

Building a Human-Centered Foundation for Advanced Analytics



In this Q&A, **Chuck Ellstrom**, vice president of sales for state and local government and education for Alteryx, discusses how organizations can transform

the way they conduct key business operations with solutions that democratize analytics, automate key processes and upskill existing resources.

What insights about government processes have emerged in the wake of recent upheavals?

COVID-19 and the public health crisis really highlighted the importance of data. Fast access to reliable data, along with analytics automation, has been fundamental to enabling state and local agencies to understand what is happening, plan their response with insight and accelerate service delivery. Unfortunately, some organizations found their legacy systems were not up to the task of automatically providing decision-makers with accurate, up-to-date data. In many cases, slow manual processes overwhelmed systems and jeopardized the delivery of key services.

How can organizations use data analytics, AI and ML to improve processes?

This starts with the capability to access data, verify the quality of the data and transform the data so it can be used in higher-level analytic processes. Without a unified ability to access, clean and prep data, AI and ML efforts stall. Organizations that build up their data analytic capabilities are more successful in applying predictive and prescriptive analytics, accelerating the use of AI and ML, and automating transaction-heavy processes using RPA.

What stages of maturity do organizations typically go through as they move toward true intelligent process automation?

There is no one-size-fits-all maturity road map, but organizations can achieve key milestones if they focus on building a strong analytics culture that will support their digital transformation and automation goals. These milestones include widening access to data and analytics and democratizing technology and automation with code-free building blocks, automating repetitive and complex analytic processes, scaling analytics across the organization and amplifying human output, and leveraging actionable insight to transform business outcomes and workforces.

What challenges typically stand in the way of progress within AI and ML programs?

Organizations often struggle to advance because of legacy processes. It's important to be open to new thinking and new methodologies to accelerate the maturation process. Many organizations also lack a solid grasp of their strengths and weaknesses regarding analytics. In addition, their processes may be hostage to old systems, data silos or poor alignment across enterprise teams. To address these issues, organizations often need to work first on breaking down traditional barriers between data scientists, IT, citizen data scientists, analysts and domain experts. One way to support this is via a unified, human-centered analytics platform. Such a platform augments human capability regardless of one's technical acumen, which allows everyone to take advantage of geospatial, predictive and ML-based

analytic capabilities to collaborate, innovate and solve problems.

What tools and strategies can ease the way for AI and ML programs?

One key principle in the responsible AI framework is keeping humans in the loop, incorporating human judgment and accountability. Since the deployment of AI, there has been a significant delineation between "black-box" and "clear-box" AI. While AI and ML can be trained to perform many tasks without humans, these systems often operate in a black-box fashion, leaving it unclear as to how these machine-based decisions are made. By contrast, the leading unified analytics platforms provide clear-box insight into the results ML models are producing and how they're arriving at those results.

What types of use cases are emerging? Where can organizations get quick wins?

Any government business process that relies on data can benefit from greater levels of analytics automation through a unified platform. Finance teams can automate the manual preparation and blend process related to building pivot tables for spreadsheet analysis. Unemployment and benefits programs can quickly build AI and ML processes to ingest massive volumes of data; process this data with RPA; and use analytics automation to connect key business processes, verify enrollment eligibility, process payments and more. Counties can automate the analysis of COVID testing data for tens of thousands of tests to quickly verify that incoming data is complete and structured correctly. The use cases are practically endless.

alteryx

Make

Breakthroughs

**That
Matter**



Drive mission-critical
decisions with
analytics automation

[Learn More](#)