

Why cloud is the best **path** for modernization

Cloud technology enables the cybersecurity, collaboration and advanced analytic services that are essential to mission effectiveness, innovation and success



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Through IT modernization, agencies can boost their ability to be innovative while also leveraging the latest cybersecurity tools. The best path for achieving that level of innovation and security is through the cloud.

When the Biden administration issued the Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity in 2021, it was a bold step in recognizing that cybersecurity is a national priority and providing concrete recommendations for change. The order seeks to address how agencies can modernize IT and establish technical capabilities that enable them to be more proactive in dealing with cyberthreats.

Cloud has a key role to play in those efforts. There is widespread agreement that the agility, resiliency and security tools necessary for government missions are best presented in cloud environments, and cloud platforms provide the best destinations for these requirements in modern applications.

New ways of working and solving problems

Collaboration is another area where cloud technology shines. The digital transformation that was forced on us during the pandemic has exposed people to new ways of working and solving problems. In Microsoft's 2021 Work Trend Index, we identified a paradox: More than 70% of people who responded to the survey said they wanted flexible remote work options to continue, yet more than 65% wanted in-person work and close collaboration to expand.

Accommodating demands to boost engagement while enabling remote collaboration is a complex challenge. At Microsoft, we think about collaboration as an operating model of people, places and processes, and we're developing capabilities based on the recognition that each dimension has its own nuances, strengths and weaknesses. For example, when cloud technology is combined with the zero trust-based security approach required by the executive order, it facilitates

collaboration among government employees by granting access and participation based on identity, physical location and/or the device they're using.

In addition, cloud platforms enable agencies to work on complex problems that ingest data from a variety of sources and directly integrate with agency IT systems. With data ingestion becoming increasingly complex in velocity, variety and volume, data cataloging is an important component of agencies' data strategies. To develop a culture of making data-driven decisions, agencies need data that is cataloged, discoverable and tagged appropriately for its sensitivity and security classification.

It's extremely difficult to perform those activities on-premises with the same speed, agility and scale that cloud technology provides — not to mention the advanced analytical capabilities that exist in cloud platforms to derive insights using machine learning and artificial intelligence.

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Keeping pace with commercial innovation

Government agencies must continue to improve their underlying IT platforms in a way that keeps pace with commercial innovation, whether it's providing a citizen experience that matches the consumer experience or whether it's maintaining information dominance in terms of national security. Cloud-based platforms provide an accelerated path to innovation. On-premises systems simply

cannot keep up with the demands of citizens, national security or the rest of the world.

At Microsoft, we recognize that agencies are pursuing multi-cloud and hybrid strategies, and we are investing to make sure that Microsoft's cloud platform provides best-in-breed capabilities that are interoperable across the other cloud platforms that agencies use. In addition to interoperability, we are focused on providing market-leading solutions

in data cataloging and management, productivity and remote collaboration, and cybersecurity.

The cloud is an ecosystem as much as it is a platform, and we want to make sure it supports government employees and citizens wherever they are and wherever their missions may take them. ■

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