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# iGovernment

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## Local governments get tech-savvy to go paperless

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The Maitland City Council met on July 25 with sleek new gadgets in their leadership arsenal: iPads.

Before the meeting began, some Council members joked about playing "Angry Birds," while others had trouble finding the documents they would need.

"I'm still learning," Mayor Howard Schieferdecker said. "I know the basics of it, but I'm not that well-versed on it yet."

Maitland purchased nine iPad 2s plus cases, wireless keyboards and other accessories, spending \$6,700. Schieferdecker said that the tablets would start paying for themselves after the first year of use.

Many cities in Central Florida are adopting the modern and sometimes-troublesome technology to end the ritual of printing several-hundred-page documents for each member at every meeting.

The city manager, assistant city manager, city clerk and IT department have iPads, as well. The tablets are used strictly for city business, keeping offi-

cials' calendars, contacts, notes, documents and more on one 10-inch, 600-gram machine.

Files are shared using Dropbox, an online file-sharing service that allows users to share files over the Internet without printing or even sending emails. Using the app iAnnotate, councilors can mark up and annotate PDFs.

Maitland Councilwoman Linda Frosch estimated that the city will save a tree and a half — every month.

### Winter Park leads

Winter Park commissioners received iPads about four months ago. The commissioners were previously issued laptops, which cost more and demand more skill. The tablets have not completely replaced laptops yet, but they save the city from printing thousands of pages a month.

"Fortunately, all of our commissioners are pretty technologically savvy," Communications Director Clarissa Howard said, "so they were able to

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## Some public officials resistant to going paperless

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adapt pretty well."

Winter Park's IT department and city management had recommended using iPads as part of the city's goal of creating a greener local government. The city also put all of their audio files and meeting minutes on its website to encourage citizens to go paperless too.

### Paper vs. screens

In Winter Springs, not all of the local government officials have adopted the iPad, but the city has gone paperless in the past year. Mayor Charles Lacey said that by using laptops and similar technology, the City Commission saves about 2,000 sheets of paper per meeting, depending on the meeting's content.

The process would have begun earlier, but some commissioners insisted on having paper copies of every item.

"As those commissioners left office, we were fortunate that the commissioners who came in were more receptive to electronic versions," Lacey said. "To me, it's just cost-saving and a convenience."

Lacey does not blame those commissioners who demanded paper copies. Sylvester Smith, Maitland's IT manager, said that some other cities in Florida, such as Deltona, passed on the opportunity to get iPads because they

preferred using paper.

"People are set in their ways and don't want to change, or they're intimidated by the technology," he said. But our council had no problem with it whatsoever."

### Cities transition

Winter Springs and Maitland also have a public terminal in City Hall where citizens have online access to local government documents.

"I think we've got a good, cheap system that wasn't difficult to do, and it's fairly easy," Lacey said.

Oviedo has been using web-based agendas on laptops for six years. The city's IT staff is looking into iPads, but because they do have laptops and have saved paper that way, it is not certain that they will adopt tablet computers.

Orlando is planning to move forward with plans to adopt iPads for its council, as most of their paperwork has been made available online. Only four of the seven councilors still get printed agenda books.

"You have to keep up with the rest of the world," Schieferdecker said, "and if you're way back here in the Dark Ages and everyone else is doing things so much faster, it'll cost you something in the future."