



# Why the **time to modernize** is now



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Modernization is not easy, but it is the key to improving security, engagement and outcomes

## **A** **GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE** study in 2019 showed

that 80% of federal agency IT budgets are spent maintaining legacy applications and systems, and that percentage has been steadily increasing. As a result, only a relatively small amount of money is available for modernization efforts.

Agencies need to shift their focus because IT modernization is essential to improving mission outcomes, particularly in terms of customer and employee engagement. By modernizing and bringing data closer to frontline workers, agencies can improve interactions and outcomes.

For example, studies have shown that 80% of a call center employee's time is spent answering the same set of questions. With the help of artificial intelligence and machine learning technology, we can create chatbots and other tools that bring information right to a customer much more quickly.

That approach revitalizes the agency's relationships with customers, and it boosts satisfaction among employees because they're not stuck doing rote tasks and can instead focus on activities that require innovation and creativity.

## **Securing data against phishing attacks**

Data has become a valuable asset and protecting it requires a modernized approach to security that reflects the changing threat landscape. Most agencies have a handle on infrastructure security, and cloud environments meet or exceed the security of on-premises systems,

which is why adversaries are now targeting people instead of infrastructure.

Phishing has become the most common attack vector against government and other systems. To counter those attacks, agencies should determine who needs access to specific data and make that data available only when users need it.

That strategy requires recognizing that all data is not created equal. Agencies should understand the data they have and the level of importance of different data –

and tailor their security plans accordingly.

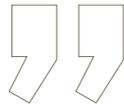
Unfortunately, for about 70% of their data, agencies don't know whether it is personally identifiable information or any other kind of information whose loss would have serious repercussions. And they don't know where the data is.

A number of tools are available that can help agencies discover, catalog and mask data so that, for example, a call center employee doesn't see a citizen's Social Security number in the database unless it's necessary.





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### **Avoiding layers of legacy technology**

Government agencies need to pick reliable cloud providers that have stability, credibility and longevity in the marketplace as well as FedRAMP authorization.

However, they should always avoid letting their data travel through outside systems.

For example, Boomi orchestrates government data, but that data doesn't flow through our platform. When a cloud

solution provider wants agency data to move through its system, agencies should see if there is an alternative to that approach.

Some IT leaders back away from difficult modernization challenges and instead decide to layer new applications on top of legacy technology. But layering is a dangerous approach because many legacy applications were written in languages that are no longer widely used. And integrations

can become so brittle that a single change in one place can have unintended consequences in other areas.

Modernization doesn't get easier, but that is no reason to delay. The time to tackle modernization isn't when it's convenient and simple. The time to start is now. ■

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