

**The Obama Administration's Information Technology Reform:
Cutting Waste and Delivering Results
August 2011**

In a time of historic budgetary, fiscal and economic challenges, the Federal government is focused on cutting waste, getting the most from taxpayer dollars, and making sure the government works so the American people get the best service possible.

Since day one, the President has recognized the importance of harnessing the power of information technology to make government work better. He appointed Vivek Kundra as the nation's first Federal Chief Information Officer to implement the Administration's technology reform agenda, which is focused on four key areas:

- Improving the management of Federal Information Technology (IT) investments
- Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations
- Enabling an open, transparent, and participatory democracy
- Advancing the cybersecurity posture of the nation

Over the last two and half years the Administration has transformed how the government manages and uses information technology to strengthen accountability and deliver significant results for the American people.

IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL IT INVESTMENTS

Bringing Transparency to IT Spending. To provide the American people with unfiltered access to Federal IT spending information, the Administration launched the IT Dashboard – a graphically-rich, user-friendly website that enables anyone to track spending on and progress of IT projects across the Federal government.

The Dashboard provides transparency into the \$80 Billion of annual Federal IT spending across 6,700 investments. With new tracking tools and open communication channels, the dashboard gives people the chance to see which IT projects are working and on-schedule (and which are not), offer alternative approaches, and provide direct feedback to the chief information officers at Federal agencies. In effect, it enables them to keep tabs on the people who are responsible for spending taxpayers' dollars for technology.

To share this model across the public sector and around the world, we open-sourced the IT Dashboard. Within hours of releasing the IT Dashboard code, 38 states, and multiple countries reached out to express interest in adopting it to improve transparency and accountability. So far, the IT Dashboard code has already been downloaded more than 2,500 times across the world.

Cutting Waste From IT Projects. To end the historic practice of run-away government IT projects that go far over budget, behind schedule and fail to deliver, the Federal Chief Information Officer and his team conducted detailed reviews of the largest and highest risk IT projects across the Federal government. This "TechStat" model brings the proper focus on resolving problems before it is too late, and reduces the structural barriers to bring innovative and effective technologies into government.

Over 60 TechStat sessions, led by OMB, have been conducted, and the results are significant – projects have been re-scoped to eliminate costly bells and whistles, revamped to accelerate the delivery of meaningful functionality, or terminated entirely because they were judged unlikely to succeed.

Due to the OMB-led TechStat sessions, we have reduced costs by more than \$3 billion and on average, have accelerated deliverables from over 24 months to 8 months.

We are now scaling this model across the government. All Federal agencies are now conducting their own TechStat sessions – to date, more than 114 agency sessions have been held, driving accountability across government.

Launching Reform Plan to Change the Way Washington Does IT. In December 9, 2010, the U.S. CIO released the 25-Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management. The plan addresses the structural barriers that gotten in the way of consistent execution and focuses on achieving operational efficiency and effectively managing large scale IT program. By hardwiring these changes into agency operations, we are ensuring we do not turn back on delivering more effective federal IT.

INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Saving Money and Improving Results by Moving IT Applications to the Cloud. Through a “Cloud First” policy, we are moving strategies from asset ownership to a utility-based model, in which agencies pay for only the resources and services they consume. By leveraging shared infrastructure and economies of scale and using “light technology” or cloud computing services, agencies are able to measure and pay for only the IT resources they actually use, and can deploy innovative technological capabilities faster and at lower costs, ultimately saving money and increasing the government’s ability to use IT in a more effective. Already, agencies have begun to make this change.

For example, The Department of Agriculture and the General Services Administration have moved email services to the cloud and are saving \$42 million over the next five years. To support this on a broader scale, GSA issued a procurement worth up to \$2.5 billion that pools purchasing power government-wide and makes it easier for agencies to consolidate collaboration systems.

Eliminating Excess Federal Data Centers. A 1998 survey of Federal agencies identified 432 agency data centers. In August 2010, agencies identified 2,094 data centers in operation, a 385 percent increase during the same period that the private sector was reducing its data center footprint. This data center proliferation represents unnecessary duplication and redundancies in technology infrastructure that wastes taxpayer money and creates unnecessary security risks.

Last year, we instituted a net-zero-growth data center policy so that data centers are not expanded beyond current levels. And to reverse the unsustainable trend in data center growth and get rid of unnecessary duplication, we will close at least 800 data centers by 2015.

Already, agencies have closed 81 data centers and will close down 373 by the end of 2012. HHS, for example, recently shut down a 15,000 square-foot data center in Rockville, Maryland that cost \$1.2 million annually for electricity costs alone.

ENABLING AN OPEN, TRANSPARENT, AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Making Government Information Available on Data.gov. Created as part of the President's commitment to open government and democratizing information, Data.gov opens up the workings of government by making economic, healthcare, environmental, and other government data available on a single website, allowing the public to access raw data and use it in innovative ways. In less than two years, Data.gov has grown from 47 datasets to more than 389,000.

It also has spawned scores of innovative applications that turns this raw data into services that help the American people. To date, there are 236 citizen-developed apps in addition to the 1,063 government apps. For instance, FlyOnTime.us takes data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics combines them with weather information and user-generated content about airline security lines — such as tweets from people waiting in those lines — to give travelers an accurate look at expected wait times and travel conditions.

And Data.gov has sparked a global movement. So far, 21 nations, 29 states, 11 cities, several international organizations have established open data platforms.

ADVANCING THE CYBERSECURITY POSTURE OF THE NATION

Shifted to a real-time security posture. We have shifted from periodic security reviews of government IT systems to continuously monitoring and remediating IT security vulnerabilities. The move towards continuous monitoring and automation has raised our awareness of our own networks and allowed us to collect the information we need to better secure government information systems.

Launched CyberStat. Drawing on the TechStat model, DHS cybersecurity experts are now meeting with agencies regularly to ensure accountability and to help agencies develop focused actions plans to improve their information security posture.

Develop centralized approach for security authorization of cloud products and services. The Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) will provide a standard approach for security authorization of cloud computing services and products. Doing so will reduce cost redundancies and inefficiencies associated with the current agency authorization processes and facilitate a climate of trust between consumers and providers of cloud services.

Summary

Our efforts to date have significantly improved the delivery of government services and have fundamentally altered how the Federal government uses information technology. As we move forward, will continue to execute on the Accountable Government Initiative, delivering results for the American people.