OPEN UP

TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP REALIZE THE PROMISE OF OPEN GOVERNMENT.

By Michael C. Zirkle

TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS

IN GOVERNMENT ARE NOT JUST BUZZ WORDS.

THEY ARE POWERFUL TOOLS FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL AGENCIES AND ADMINISTRATIONS. WHEN TRANSPARENCY INCREASES, SO DOES PUBLIC TRUST. THE UPSHOT BEING GREATER PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION—SYSTEMWIDE. AND A BETTER EXPERIENCE FOR ALL.

GOVERNMENT IS TAKING UNPRECEDENTED STEPS TOWARD TRANSFORMATION.

With a firm commitment to making government transparent and efficient, the U.S. federal government is taking a new approach to deploying innovative technologies—one much closer to that of the private sector—and redefining what the public sector can accomplish and how it goes about its business.

Building on previous administrations' initiatives, the position of federal chief information officer was created to lead this new vision for government IT.

FIRST UP ON THE NEW APPOINTEE'S AGENDA WAS TO DEVELOP AN OPEN-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE.

This initiative will drive major changes in operations, technology deployments, and working cultures in all departments for years to come.

DEPARTMENT LEADERS ARE

FOCUSED ON
TWO MAJOR IMPERATIVES,

IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A NEW, OPEN FRAMEWORK:

1

BRING TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURES TOGETHER.

- Federal leadership recognizes that government cannot continue to operate in traditional ways, keeping separate IT infrastructures across departments and lines of business.
- Legacy IT isn't built to easily accommodate mobility and cloud services. Open concepts facilitate accessibility, which propels multi-agency modernization, streamlined services, and economies of scale.
- Already, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, which, in the past, maintained discrete IT operations, are merging their infrastructures into a single, cloud-based data center.

- Civilian and defense authorities have differing needs for security, mobility, and information management in some scenarios. But in others, their requirements are the same, enabling a unified solution and approach.
- Such important concerns as fleet and asset management; efficient, secure communication and collaboration; and fast, coordinated emergency response are highly relevant in both the civilian and defense realms. Both would gain from sharing technology platforms.

POOL RESOURCES ACROSS ALL OF GOVERNMENT.

2

KEEPING GOVERNMENT OPEN—AND PROTECTED.

THIS NEW FRAMEWORK IS DELIVERING FRESH INSIGHT INTO THE VALUE OF INFORMATION.

AND MANY GOVERNMENT LEADERS ARE LETTING GO OF THE RESTRICTIVE "NEED-TO-KNOW" MINDSET AND ADOPTING A MORE "NEED-TO-SHARE" ATTITUDE.

Proponents of open government realize that information is really only meaningful when it's accessible and actionable. Real-time sharing among departments and with citizens boosts information's value and justifies the effort and expense of collecting and storing it. This is particularly evident in the intelligence community, which has had to rapidly evolve its approach to information sharing between agencies, as it evolves to combat new, more decentralized and unstructured threats. At the same time, the need to mitigate risk remains.

Government agencies must adopt a new data-centric view of risk management, one that focuses on identifying the true value of the information and who needs access to it as the basis for establishing the appropriate security and access measures. This protected view provides more security than selective transparency. In this regard, government and enterprise share a common interest.

THE COST OF FOREIGN EFFORTS TO ILLEGALLY OBTAIN U.S. TECHNOLOGIES IS ON THE RISE. U.S. COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED MORE THAN $13 BILLION IN LOSSES FROM ECONOMIC ESPIONAGE IN THE 2012 FISCAL YEAR.[1]

As the public sector creates more effective ways to maintain data integrity while increasing its availability for greater constituent engagement, enterprises will benefit from adopting similar measures and vice versa.

BUSINESS SAVVY MEETS
GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE.

WITH AN OPEN APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT, MANY SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED TO BE ADVANCED WITHIN THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS WORLD, LIKE PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE, CAN NOW BE ADAPTED TO ADDRESS GOVERNMENT SECURITY COMPLIANCE NEEDS.

Shared databases and infrastructures in the cloud will enable analytics to be deployed across multiple agency data sources, to speed up decision making and planning processes, and exhibit accountability to constituents. With the potential to transform masses of data into insight, analytics will be a central driver of open government.

MANY FEDERAL AGENCIES ALREADY HOUSE LARGE MASSES OF HISTORICAL DATA, AND MORE PERVASIVE USE OF MOBILE DEVICES AND MACHINE-TO-MACHINE (M2M) TECHNOLOGY IS GENERATING NEW CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT DATA.

By combining historical trends with contextual data within an event, and applying analytics and technologies like augmented reality, defense contractors and military personnel will be able to predict the most likely outcome in order to streamline decisions.

EFFICIENCY IN ACTION.

MANY OPEN-GOVERNMENT SCENARIOS COMBINING CLOUD, M2M, MOBILITY, ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS, SECURITY, AND ANALYTICS IN SHARED-RESOURCE FRAMEWORKS ARE ALREADY TAKING SHAPE:

SERVICE DELIVERY. Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) centralized their resources, creating a single, cloud-based contact center. This is increasing efficiency, eliminating redundancies, and empowering a mobile, decentralized work force.

EMERGENCY HEALTH RESPONSE. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are sharing their data to support more effective emergency response. Both public-sector and private entities can access more than 60,000 CDC data sets to support decision making or disease tracking.

IDENTITY MANAGEMENT. Public-sector entities are sharing data to streamline identity management and make it easier for individuals to authenticate themselves. In the near future, authentication will reside primarily on smart phones or other mobile devices.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT. Congestion and traffic accidents currently cost the U.S. economy $65 billion every year. The government is exploring M2M-enabled smart vehicles, smart highways, and other data-enriched infrastructures to smooth day-to-day transportation management and inform long-range policy development.[2]

BRIDGING THE
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS.

POLICY MAKERS AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGERS ARE BEGINNING TO REALIZE MANY OF THE BREAKTHROUGHS IN TRANSPARENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS THAT ARE THE PROMISE OF OPEN GOVERNMENT.

In the process, government and private-sector enterprises stand to benefit significantly from adopting each other's approaches.

THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN VERTICALS, SUCH AS HEALTHCARE, FINANCE, SERVICE DELIVERY, AND LOGISTICS, WHERE SHARED TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS CAN BE DEVELOPED TO SOLVE MANY OF THE MUTUAL CHALLENGES IN THOSE SPACES.

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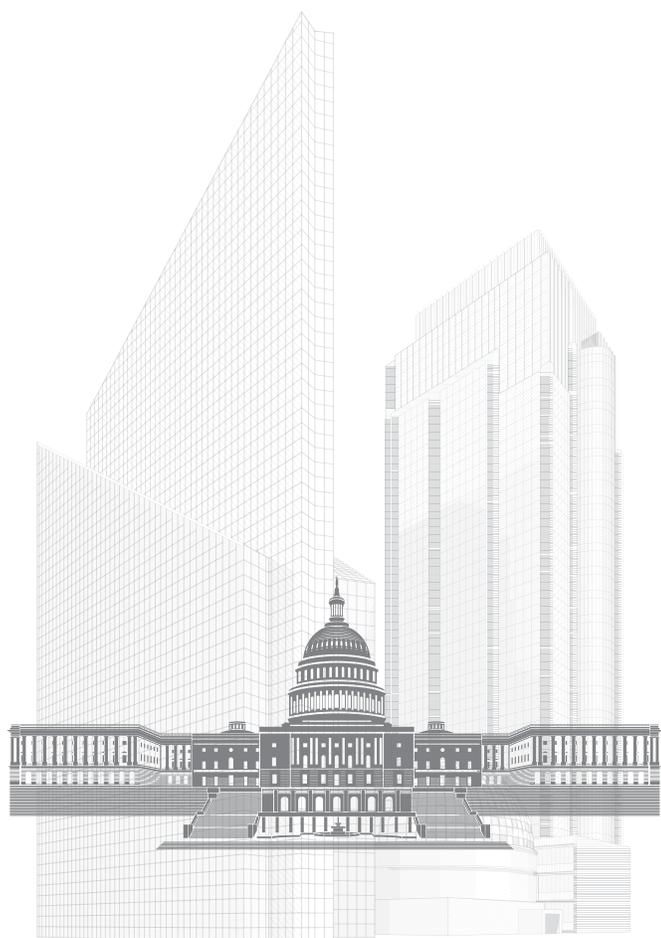
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As Associate Director of Government Solutions, Michael C. Zirkle is responsible for providing industry solutions and product strategy leadership for Verizon in the public sector. Zirkle, who has deep expertise in such areas as information security, IT portfolio management, governance, policy, and standards, has a BS degree in computer science from the Virginia Military Institute.

1 *LA Times*, "Foreign spying against U.S. companies on the rise, FBI says."
2 Report by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. (prepared for the Federal Highway Commission)