



3 Data Myths Busted by Tableau

A Conversation with STEVE SPANO

Brig. Gen. (Ret) Steve Spano, US Air Force, is no stranger to the myths that surround data analytics. During his military career, he worked to find better ways to provide data, knowledge, and insights to senior military and civilian decision-makers. In his current role at Tableau as Regional Vice President of Public Sector, Spano continues to promote the importance of data and data culture, helping leaders and others in government discover how to leverage data as a strategic asset.

I've had many conversations with departments and agencies nationwide, and I've addressed a number of questions, or "myths," that surround data analytics. Most of these myths are just that—outdated perceptions that aren't the reality for organizations which have adopted modern analytics platforms. At Tableau, we know that the first step to helping people see and understand their data is to explain how frictionless capturing, analyzing, and reporting can be.

Myth 1: Data reporting is hard. It just is.

Government organizations have always relied on data, in the form of traditional reporting, to inform decision-making. But static reports are difficult to assemble and produce, because they rely on a time-consuming data-gathering process—and are often produced by IT departments with limited input, context, or partnership from line of business stakeholders.

But data reporting doesn't need to be hard. And with the requirements of the Federal Data Strategy being a top-of-mind consideration, it's essential that departments and agencies pivot away from tedious, spreadsheet-centric reporting. Using a modern visual analytics platform like Tableau, it's possible to create impactful, interactive visualizations using data from

disparate sources. This tends to encourage curiosity, collaboration, and overall engagement, allowing your teams to leverage their data in powerful new ways. With richer capabilities and an intuitive user experience, a modern data analytics platform radically redefines reporting, making it an easy, insightful process.

Myth 2: To do data at scale, you need data super powers, a small army, or both.

There's a fairly common misapprehension about implementing data analytics at scale: to succeed, you need a team of data scientists and highly specialized data workers. What you actually need is to turn your existing team into "data people."

To do this successfully, you need to build a strong data culture. Data-driven organizations have learned that it's essential to promote a data-centric mindset across the entire organization. This empowers everyone to use analytics for deeper insight and understanding. Data is at the heart of decision-making, so leadership needs to be committed to making data culture an ongoing, organizational priority. It's safe to say that once you've instilled a data culture, data is your super power.

Myth 3: AI isn't something government organizations need to think about right now.

In the consumer space, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are core to many popular applications and capabilities, from Internet of Things devices that gather usage data and respond according to patterns and preferences, to online services that offer suggestions based on prior selections. But are there meaningful use cases for AI and machine learning in the public sector?

The answer is a resounding yes. AI and machine learning can play a role in

alleviating administrative burdens, such as answering questions or drafting documents. This ties directly to mission, because citizens benefit directly from more efficient service delivery. Tableau supports the goals of improving government using AI and machine learning with capabilities such as Explain Data, a tool to bring automated statistical analysis to visualizations, and Ask Data, which allows you to ask questions of any published data source and get answers in the form of a visualization.

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There are many more data myths out there. We've chosen to highlight three of them here, but we encourage you to reach out if you have one or two that you think need busting. Be sure to explore more on the [Tableau Government Analytics](#) solutions page, and follow us on social @tableau.

Interested in learning more? Read our white paper, A Guide to Implementing Federal Data Strategy Using Tableau Blueprint: carah.io/TableauBlueprint



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