

Observability Platforms: Because App Monitoring Is Not Enough

An interview with Bob Withers, Director of Public Sector, New Relic

To what extent do agencies have an accurate gauge of the performance and security of their applications and systems? As enterprise IT environments have grown more complex, such visibility has become more elusive. Agencies might have basic monitoring capabilities, which enable them to track specific metrics. But monitoring is not enough.

What they need is the ability to observe the performance of their systems from end to end in real time – and when a problem arises, to identify its source. That is the purpose of an observability platform.

To learn more about this capability, GovLoop spoke with Bob Withers, Director of Public Sector at New Relic, which provides a cloud-based programmable observability platform. He identified three key ways in which an observability platform can help agencies improve their IT operations and services.

Minimizing the Costs and Risks of Cloud Migration

When agencies move applications to the cloud, they generally expect to reduce the cost of operations and improve performance. The problem is that they often do not have any clear measure of whether that bears out.

An observability platform provides the ability to get a detailed picture of cost and performance before, during and after a cloud migration. If problems arise, the platform makes it possible to trace those problems to their root. This is especially important because many systems involve hundreds of components, all of which factor into the performance and cost-effectiveness of that system.

Such insights also can help agencies determine upfront whether it makes sense to move an application to the cloud or keep it on premises. "You want to make informed decisions," Withers said.

Improve the Citizen Experience

The complexity of operations also makes it difficult for agencies to gauge the user experience. End-user or citizen services often involve multiple applications and systems, each of which must be factored into an overall picture of the end-user experience.

For example, in the case of a citizen-facing service, performance depends on such variables as the quality of connection in the end users' area, the browser they are using and their operating system, all of which must be factored into application performance.

New Relic has adopted a standard scoring system, called Apdex, that factors in a wide range of dependencies to assess both application performance and the overall user experience.

Enforcing Security Controls

Any discussion of a cloud-based system must begin with the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP), a government-wide program that provides a standardized approach to security.

New Relic has received FedRAMP authorization at a moderate impact level. Unlike many vendors who put specific releases through the FedRAMP process, New Relic has just one version of its software-as-a-service offering, which means all customers, federal or not, get the benefits of FedRAMP security.

"I like to say that New Relic is FedRAMP compliant, not just our application," Withers said. "We are absolutely all in."

Additionally, all the performance data gathered by the observability platform can be fed into an agency's cyber solution, providing new insights into agency operations.



Data-driven insights that improve digital citizen experience and optimize cloud usage

New Relic is the only FedRAMP-authorized programmable observability platform

New Relic uniquely delivers agency stakeholders needed visibility and understanding of their IT-driven customer experiences, business operations, and IT applications, and presents it in a meaningful, customizable, and easily digestible way that caters to any stakeholder.

We instrument, measure, and improve public sector applications and hybrid infrastructures to help agencies create better-performing software, experiences, and mission-supporting IT.

Visit us at newrelic.com/public-sector

