

REVOLUTIONIZE CITIZEN SERVICE

Cloud technology helps agencies connect with the public in new and powerful ways.



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CLOUD-BASED DATA and workflows give citizens and agencies access to the right data at the right time regardless of location or device. That's something not typically associated with government interactions of the past. Although it might not seem revolutionary compared to what Amazon and Netflix can do, people are enjoying the benefits of agencies' adoption of cloud technology in the form of quicker and more personal interactions.

By investing in cost-effective cloud solutions they can quickly deploy, agencies can save taxpayer money while providing more modern and digital ways to interact with the public. The technology can also improve agencies' ability to make smarter decisions in real time, thereby fostering even stronger relationships with citizens.

After all, people expect government agencies to offer the same user experience they enjoy in every other part of their lives. Waiting in line for two hours to apply for government benefits is unacceptable in today's world. Colorado, for example, recently moved its integrated eligibility assessments for government benefits to the cloud, which helps serve its citizens in a more efficient, satisfying way.

Cloud technology also helps agencies do more with less by offloading IT maintenance and operations to the cloud. Now they can focus more of their limited resources on functionality that reaches citizens instead of simply ensuring that the hardware works. And regardless of where the data resides or how ready an agency is to modernize, implementing a cloud-based reporting tool can give government leaders a holistic view of their world and the insight to make mission-critical decisions based on all the relevant information.

To find a trustworthy cloud provider, agencies should look for companies with security packages that reflect completion of the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program's Security Assessment Framework. The provider should also

make publicly available information on security, availability and performance status.

The cloud has a slightly different operating model from on-premises technology, which requires a greater understanding of total cost of ownership. Focusing on reducing an agency's TCO across all IT spending will highlight the efficiencies that cloud computing can bring. Not focusing on agency-wide TCO reduction, however, can cause the same problems with cloud adoption that agencies have had with legacy on-premises technology.

Therefore, before even looking for a cloud provider that is aligned with their priorities and objectives, agencies should consider the following questions:

- ▶ Do we understand the TCO for our proposed set of IT requirements?
- ▶ Do we understand the mission-critical requirements for each application?
- ▶ Was our current set of requirements based on the capability of our existing technology, or did we identify what we needed to succeed regardless of what we thought the technology was capable of?
- ▶ Do we have employees with cloud-based skill sets?

BlackBerry devices, legacy PCs and on-premises software from the 1990s are also hurting the ability of agencies to recruit the best and brightest prospective employees—especially millennials. They are used to having access to the latest technology and mobile-first conveniences.

So instead of worrying about what might or might not have been possible in the past, agencies should identify their ideal mission-critical requirements and wrap cloud technology around them. Officials should also understand any compliance mandates before making purchasing decisions. Cloud technology can often help agencies meet legislative requirements.

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