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Digital Transformation: Empowering the Government IT Workforce Through Intelligent Automation

May 2019

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Introduction

Federal agency leaders are under significant pressure to execute a successful digital transformation (DX) strategy. Digitally determined agencies are focusing on deploying technology to improve service delivery, increase capacity, streamline operations, and create a tech-friendly work environment. These agencies are intelligently automating IT, employee, and constituent processes to reach policy goals, enhance constituent experiences, improve accuracy and efficiency of operations, and meet federal requirements. An integrated services platform empowered through intelligent automation lies at the heart of digital transformation, providing the architecture that drives and accelerates every digital initiative. Cloud digital platforms are designed to securely share information across agency departments such as customer service, IT operations, human resources, and application development. Cloud digital platforms can also handle the full life cycle of service management in a centrally managed repository, enabling increased demand for services and providing compute power that is scalable, responsive, and secure. When powered by intelligent automation, digital platforms provide many benefits.

Benefits

Greater automation in the workplace allows agencies to not only handle today’s workload but also keep pace with the growing complexity of offering new services at scale. Platform intelligence can help drive automation with intelligent orchestration of processes, predict performance, and detect anomalies to prevent future problems.

Platforms can be designed to enable any application or service to leverage contextual data from activities, tasks, and processes within a common data model. In-platform intelligence that leverages machine learning, virtual agents, and data analytics to guide and drive action can power greater automation and self-service delivery. Intelligent automation can also improve security by prioritizing security breaches and alerts and increase the collaboration between IT and security to perform timely incident resolution.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT’S IMPORTANT
As agencies digitally transform, they seek to automate processes and connect silos of information to enhance mission performance and better serve constituents.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
Cloud digital platforms intelligently automate and securely share information across agency departments such as customer service, operations, human resources, and application development.
Trends

The federal government is challenged with a multitude of legacy, siloed systems that make it difficult to expedite, automate, and prioritize tasks. Further, many business processes are designed as manual, time-consuming tasks that require outdated patterns of work to accomplish. Improving constituent services is a priority for many agencies as citizens increasingly expect government to deliver the same effortless services they experience in their private lives. Successful government leaders are taking a more holistic approach to citizen services and experiencing benefits in citizen engagement and satisfaction as well as government efficiency. IDC Government Insights observes that many federal agencies have initiated DX initiatives to make data-driven decisions, enhance operations, and improve services, but these initiatives lack coordination across the agency. In addition, early attempts often meet subsequent challenges that require changes in culture, budget, talent, platform, and scale.

Successful DX initiatives are built on a cloud-based, agile-architected platform that puts data at the core, scales rapidly from a single user to the organization, accommodates ecosystem users (such as nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], educational institutions, utilities, and other public sector entities), and enables innovation. Because the platform concept is key to being digitally enabled, successful federal agencies establish a strategy to manage a fully integrated, enterprisewide technology architecture enabling digital products, services, and experiences while modernizing and integrating the internal IT environment.

Considering ServiceNow

ServiceNow Inc. is a $2.6 billion company headquartered in Santa Clara, California. It has over 8,600 employees, supports 75% of the Fortune 500, and has a dedicated government organization. In recent years, ServiceNow has evolved from an IT service–focused solution provider to an operations and applications platform provider.

ServiceNow’s Service Automation Government Cloud Suite provides natively integrated applications designed to support IT service automation, resource management, and shared support services. This suite uses continental United States (CONUS)–based dedicated infrastructure (facilities, servers, databases, networking devices) to process, store, and transmit government information using a multi-instance architecture. The ServiceNow platform includes easy-to-use, point-and-click customization tools to help customers create solutions for unique business requirements. ServiceNow applications cover all IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) processes and are natively integrated on a single platform providing web intuitiveness and process automation. Figure 1 illustrates the functions that the Now platform supports in IT, employee, and customer workflows.
Of note is the newly released mobile application that enables a simple and easy approach for IT and customer service employees to get meaningful work done. This application lets IT quickly route requests for action wherever the requests might be and provides support to employees wherever they are via mobile, web, chat, or third-party interfaces. Plus, employees fix simple issues with a swipe of their thumb so that they can focus on solving more complex problems. Additionally, the ServiceNow Mobile Studio enables the building and deploying of native iOS and Android mobile applications using no-code tools and a drag-and-drop interface. Employees can use applications with read and write capabilities anywhere, even when they're offline. This capability addresses agencies' developer shortage issues with a low-code/no-code platform, helping meet line-of-business needs for applications. Additional functionality includes:

» The ServiceNow Customer Service Management application enables agencies to provide service and support for constituents through communication channels such as web, email, chat, telephone, and social media. Customer service managers have the capability to create cases as needed and route cases to available customer service agents with the necessary skill sets.

» ServiceNow Agent Workspace is a command center for prioritizing work and taking action. Activity streams keep the latest updates in view, and machine learning surfaces similar incidents. This enables customer service and IT agents to have the context they need to resolve issues quickly from a single dashboard.
Alert Intelligence is an IT operations management capability that helps IT operators focus on key issues with prioritized alerts and provides insights about past incidents, similar and repeat alerts, and Knowledge Base articles and metrics. This allows IT operations teams to quickly get to the root cause of a service performance issue or an outage, collaborate with different teams, and launch remediation workflows from the same console.

ServiceNow is delivering change automation enhancements to its IT service management (ITSM) products. IT can integrate change with DevOps using out-of-the-box REST APIs, automate manual approval processes, and provide clear audit trails for better governance.

The ServiceNow platform solution is deployed as a Government Community Cloud with FedRAMP moderate authorization (FedRAMP high authorization is in process). This solution is available for use by U.S. federal, state, local, and tribal governments with registered .gov or .mil domain addresses, government consultants, and federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs).

Meeting Federal Requirements

Cloud-based digital platforms that empower the government IT workforce through intelligent automation also assist agencies in meeting legislative and executive mandates such as the following:

The three pillars of the President's Management Agenda require agencies to deploy digital transformation platforms to modernize IT, use data as a strategic asset, and develop the 21st century workforce. A platform supports the requirement for:

- Modern IT to function as the backbone of how government serves the public in the digital age
- Meeting customer expectations
- Keeping sensitive data and systems secure
- Ensuring responsive, multichannel access to services

The 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act, or 21st Century IDEA, sets minimum standards for accessibility, ease of use, and security of government websites. Agencies must deploy an industry-standard secure connection, design around user needs with data-driven analysis for management and development decisions, and use data to determine user needs.

The Making Electronic Government Accountable by Yielding Tangible Efficiencies Act of 2016, or MEGABYTE Act, requires agencies to establish a comprehensive inventory of software licensing by identifying and collecting information about software license agreements using automated discovery and inventory tools.
**Challenges**

ServiceNow faces the challenge of extending its brand beyond that of a leading ITSM provider to that of an enabler of government digital transformation. While ITSM is a key component of DX, successful transformation includes automating not only IT workflows but also all employee and customer-facing workflows. Successful transformation includes leveraging data to inform actions, perform intelligent orchestration of processes, predict performance, and detect anomalies to prevent future problems. While the market may become crowded with vendors addressing government DX, ServiceNow can position itself to become a significant solution provider for government by leveraging its ITSM strength, automating workflows, and providing an integrated platform in which tools, capabilities, and frameworks are empowered by intelligent automation.

**Conclusion**

As agencies work to digitally transform, they are seeking to automate processes and connect silos of information to enhance mission performance and better serve constituents. The Now platform transforms IT from IT service management to an integrated platform in which tools, capabilities, and frameworks empowered by intelligent automation provide ubiquitous access to information and services.

By providing a hybrid and multicloud platform solution that enables IoT, better user experiences, mobile applications and development, and automated processes through machine learning, ServiceNow enables agencies to improve employee productivity, making work better for people; ensures accuracy in delivering information and services; and enhances the user experience. Enabled by intelligent automation, government operations can become more responsive and effective by leveraging digitally connected information and services, assets, and employees.

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**About the Analyst**

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Adelaide O’Brien is a dedicated government analyst who understands agency requirements and mandates and has deep technical expertise in analytics, AI, and cloud. She has been recognized as a valued thought leader by U.S. federal agencies and the vendors serving government and named one of the top 100 leaders from throughout the federal IT community.