

Intelligent Data Management Prepares Agencies for a Data-Driven Future



Mike Anderson, chief federal strategist for Informatica, discusses how intelligent data management helps organizations fully embrace the strategic use of data.

What trends are you seeing around state and local government use of advanced data tools?

A plethora of data is being generated throughout the enterprise. Governments need to utilize that data strategically to improve internal efficiencies and citizen services, yet a lot of the data is siloed and organizations don't even know they have it. We're also seeing many governments move their data and workloads into the cloud. They're seeking help to understand what data they have, what data and applications need to stay on premises and what can be moved, what processes need to be completely shut down and run in a software-as-a-service (SaaS) environment, and so on. Then they need easy access and visibility into that data, wherever it lives. Fortunately, a lot of the processes around these trends can be automated to help organizations achieve their goals.

What are the challenges of using advanced data tools in state and local governments?

In one word: talent. Being able to manage and understand data and turn it into business insights is very complex at the practitioner level. Data scientists, data engineers, statisticians, chief data officers and other talent to do that kind of work is in short supply. Companies are now creating advanced data tools that can be used by folks who are

not data science experts to get the data they want, when they want it, so they can run analytics on it and make decisions based on the results.

Please discuss cloud modernization as part of an overall move to a more data-driven future.

To take full advantage of modern technologies, you need your data in the cloud, where you can run very large analytics programs; however, many organizations can't move all their data to the cloud. That means they still need an on-premises data management solution to ensure their data is high-quality, integrated, catalogued and so on. At the same time, SaaS is key to a modern architecture. It allows organizations to access data management capabilities through a web portal while offloading the burden of maintaining, updating and patching software. That's really the future of intelligent data management.

What other solutions can help governments better leverage advanced data technologies?

Automation will be an important component of this. For example, it's essential to automate data-quality assurance. A dashboard may present attractive facts and figures, but if the quality of the underlying data is bad, you'll get an inaccurate picture that may lead to poor decisions. Automated cataloguing is another key function. You need to be able to leverage metatags — data about data — to find what you need quickly. Finally, you need to master the data. That means being able to see all the data about a single person, place or thing so that you have an immediate and complete view without having to search for it.

How should data-driven organizations address data protection?

Data protection is extremely important to maintain public confidence as well as comply with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other requirements. Nefarious actors want to steal government data, especially PII. Lots of perimeter defenses prevent access to government systems, but organizations also need to wrap protection around the data itself so that PII isn't released to the public or bad actors. One way to protect data is to consistently and persistently mask PII. Organizations should also use automated processes to identify abnormal patterns of user behavior and automatically issue alerts when certain thresholds are reached.

What steps can agencies take to promote a data-driven culture?

Having a broad strategy is vital. We recommend organizations set specific three- to five-year goals, and then create an implementation plan that makes those goals achievable. The plan needs to identify some specific value for government leaders, where they see the benefit of using analytics to improve decision-making. It's important to start small. Identify something that's a high priority for the organization. Apply the implementation plan and your data capabilities and tools to that problem and show how doing so offers value. If you keep doing that again and again, you're going to start changing the culture because agency leaders will see the value in the outcome of those data-driven efforts.



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