



APIs: Building blocks for digital transformation



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API-led connectivity offers agencies the security and flexibility they need to keep pace with customer demands

WITH VARIOUS CUSTOMER demands and technology trends affecting the public and private sectors today, government entities are under increasing pressure to be more agile and innovate faster. However, information silos trapped in legacy systems have plagued government IT for decades.

Connectivity has typically focused on point-to-point custom coding or tightly coupling two systems together through one-to-one connections. As IT environments grew, this approach created a brittle technology landscape that's difficult to maintain and scale.

To combat the complexity, an increasing number of agencies are using application programming interfaces to easily connect any application, data source or device, regardless of format or source. APIs are quickly becoming core building blocks for digital transformation because they make systems easy to access and allow data to be decoupled from complex underlying systems. As a result, developers are free to code what customers want and innovate faster.

Simplifying the move to the cloud

A core element of most agencies' digital transformation efforts is a successful cloud strategy. Cloud-based solutions promise increased agility, reduced costs and improved operational efficiency. Additionally, cloud-based solutions, such as the Salesforce Customer Success Platform, play a key role in agencies' efforts to become more customer-centric. It's also one of the reasons why MuleSoft is investing in being the first

FedRAMP-authorized solution for enabling API-led connectivity.

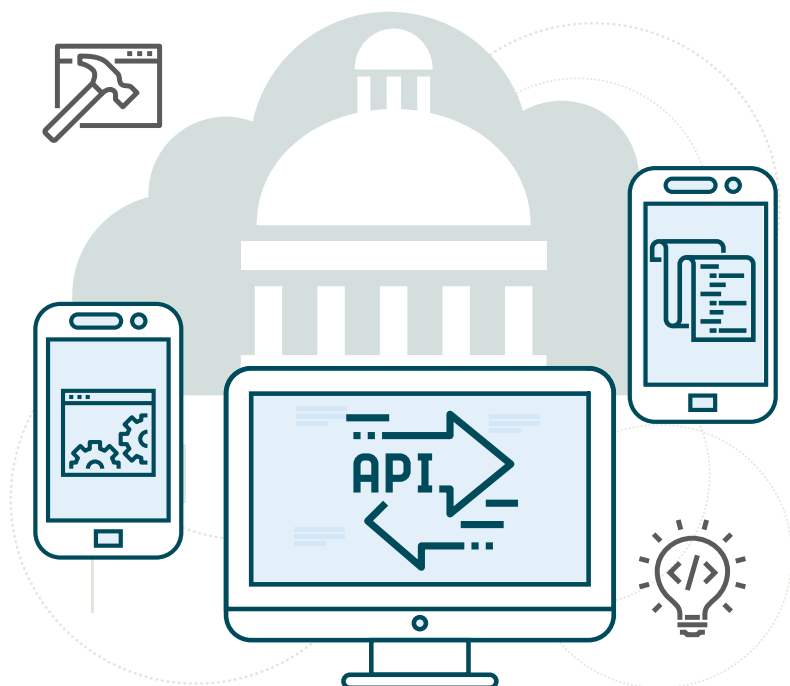
Creating a successful cloud strategy relies heavily on integration. APIs can help ease the move to the cloud by giving developers the ability to gradually decommission the legacy applications that many agencies still rely on. For instance, an agency might develop an API on top of a decades-old human resources system to expose the data in a standardized manner. From then on, developers can reference the API instead of going directly to the HR system, and the move from an on-premises system to a cloud-based one can be done incrementally using the API. The downstream applications are unaffected by the underlying move to the cloud, and the agency did not have to

rip out and replace a legacy system that was still performing a vital function.

Another transformative feature of APIs is their reusability. Agriculture Department officials developed a set of reusable APIs to pull the information they needed from their payroll and financial management systems. Their developers then used those APIs to create mobile and online applications for specific customer purposes. Eventually, other USDA offices and even other agencies asked if they could use the APIs for their own projects.

Interdependencies and collaboration

Agencies must move from having a designated set of people who are





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responsible for IT connections to a mindset of collaboration so that they can share APIs across the enterprise and across agencies.

We advise clients to start incrementally, taking one project or a group of projects and redesigning them using an API strategy. Once agencies experience successes, they can add more applications to the mix.

As an application network starts to

emerge, it will reveal interdependencies and give agencies a more holistic view of their enterprises.

Finally, API-led connectivity embeds security by design, allowing agencies to see the policies they need to apply across the organization or within specific departments. As APIs become the standard for communication across enterprises, agencies will be able to securely plug new

technologies into their application networks because they've already done the maximum amount to reduce risk.

This exciting new approach is about ensuring that agency systems are robust and flexible enough to support customer demands now and into the future. ■

Shad Imam is head of federal pre-sales at MuleSoft.



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Government agencies use Anypoint Platform to more efficiently and securely connect across legacy and cloud systems, increasing IT efficiency while reducing costs.

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