



Maintaining productivity in times of crisis

Better asset management and digitized workflows are essential to a seamless customer experience



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BUYING AND DEPLOYING new technology at a time of crisis is far from ideal. Still, many agencies found themselves in that position as employees and government operations shifted to telework during the coronavirus pandemic.

As a former government CIO, I understand the challenges our clients had to tackle to keep things running during the crisis. The disease outbreak and subsequent lockdown exposed some severe gaps in government preparedness.

A well-managed organization understands its data, workflows, resources and networks. It knows how services are provided, who and where the employees are, and who the contractors are. And it understands the importance of proper IT operations management. When disaster strikes, those organizations are better prepared to make the adjustments that are necessary to continue providing customer service and support their employees' needs so they can operate as though nothing has changed.

Keeping employees energized and engaged

During a crisis, people need the services that agencies at all levels of government provide. But employees cannot deliver good citizen experiences if they can't access the network or any of the resources they need to perform their work. They won't feel engaged, and that will affect the way they interact with citizens.

Agencies must be ready to serve customers under any circumstances.

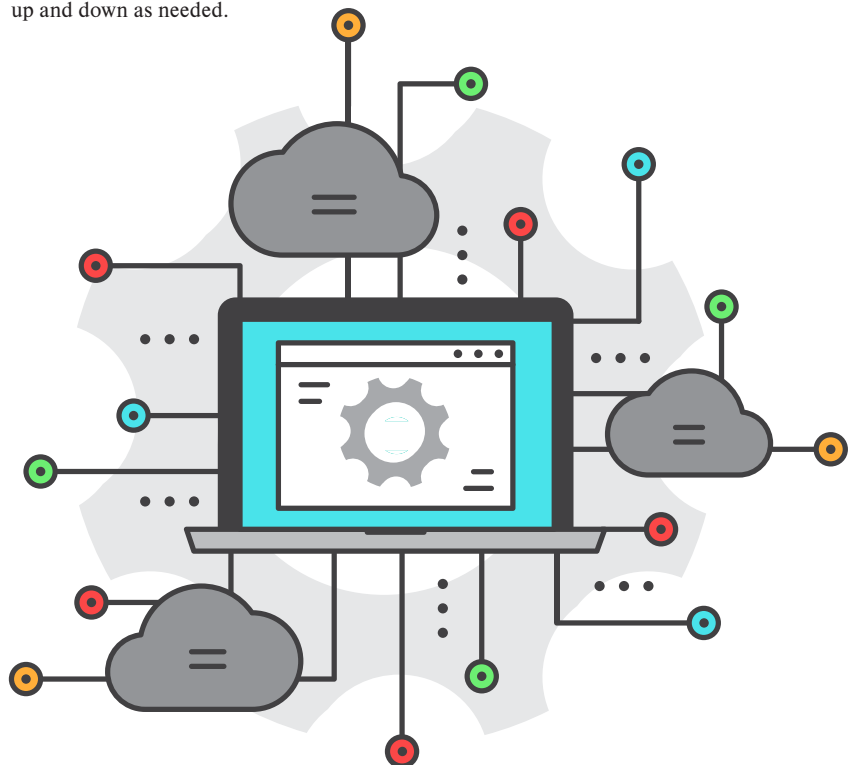
It's important to digitize office workflows ahead of time so that those processes can seamlessly transition to telework environments when a crisis hits. During such disruptions, IT leaders need to know how many software licenses they have for videoconferencing, VPNs and other remote tools. They must be able to get laptops to the employees who need them and have a plan for servicing those computers if something goes wrong. They also need to keep all the agency's other activities functioning, such as human resources.

Software asset management can help agencies respond to crises by optimizing the purchase and maintenance of all those tools and by allowing agencies to scale resources up and down as needed.

Creative solutions to unusual situations

Some customers might not prefer to interact with agencies online, but when government offices are forced to close, they suddenly have no alternative. In those situations, agency employees must be prepared to walk somebody through a process that they typically handle face to face.

For example, when state offices were closed to limit the spread of the coronavirus, Tennessee officials faced the challenge of getting emergency benefits to children and families under the federally sponsored Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Signing up for those benefits requires an in-person





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interview and identity verification. Officials could not do face-to-face interviews or rely on clients having access to video capabilities at home, so they decided to integrate the ServiceNow platform they were already using with trusted online identity verification systems.

That creative approach demonstrates that the government can continue to function

and perform important activities even under unusual circumstances. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the relevance of the concepts in the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act, such as offering online forms that are easy to fill out and sign digitally. IDEA’s core tenets can improve the government’s response to future crises and make a significant difference when agency employees have to rely on alternate means to

serve government customers.

The next disaster might not be a pandemic. It could be a more localized disruption, such as a natural disaster. But when it happens, we all need to be better prepared. ■

Jonathan Alboum is the principal digital strategist for the federal government at ServiceNow.



Maintain productivity in times of crisis

Your government agency is on a mission to provide a seamless user experience, engage employees, and optimize resources for crisis management.

ServiceNow is committed to helping you manage the unique, rapidly evolving challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic. Our digital workflows simplify complexity, so you can focus on what matters most.

Put technology to work during a crisis with workflow apps and resources to accelerate your response.

Learn more at www.servicenow.com/crisisresponse

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