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HOW TO EASE THE BURDEN OF LEGACY SYSTEMS

An enterprise approach to cloud provides three key efficiencies that free up resources for modernization.

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ENTERPRISE SERVICE delivery in government agencies lags behind the consumer technology world. Just look at the experience of getting a ride in a car, or booking a flight or hotel room. Uber notifies you what car will arrive, when, driven by whom, and then charges according to your preferences. Your favorite airline or hotel pushes information to you about your reservation. 2016 holds great promise for federal agencies when it comes to bridging the gap between the consumer world and the enterprise. And cloud computing is the key to making that happen. The chasm of expectation versus reality is no longer acceptable.

While agencies are under pressure to modernize the user experience and roll out new services, they also face a stark reality. The government's IT budget is nearly $80 billion, three-quarters of which is spent on operating and maintaining current systems. They can't make the shift to the cloud while burdened with the expense and time of managing legacy systems.

Moving to cloud computing is essential. As FITARA pushes agencies to modernize their approach to IT, enterprise-class cloud computing provides three key capabilities that can help deliver these greater efficiencies:

1. Efficient Infrastructure Management: Instead of focusing on managing infrastructure, applications and networks, agency executives can focus on delivering a modern, commercial-grade user experience. They can deliver information when it's needed within the appropriate context. Enterprise-class cloud service providers can help deliver previously unobtainable levels of visibility, security and accountability.

It's important to note this service model can't rely on the traditional cloud computing architecture of most consumer-facing apps. Enterprise-class apps require an enterprise-level cloud infrastructure to provide unprecedented high availability and performance. If a consumer cloud-based app such as Facebook goes down for a few hours, it's a mere inconvenience. However, it's unacceptable to lose an enterprise service delivering business critical capabilities, even if only briefly. The enterprise cloud provides 24/7 availability with no downtimes or outages, protects confidential information, and unifies multiple departments through a common service model.

2. Compelling User Experience: Federal agencies can duplicate the consumer-level user experience because the enterprise cloud provides the same ease of automation, workflow portals, presence and device awareness that define the consumer world. Automated notifications become part of that user experience.

3. "Service Awareness" to Connect All Divisions: The enterprise cloud's platform orientation moves agencies away from siloed departments (such as HR, finance, facilities, IT) with distinct processes and systems. Now an enterprise-wide service delivery model can coordinate workflows across all departments while providing each with the visibility and control it requires.

Government agency executives should consider moving from a traditional IT infrastructure to the enterprise cloud. Doing so will help them create a simpler and better user experience, while also relieving them of maintaining systems and apps in the datacenter.

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