



# Cloud and the customer experience

Advances in cloud security are boosting the public's willingness to interact with agencies online



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**A**S CLOUD-BASED TECHNOLOGIES evolve, the government continues to take steps to ensure that agencies can securely deliver and manage applications and citizen interactions in the cloud. With the support of FedRAMP and the Trusted Internet Connections program, agencies are starting to realize that, in some instances, the cloud may be more secure than their own on-premises environments.

Ensuring that personal data is protected and secure is essential to agencies' efforts to modernize the customer experience. Furthermore, the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (IDEA) allows

agencies to shift their priorities to focus on offering a customer experience that mirrors what commercial entities offer.

## Designing with the end user in mind

The emphasis on user-centered design is changing the way applications are created. In the past, many government applications were built from the perspective of the agency rather than from the perspective of the end user.

The flexible, innovative nature of cloud technology makes it easier for agencies to improve the efficacy of their applications and what they ultimately deliver. In addition, cloud technologies can help agencies start getting a 360-degree view of how they interact with citizens, business partners and other agencies and even begin personalizing those experiences.

In addition, software that manages, authenticates and verifies people's credentials can ensure privacy while streamlining the customer experience. IDEA codifies the use of secure credentials across platforms and therefore will accelerate the use of trusted credentials in multiple environments so that people will be even more willing to conduct online transactions with the government.

## Future-proofing IT systems

There are many other technologies than can ease the transition to improved digital services in the cloud. As agencies make investments in their IT infrastructures, they should aim for building a system that helps them take advantage of all that the cloud has to offer.

Leading with an open-source, open-API approach allows agencies to avoid being locked into proprietary architectures and software. It helps them future-proof their systems by giving them the ability to incorporate new technologies as they are developed. For example, open-source software like Drupal allows agencies to add automation and machine learning to their cloud-based systems, which further ensures the flexibility, scalability and security of those systems.

The government needs to be able to adopt the latest technologies while protecting users' privacy. That's why it's essential for government and industry to continue working together to improve the way cloud-based technology manages and secures data. ■

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