

Choosing the right path to the cloud

Agencies need both a vision and a plan for using cloud technology to meet security and service demands

SUCCESSFUL CLOUD ADOPTION is about establishing where you are and systematically moving toward a measurable target. And that target must be grounded in a solid understanding of current and evolving mission needs and the state of available, mature market offerings.

IT leaders can start by recognizing that for the foreseeable future, they must build and effectively manage a hybrid model that is capable of operating in both the traditional IT environment, which emphasizes safety and efficiency, and in

the emerging agile IT model, which can provide the necessary innovation, speed and flexibility to deliver new and improved services.

To determine which services are best supported by each model, leaders should take a top-down, mission-capability view of their system portfolios. Then they should choose the best path to modernization based on business and workload needs. For example, cloud-based software as a service (SaaS) is ideal for systems that demand innovation and differentiation, while application platform as a service (aPaaS) or



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infrastructure as a service (IaaS) can help meet the need for stronger infrastructure.

Creating a secure, collaborative environment

Different models also require different levels of security involvement. Agencies have much more responsibility for IaaS security controls, for example, because they must continue to patch, monitor and secure everything above the hypervisor, such as operating systems, app platforms, middleware and databases. In fact, the Equifax data breach happened because an Apache Struts patch had not been applied, and hackers exploited the vulnerability via an IaaS system.

The biggest risk is that agencies will not secure the applications hosted on an IaaS system because they assume the provider is responsible for all security controls. In contrast, aPaaS and SaaS alleviate more of the pressure on agencies by providing security controls farther up the technology stack.

In addition, employee collaboration and productivity are a measure of how well technology fits an organization's operating environment. If custom systems are developed in silos across an IaaS or platform-as-a-service environment, for example, collaboration and productivity might not be improved at all. SaaS and aPaaS, by contrast, can be configured to meet the requirements of each unique part of an agency's mission while ensuring that the employee experience and processes are integrated.

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Delivering modern citizen services

Similarly, citizen expectations for service availability and quality are rapidly evolving because of the way people interact with service providers outside government, which means being able to access services when and where they want via the web,

mobile devices, social media, texting, chats and bots. Unfortunately, the systems on which the government currently relies cannot evolve quickly enough to meet those expectations – or support the innovation necessary to respond to new challenges.

Therefore, the biggest opportunity for cost savings and mission impact is to consolidate citizen engagement, mission service and employee productivity activities

with the help of cloud technology. Then the government can ensure that its workforce is collaborative, productive and ready to deliver public services that will meet the expectations of current and future generations. ■

Kevin Paschuck is senior vice president and chief operating officer of the Public Sector Business Unit at Salesforce.

The graphic features the Salesforce logo in a cloud shape at the top left. Below it, the text reads "CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATH TO THE CLOUD" in large, bold, white letters, with "TO THE" in smaller letters between two sets of diagonal lines. Underneath, it says "Choose Salesforce." To the right, three circular icons are connected by a white line: a speedometer for "SPEED", a lightbulb for "INNOVATION", and two curved arrows for "FLEXIBILITY". At the bottom, a URL is provided: "Learn more at: carahsoft.com/innovation/IIG-cloud-adoption/salesforce".