

Zeroing in on data center modernization

Finding a balance between the data center and the tactical edge is driving many agencies' IT transformation efforts



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AGENCIES ARE embracing digital transformation because they recognize that modernization has become an imperative. They know they need to create a new computing platform to comply with the government's digital and budget priorities, and most agencies realize that they have to start by modernizing the data center first.

By incorporating automation and next-generation infrastructure into their data centers, agencies can decrease their IT

footprint, become more energy-efficient and adopt modern cloud-based applications while taking advantage of other burgeoning trends, such as the internet of things.

Bringing data centers closer to frontline users

Many agencies are modernizing on new technologies such as converged and hyperconverged infrastructure to bring together compute, storage, networking and server virtualization. Those approaches

offer a number of advantages for solving mission-critical problems in the government.

First, converged and hyperconverged technologies give agencies the ability to scale in a standardized way and take maximum advantage of software and automation in their data centers to achieve that scale. The technologies multiply the human factor, so to speak, by leveraging software to do a lot of the work. It's not taking away jobs. It's simply giving people additional capacity.

Second, the technologies allow agencies to harmonize hardware and software when they need to push compute and storage out to the tactical edge. Those solutions bring the data center closer to frontline users when, for example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's employees are responding to a disaster and need to run applications with poor network access or when warfighters require higher compute power than end-clients can offer.

Data protection and workforce transformation

From a security perspective, agencies must modernize their strategies and processes. It is no longer simply an opportunity to comply with statutes but an opportunity to protect the mission in ways we haven't been able to do before. In other words, IT transformation offers agencies a chance to increase their security postures while remaining flexible in responding to mission requirements.

Data is a precious commodity because it powers decision-making, yet many agencies are struggling to develop comprehensive data protection strategies. Fortunately, through the application of software, agencies can create



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an envelope of security around data wherever it resides and wherever it might go.

That's important because today's workforce is increasingly remote. We fit work into our lifestyles, and we work a lot and often. Therefore, new security capabilities look beyond signature-based issues at the endpoint and instead search for anomalies. To identify a malicious link or file, for example, they evaluate patterns in how users work.

Furthermore, efforts to transform IT and security are interlinked with a transformation of the workforce. The challenge in government is attracting and retaining young talent, and the best way to do that is to provide devices that offer the same access and portability that personal devices do.

Technology has become a driving force that contributes to job satisfaction and is therefore essential for agencies to attract and

retain new talent. The transformation to a more digital government also enables agencies to serve their constituents more effectively.

Every agency is at a different stage in its IT transformation journey, but industry is here to help. We want to see the government succeed in this effort. ■

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IT transformation
begins here.