govtech review

DROWNING IN DATA

SMART CITY DATA MANAGEMENT

AGILITY AND ANALYSIS
ENTERPRISE MOBILITY IN ACTION

BUILDING TRUST
EMPATHY OVER EFFICIENCY

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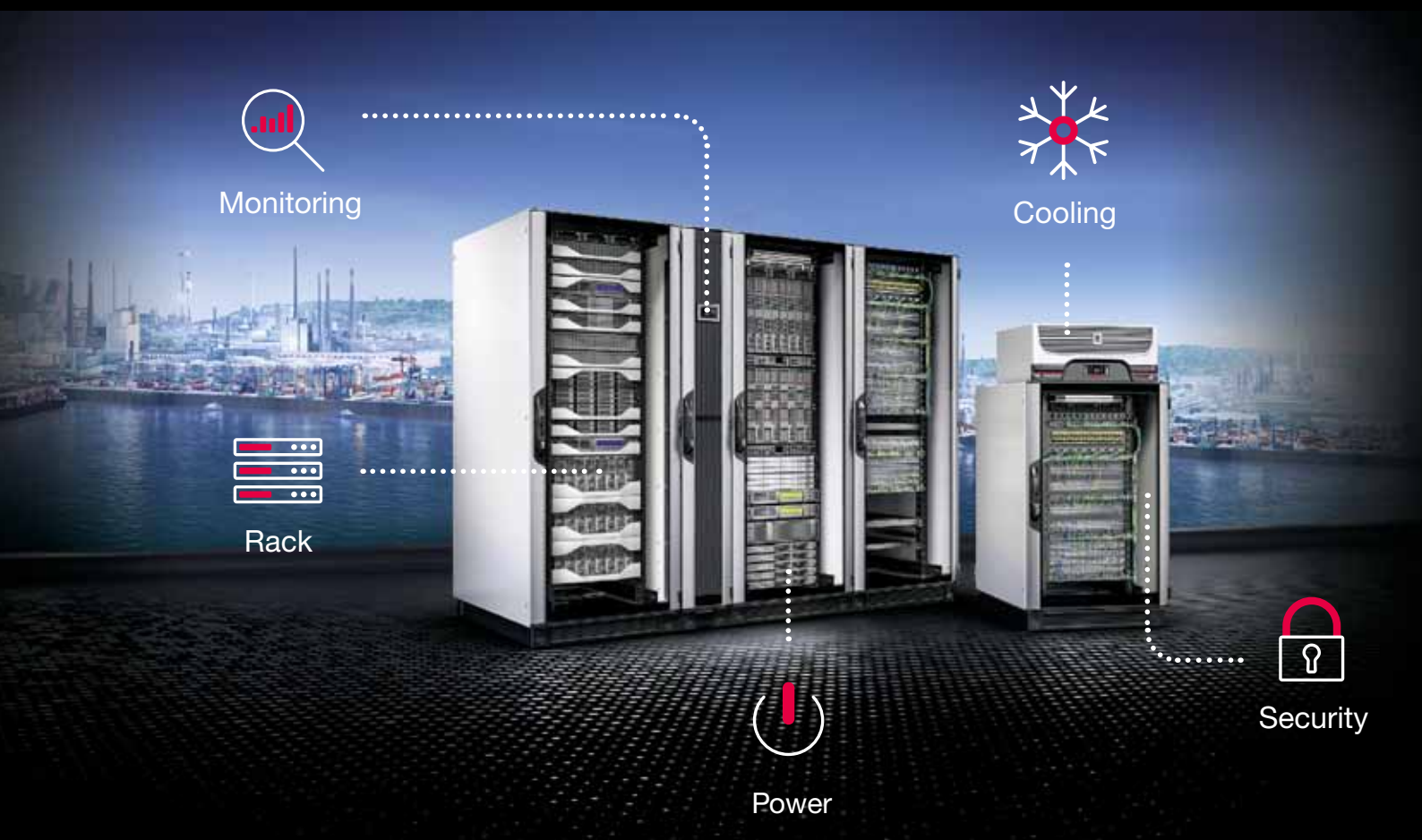

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INSIDE

FEATURES

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Insider

Artificial intelligence is by no means a new technology, but it is really having its moment. Spurred on in part by the government's Artificial Intelligence Action Plan, we are seeing increased investment — and advancement — in this versatile tool.

As we become accustomed to digital technologies in our everyday lives, there is an increased expectation for seamless connection in all online interactions, whether that be with individuals, private enterprise or government agencies. To the end user, the lines have become blurred to the point where renewing a licence or accessing healthcare support should be as simple and secure as ordering groceries or dinner for home delivery. While the need is there, and the benefits are clear, getting to that point can be a challenge. The key to success likely lies in a strategic approach to the use of AI technology in infrastructure, applications and across entire ecosystems.

While the Digital Transformation Agency has undergone another portfolio shift under the new government, its underlying ethos remains — to align digital strategies and priorities, to simplify procurement and to reduce cost. As the goalposts continue to move, agencies must establish a foundation that allows for the adoption — and adaptation — of new and emerging technologies that can assist in the dual pursuits of better service delivery through increased personalisation and increased efficiency.

Beyond simple automation of processes and services, the potential for AI in government is huge, with advanced analytics and machine learning capable of detecting and determining trends and making evidence-based decisions that will protect and provide for citizens across countless applications.

Regardless of the field of operation, success will hinge on a solid AI implementation strategy. Whether it's the rollout of smart city programs or a move to greater enterprise mobility with a hybrid workforce, AI is at the core of every digital transformation. Adopting these new and emerging technologies offers the greatest opportunity to quickly reshape departmental function, to improve worker engagement and productivity, and to deliver a better customer experience.

These are exciting times for government, with agencies at all levels poised to reap the benefits provided there is a solid understanding, a data-driven mentality and a workable strategy in place.

We've got plenty of guidance on achieving success in this issue, with articles ranging from data management in smart cities, software development considerations and how to build trust in government. I hope you enjoy this issue of *GovTech Review*.

Dannielle Furness, Editor
editor@govtechreview.com.au

wfmedia
connecting industry

A.B.N. 22 152 305 336
www.wfmedia.com.au
Head Office:
Locked Bag 2226
North Ryde BC NSW 1670
Ph +61 2 9487 2700

EDITOR
Dannielle Furness

gtr@wfmedia.com.au

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR/MD
Geoff Hird

ART DIRECTOR/PRODUCTION MANAGER
Julie Wright

ART/PRODUCTION
Linda Klobusiak

CIRCULATION
Dianna Alberry
circulation@wfmedia.com.au

COPY CONTROL
Mitchie Mullins
copy@wfmedia.com.au

ADVERTISING SALES
Liz Wilson Ph 0403 528 558
lwilson@wfmedia.com.au

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New Vic Govt chatbot speaks eight languages

A new chatbot developed by Think HQ in collaboration with the Victorian Government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing has been designed to deliver multilingual support for multicultural communities.

The AskVic WhatsApp chatbot can engage with users and share vital information in eight different languages.

The tool was originally developed to increase accessibility to reliable COVID-19 information and support among culturally and linguistically diverse communities. It can serve in-language information to user queries and link out to further information and support services.

Longer term, the chatbot will be developed as a vital information source for migrant groups to support equal access and participation in Victorian life.

Supported languages are English, Hindi, Arabic, Vietnamese, Turkish, Punjabi, Spanish and Filipino.

ThinkHQ Head of Digital Olivier Laude said the app was developed using a human-centred design philosophy, and that content and cultural relevance as well as technological capabilities were also key elements of the design.

"The AskVic WhatsApp chatbot will provide essential information to audiences that are too often forgotten from traditional communications in Australia," he said. "We are proud to have delivered an innovative technical solution built with users to reflect all the cultural and linguistic nuances."

The tool is built on open-source technology, including the Rasa Conversational AI, and uses the BotFront authoring platform.

Aussie smart traffic tech picked up by UK Govt

Australian-developed smart traffic technology is being rolled out across UK roads to catch dangerous drivers. The AI-enabled hardware and software was developed by Melbourne-based Acusensus, which has partnered with the UK government body National Highways to monitor driver behaviour across Warwickshire.

A roadside sensor van is equipped with multiple cameras to capture every passing vehicle, even at speeds of up to 300 km/h. The AI software can instantly determine if drivers are using a handheld device and if the driver and passengers are wearing a seatbelt.

UK government figures show there were 420 collisions on British roads in 2019 in which the driver was using a mobile phone. Separate figures show failure to wear a seatbelt has been attributed to one in four road deaths in the UK.

"Sadly, there are still drivers who do not feel the need to wear a seatbelt, become distracted by their phones or travel too close to the vehicle in front. We want to see if we can change driver behaviour and therefore improve road safety for everyone," said National Highways Head of Road Safety Jeremy Phillips.

Acusensus's camera software has already been successfully deployed in NSW, coinciding with a 22% drop in fatalities based on previous trends since the mobile phone detection program launched in 2019. The company launched its mobile phone and seatbelt detection program in Queensland in 2021 — said to be a world first — with a 10% drop in fatalities in the first six months, and last month turned on the cameras for its unique combined speed, mobile phone and seatbelt detection program in WA.

Acusensus founder and Managing Director Alexander Jannink said he was confident the three-month UK camera trial would produce similarly successful results.

SMART CITY DATA IS GREAT, BUT HOW ARE WE GOING TO MANAGE IT?

Gavin Jones, Vice President Sales, Australia & New Zealand, Confluent

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TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS ARE IMPROVING GOVERNMENT SERVICES BUT THEY ARE ALSO CREATING A HEADACHE FOR DATA STORAGE, ANALYSIS, AND INTEGRATION.

In a connected world, cities run smoothly. The network of sensors, cameras, and devices work together to paint a vivid picture of the urban environment informing the citizens, the government, and the private sector. We are seeing innovations in transport, energy, utilities, and crisis response designed to bring a higher standard of living, especially as IoT adoption increases.

While these investments are improving the quality of government services, they are creating a headache for data storage, analysis, and integration. There is also the question of data management.

Reassessing how data is managed is key to unlocking the value of smart cities. For effective data management, there are three core principles: data needs to be actively transmitted across different channels, it needs to be in a secure environment, and it needs to be scalable.

DATA CHALLENGES OF SMART CITIES

Keeping in mind these three principles, governments are working to upgrade their decades-old infrastructure to meet the needs of new technology. This can be a costly endeavour over a short period of time, with many choosing a phased approach. However, at the centre of this modernisation is the need to quickly mine value from data to drive the next steps.

As sensors and systems are deployed, data is generated at pace, needing to be stored, analysed, and distributed to different parts of the network instantly. With traditional databases, this can be clunky, time-consuming, and require manual processes to update systems to read the same information. For smart cities, this can result in potentially dangerous mistakes and incorrect details relayed to citizens.

Data governance tools for real-time data streams can ensure the integrity of data used across an organisation. But according to the 2022 State of Data in Motion Report report, only 27% of IT decision-makers have such capabilities in place.

For smart cities, there is a need for a data streaming platform that can overcome the key challenges faced, such as:

- Integration — vast amounts of data, from legacy to custom code, across thousands of systems.
- Data correction and correlation — real-time ETL (extract transform and load) and data enrichment.
- Real-time processing — act on data when it is needed; right now.
- High availability and zero downtime — always available even in a disaster.

Streaming data from IoT devices at scale across the city is key to a smart city being able to monitor what's happening in real time. This pattern can be accomplished via a smart-edge processing framework that plugs into the data hub (or hubs for further resilience). This allows for data reduction (getting just the signal from the noise) as well as data enrichment all happening at speed in real time.

This now enriched data can quickly flow to the hub for further processing and distribution to any system and other parts of the organisation that need to make timely decisions.

In turn, governments can make quick decisions, fine-tune operations,

"To combat capacity issues of traditional databases, cloud services can be adopted to shrink and grow with the movement of data."

and plan strategies for positive impacts on everyday challenges. Adopting a data streaming capability within an organisation can build trust and confidence in teams to work autonomously and make decisions that are based on real-time data.

REAL-TIME BENEFITS FOR RESPONSE

An area of high priority for governments is critical response situations, where timeliness is key to navigating problems to mitigate emergencies. Cities never sleep, so data is always moving and needs to be managed accordingly. To plan the shortest and quickest route for first responders to safely get to an incident, governments need to have real-time information on traffic management such as congestion levels and local road closures. Likewise, for citizens, sharing live accident information helps them plan accordingly.

Real-time data provides visibility on current operations across a city but to translate this information into actionable insights, there needs to be an easy way to access and filter multiple sources of data. Data needs to be constantly shared between different locations and computer systems and then integrated to facilitate instant decision-making. With need-to-know details at their fingertips, data streaming enables first responders to make high-pressure decisions based on real-time data.

Downtime for services can be a stressor for the day-to-day functioning of a city and, at its worst, detrimental to the safety of citizens. However, there is also the possibility of technology being exposed. When systems are down, they're unable to detect threats, leaving access points vulnerable to security breaches. In line with the core principles of data management, smart cities should look to develop secure environments so that data is not compromised and services can continue as usual once downtime has been corrected. As such, the rise of cloud services has become more prominent due to their always-on protection against internal and external threats.

SCALABILITY FOR POPULATION AND TECH ADOPTION

Population numbers in major cities have continued to rise, so governments have worked to meet the increased demand for services and utilities. More people means more technology; more technology means more data.

The volume of data is not always consistent and can undulate daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly according to the activities of citizens. To combat capacity issues of traditional databases, cloud services can be adopted to shrink and grow with the movement of data.

There are several other benefits to the cloud, such as cost savings, simplicity, resilience, and security. These combined, foster a flexible environment for developers to collaborate anywhere and everywhere with the peace of mind that the underlying cloud infrastructure has loss prevention and disaster recovery measures in place. Being cloud-based also means applications and software automatically update so developers can focus on value-add rather than maintenance or resourcing.

Innovation for smart cities is only going to increase with each new technology built for integration and data-sharing to maximise the effectiveness of information produced. Governments should prepare their infrastructure with the ability to manage data throughout multiple database formats including cloud and traditional while switching to modern systems, so they have the option to use both hybrid and multi-cloud environments. This is possible with data streaming as it draws from multiple sources integrating the information to produce the full picture rather than segmented snapshots.

DATA IN MOTION FOR SMARTER CITIES

Seventy-six per cent of IT leaders said timely integration of real-time data from different applications is very, or extremely, important for mission-critical processes within their organisation, according to the State of Data in Motion Report. Yet nearly half reported difficulty integrating data promptly.

However, after the initial barrier is crossed, real-time data management proves itself beneficial in both performance and maintenance. Governments can worry less about the integrity of their information and look to the future to develop innovations and upgrade services.

Following the adoption of a seamless flow of real-time data, governments thrive with more effective and efficient data management. Leveraging cloud environments to manage the scalability of increasing volumes of data, governments appreciate automation and flexibility of applications while maintaining a secure environment to innovate. As governments accelerate towards modernisation, data in motion bridges the divide between imagination and reality, empowering them to harness the wealth of real-time knowledge for smarter cities.

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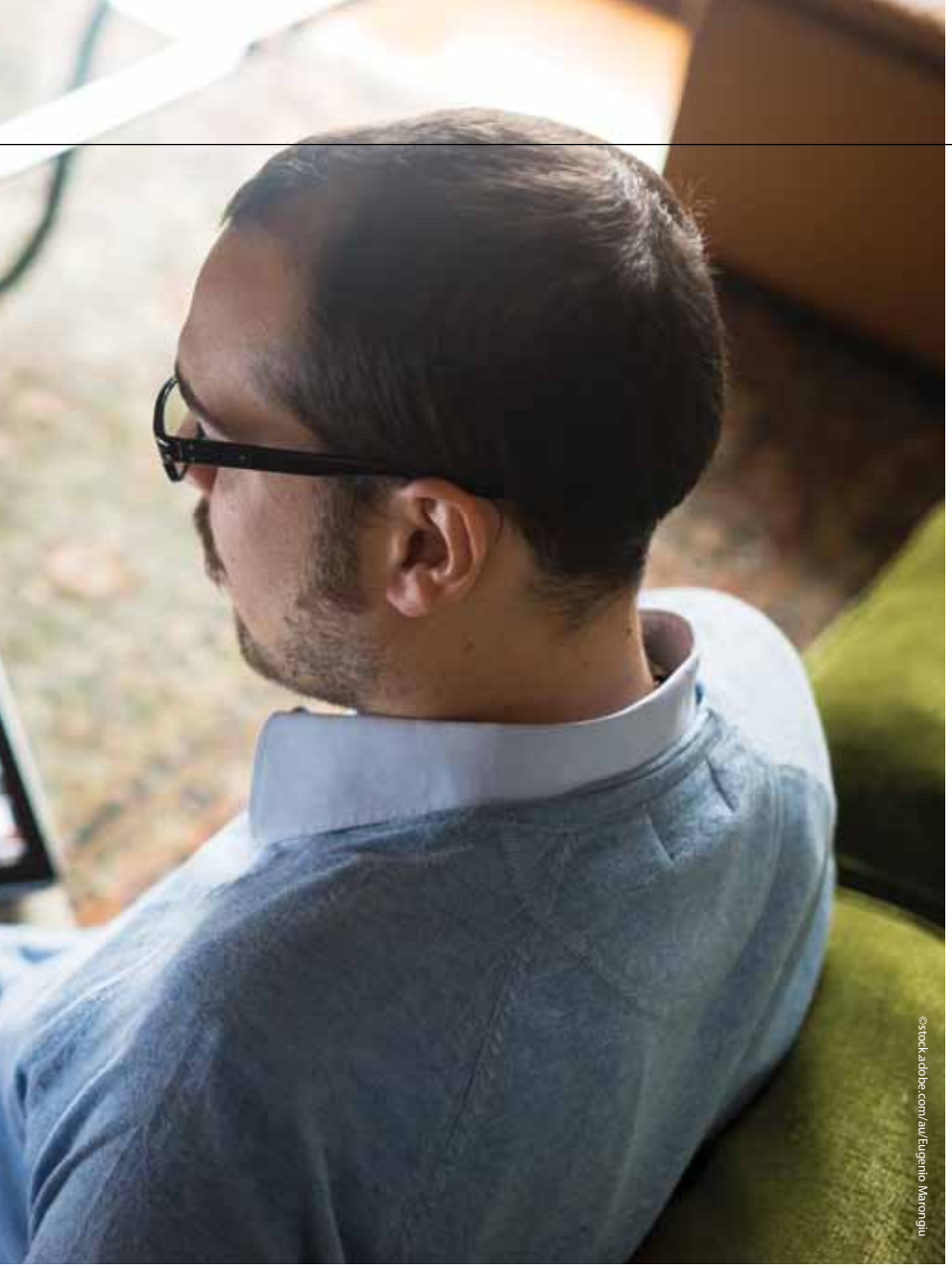
ENABLING ENTERPRISE MOBILITY IN GOVERNMENT

Brent Paterson, Managing Director Australia and New Zealand, SNP

WITH COSTS RISING ACROSS THE BOARD, TAXPAYERS ARE UNDERSTANDABLY SHOWING MORE INTEREST IN HOW GOVERNMENT FUNDS ARE BEING SPENT. THE PUBLIC SECTOR FACES MOUNTING PRESSURE TO STREAMLINE INTERNAL PROCESSES, REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND ACCELERATE RESPONSIVENESS, ALL WHILE MANAGING THE NEEDS OF A MORE MOBILE WORKFORCE.

Like the private sector, becoming an intelligent enterprise is now more important than ever for government agencies so they can remain adaptable to constantly evolving national and global challenges. The public sector must also be ready to harness emerging opportunities for the benefit of the nation.

One of the most effective ways Australian government agencies can achieve this is by investing in digital, data-driven technologies that help optimise internal processes and realise greater levels of productivity and efficiency. For example, agencies that prioritise data integrity and adopt near-real-time data analytics capabilities will be better positioned to build mobility, agility and resilience into every aspect of operations and become intelligent enterprises. This doesn't just apply to key agencies such as defence, transport, and finance, but also to agencies that historically haven't relied on the valuable insights and capabilities that data analytics can bring. Having the right data analytics available to the right people at the right time improves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insights to support critical areas such as cost control and workforce retention.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING ENTERPRISE MOBILITY IN GOVERNMENT

Many government agencies still rely on having a primarily office-based workforce. While traditionally this model has worked well, COVID-19 lockdowns forced departments to quickly accommodate remote and hybrid working. To some extent, this has remained as the public sector aims to retain talented workers who are not yet comfortable with returning to the office full time or workers who have relocated from city locations to regional areas.

As the great reshuffle continues and public and private sectors vie for top talent, enterprise mobility will become increasingly important for agencies, especially those that want to enable their workers to engage more with communities.

Enterprise mobility refers to being a more mobile organisation underpinned by reliable, secure technology that supports all facets of mobile, remote and hybrid work. For a hybrid or remote workplace to be successful, it needs technology that lets authorised users easily find information, collaborate and securely access data across multiple devices through cloud technology.

To truly achieve enterprise mobility, the organisation must be on a path to become an intelligent enterprise. Intelligent enterprises move beyond being data-driven organisations to agencies that consistently embed advanced technologies, live data analysis and best practice processes across every aspect of the department at all levels.

This approach helps to eliminate legacy data siloes that create bottlenecks and impede internal processes that slow government decision-making. Instead, agencies that adopt an intelligent enterprise business model achieve more dynamic cross-functional business processes both within the agency and across agencies. This delivers complete visibility for government decision-makers because of the real-time and accurate insights they have of their organisation, sister agency issues that may impact on their department, and constituents. This can result in optimal citizen, employee and stakeholder experiences, and deliver a more agile organisational approach.

One simple example of this is smart cities, whereby the intelligent enterprise model can eliminate data siloes and drive greater levels of cross-department collaboration, such as planning and environment, infrastructure, communities and finance, to fast-track projects that can realise the smarter cities agenda more efficiently than legacy departmental models.

There are three important benefits that come from being an intelligent enterprise in the public sector:

1. AGILITY

The level of collaboration that the intelligent enterprise model provides both within the agency and across agencies, while securely enabling mobile and remote workforces, gives government departments greater levels of agility. It provides agencies with the same level of agility as leading private sector enterprises, which is critical for the ever-evolving political and economic landscape.

Achieving agility at this level means the agency is much better equipped to adapt to environmental and societal changes. The volatility of recent years has shown how fast government departments need to react. As an intelligent enterprise, agencies will have the necessary technology to deliver the right data insights to the right people at the right time so agencies and government leaders can make more informed decisions that accommodate rapidly changing environments.

Advanced mobile technologies let intelligent enterprise agencies provide more mobility and flexibility to employees while saving infrastructure costs and reducing technology downtime. This helps reduce operational costs, improve efficiencies, boost productivity and retain valuable employees now seeking more flexible working arrangements. For example, the intelligent enterprise can support a secure remote working model that empowers employees to provide services from any location, mitigating the potential impact of future restrictions and providing a safer alternative workplace in case of future health and safety events. It also gives government workers information at their fingertips when engaging with community members, improving customer service.

2. LIVE DATA ANALYSIS

A key issue for government agencies is how to continually improve customer service and engagement. Eliminating data siloes and achieving live data analytics is crucial because it gives agencies more streamlined access to the data they need, when and where they need it, to deliver better services to constituents. This includes critical data such as transport interruptions or environmental and community issues that impact citizens' daily lives. An intelligent enterprise makes this information more easily available for government agencies, so decision-makers get necessary insights to deliver better outcomes for constituents and, ultimately, much better customer service and engagement.

"For a hybrid or remote workplace to be successful, it needs technology that lets authorised users easily find information, collaborate and securely access data."

Having real-time data analysis with the most up-to-date information on projects and current operations enabled by mobile cloud technologies also reduces the time and resources needed for manual reports, leading to faster results and turnaround times. And, it reduces the risk of errors in analysis and reporting, which directly impacts constituent outcomes.

3. BEST PRACTICE PROCESSES

The advanced technology within an intelligent enterprise provides government agencies with the tools to streamline processes and implement more efficient practices. This lets agencies capitalise more on the benefits of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), taking advantage of automation capabilities and freeing up workers to focus more on strategic objectives and customer engagement.

Adopting smart technologies, such as AI and ML, and deploying tools that help improve internal communications and alignment, while streamlining business processes, automating tasks and operations, and optimising operations, empowers the public sector to set and achieve the same level of business best practice that's realised in the private sector. The outcome is a next-generation government that can more easily keep pace with rapidly changing consumer and community needs while continuously improving cost and operational efficiencies, and worker productivity and engagement.

The idea of the intelligent enterprise and more robust data analytics may seem like a simplistic model to government agencies that are already on a solid path to digital transformation. However, the reality is that it unlocks an unprecedented capability for agencies to reshape how departments function and deliver long-term cost and operational efficiency gains, while improving how agencies are perceived by community stakeholders.

This both supports the government of the day and creates a sustainable enterprise for the future public sector as it helps agencies more effectively uncover ways to address the growing challenges of a rapidly aging population, climate change and social issues across local, state and federal levels.

Data accessibility, integrity, real-time analytics, advanced technologies for digitalisation and hybrid working models are the future for government agencies. These technologies build mobility, agility and resilience, and are the backbone for an intelligent enterprise. Government agencies that want to improve efficiencies, save costs and build better engagement with staff and communities must embrace these capabilities and the technological solutions that support them to evolve public sector processes to meet the needs of the digital economy.

Bundaberg becomes a ‘cloud-first’ council

Bundaberg Regional Council (BRC) has achieved its ambitious goal to become a cloud-first council, meaning it can deliver better, smarter, more connected services to the 90,000 residents living in the Bundaberg region.

BRC’s digital transformation journey, which is centred on the as a service (XaaS) model, has been supported by global public software provider Civica.

Civica’s Authority Altitude allowed BRC to simplify all processes across the organisation, increasing efficiencies and modernising the IT team’s work practices. The implementation has geared the team towards seeking further productivity gains as the reactive maintenance work that once dominated their day becomes a thing of the past.

The smooth implementation, combined with a workforce that was ready to make a change for the better, has delivered a positive experience for the council.

BRC CIO Mitch Miller was amazed at how quickly Authority Altitude was operational.

“This doesn’t happen with ERPs very often; it’s usually the vendor we have to wait for, but in this case Civica has surpassed our expectations.

“Everything we’ve freed ourselves of allows us to continually improve business processes because we no longer need to do traditional back-of-house IT work. Our operating costs have also been overhauled — no more asking finance for a million dollars every two to three years, we now have a flat operating expense from year-to-year with zero capital expense,” Miller said.

Civica is a long-term technology partner to over 300 councils across Australia and New Zealand. The Authority Altitude SaaS solution was developed in Australia in collaboration with local government agencies.

DCI Data Centers to build new facility in Canberra

DCI Data Centers (DCI) has secured land and power to build a 20 MW, TIER-III, Zone 3+, secure cloud edge data centre, called CBR01, to service the Canberra market.

DCI Data Centers Chair and Brookfield Managing Director Udhay Mathialagan said the new facility situated in the Poplars Innovation Precinct, Jerrabomberra, is the first to respond to the Commonwealth’s mandate to supply geographical and supply chain diversity for government and public cloud workloads at scale.

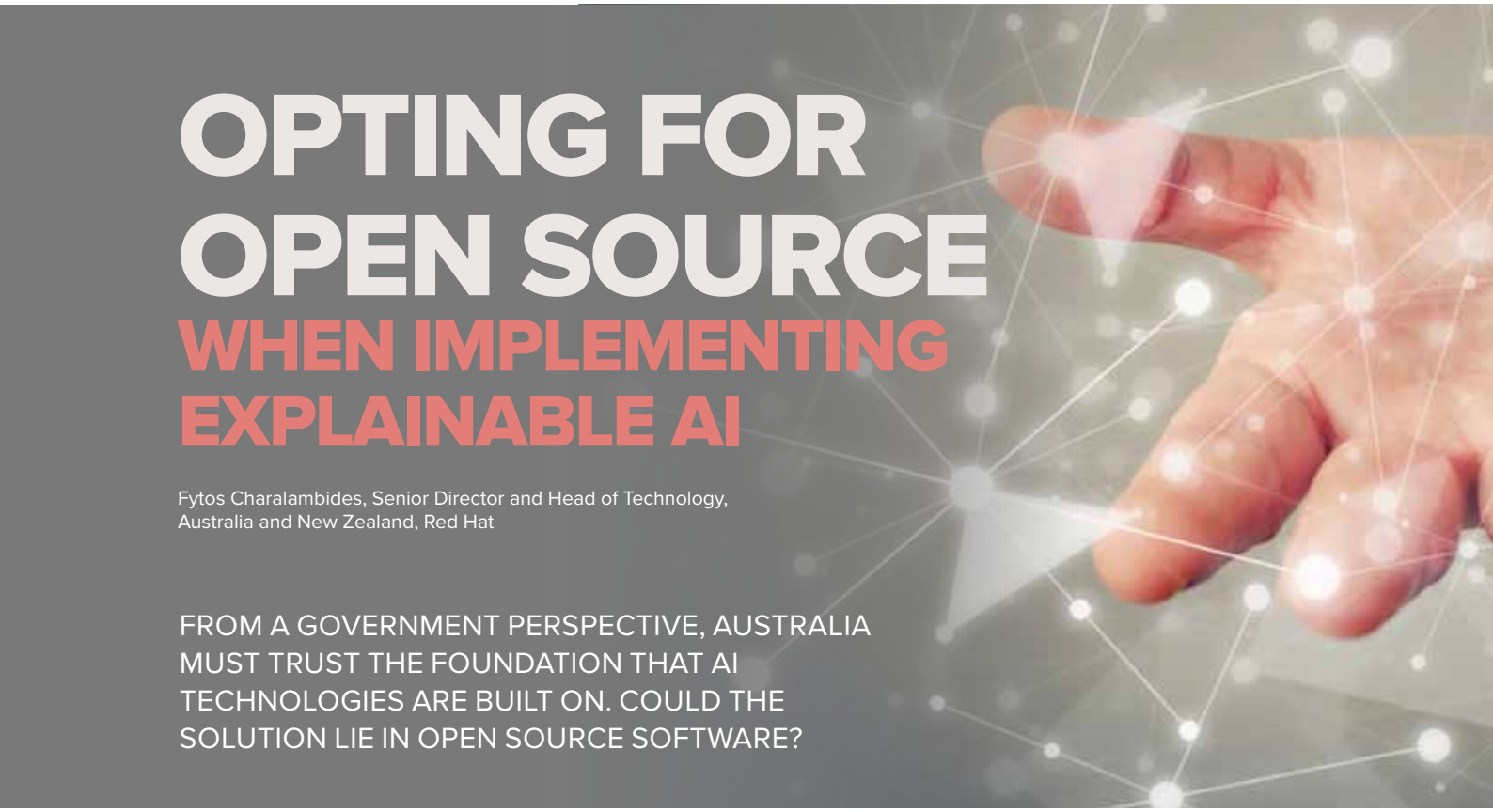
“This new data centre is the first site to offer true resiliency in power provision that not only answers a call from the government to support their Cloud First Strategy, but will provide unparalleled security for our customers. It will also be one of the major contributors in driving urban development within the new precinct,” he said.

DCI is one of the first to commit to the precinct, which has a focus on defence, space, cybersecurity and high-tech manufacturing sectors.

CBR01 will operate on a separate grid to Canberra. This is due to a multiparty agreement and investment between DCI, Poplars and other power users that will see Essential Energy build a new 132 kV powerline to Poplars, unlocking the site’s development potential and removing barriers for other like-minded businesses to set up in the precinct.

“This separate grid will support cloud services and provides resilience for the Canberra market and Capital region. It also means that with our commitment to the site we will expedite the development of the precinct, which will positively impact the region for future generations,” Mathialagan said.

The new data centre will have an initial capacity of 20 MW, with eight data halls and dedicated secure offices and storage over the 4 ha site. The innovative data centre design brings together environmentally efficient technologies and construction methods, meaning emerging customer demands can be addressed efficiently and promptly.



OPTING FOR OPEN SOURCE WHEN IMPLEMENTING EXPLAINABLE AI

Fytos Charalambides, Senior Director and Head of Technology, Australia and New Zealand, Red Hat

FROM A GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE, AUSTRALIA MUST TRUST THE FOUNDATION THAT AI TECHNOLOGIES ARE BUILT ON. COULD THE SOLUTION LIE IN OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE?

When the federal government revealed its $124 million Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan in 2021, it marked the beginning of a new era of public sector confidence in the technology. It was clear the government had been thinking about this for some time. Prior to announcing its overarching AI Action Plan, the government released an AI Ethics Framework, a collection of voluntary guidelines for businesses and government entities to responsibly design, develop and implement AI.

Since the AI Action Plan was released, the macro and micro environment in Australia and globally has changed dramatically, sparking new debates and conversations about changing government policies to fit the new normal. One of the standout transitions is the request for transparency and access to information around how the government funds and operates citizen services. Combined with a heightened cybersecurity landscape, the question is: how does the government provide open access in this complex operating environment whilst maintaining secure platforms that build trust?

From the government's perspective, if Australia is to realise the immense potential of AI, it needs to be able to trust the foundation these technologies are being built on and be confident that a particular AI technology has come to the correct conclusions within the context of the data that it is being fed. By gaining better visibility into the AI process, government entities using the technology can achieve 'explainable AI' — the ability for machines to clearly demonstrate and explain the rationale behind their conclusions. Understanding the process that went into the AI — how specifically it came to a calculation — can help users feel more confident that the solutions they are being presented with are the right solutions. This capability can offer greater trust that an ethical framework can be applied and maintained when using AI technology.

However, not all AI software offers the kind of visibility and transparency needed to adhere to such an ethical framework. For example, proprietary software tends to be very opaque by design as the developers, and the organisations that employ them, want to protect their work and intellectual property. As such, it is exceedingly difficult to tell how a piece of software actually works — the paths that it takes to process and analyse data, from ingestion to recommendation. Without understanding the process, it can be difficult to achieve trusted, explainable AI.

The solution might lie in the adoption of open source software to develop these technologies. Open source

software, along with the core cultural tenets of the open source community, can help the public sector achieve its AI objectives. With the right combination of technology and development methodology, agencies can build more transparent AI solutions faster, resulting in greater efficiencies and more accurate and trusted decisions.

OPTING FOR OPEN SOURCE

One of the best ways governments can gain the visibility needed to ensure that AI technology can adhere to an ethical framework is by powering it with highly transparent, standards-based software. This is where open source software can help. Open source software is built on the concept of transparency and open collaboration.

To provide some context, open source software is code that is designed to be publicly accessible for anyone to see, modify and distribute as they see fit. Because it is developed in an open and collaborative way, open source software is often less expensive and more flexible than proprietary software.

But most importantly, it is eminently transparent. Open source draws upon a decentralised production model that often involves many contributors working together to find new ways to solve problems in their communities and industry. This requires absolute transparency to work. As a bonus, with so many eyes on the source code, there are fewer chances of security issues slipping through the cracks during the development process.

Indeed, 84% of government IT leaders surveyed for the State of Enterprise Open Source: Highlights from the government sector report said they believe that enterprise open source is as secure as or more secure than proprietary software.

Governments can draw upon the transparency of open source software to build AI systems that are able to incorporate and meet ethical guideline requirements. Open source software allows visibility into how a particular conclusion is derived from a specific dataset.

This kind of visibility not only has the potential to help government agencies better understand how their AI processes analyse data and reach their conclusions, it also offers an unfiltered view of the processes behind the otherwise opaque 'black box' technology that sometimes powers AI. At the same time, the security offered by open source has the potential to create safer AI systems.

OPENING UP TO INNOVATION

The government is increasingly embracing innovation. This is a core theme of the AI Action Plan, which aims to see Australia become a global leader in the development and adoption of trusted, secure and responsible AI.

The government's efforts to support and drive AI technology development mirror efforts in the private sector. Organisations in the private sector are well aware of the value of open source software, and AI is one of the areas seeing surging usage of such software.

For example, 80% of organisations surveyed in our latest State of Enterprise Open Source report indicated they were planning to increase their use of enterprise open source software in areas such as AI, machine learning (ML), edge computing and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Why? A big part of it is that the IT leaders surveyed continued to perceive enterprise open source in an increasingly favourable light, with 77% indicating they had a more positive perception of enterprise open source than they did just a year earlier. This trend could have something to do with the cost, flexibility and security aspects that open source software can offer different use case implementations, including AI.

At the same time, 78% of the government IT leaders endorsed enterprise open source solutions at a time when flexibility and innovation were needed most. Meanwhile, open source software's lower total cost of ownership ranked as its most favourable benefit among government sector survey respondents.

This is important. Public sector entities in Australia, as in many other countries, are typically bound by procurement rules that compel agencies to find and engage suppliers that represent the best value for money. With the lower total cost of ownership offered by open source software, it represents a logical choice for many government entities.

All of these factors contribute to the rising role that open source can play in enabling the federal government to achieve the 'explainable AI' capability that can underpin an ethical framework for the use of AI systems in Australia, ultimately helping to drive the country's AI ambitions.

Australia has the chance to reap enormous benefits from AI and open source software can provide a pathway to making this a reality.

RESPONSIBLE AI

John Asquith, Government Relations Lead, ServiceNow Australia

Global advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics have shown better ways to get things done. Millions of Aussies have embraced AI-based applications to make everyday tasks easier, faster and more meaningful. This is especially true for the 40% of knowledge workers that have embraced hybrid work arrangements post-pandemic.

Dr Catriona Wallace, CEO of Ethical AI Advisory, believes the pace of change will only accelerate and it must be met with an increase in responsible design and development.

"Over the next few decades, AI will become the most intelligent entity on the planet," she said.

"We should be excited about this possibility, but conscious of the risks. Leaders need to act now, double down on responsible and ethical AI, and get diversity into the design and build of AI tools."

In a new report commissioned by our team, Wallace looks at how AI will transform the way people work, live and play by 2032, and will pave the way for a nationwide digital gold rush. Wallace believes that when it comes to AI, employees and customers will overwhelmingly favour organisations that actively practise ethics, accessibility and fairness.

A NEW SET OF RULES

With Australia's exponential uptake in digital services, business leaders are currently playing catch-up to build trust in how AI is governed and used. Questions of integrity and responsibility loom large. Who's making the rules for how AI is applied, and how do we hold them to account?

People want convenience, choice and frictionless services, but not at the expense of fairness. They don't want biased or opaque decision-making processes that can't be understood or questioned.

As investment in digital transformation accelerates, ethical decision-making — and the technology that underpins it — presents a new layer of organisational responsibility for leaders.

INVISIBLE AI

The average Australian already interacts with AI around 100 times each day, according to our report. However, there's a trust gap between consumers and business leaders when it comes to AI use. Our report reveals that 96% of Australian executives believe AI is becoming pervasive and only 22% of Aussies trust how companies are currently implementing AI.

This trust gap presents a challenge for businesses and a need for organisations to be active in their ethical decision-making. The need for AI ethics is more pertinent than ever, given the predicted pervasiveness of the technology.

According to Wallace, by 2032 we will interact with AI in almost every

activity and function we perform, hundreds of times a day, even when we sleep. AI will be everywhere, all the time, often without us knowing.

So, how can executives better prepare for AI's omnipresence? Wallace advises organisations to focus on three priorities that will enable them to realise AI's full potential, while reducing organisational risk.

1. ETHICS AND DIVERSITY MUST BE BUILT INTO AI

Designers of AI systems know what data goes in — and what answers come out. However, what happens in between is often a mystery. Hidden biases in the data can deliver results that are inaccurate, unethical and even illegal.

Many companies struggle to quantify the ROI from AI governance measures like building fairness, gaining trust with employees and customers, and ensuring regulatory compliance. Wallace predicts the risks of inaction are increasing, and that Australian regulators will move more aggressively against irresponsible operators.

Faced with increased stakeholder pressure, organisations must develop responsible AI strategies that reduce the chance of causing unintended harm to employees or customers. These must be clearly articulated in company policies and deployed wherever AI is being used.

Time is ticking on transparency as a choice. Reports show that this year, more companies will factor ethical responsibility into employee and customer journeys.

"Voluntary guidelines like the Australian Government's AI Ethics Framework will soon be replaced with minimum required standards, and responsible use of AI will be required by law," Wallace has predicted.

"When this happens, responsible AI will join other risk and compliance topics as a board-level imperative."

2. GOVERNANCE IS KEY

At our recent Knowledge 2022 conference, speakers — including NSW Minister for Customer Experience and Digital Government Victor Dominello — suggested a credential-based digital identity would be a catalyst for open ecosystems, marketplaces and platforms, representing the next generation of digital citizen experiences.

Dominello stressed the urgency for citizen services to catch up with consumer-grade experiences, saying "the biggest productivity play we have as a nation is getting digital identity sorted for Australians — we're still mucking around with paper and plastic cards. But to do that, trust in how data is secured and managed is critical."

3. MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

Our research has found Australians generally want speed, transparency and a personalised approach when resolving customer service issues. However, Wallace's analysis reveals two new user mentalities are emerging. The 'digital experiencers' will embrace technology with few limits, while the 'organic experiencers' (roughly 25% of the population) will demand choice in how they interact with brands and employers. This group will reject digital-only models, preferring to pick and choose between touchpoints based on the task at hand.

This divide means business and government will need to design products and services that cater to both groups.

Take our client, Energy Queensland as an example. The energy provider manages 247,000 km of network for more than two million customers. This large-scale operation requires a seamless flow of real-time information across the organisation. Disconnected, home-grown systems meant employees were wasting valuable time waiting for decisions, actions and responses, causing bottlenecks and eroding trust.

When implementing a new digital strategy, the organisation wanted a consistent experience, without forcing every employee on to digital channels. Energy Queensland created a process that allowed people to log requests via an app, but also continued to offer a phone helpdesk, giving employees time to adjust to the change. Meeting staff 'where they are' and where their preferences lie increased uptake, while also allowing digital users to gain back critical time.

RESPONSIBLE AI BECOMES BUSINESS STRATEGY

Employees and customers will increasingly decide which brands they engage with, based on responsibility standards set out by leaders. By focusing on the ethical design and delivery of products and services today, organisations can become more agile and adaptive, while staying ahead of the regulatory curve.

Forward-thinking firms will invest in responsible AI, fair business practices that meet stakeholder expectations and systems that empower stakeholders via greater choice in how and when they interact with brands.

The three trends a government department must consider when faced with modernising legacy systems

Paul Arthur, Regional Vice President - A/NZ, OutSystems

It is a widely accepted fact that government departments, agencies and peripheral organisations are often slow to modernise their technology. Citizen expectations change constantly, budgets are tight, shifting priorities must be accounted for.

To successfully transform, a government must consider a holistic change across departments, taking into account the overall experience of their constituents and the various technologies available to help achieve these goals.

A major part of this modernisation has been to replace old, legacy systems with modern solutions.

For many years, legacy modernisation was a black or white affair: either rip out all the old technology and start afresh or make do with it, layering new technology onto old to extend its useful lifetime. Afraid of the risks of the first option, most IT departments and government decision-makers opted for the second, for better or worse.

However, since technology has improved dramatically in recent times, there are now a much wider range of options available to decision-makers. Coupled with the after-effects of the pandemic, whereby employees have become accustomed to more flexible working arrangements and remote work, there is simply no way a government department can continue using aging legacy technology.

Falling into the 'lift and shift' way of thinking about modernisation is a false solution. Governments must look to key modern technologies like cloud computing, DevOps, and high-performance low-code platforms to keep critical processes and systems running whilst providing important upgrades to bring technology up to the level that citizens expect.

In reality, the word 'legacy' refers to the amount of technical debt a particular piece of technology has — in other words, how expensive and difficult it would be to resolve any of the issues it has that keep it from meeting current needs.

The legacy modernisation challenge has generally come down to an economic argument: the cost of keeping an ineffective, older system versus the total cost of modernising it — including the strain on people and other processes whole it is being replaced.

Further to this, it is sometimes necessary to consider how citizens will react to a new solution as well, if the upgrade happens to be a new portal or application for public use.

Enter the concept of Hybrid IT

Simply put, Hybrid IT is a management approach that combines legacy, on-premise systems with public and private cloud, deployment environment across multiple public clouds, private clouds, and on-

premises and cloud-based virtualized environments, as well as traditional on-premises systems, including legacy assets. As such, hybrid IT gives enterprises the means for modernising legacy — a framework for modernisation. Within this broader strategic context there are three trends that are changing the nature of legacy modernisation.

Trend #1: The Cloud

Like downsizing a house and seeing it as an opportunity to clear away a whole lot of clutter, so too is moving to the cloud.

Even as organisations adopt cloud-first strategies, rarely is there an opportunity to "lift and shift" a legacy app directly into the cloud. Instead, cloud-native approaches like containers and microservices give technology teams new opportunities to replace legacy functionality with modern applications.

Make no mistake: cloud-native approaches are challenging. The combination of complex technology and scarce, costly skills can hamper a cloud-native migration.

Trend #2: DevOps

DevOps is an automation-driven model for collaboration across the IT organisation, including development, quality assurance, operations, and security — as well as an increasing level of collaboration with people in customer-facing roles. Such individuals have a previously unheard-of opportunity to really represent their department or agency, bringing their inside knowledge to the design and functionality of the project.

DevOps, however, isn't only for bespoke development. DevOps is also an essential enabler of legacy modernisation, as the teams responsible for maintaining legacy apps must be an integral part of the collaborative nature of a DevOps project.

In the past, modernisation has often succumbed to the "throw it over the wall" mentality that DevOps can likely resolve. DevOps calls for pushing such decision-making down to cross-functional, collaborative teams — who might determine, for example, that the best way to deal with a legacy app is to modernise it in its existing place and format. In other words, the right modernisation decision may very well be to update an existing application in its existing operational environment, perhaps rewriting it with microservices.

Proceeding with modernisation without DevOps and the automation and collaboration it can bring, it is much harder to make the best decision for whether to rewrite, migrate, modernise or simply leave a legacy system in place.

Trend #3: High-performance Low-Code Platforms

With this range of choices now available, modernising a legacy application is no longer a monolithic task. However, such modernisation typically requires the creation of new application capabilities, which brings us to the third trend: high-performance low-code platforms.

One of the reasons why IT managers in the past have baulked at modernising legacy applications is the sheer cost, time, and risk involved in hand-coding an application. Low-code changes this equation, lowering both the time and risk involved in application creation. However, not all low-code vendors focus on legacy modernisation. For many, bespoke app development is often their reason-for-being. It is necessary to do some homework on the task at hand, and decide which vendor or vendors are best suited.

Low-code can also take advantage of the many cloud native services out there, giving companies the benefit of cloud native without the effort of using traditional tools. There is also the consideration of data risk when looking at a lift-and-shift approach — some data is simply too sensitive to move lightly, so finding ways to keep it within an original storage repository or platform can sometimes be optimal — therefore, finding a way to make it work better in that original environment is paramount.

Consider it like a web or framework that envelops the legacy application, making it work faster, more efficiently and integrating better with other systems.

An enterprise application development platform can help move a government agency towards a hybrid IT infrastructure, modernise legacy applications, bridge-build between disparate platforms and generally provide many integral facets of a digital transformation or modernisation project.

Modernising is no longer a long-term plan, or something that is 'nice to have' — it is simply essential to bring systems up to speed in the modern, post-pandemic world. Citizens — whether they are customers or constituents — demand fast, seamless digital interactions. This is true for private enterprise, and equally so for government agencies — and both sides have plenty to lose if they cannot provide those services.

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LIVING ON THE EDGE

THE IMPORTANCE OF SECURING THE EDGE FOR SMART CITIES

Chris Gibbs, Managing Director & Regional Vice President ANZ, Akamai

AS GOVERNMENTS AT ALL LEVELS SEEK TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE OF URBAN SERVICES, REDUCE COSTS AND RESOURCE CONSUMPTION, AND ENGAGE MORE EFFECTIVELY AND ACTIVELY WITH CITIZENS, WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE MORE SMART CITIES ROLLED OUT.

Key enablers of smart city initiatives globally have been the adoption of 5G and IoT applications. The Asia Pacific region is home to some of the world's most advanced 5G markets, with Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea aiming to be global leaders. But for smart cities to truly reach their potential, they need to harness the benefits of the edge.

USING THE EDGE TO DRIVE SMART CITY ADOPTION

Gartner defines edge computing as "part of a distributed computing topology where information processing is located close to the edge, where things and people produce or consume that information". Using the edge, data is processed on smart devices rather than sent back to the cloud. This reduces latency, improves response times, and makes services more robust and easier to scale.

The edge can add another layer of scale and performance and, with the right design, provide additional security and help minimise costs. The edge is where applications and services need a presence in order for digital business across any industry to be successful.

Users, applications and endpoints now exist across multiple locations and across different industries. This means businesses need solutions that enable real-time collaboration regardless of location, efficient deployment of distributed workloads and a secure connection. Organisations must be able to manage business disruptions in a rapidly changing environment, accelerated by the pandemic and further driven by ongoing global developments.

Investing and innovating at the edge can bring valuable public sector improvements, including reduced latency, increased scalability and improved security. Edge computing will be critical for agencies looking to drive

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a new wave of innovation with security at the forefront. Computing at the edge makes room for real-time processing and performance while empowering developers to 'just code' without needing to manage the complexities of supplying computing capacity and deploying code at the edge.

More workloads such as IoT and augmented reality/virtual reality are moving to the edge to take advantage of the benefits, but many are still too resource-intensive — such as Industry 4.0 and 5G networking processing — to be feasible. For the workloads that can be moved, the results can lead to transformational digital experiences for users and developers alike.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDGE FOR AUSTRALIA'S SMART CITIES

Edge computing is ideal for smart cities, where utilities and traffic are managed through intelligent, semi-autonomous networks. Locally, smart city projects will increasingly rely on processing data as close to the endpoint as possible. Several current programs, including 'Switching on Darwin' and Palmerston's smart city initiative, involve using technology to improve community safety, with both of these utilising CCTV cameras and smart LED technology to reduce street crime.

Similarly, Queensland's Logan City Flooded Roads Smart Warning System (FRSWS) project involves 20 FRSWS signs fitted with sensor technology to provide real-time information on the status of roads across the municipality. Given how quickly roads can flood, time is of the essence in minimising the risk of drivers inadvertently driving into flooded roads.

Edge computing is also being trialled by the NSW Government in Greater Sydney to monitor compliance of rank and hail taxi passenger service providers.

All these initiatives have one thing in common — a need to gather, process and analyse data closest to the point it is being generated, in order to unlock real-time insights.

SECURITY AND PRIVACY AT THE EDGE

While edge computing can resolve some of the privacy issues by accumulating data centrally, it can present security risks and leave personal data more exposed. For governments already grappling with cybersecurity and citizen privacy issues in existing, centralised systems, managing a new, remote realm of potential vulnerability is challenging, as well as ensuring secure data transfer between the edge and the cloud.

An edge platform with full visibility into the ever-evolving threat landscape can help mitigate attacks on customers across all industries by providing broad API protections to deal with DDoS, malicious injection, credential abuse and API specification violations, while providing scalability and performance for API traffic.

Moving your security stack to the edge is a step in the right direction, as this is where threats, users and applications are located. Utilising the edge ensures that attack traffic can be blocked right at its source, preventing access to its target.

Some approaches to consider when securing the edge:

- **Adopting a Zero Trust** approach is needed to prevent unauthorised access by malicious actors. With a 'never trust, always verify' approach across all entities — regardless of location, device or application and where the data is hosted — Zero Trust ensures only the right people have access to the network at any given time. Zero Trust thinks and acts like the Secret Service, being vigilant and methodically checking credentials before allowing access — even when they recognise the person.
- **Implementing a security strategy that addresses internal and external threats** is paramount. While common countermeasures such as multi-factor authentication (MFA), antivirus tools, and strong identity and access controls are a crucial part of the Zero Trust security strategy to defend against external attacks, businesses and government organisations also need a strategy to minimise the risk of cybercriminals reaching critical assets once defences are breached. Microsegmentation can play a pivotal role in alleviating the impact of infections that slip through the cracks. Once advanced threats like ransomware attacks penetrate a network, they start exploring the infrastructure for vulnerabilities and high-value assets. Microsegmentation ringfences critical data and systems to prevent or mitigate the damage once an attack has begun.
- **Implement audit processes to manage data and application hosting** changes at the edge. Where critical application parts or data segments are transferred to edge facilities that haven't been authorised as secure to host them, organisations can mitigate events by centrally controlling and subjecting edge application and data hosting to compliance audits.
- **Record all edge activity**. It's important to have full visibility into edge activities so that the organisation can make informed decisions if and when a breach occurs. Log all events associated with edge computing operations, including deployments, design modifications and access to any administrative modes from either a local keyboard/screen or remotely. Employees from IT operations and security departments should be notified before changes are made, and an escalation procedure should be created to inform management if anything unexpected is reported.

As more smart city projects are rolled out across Australia, securing the edge must be a top priority to mitigate security risks and cyber attacks.

Bad Data is Impacting Business Operations

Big data has grown in big proportions over the last decade. More companies are relying on the information they gather about their customers to make decisions, set goals, and find their competitive edge in the market.

With a giant amount of data, however, comes a giant amount of responsibility. Having strong privacy and security procedures and standards becomes paramount.

When a company has multiple departments, data siloing can occur, which should be a huge no-no for most companies. Someone in a sales department is entering essential data into their own records on a customer, for example, but the marketing department, who should be relying on that information in their decision-making for future advertising techniques, has no idea how and why this customer is buying their products. Instead, the marketing department might budget a large amount of money on research to understand customers' behaviour, when that data is already present in the sales department.

At the organisational level, lapses in data can lead to dire consequences, including lost revenue and even irreversible damage to the brand's reputation. In fact, global research and advisory firm Gartner, estimates that poor data quality costs organisations an average of S$12.9 million (approximately AUD13.4 million) a year. Apart from the immediate impact on revenue, over the long-term, poor-quality data increases the complexity of data ecosystems and leads to poor decision making.

Organisations with a proactive approach to ensuring data quality can minimise business risks or losses and are in a better position to uncover opportunities that improve business outcomes.

For example, if a company has inconsistent data on its supplier payment terms, and payment is made in 30 days instead of the stipulated 60 days, it can lead to missed opportunities to improve the company's working capital. By adopting a proactive approach to managing its data, the company can free up an enormous amount of working capital, especially if it has hundreds of suppliers.

Data has to be treated as a company's core asset and it needs to be of top quality, so that right decisions can be made timely. It is through the refinement process of cleansing, validation, de-duplication and continuous auditing that data can become valuable.

"Organisations are faced with an increasing volume of data coming in from many different sources daily, and with no signs of abating," says Mr Gordon Lam, President for Asia Pacific & Japan at Syniti. "However, the true value of this data can only be realised when it is harmonised and used to drive specific business outcomes."

Harnessing Data for Business Growth

As a leader in Enterprise Data Management, Syniti drives data quality, data governance and data management for businesses. Syniti's team of data experts support enterprise businesses on their data journey using the Syniti Knowledge Platform, which is a state-of-the-art solution for data quality improvements, master data management, data migration & replication, and more.

As organisations embark on digital transformation and adopt new technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence and machine learning, whether they succeed in

Figure 1: Source: A Business Value Snapshot by IDC, sponsored by Syniti

future is largely dependent on getting their data management processes right.

For data to be useful in decision making, it has to be accurate, consistent, complete, valid, timely, accessible and compliant. Yet, maintaining data quality is a challenge for many companies where much of the data entry is done manually across different systems, often resulting in inaccuracies and data duplication.

Gordon adds, "Organisations may already have data analytics software, but the critical question remains whether the data itself is accurate and relevant to provide reliable insights for effective decision making. Poor quality data results in poor quality decisions. Having the right data management platform that takes care of underlying data quality will turbocharge insights from existing data analytics software."

The Syniti Knowledge Platform helps to ensure that the data is correct right from the start. The moment any data enters a system, it is important to ensure that the same data from various systems is not duplicated. This gives organisations a "single source of truth" — a single system of records and data that can be used by various business functions to confidently make decisions.

"The quality of data has a direct impact on business performance," says Marcus Scott, Vice President of Sales for Australia and New Zealand at Syniti. "When data is managed well, companies are able to increase revenue, optimise costs and reduce business risks."

Accelerating Data Transformation for Australia and New Zealand businesses

Syniti has been crucial in providing end-to-end data management to accelerate business transformation for organisations in Australia and New Zealand.

One of Australia's largest and oldest food and beverage companies accumulated 500 legacy software applications as it grew rapidly over the years. Most of the applications were more than 30 years old and ran across various business functions, with data, including supplier and finance data, stored in separate systems. It became challenging to access data across the silos which impacted business operations.

To remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market, the company engaged Syniti to bring together all the 500 applications onto one cloud-based platform and implement a master data management system for its supplier and finance data. This has helped to remove data inconsistencies, minimise the need for double entry of data, and ensure that the quality of data is maintained. By streamlining key business processes, including supply chain reporting and customer claims processing, the company is now able to respond quicker to changes in the market.

Australia with its 100% data-focused team continues to support businesses in Australia and New Zealand and has previously reported an 800% software growth in the region for the first half of 2021, as organisations continue to accelerate digital transformation plans.

Driving Business Outcomes

Beyond ensuring the quality and efficient management of an organisation's data, Syniti supports data migration, a crucial process that is time-consuming and carries the risk of data loss. With a focused, data-driven approach, unique methodology and data management software like the Syniti Knowledge Platform, Syniti has helped more than 4,000 businesses resolve their data challenges. In addition, according to an IDC report, our solutions have helped businesses and operations reduce unplanned system downtime by 98%, data migration costs by 38% and time to complete data migration projects by 46%.

Syniti is a platinum partner of SAP which is one of the world's leading producers of software for the management of business processes. Syniti's software is resold by SAP as SAP Advanced Data Migration, by Syniti. Many of the largest global system integrators also resell and depend on Syniti as their enterprise data migration platform and partner of choice.

We also previously announced Syniti's collaboration with SAP to Provide Smooth SAP S/4HANA Deployments as a premier service offering for customer migration to SAP S/4HANA. In doing so, Syniti is further deepening its strategic collaboration with SAP Data Management and Landscape Transformation (DMLT) Services for customers moving to SAP S/4HANA via Selective Data Transition (SDT).

In a recent study, market research firm IDC found that Syniti and SAP customers that leveraged the Syniti Knowledge Platform to migrate and integrate their data for their SAP workloads significantly benefited in terms of their investment and reduction in operating expenses - reference Figure 1.

Marcus adds, "All industries face common data challenges. Smarter, better, and more efficient methods of doing things should be driven by software. With only 30 percent of digital transformation initiatives in ANZ succeeding in 2020, there is a significant opportunity for Syniti to help organisations harness the true value of their data."

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NO PAIN, NO GAIN: DRIVING RECOVERY THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR

Katrina Lawrence, Vice President, Public Sector, Dell Technologies Australia and New Zealand

A staggering 67% of all digital transformations miss the mark[1] — and that's not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, trial and error are critical for all organisations across industries, including the public sector. There should always be a margin for setbacks. The opportunity to learn from those mistakes is gold.

Our recovery depends on this progressive facet of innovation to streamline digital services, enable greater accessibility and deliver on visions for sustainability and inclusion. Accepting errors and regarding them as an opportunity will enable resilience in our hyper-competitive and increasingly digitalised futures. Let's call it failing fast, with grace.

As the public sector looks to unleash digital transformation and benefit from the potential of scalable, agile infrastructures, it's worth noting the lessons from the private sector. We know that transformation isn't easy, with 78% of businesses believing digital start-ups will threaten their organisation.[2] We also know through Dell Technologies Digital Transformation Index[3] that around six in 10 businesses cannot meet customers' top demands, highlighting the scope of the challenge ahead. Learning from these lessons and working with industry experts is vital in maximising the public sector's digital ambitions.

STEPPING STONES TO SUCCESS

Embracing the right kind of setback is an essential first step. There's a difference between incremental errors on the digital transformation journey and long-term, business-altering blunders. Acknowledging the need for testing, trial and experimentation is vital in the digital era — and public sector leaders are well placed to embrace this distinction and encourage a culture of innovation — where encountering challenges is part of the evolution process.

Those prepared to make small, consistent changes on the digital transformation journey will encounter bite-sized improvement opportunities they can learn from as they go. This

focused, steady approach will generate more impact than those seeking a single seismic shift. Making room for error and evolution often leads to positive change. Those partnerships founded on accepting marginal missteps in the pursuit of long-term innovation have far greater chances of success.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR: ONE METRIC AT A TIME

From 2015–2020, the adoption of cloud services yielded an estimated $9.5 billion benefit in improved productivity.[4] Adopting a multi-cloud strategy can deliver even greater productivity improvements with its flexibility and enhanced capability, which is why getting the approach right now is vital for public and private sectors.

"Pivoting in response to concerns at the early stages of a transformation plan is an invaluable tool, regardless of sector."

Digital transformations should follow an Agile methodology, breaking the project up into several phases to focus on tangibly improving a metric through continuous, incremental improvement. Organisations that focus on one quantifiable thing can readily see impact and test, learn and refine an approach for maximum gain. This means finding a significant process and then applying advanced technologies to improve that process by 5% or 10%.

Smaller steps require less labour, fewer resources and less finance. And 100 measured steps forward can have a more dramatic and significant operational improvement than one giant leap into the unknown. This was highlighted in our recent work with the Berlin Institute of Health.[5] The installation of new core servers delivered a 70% increase in processing power from its legacy system. It's an essential part of the institute's digital transformation solution for its ongoing research on COVID-19.

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest challenges for the public sector is bringing the vision of healthier, flourishing societies to life with digital transformation. The state finances the public sector, and as custodians of public finances, those holding the purse strings may often feel there is little room for error. Nevertheless, the public sector should seek to embrace that spirit of digital innovation and incorporate an acceptance of improvements along this journey toward a futureproof economy — in collaboration with industry experts and partners.

RECOVERY: MINDSETS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Pivoting in response to concerns at the early stages of a transformation plan is an invaluable tool, regardless of sector.

While only a third of digital transformations result in material and beneficial outcomes for the business, this statistic should not curb ambition but level expectations to enable innovative mindsets on the pathway to economic recovery. These mindsets should help to cultivate more digital skills and prepare the workforce to adapt to a future in which they will have multiple careers and specialisms.

As we enter the implementation stage of recovery, putting earlier investments into action and getting the most out of digital innovations is vitally important. Embracing opportunities for improvement along the way is more critical than ever as we address this journey and its impending challenges. We need to fail fast together.

As public and private sectors collaborate in their quest to make recovery a reality, failing fast, learning fast, but winning small is often essential. This digital mindset will drive public sector transformations beyond the 4th Industrial Revolution.

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BUILDING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

ORCHESTRATING EMPATHETIC CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Tony Winterbottom, Principal – Government Business, ANZ, Genesys

Ongoing economic and societal strains are causing demand for services and information to climb and government organisations are feeling the pressure. Australians expect government agencies to provide timely, tailored and robust care — particularly during times of distress, like natural disasters and a global pandemic. Empathy is at the core of this experience, and it must underpin every customer engagement.

Speaking at the 2022 Genesys G-Summit in Sydney, Victor Dominello MP, NSW Minister for Customer Service and Digital, echoed these sentiments when he said that public sector institutions must revolutionise customer service delivery, leveraging empathy to effectively address the increasing crises facing the Australian public and rebuild trust in government.

But what does this look like in practice? Here are three areas where government agencies can orchestrate empathetic customer experiences.

THE KEY METRIC OF SUCCESS IS NO LONGER EFFICIENCY

Technology plays a significant role in the evolution of the customer service industry and has resulted in increased transparency of information and more efficient customer interactions. Case in point, Mr Dominello said 75% of the New South Wales (NSW) population now has a digital version of their driver's licence.

However, technology is not a silver bullet — people are still vital in providing a personalised touch. When engaging citizens with empathy, there are a few cornerstones of outstanding service:

- Matching the customer to the customer service agent most suitable and/or qualified to provide support.
- Ensuring support personnel have the appropriate credentials to help the customer.
- Building trust with the customer through exceptional personalised service.
- To drive a healthy balance of efficiency and satisfaction, public institutions must place trust at the heart of their operations. Creating empathetic customer experiences is critical to this cause.

HOW TECHNOLOGY ENABLES EMPATHY

Technology has incredible potential to enable more empathetic interactions. For example, automation can eliminate admin work, affording government representatives more time with customers. Additionally, tools like predictive routing — which matches each interaction with the available agent that is best able to handle it and uses machine learning to align customer intent with the best equipped agent — ensures seamless customer experiences across multiple touch points.

AI-powered customer engagement technology is already being deployed greatly by Service NSW, a public service agency with 3000 customer service agents working 24/7. Speaking at G-Summit, Russel Murphy, Director of Program Delivery at Service NSW, highlighted how the Service NSW contact centre was tested when the Australian bushfires engulfed much of the region and during the breakout of the global pandemic. By embracing the use of artificial intelligence, the team could handle a huge increase in customer interaction volumes and help millions of residents navigate the turmoil, whilst remaining empathetic to each case.

EMBRACING A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC APPROACH

With billions in taxpayer funds dedicated to overhauling digital services in the coming years, Dominello stressed that those investments must be used by the government to deliver people-centred experiences where customers feel heard, valued and supported. This means reducing barriers to access and acknowledging that inclusion is critical. This will support more proactive service delivery, individual empowerment and ultimately foster trust in government.

For example, intuitive self-service options that provide customers with a channel choice will help reduce the frustration experienced when engagement is only available via in-person meetings and paper-based processes. Government agencies can harness technology to allow real-time feedback for users. For example, feedback from Service NSW customers showed that people with double-barrelled names could not download their digital licences. This feedback enabled the NSW Government to identify and patch the issue quickly.

Proactively responding to issues experienced by customers puts them at the centre of government operations and builds trust. Further, in recognising that people and environments are always changing, agencies can leverage technology to intelligently predict what customers need so that the right resources, information and services can be delivered through the right engagement channels at the right time. These capabilities mean public service organisations can continually learn and improve their actions for more successful outcomes.

Government agencies have made remarkable progress in expanding and scaling services — especially when considering that much of this was accomplished while working remotely. This progress was made possible by public servants who should be praised for their commitment to reimagine, automate and deliver timely and empathetic customer experience at scale. By continually pushing to adopt a customer and employee-centric approach, government agencies can create empathetic experiences, earn trust and build confidence in government.

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DRIVING TOWARD A DIGITAL, AI-ENABLED FUTURE

John Garratt, Federal Government Director, Micro Focus

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CITIZENS EXPECT STREAMLINED EXPERIENCES WHEN DEALING WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, ESPECIALLY AS PEOPLE BECOME INCREASINGLY COMFORTABLE WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES AND THE RAPID SPEED WITH WHICH THEY CAN SOLVE CHALLENGES ONLINE. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FACE INCREASED PRESSURE TO IMPROVE SERVICES BY LEVERAGING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES THAT MAKE PROCESSES FASTER AND EASIER.

Citizens expect streamlined experiences when dealing with government agencies, especially as people become increasingly comfortable with digital technologies in their personal lives and the rapid speed with which they can solve challenges online. As such, government agencies face increased pressure from the public to improve services, and how citizens engage with them, by leveraging innovative technologies that make processes faster and easier.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged over time as one of the most effective technologies that businesses and government departments can integrate into their technology stack to streamline processes and increase productivity levels across the board. It is a versatile technology with a myriad of different applications that can help to accelerate operations and uncover inefficiencies. Leveraging AI for automation, analytics, security, and even underpinning contact centres with AI bots can help better support government departments with tools that help to drive better performance.

AI is not a new tool for government departments; Australian governments have been using AI in some capacity since the 1990s.[1] AI is not only being leveraged by government agencies for back-end processes, either. Smart cities are increasingly using AI to underpin daily operations. For example, we are already seeing governments across the country leverage AI in cameras that detect the use of mobile phones while driving. AI's capabilities and use cases continue to increase as the technology advances.

The Australian Government itself recognises the need for continued investment in AI, developing the AI Action plan as a key part of its Digital Economy Strategy, which aims to deliver on the Australian Government's ambition for Australia to be a leading digital economy and society by 2030.[2] One of the focus areas for the action plan is the

continued adoption and development of AI technologies to create jobs, increase productivity and transform Australian businesses.

However, while the government prioritises the use of AI in the private sector and is investing heavily in continued development to help aid in digital transformation efforts across the board, there are still improvements that can be made in terms of how government departments use AI technology in their operations.

AI IN GOVERNMENT: WHERE IT IS VERSUS WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE

Like businesses in the private sector, AI is already widely used across government departments and the public sector to varying degrees. It is common for government agencies to leverage AI to support the automation of processes and services.

For example, using AI and automating service tickets for helpdesks is a reasonably common practice. Governments also might leverage AI in their operations to bolster omnichannel contact centre environments supported by chatbots and automated processes. IT support teams could also leverage chatbots to facilitate self-service and alleviate pressure on the first-level service desk. It is increasingly common for government teams to use natural language processing (NLP) for machine learning (ML) to uncover trends and identify new areas for further automation. Data analytics is another common use for AI across government departments, with many leveraging AI to help drive better business insights from more detailed analysis.

And, as the skills shortage continues to plague organisations nationwide, government departments face even more challenges as available resources continue to flow between agencies, taking their intellectual copyright and skills with them. As such, government departments are more actively assessing new opportunities to focus their experts on more challenging problems.

Engaging AI is one way agencies can get more value from their available resources, using smart software solutions to deliver AI for IT operations (AIOps) that can integrate and analyse distributed events. The use of AI and process automation is a simple first step using automation robots that can utilise AI to make decisions based on data and past events. However, government agencies are missing significant opportunities by not using AI to the full extent of its capabilities. And, considerable efficiencies could be gained by agencies taking their use of AI to the next level.

There are two major areas, both internally and externally, where government departments should focus on further integrating AI and other innovative technologies to achieve their aspirations of a digital, AI-enabled future. These are:

- **Security**: While AI and ML are already firmly on the radar for government departments, the use of AI and ML for security purposes can go further than it already has. AI and ML can be used in security information and event management (SIEM) software to detect anomalies and identify suspicious activities that indicate threats. For government departments looking to take advantage of vast amounts of data available by analysing and using logic to identify similarities to known malicious code, AI can identify new and emerging threats much sooner than human employees and previous technology iterations. Potential uses for AI by government departments could also include leveraging AI to uncover data patterns and identify instances of illegality in online chatter or social media, for example.
- **Health and safety**: AI can also be used to significantly enhance the health and safety of citizens. A recent example for government departments is the use of AI to track the spread of COVID-19, with different symptoms being reported at medical clinics and cases triaged as presented to emergency departments. While this is a specific case, it will continue to be a useful application for AI in future health or safety events.

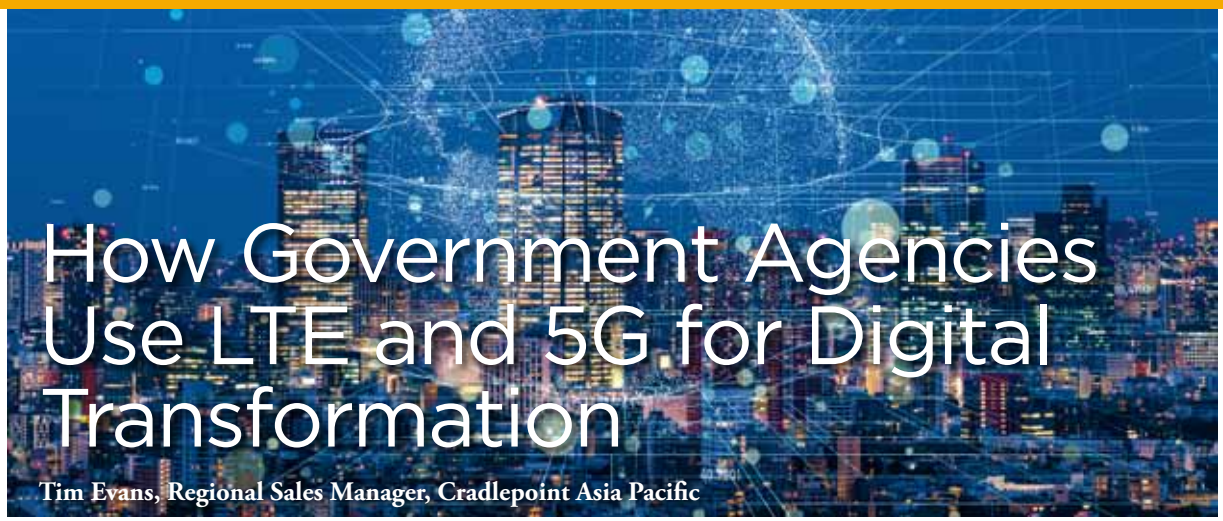
HOW TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKFORCE WITH CHANGING PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGIES

As with any organisational change, government agencies face challenges when it comes to changing processes and implementing new ways of operating. In addition to the continued investment in AI to help strategically advance the transformation of government departments, it is crucial that time and resources are invested into better change management to ensure public sector workers can use AI to its fullest extent in their operations.

Using AI across government operations both in the public arena (ie, cameras detecting mobile phone use) and in back-end processes will drive Australia towards its goal of being a leading digital economy and society. And, empowering government workers to use AI in their daily lives will help to deliver better operations that will in turn lead to more streamlined processes and better experiences for the public.

Ultimately, in order for the government to deliver superior citizen services, it is essential that it finds the right balance between technologies that streamline processes and change management that empowers the public sector workforce to embrace change and harness the power of AI and other smart technologies.

1. https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/researchpapers/Pages/The-use-of-AI-by-government-parliamentary-and-legal-issues.aspx
2. https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/australias-artificial-intelligence-action-plan/about-the-ai-action-plan



How Government Agencies Use LTE and 5G for Digital Transformation

Tim Evans, Regional Sales Manager, Cradlepoint Asia Pacific

Given the essential nature of their work, every government agency's employees need consistent and reliable access to the digital tools they use on a daily basis. In a wide variety of situations, these departments need the right network assets deployed today that can scale to meet the requirements of the future. Cradlepoint's NetCloud Service and cellular-enabled routers and adapters unlock the power of 4G LTE and 5G to securely connect government workers no matter where their mission takes them.

Pop-up networks

LTE and 5G allow government employees to quickly deploy wireless connectivity for operations including emergency services, food and safety inspections, and aircraft maintenance. Staff can easily set up connectivity in the field without reliance on another organisation's network.

In Australia, pop-up networks were used in many COVID testing and vaccination clinics to provide on-site connectivity to patient health records and update vaccination status during the pandemic and could also be applied in use cases such as election voting booths.

Remote work from anywhere

Late last year, various government departments said that a hybrid working approach would continue post-pandemic lockdowns and plans were made for new workspaces that would support that long-term.

In a report published by the Australian Public Service (APS) Commission, it was found that for public service workers, "access to digital tools, information systems and videoconferencing technology were critical during crisis, to ensure timely communication between ministers and the APS, business continuity of Government, and team engagement."

Having a secure, dedicated network for high-bandwidth technologies is a necessity for government workers who work from home, abroad or in hot-desking environments. Issuing Wireless WAN routers to remote staff allows IT personnel to centrally monitor and control information security and network performance.

Pandemic aside, the ability to offer remote work to government employees gives the sector access to wider labour markets and in-demand skills, reducing geographic barriers to some roles in the sector.

Disaster response kits

Disaster response kits serve as a highly portable tool for setting up a dependable and secure network to ensure critical work can begin immediately. Hardened kits featuring ruggedised LTE routers can be used in a range of harsh environments as an integral part of emergency response.

Smart bases

Today's military bases use IoT technologies including surveillance cameras, security equipment, and drones. Using a cellular router to connect each IoT device and/or application enables IT teams to deploy these technologies anywhere quickly with the ability to separate red/black data. 5G technology is fast becoming a suitable technology to manage and deploy drones. Only 5G provides the bandwidth, resiliency and low latency needed to for most applications and payloads.

Mobile command centres

When responding to an incident, agencies need flexibility to take their operations into the field. Mounting a ruggedised, cellular- and Wi-Fi-enabled router in a mobile command centre provides the 24x7 connectivity that field agents need to work and communicate efficiently "on the move".

Different government departments all over the world are investing more and more in wireless connectivity to enable better connected operations at permanent and temporary locations, as well as to enable public sector workers to work remotely where possible. This is important not only to retain staff in the sector but also to attract skills into the public sector by providing hybrid working environments that have become a mainstay in so many other sectors.

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VOCUS UNLOCKS FIBRE SPEED

FOR NEW HIGH-TECH ALLIANZ STADIUM

THE NEW ALLIANZ STADIUM IN SYDNEY HAD A GOAL OF BEING A LEADER IN TECHNOLOGY AND IT WANTED SUPER-FAST FIBRE CONNECTIVITY. HOWEVER, IT DIDN'T NEED THE SPEED AROUND THE CLOCK — JUST WHEN GAME DAYS WERE ON.

The new $828m Allianz Stadium in Moore Park, NSW, has taken advantage of an innovative billing arrangement with fibre network and technology specialist Vocus.

Under the deal, the stadium has subscribed to a 1 Gbps connection but can 'burst' up to 5 Gbps speed at up to 5% of the time at no additional cost. The Vocus 'IP Burst with 95th percentile billing' feature took inspiration from the wholesale telco world (where telcos buy capacity from each other) and is now available to its enterprise and government agency customers.

The five-times extra speed available to the stadium will be used during football matches and concerts to provide an immersive digital experience for guests. A crowd of up to 50,000 fans can experience Wi-Fi connectivity, while the fibre simultaneously supports all of the stadium's IP-connected services.

The venue is also connected over the Vocus fibre network into the broader group of Venues NSW sites, including the Sydney Cricket Ground and WIN Stadium in Wollongong. The interlinked network allows the multiple stadiums to share a larger pool of bandwidth and also provides multi-fibre redundancy into each site.

THE STADIUM'S AMBITIOUS TECHNOLOGY VISION

The vision was for Allianz Stadium to be one of the most technologically advanced stadiums in the world, according to Tim Blight, Head of Technology at NSW Government's Venues NSW.

Vocus' superfast 5 Gbps fibre underpins the technological innovation within the stadium, including more than 1500 networked NEC information screens, giant bonded LED displays running for 1.1 km and jumbo 27 m Daktronics scoreboards in the stadium bowl.

However, it is the spectators — not the screens — that really benefit from the 5 Gbps pipe and a carefully engineered Wi-Fi 6 network of 800 meshed wireless access points now powers game day connectivity at the stadium for up to 50,000 guests. The Wi-Fi supports the community with live internet connectivity including helping guests find their way from the couch to their seats, along with future experiences that the stadium is currently evaluating.

Two fibre links run into each stadium through separate conduits, delivering the redundancy required by the application. Even if a backhoe digs up one fibre path kilometres away, the others will stay online.

Vocus was able to provide a commercially aligned internet service that met the stadium's specific needs. The unique billing arrangement gives Venues NSW the headroom needed to do future deals with sporting codes and event promoters that increasingly demand high-speed connectivity for events.

BEHIND VOCUS' MULTI-GIGABIT STRATEGY

According to Vocus State Manager NSW Enterprise & Government Bryan Turnbull, the unlocked speed offered by Vocus' IP Transit is one way the company is contributing to building Australia's digital economy and encouraging customers to find new and innovative applications to make the most of high-capacity connections. Across Australia, government agencies not only rely on having access to internet, but also real speed to experiment with the most cutting-edge concepts outside of data centres.

In the case of Allianz Stadium, NSW Government's Venues NSW wanted to get super-fast connectivity where its data was being generated — at football matches, concerts and other special events — but another agency could equally benefit.

"The five-times extra speed available to the stadium will be used during football matches and concerts to provide an immersive digital experience for guests."

For example, huge off-site backups or a government department migrating an on-premises server to a cloud data centre could complete the task at multi-gigabit speeds within the 5% time allowance within the month. An AI lab at an educational institution could sync large datasets with other researchers around the globe, even if their bandwidth requirement was lower for the rest of the month.

The IP Burst with 95th Percentile offer is possible because Vocus owns and operates its own 25,000 km fibre network around Australia. Providers that had to resell access through other networks may not have the flexibility to offer a similar package.

In addition, the fibre installed by Vocus is often capable of much faster speeds than required, so it makes sense to give clients access to the burst bandwidth only when needed. Over time, it is it expected that customer use of bandwidth will grow as business cases for new applications are proven.

UNLOCKED FIBRE SPEEDS OPEN TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES NOW

The IP Burst with 95th percentile billing feature is available to any Australian business or government agency that can be connected to the Vocus network. The maximum burst speed can be negotiated with the customer, with speeds dependent on the available network capacity at the specific location.

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UNITING TO MAKE AUSTRALIA

A HARD TARGET FOR SCAMMERS

A three-pronged approach is required to reduce the impact of scams on Australian consumers, according to ACCC Chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb.

The financial and emotional devastation caused by scams every year in Australia can be reduced if government, consumer groups and the private sector work together to make Australia a much harder target for scammers, according to Cass-Gottlieb in her speech to the Law Council of Australia's 2022 Consumer Law Forum in Sydney.

"First, we need to stop scammers reaching consumers by disrupting the means by which they contact would-be victims — whether through phone calls, SMS, email, social media," Cass-Gottlieb said.

"Second, we need to better educate consumers so that if a scam contact makes it through to them, they are able to recognise it as a scam. Scammers are increasingly sophisticated and cunning in the ways they trick consumers and businesses, so this is a key challenge to address.

"Finally, we need measures in place so that if a consumer is convinced to attempt to transfer funds to a scammer there is a safety net there to prevent this from happening," she said.

During 2021, almost $1.8 billion in combined losses were reported to Scamwatch, ReportCyber, 12 financial organisations and other government agencies.

"Once we consider the fact that about a third of scam victims don't report their losses, the real figure lost to scams in 2021 was well more than $2 billion," Cass-Gottlieb said.

"These figures are staggering and represent a severe financial impost. What can never be calculated, however, is the emotional toll and the life-changing consequences that can result from these scams and their impacts on individuals, families and businesses."

The fight against scams was never-ending and ever-evolving, Cass-Gottlieb said.

"No sooner do we succeed in shutting down one scam than another springs up in its place.

"But I firmly believe that by bringing together government, consumer groups, the financial services sector and the telecommunications sector we can make Australia a much harder target for scammers and prevent not only the billions of losses that we have seen to date, but also the emotional devastation."

"Take this as a call to action to make Australia the world's hardest scam target," she said.

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