Why Wait? Simple Strategies Put AI and ML Within Reach

Organizations no longer need data scientists and customized applications to make an impact with AI. In this Q&A, **Chris Haas***, strategic business executive for Google Cloud Public Sector, discusses how state and local agencies can use AI and ML to improve government services and make life easier for workers.*

What AI and ML opportunities are top of mind as governments navigate the future of work and service delivery?

There are many. One theme is using AI and ML services — things like translation, automated document processing and intelligent virtual agents — to make government services more accessible for everyone, including people who have disabilities, don't speak English or can't travel to facilities. Another theme is around applying AI and ML to become more efficient in things like processing documents, which can help organizations justify their programs and quantify their impact. Finally, there is a big benefit to using AI for things like predicting, identifying and mitigating potential cyberattacks — especially as remote work and digital services expand the attack surface.

How can AI and smart automation improve collaboration and productivity across teams?

The idea is to ease the mental load on workers and help them be as productive as possible by giving them things to stay on track and make work easier. For example, Gmail can automatically present a nudge asking email senders what they'd like to do if their email goes unanswered. Gmail's Smart Compose capabilities suggest how to complete sentences when users type an email or other document. More comprehensive solutions consolidate email, collaboration, document editing and other functions into a single unified workspace and then apply AI to predict and suggest which sets of documents a worker may need when they open the workspace.

Where else are technologies like AI and ML making an impact?

One of the biggest areas is in social services and benefit programs. Call centers were completely overwhelmed due to the pandemic, and our Contact Center AI product suite let them add hundreds of thousands of virtual agents overnight. Most of these programs also were using paper-based, manual document processing that couldn't keep up with the high volume of requests during the pandemic. Using Google Translate and Document AI to translate documents and automate document processing enhanced the speed and accuracy of processes these agencies perform day in and day out. AI also helps identify duplicate, improperly documented and fraudulent requests early in the process, which saves time and money.

How can organizations best take advantage of these technologies?

You don't have to be a data scientist or develop custom models to be effective. There are very good AI solutions that are purpose-built for specific use cases and don't require customization, such as our Vision AI. I would start there. A software engineer can do what's needed, and the solution will likely address a lot of the organization's needs. Over time, software engineers and others can expand their skillset to retrain custom models in lightweight ways for slightly different use cases the generalized AI doesn't accommodate. For example, Google Cloud's AutoML products can be used by non-data scientists to retrain our best-in-class AI models for more custom use cases. Just remember that the AI solution is only one part of a larger automated processing use case, and organizations need to plan for how AI is going to be incorporated into that bigger process so it can be used efficiently.

What should organizations consider as they adopt AI and ML?

AI is more accessible than ever before, but it still requires some expertise and a track record of generating real customer value. Pick partners that can meet your needs and demonstrate customer experience depth and breadth. As you implement AI, don't trust the AI straight away. Make sure that a human is always validating what the AI is doing before you build it into a full automated process. Once you trust the AI, you can start automating implementation.

How can leaders overcome cultural barriers when adopting these technologies?

The pandemic proved the impact AI can have in times of crisis. Don't slow down now. Instead, continuously modernize and apply the lessons your teams learn deeply into your culture. Then apply those same innovations across agencies using dedicated teams to continue quickly iterating through new applications of AI.

Learn more at **Carah.io/GovTech-AIML-Google**

Google Cloud

Public Sector Connect

Network and find reusable content, crowd-source innovations, and collaboration opportunities in this community exclusively for government and education employees.

Sign up here: carah.io/48185