



Smart government: The convergence of cloud, data and AI

AI thrives on a robust, scalable cloud infrastructure and access to a wide range of datasets



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IT'S IMPORTANT FOR AGENCIES to understand that in order to accelerate their ability to deliver on their missions, their strategies for cloud technology, data management and artificial intelligence are deeply intertwined. By linking all three efforts, the government can leap ahead in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

The benefits of AI are powerful and only just being realized, but the journey to achieve those benefits is fairly complicated.

Once an agency identifies the problem it wants to solve, leaders need to gather relevant data for analysis. Unfortunately, government datasets are likely not linked to one another and are often owned by different teams or even other agencies.

Furthermore, AI is a relatively new and complex technology field, and agencies need people who understand how to gather and connect the right information and who can recognize when AI models are working and when they're not. Whether in-house

employees or external consultants, they must be able to create a rich and reliable database for AI and machine learning.

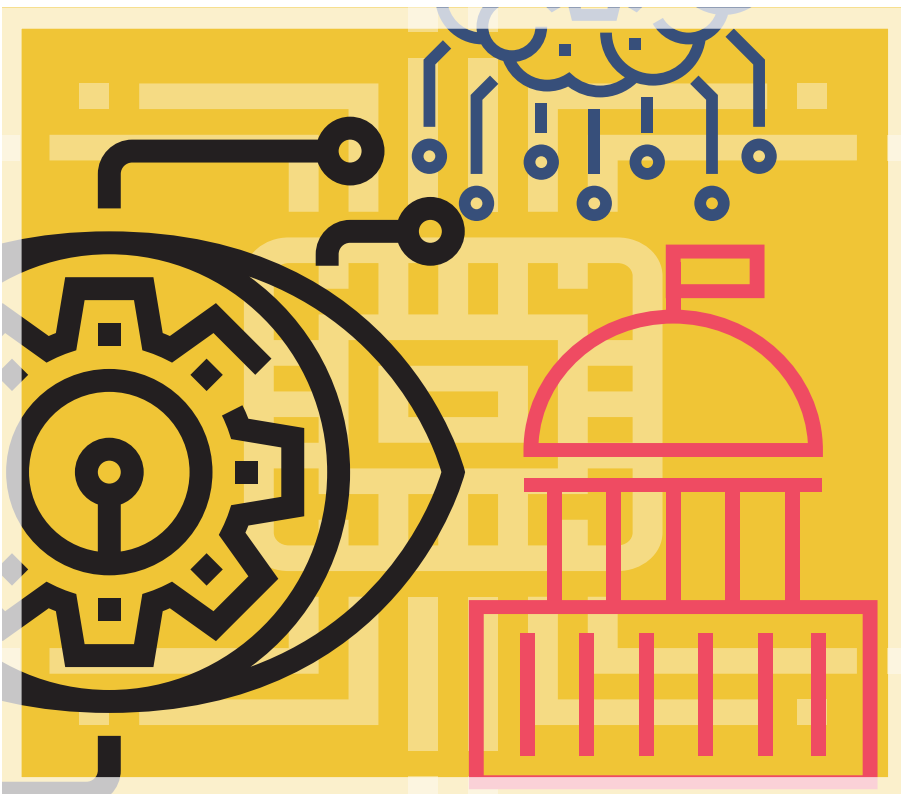
Overcoming obstacles to data sharing

The government's progress on cloud adoption is central to its success with AI. Because agencies are trying to find answers to new questions, they need more and flexible compute and storage power than they have had in the past. Cloud technology provides a robust platform for those activities that is scalable to meet the demands of machine learning algorithms.

AI is fueled by data, but information sharing has been a challenge in government for quite some time because organizational culture often encourages data owners to maintain discrete control over their information. Agencies must change that attitude so people can use whatever data they need and are entitled to access to address mission challenges.

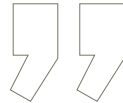
Two key steps can help agencies facilitate collaboration on AI projects without compromising the security and integrity of government data. First, agency heads must accelerate the use of data for the common good. Alternatively, the Office of Management and Budget or the intelligence community, for example, might issue a policy that allows and facilitates information sharing in a way that keeps the security and integrity of the data intact.

Second (and a crucial step), agencies must enact role-based access and robust identity credentials so that only those





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people authorized to see and interact with certain data are allowed to do so. That gives agencies governance and control over how their data is used and shared.

A purposeful allocation of resources

AI's ability to help with even the most complex government challenges is limited only by its access to datasets. Once those resources are available and the agency has

instituted role-based access for sharing and collaboration, AI can be applied to the agency's mission activities.

When the Defense Department created the Joint AI Center, it represented a purposeful allocation of resources to this emerging technology. Now someone is in charge of building the technologies, using them ethically and making sure they're solving mission-critical problems for DOD as a whole in a way that can be shared and

spread across that large infrastructure.

It serves as a model for other agencies as they take a more strategic approach to building, scaling and deploying AI solutions. By recognizing the key roles that cloud technology and data strategies play, agencies can accelerate the use of AI to address government challenges. ■

Rob Carey is president of Cloudera Government Solutions.



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