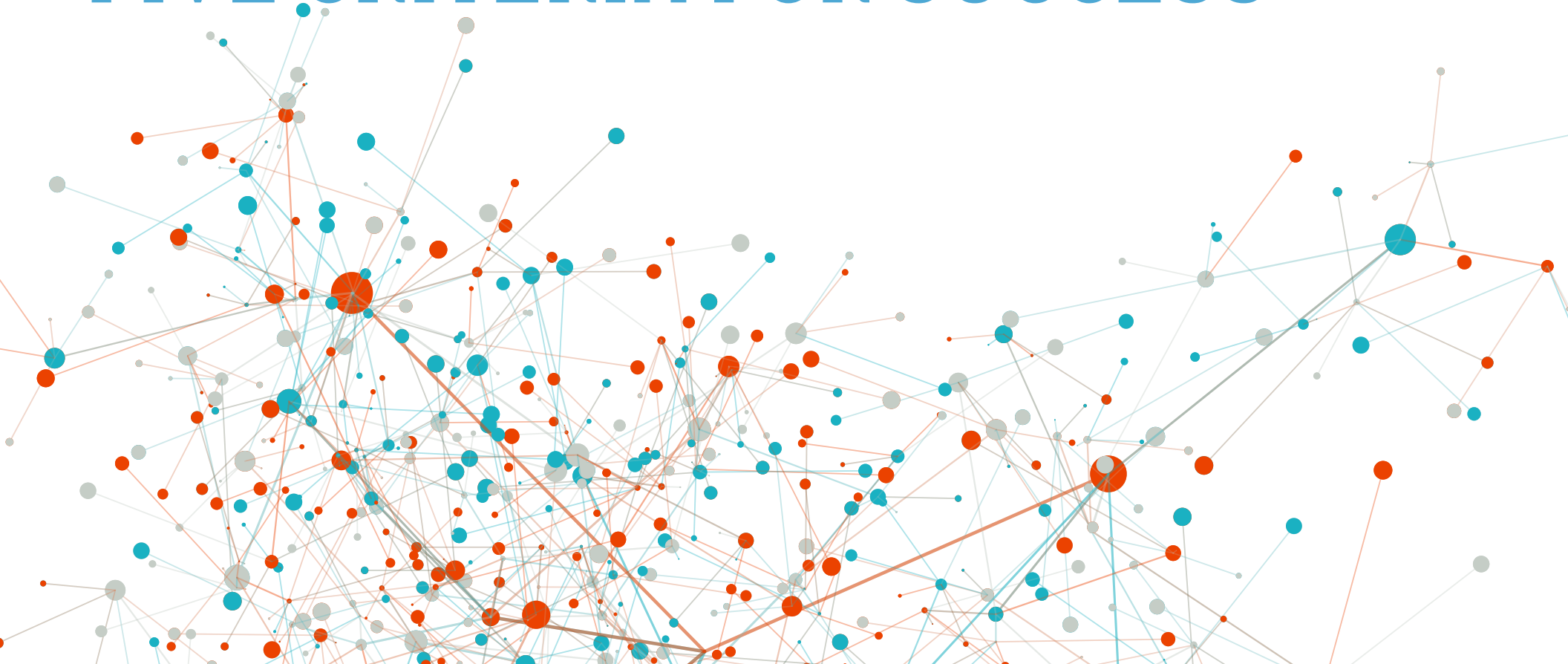


OVERCOMING THE DIGITAL DILEMMA

FIVE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS





Overcoming The Digital Dilemma: Five Criteria for Success

People today are constantly connected. The high-tech devices that enable us to communicate with people all over the world also communicate with each other, allowing for more personalized services at a higher level. Federal, state and local agencies, the Department of Defense and government contractors should be investing in this innovation, but too often they're stuck pouring resources into antiquated systems and software that are holding them back. The modern constituent wants a modern experience: online, available 24/7 and accessible by any device. To be successful, government organizations should be prepared to meet these needs. Without a new approach to IT, and the tech and strategies to support it, agencies will continue to miss the mark in constituent services.

The Digital Dilemma

The reasons to embark on a digital transformation are clear — legacy IT is dooming federal organizations. Some estimate¹ that the federal government is spending approximately 80% of its allotted IT budget for FY2017 on the operation and

maintenance of legacy systems. A 2015 GAO study² found more than 5,000 of the government's 7,000 IT investments spending all of their funds on such upkeep. Worse, the study also found that ratio has increased annually over the past seven fiscal years.

That is time and money not spent innovating and modernizing. It is difficult, if not impossible, to keep up with a constantly shifting digital landscape when the majority of your organization's IT efforts and budgets are spent maintaining old platforms and the outdated strategies that accompany them. It is possible to solve this challenge, however. The good news is that there is no need to reinvent the wheel — only to realign it. Luckily, there are organizations in the public sector that are solving the digital dilemma³ in a way that delivers innovation, aligns customer's expectations and transforms their legacy environment while eliminating the complexity, cost and the project risks they're facing.

Organizations are succeeding using a single, integrated platform that delivers multiple services that are innovative, open, fast, easy and trusted. These criteria offer government organizations useful metrics by which they

can evaluate potential platforms to support them along their digital transformation. By utilizing a single platform that adheres to each of these specifications, IT departments stand to better-serve their organizations.



Innovative: Evolve with Modern Technology

Real innovation used to take decades; today it can take just weeks or months. With new advancements in the cloud, mobile technology, social media, the internet of things and artificial intelligence, the digital landscape is constantly advancing. It is not enough to bring an organization's IT structures and strategies up to the modern day; they need to be able to respond to a rapid rate of change. Platforms should be able to consistently evolve with today's technology innovations, incorporate user feedback and provide automatic updates without breaking customizations.

Too often, a government agency's IT platform acts like a frozen moment in time — incapable of upgrading and unable to adapt or evolve to modern equipment, tactics and expectations without throwing off or breaking the whole system. Different devices may be running

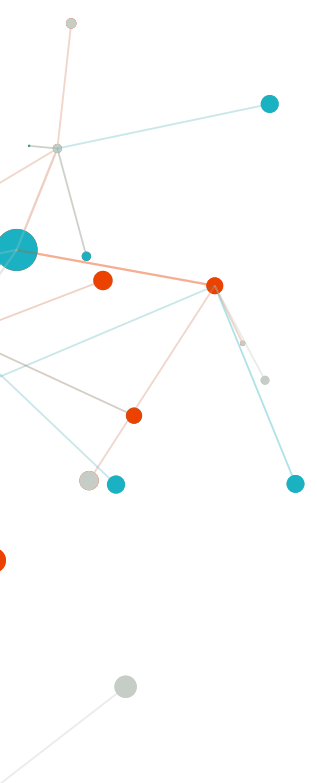
different versions of the same software. With restrained resources and a lack of technical expertise on staff, federal IT departments are forced to build on years-old apparatuses. Government agencies can no longer commit to old technology to fulfill their missions.

The consequences of inaction aren't just inconvenient; they have the potential to be dangerous. The inability to take advantage of new technology can mean an organization isn't utilizing the latest security tools, exposing it to attack. Hackers certainly aren't using old technology; government shouldn't be either.



Open: Connect Everything and Everyone

Many IT departments deal with data in dissimilar forms from a variety of different sources, both within and outside their walls. This can create silos within an organization, adding to overall costs and blocking efficiency while preventing productive collaboration among different departments. Ideally, all of these various data types should integrate together and provide employees and constituents alike with a full picture of the agency's capabilities.



A commitment to openness can aid an organization in numerous ways. First, it allows for all of an organization's diverse departments to have access to the same data so that they are all on the same page, and can make the most informed decisions. By ensuring that their platform is available on any device that employees, constituents and vendors may be working with, openness helps organizations be more transparent, building public trust. This type of open communication also widens the platform up to a broad ecosystem of solutions that can be shared and tweaked.

Finally, with open data organizations can get feedback from constituents and data centers in real-time, enabling them to measure progress, make more informed choices and quickly adapt to a changing environment. By utilizing a platform that is API focused, IT departments are able to better-ensure they can quickly create and employ solutions to complicated problems.



Fast: Keep Pace with Ever-Changing Business Requirements

In response to these challenges, any solution that will take years to effectively implement will only leave agencies with another outdated system, compounding the original problem. Additionally, there can be no interruption in services and operations; constituents will not wait months or years while new systems are installed.

The ability to be agile is also essential. An ideal platform should adjust with performance requirements without unnecessary hardware or software installs. As needs, priorities and budgets fluctuate, organizations need to be able to quickly scale their platform up and down as necessary. IT departments shouldn't be trapped in a platform that may have suited their needs at one time, but does not any more.

In most agencies, budget and staff time are already tight. Even with the savings that phasing out legacy IT structures would bring about, many IT departments can't afford the cost of developing a completely new system in-house, or the time it would take to learn a

completely custom solution. Ideal solutions should not require more investment — they should be ready to go from day one.



Easy: Configure with Clicks Instead of Code

When it comes to employee recruitment, government agencies simply aren't able to offer the salaries, perks and excitement of Silicon Valley. This puts agencies at a significant disadvantage in the world of IT, complicating not only the development of new solutions but also their implementation. Federal IT departments often do not have the time or resources to design and install a completely custom platform, and they can't spend their days finding and fixing unexpected bugs. Configurations must be able to be completed using clicks, not code.

Any new systems need to be easy to pick up and implement without years of computer science training. The government landscape often lead to quicker-than-usual turnaround rates, so new systems cannot depend on the organizational or technical knowledge of any one person in order to be successful. Ideally platforms should learn and adapt to an organization's processes over time,

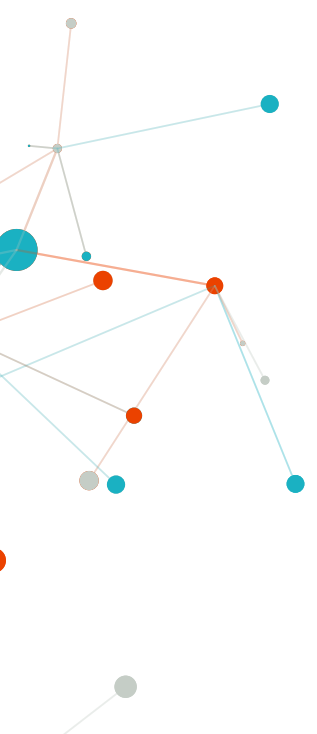
not the other way around. Better yet — by utilizing a platform designed and managed by an outside IT provider, government organizations can better focus their efforts and attention on their mission.



Trusted: Maintain Mission-Critical Security and Compliance

The stakes are much higher in government than in the private sector. Government agencies deal with a massive amount of personal data, and maintaining public trust is central to each government agency's mission. Under intense public scrutiny, the IT departments at government organizations need to know that whatever platform they invest in is going to work, and that the data they deal with will be secure. Governments need to continue to serve their constituents even while undergoing a transformation, and their overall budget cannot be threatened by potential failures.

Further, agencies must ensure that their IT department's data-collecting and -maintaining practices comply with strict federal, state and local guidelines. Keeping track of FedRAMP, DoD, IL/4, SOC, HIPPA and many more



compliance can be its own full-time position. Organizations that use a partner or off-the-shelf solution know that it is already compliant out of the box, and can avoid a whole layer of complexity that comes with building a custom system. Simply put, when undergoing such a massive change, organizations need to know what they're getting. There is no room for mistakes and no time for second chances.

Conclusion

In a constant effort to maximize the time-to-value ratio they receive from IT, organizations can no longer sit back and let their IT budgets be consumed by the complexity, inflexibility and expense of legacy systems. The public expects more from the governments that serve them, and federal agencies need to move into the modern era or face extinction. Such a drastic change must be carefully thought out, and should not be undertaken alone.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and any organization undergoing a digital transformation will need to evaluate its resources and priorities. Choosing the right platform, however, can alleviate much of this stress. By partnering with an IT provider it can trust to build, maintain and update a new platform, federal organizations can free up their IT department's time and budgets and then reinvest those resources back into their overall goals and mission.

Sources

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