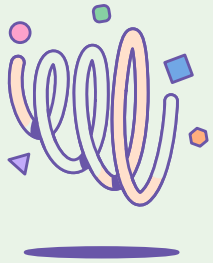
tines

Is your agency prepared for AI agents?



Agentic AI is no longer theoretical. In just the past six months, **search traffic** around "agentic AI" has skyrocketed, particularly in the D.C. area, highlighting interest in what it is and what it can do.

For federal agencies specifically, agentic AI is fast emerging as one of the most powerful new tools in government, from contributing to zero trust and national security strategies to mission critical enablement and delivery of services to the public.

Defense experts, for example, have been recommending the Department of Defense "aggressively begin experimenting with agentic AI tools." And earlier this year, the Department of Homeland Security released its **DHS Gen AI Public Sector Playbook,** sharing lessons learned from the agency's AI pilot programs to help other public sector organizations build a strong foundation for effective Gen AI.

As with the deployment of any AI solution, agencies must focus on developing thoughtful, practical use cases that will provide maximum benefit. Moreover, according to requirements laid out in Executive Order 13960 and OMB Memo M-24-10, agencies must inventory and document their use cases to share with other agencies and the public, in the interest of transparency, collaboration and public benefit. But how do agencies take agentic AI from requirements and regulations to action?

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Eoin Hinchy,
Chief Executive Officer,
Tines

What can AI agents actually do?

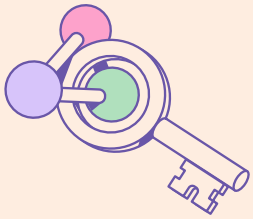
To cut through the hype, Eoin Hinchy, CEO of Tines said, "Agents are a new, exciting type of automation – simple as that." That does not lessen the value or potential of agentic AI, but rather provides assurance that agentic AI builds upon the success and advancements of large language models over the previous few years. In other words: agencies have a foundation to build agentic AI capabilities. "This opens up an entirely new class of use cases, the ones traditional automation could never touch," Hinchy said.

Deterministic workflows of previous automation solutions require structured data as a prerequisite. Agentic AI workflows, in contrast, are purpose-built to access and work with unstructured data. Moreover, agentic AI is accessible regardless of skill sets.

"The barrier to entry is dramatically lower. You don't need to code or even master a no-code tool," Hinchy explained. "With agents, all you need to do is describe in natural language what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it."

This flexibility is a major bonus for agencies that don't necessarily have a deep bench of coding or data science expertise.

As the government workforce has been consolidated and restructured in recent months, new technology solutions that are both highly sophisticated and accessible are critical. Even expert coders see benefits from removing lower level tasks off their plates, enabling them to focus on more advanced or complex work.



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Responsible agentic AI implementation

From a technology perspective, Hinchy said, agencies are well-positioned to implement AI agents, particularly if they already have a foundation of AI and automation capabilities in place. When it comes to governance, however, Hinchy underscored the importance of prioritizing security and privacy, especially when implementing industry tools.

"Most agencies won't build their own models. They'll rely on commercial tools. And it's not always clear how those tools are built, trained, or secured," he said. "If you're sharing your data with third-party providers, how is that data being treated?"

As a result, responsible implementation will not be as simple as the flick of a switch. Agencies need to take their time to test, observe, and build guardrails, because AI agents carry bigger risks than most technologies.

"If you're deploying a new HR system or a new finance system, the blast radius of something going wrong there can be well understood and contained," Hinchy said. "But the potential scope of error and impact of an AI agent going wrong is almost infinite. They have access to all your tools and are still brand new technologies, only about 12 to 18 months old."

In government, where the stakes are already high and security breaches can threaten the safety of the entire nation, it's even more crucial that implementation be thoughtful and responsible.

Hinchy highlighted a checklist to help guide government technologists as they initiate agentic AI roadmaps:

→ **Define your end goal** – what are you trying to achieve? Every project should begin with clearly defined success criteria.

→ **Develop a deep understanding** of what agents are good at and what they're not. They're a promising new tool, but they are not a panacea.

→ **Establish security and privacy guardrails:**

- Where is the model coming from?
- What access does it have to our data and tools?
- What controls are we providing between agents and tools?
- How do we prevent hallucinations?

Integrating AI agents in the workflow toolbox

Tines helps agencies bring it all together through their intelligent workflow platform that offers full spectrum automation – not just agentic, but human-led and deterministic as well.

"We allow agencies to decide which tool is right for the job that's trying to be achieved and we enable them to move seamlessly between workflows, or between tools in the same workflow," Hinchy said. "Then we provide strong security and privacy fundamentals. Security is in our DNA, and we've worked with the world's leading security teams to help them address their most important workflows."

This means Tines has developed a comprehensive understanding of what is required from a security perspective for mission-critical workflows and is prepared to work with agencies to move forward in a secure and compliant way, keeping frameworks like CMMC 2.0 at the forefront.

Ultimately, AI agents will be another tool in the automation toolbox for agencies, subject to all of the same standards and precautions. It's the third piece of a three-pronged automation strategy – until the next big development rolls out. And rather than three separate approaches, consider them more like a Venn diagram.

1. Human-led automation

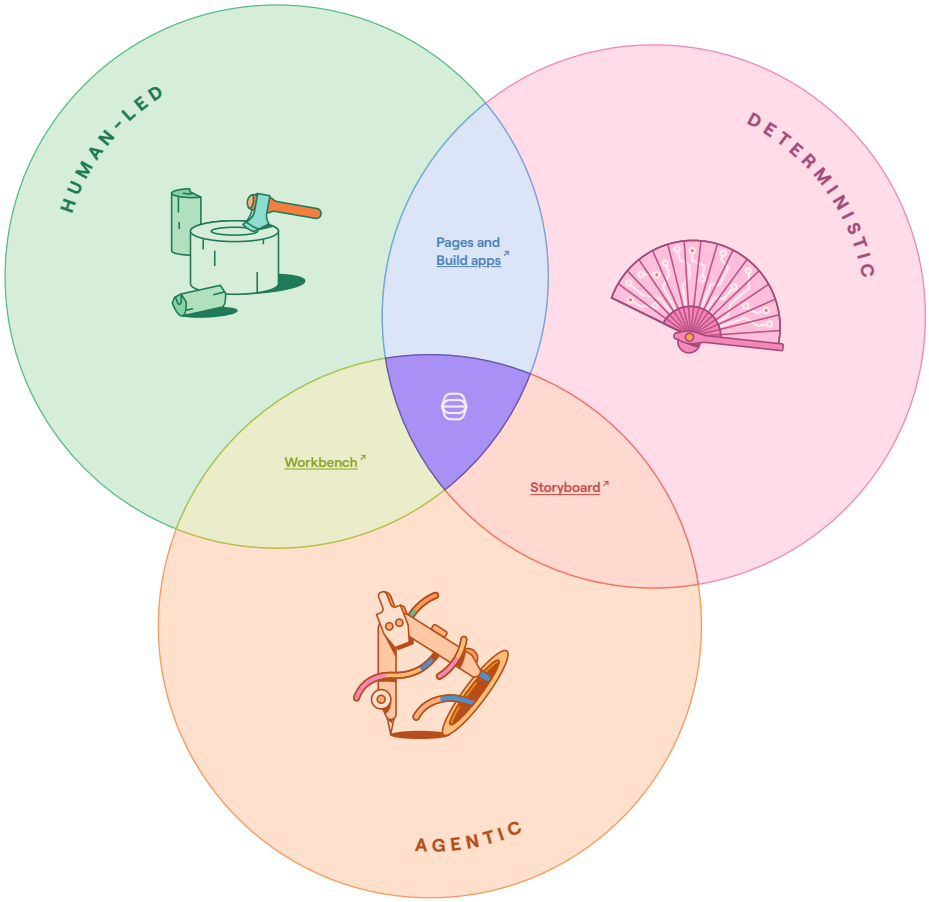
A person is driving the automation, for example, taking data, copying it into another tool, observing the results and making decisions. It requires good judgment and expertise in context and risk.

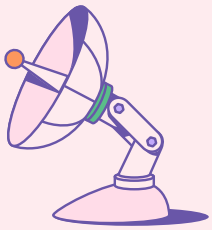
2. Deterministic automation

Applying a series of instructions through code or a no-code tool such as Tines' workflow builder. A powerful solution for high-volume, mission-critical use cases requiring predictability and compliance.

3. AI agents

Ideal for use cases involving ambiguity, flexibility and accessibility for people who may not have complex technical skills.





"The most important thing to note is it's often not one or another. You'll have use cases where you need to blend two or all three, and the magic really happens when you begin to blend," Hinchy said. **"The intelligence of LLMs today can already make people's jobs more impactful and joyful** – just imagine what we'll unlock if they get even smarter."

→ **Learn more** about how Tines can help your agency unlock the power of automation.