to MI Drive. And if you're in downtown Detroit on the famous Lodge, right, do you guys ever do the Lodge on a Friday afternoon? Not good. But the bottom line is you can go to Michigan.gov and you can not only understand, hey, this is where all the construction is, but with the Intelligent Transportation System, you can actually get live video, live video that shows you, hey, not only is there a construction site, but it's backed up, and it's backed up for "X" amount of miles. That's putting data together in a way that it's usable to the end-user. You know what the biggest complaint is with MI Drive now? It's not statewide, right? We don't have all of those capabilities, especially with the video. The biggest issue is people want hand-helds, right? Why? Well, because they've got little tools like Google and a few other things where they've got it on hand-held. Wouldn't it be great sitting on the Lodge, or coming out of the parking garage, saying, do I take the Lodge or do I take 275 home, or 75 home, right? And have that at your palm tips. We've talked about, and this is actually one that is really quite hilarious. How many of you have gone fishing and a conservation officer comes up and wants to see your license? So what did we do? We actually developed a wireless application that can sit on your

Blackberry or PDA that you can actually get that fishing license while the conservation officer is walking up to you. But the real challenge is this: When we take a look at it, why do I bring that up, other than to make sure you're laughing after lunch, right? I bring that up because we're transforming services. The Web was about PC's. We get 38 million hits a month on our PC's, right? What's the biggest growth do you think we're seeing hitting our Web right now? Mobile, mobile devices. It doesn't seem like a lot, 330,000 page views from a mobile device on a regular basis. That actually is growing tremendously. So, again, it's looking at how is the information being used, how do people want to experience, how do they want to transact, interact with government services, and how do they want to get it. So, again, a lot of these things we're talking about are looking at the end-user, looking at how do they want to see the data. It's one thing to provide data; it's another to provide it into information, and turning that information into services. And that's what we're trying to do with a number of the key things we're putting together.

The issue is, it's around centering technology about the end-user. It's really in a lot of ways. We talked about this briefly. It's really almost ripping out what you've put in place before that most of our technology surrounds our organizational structures. But again, how many folks here, when

you ask for a permit, do you really care if it's the Department of Natural Resources or the Department of Environmental Quality? You don't care. Most people don't know, right? Because what we found out, we actually went to Michigan businesses, right, we've got about 50 businesses we've done some focus groups with, and at the end of the day most businesses today, when they interact with government, they have no idea what permits, what licenses, what applications they have to fill out at the state level, let alone the local level. So the challenge is for us is, how do we do that? How do we bring all these things together? How many of you bank online? Raise your hand. Awesome thing, isn't it? You've got to think banking online and ATM's, my life is good, right? I'm not sure I know what a bank looks like. But the bottom line is, when you go to Fifth Third Bank.com, you don't have to enter a different I.D. and password to get into their savings system. You don't have to enter another password to get into your checking system. They bring it all together and you can handle all of your interactions at one point. I think the financial industry has got it figured out. Why isn't government that way, right? At the end of the day, how many folks go to the Secretary of State's office? We all do. If you don't, you're in big trouble. But at the end of the day, how many times do you go a year? Once, twice? It all depends, right? Wouldn't it be great if you could do it all online and manage

your entire portfolio? How many of you, you know, you've got snowmobiles, you've trailers, you've got cars, you've got trucks, and depending on when you bought them you have your different stickers that come up, you've got your registration, your driver's license, and they all happen at different times of the year. Wouldn't it be great if you could come online and manage your entire portfolio? So you bring it up, Ken Theis, I've got a truck, I've got a SUV, I've a trailer, and I've got a snowmobile, and I can renew those online at one time. Well, the good news is that's coming, that's coming very quickly actually. But that's what I'm talking about. Most people want to personalize their relationship. Just like in businesses, what we found out in businesses, they came and told us, you know, we don't know what license is, permits, applications that need to be done. So what we're doing is developing a business portal that's going to go live in January. What this business portal is going to do is it's going to allow every Michigan business to come into this portal and really personalize their interactions with state government. So whether they've got to pay their quarterly taxes or get their commercial driver's license, or pay their unemployment insurance, or to get permits for building or expanding a current facility; whatever their interaction is, they're going to be able to interact one time, with one password, one I.D., and they're going to be able to manage their

account. So if they go ahead and apply for two permits and it says those permits should take two to three weeks, we're going to provide them a daily status update to that site that's going to say, yep, you submitted it three weeks ago and it should be either approved or denied within those same type of things. So when we take a look at usability we're looking at it from an end-user perspective, and looking at how does that individual, how does that business want to do their interactions, and providing them the flexibility. Doesn't sound like a big deal, but for businesses that we've sat down with, they have about fell over, and said, you've got to be kidding me, I can go to one place and ask the question, hey, I'm looking to expand, here's the four things you need to do, be able to do it all online and get all those back-end systems to actually talk to each other and integrate with each other? Now, that's transparency that we're looking for. And that's really what we're trying to do. When you do that, you're doing a couple of things. You're making and transforming services, but you're also modifying and adjusting business processes. And that's some of the hardest part is you've got to look at how we're operating today, because what happens is most businesses, when they set up a business, they have four to five permits and licenses they need. Those four to five permits and licenses are handled in different agencies so they all have different time

frames. Well, what we find out is, you've got to have license #2 done before you can even apply for license #3. And you look at that and say, from an end-user that doesn't make any sense, right? Why can't we just submit for all four of them right at the same time? And when you do that, you now take a process that happens sequentially and takes maybe five to six months to get permits done and now you're doing them, hopefully, in about a 30- to 45-day time frame. That's how you can impact how we interact with citizens. When you do that, it's about moving across traditional government boundaries. If you do that, and you do that for state government, well, that's great. Well, why can't we do that from locals? Why can't we do that from a county, from a city, and a township perspective? So that's really where we're going. And when you take a look at it from a business perspective, and you say, wow, that's really cool. Then the next question the governor asked me is, how fast can we do this for citizens? And it's right down the path. I didn't answer that question, just so you guys know. We've got to get the business one done first. But the issue is, wouldn't it be great, your interactions with government, wouldn't it be great, you could go to one place and customize that interaction for what's important to you.

So a little bit about DIT, the Department of Information Technology. To give you a little bit of background,

we are about 1,700 employees. We manage every piece of information technology for the state. Whether you get pulled over by the trooper that pulls up your record on their car before they give you the ticket, to the Lottery tickets, you know, that get out, that publish out, to the DNR campsites. You name it, we own it. About seven years ago we were 19 separate IT organizations. We have consolidated into an enterprise organization. The organization struggled with projects. We had multiple technology versions and uneven software - or security. Today, we have an overall strategic plan, and we're using technology the way technology needs to be used, strategically, in helping the governor and helping the cabinet and the legislature get done the things we need to get done. To give you an idea, in seven years we were able to reduce our IT costs by over a hundred million dollars. Today we manage about a 430 million dollar budget. So in about six years we were able to take out and reduce IT expenditure by 24 percent, taking and saving taxpayer money by one hundred million dollars. At the same time, not only growing in responsibility, about 15 percent new growth in our organization, but doing the stuff more efficiently, more effectively. Because when you do that, it makes us more agile, it makes us more of a strategic partner with the governor and her cabinet members versus a simple order-taker or just running the day-to-day operations.

A couple of the goals. Obviously, expand Michigan services to reach citizens and businesses anytime, anywhere. That fits into our whole usability framework and our overall strategies as it fits into that. And again, it's not just getting people out of line and in line, it's about trying to personalize that experience. Goal two is service, delivery-effective technology services. It's a great example. State government has a great asset. We have more data than you could ever imagine. The hard part about it is, how do I turn that data into information, and how do I turn information into services. So a great example: The Department of Education said, you know, we know there are thousands of kids out there that are eligible for free and reduced lunch programs. How do we get those kids and those families aware of this program? We went to the Department of Human Services that provides food stamps and we found out that if folks are on food stamps in Michigan, they are automatically eligible for free and reduced lunch program. So we took a bunch of data from the Department of Human Services food stamps, we compared it to the free and reduced lunch program, and we found 367,000 kids in Michigan that were eligible for free and reduced lunch programs and are now participating in that process. And that's the kind of cool things about an enterprise organization that's looking at, how

can I take this data, turn it into information, and ultimately improve our services to our citizens.

Goal three talks about IT management infrastructure. We've done a lot of consolidation and standardization around that. And obviously, one of our key, critical initiatives is providing a great workforce. The public sector, I think, has really struggled in training, developing, investing in its employees. So we are well down the path of really turning that model upside-down, and we're building a university of DIT, the Department of Information Technology, a virtual university, that's going to provide overall training, certification, and career path opportunities for all of our 1,700 employees.

Goal five: We talked about cross-boundary initiatives. The ability to have technology transcend across traditional government boundaries. We're all doing the same thing. Counties have servers, they have networks, they have data centers. The state, today, I've got 35,000 square feet of raised floor data centers. So why are we doing this? It's all public money. Isn't there better and more efficient ways that we can leverage technology? And technology today allows us to be able to do that.

And then goal six we take very seriously. Innovation and transformation; using technology to transform how government interacts with its citizens and provides its services.

So the bottom line is this: I think, you know, with all the issues and everything that is facing the state, you know, we're at a point where change is upon us. At the end of the day, we don't have the luxury, given the economic pressures, given all the financial issues that are facing us, you know, the budget issues that are facing us, to do what we've always done, is to take this opportunity and you can either lead it, you can get run over by it, or you can watch it happen, but to take this opportunity to transform, really government, through the use of technology. So you can either look at the slide and say, is it a plank, because when I do some of this presentation sometimes the people are like, oh, my God, it's so bad, he wants to change the world. So you can either look at it as a plank or you can look at it as a springboard. At the end of the day, state government, we're on our seventh or eighth year of really major budget challenges, and from what, you know, if you read the newspaper, it isn't going to get any better. For us, we think that can drive IT, and we're going to use it as an opportunity to really take a look at IT, but not IT for IT's sake. It's looking at the end-user, whether it's, you know, a citizen that's up in the U.P., whether it's a disabled veteran in Southeast Michigan, or whether it's a professional employee in Grand Rapids, but looking at their specific needs and how they interact with government, and using that as a starting point

versus the other way around. But the bottom line is, these are great times. As I said to my staff, a budget crisis is a terrible thing to waste. Sometimes in this country it takes a crisis for hard decisions to be made. And unfortunately, if we've had one in our lifetime, we probably are all facing it together today. So the opportunity is, how can we be a part of the solution? So my role and my employees' roles are really to try to look at technology and how we can better leverage technology, transcend government services to all of our citizens and businesses within this great state.

So that's it. Thank you.