

Modernizing IT Must Go Well Beyond Migrating To The Cloud

Agencies must leverage the Data Cloud to get to evidence-based decision-making and True Citizen 360 Service

While most public agencies have migrated some or all of their workloads to the cloud, they are quickly realizing that its benefits of cost efficiency, security, and on-demand capacity are not enough to meet newer requirements coming out for the next-generation of [Citizen 360](#): evidence-based policy- and decision-making.

Modernizing legacy IT involves a lot more than just a “lift and shift” from on-premises to the cloud. While that cloud journey lays the necessary foundation, many agencies are now realizing that data silos and so-called “stovepipes” can — and do — exist in the cloud, too.

As these agencies prepare to meet the recent and current demands for evidence-based policy-making, they must realize the power of a modern data cloud platform to avoid recreating the same stovepipes they ran into in the on-premises days. Including a cloud data platform strategy in your modernization plans is increasingly necessary to securely realize the needed data sharing and exchange of data between agencies across lines of local, state, and federal government.

The OMB Circular No. A-94 (June 2021) recently set the tone by mandating that agencies have chief data officers, while laying out the requirements for evidence-based policy-making (M21-27). The new era it heralds calls for the ability to aggregate data across systems that previously have not interacted, yet agencies must be able to do so securely and while meeting the privacy and compliance regulations that exist at each level of government.

The Data Governance Solution

While the cloud makes possible the real transformation and innovation organizations seek, it takes more than just shifting applications and infrastructure to get there. Fortunately, an established data platform can help secure and govern collaboration and data sharing. This ability is key to evidence-based decision-making.

The issue that must be solved in the cloud is primarily one of data governance. How can agencies gain the benefit of leveraging third-party data, let alone share their own, and still meet stringent governance requirements to protect citizens?



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Fortunately, public sector organizations can leverage best practices and learnings from commercial industry. What the private sector has discovered is that just migrating to the cloud doesn't, by itself, go as far as necessary when sharing data.

Many commercial organizations have already migrated workloads to one or more of the big three cloud providers — Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, or Google Cloud—and quickly realized they hadn't anticipated the challenges in working across clouds.

Modern data cloud platforms allow data sharing while giving organizations tools to retain control of their data. These platforms generally avoid copying your data; it remains resident in your cloud and uses role-based access protocols to enable data sharing in near real time, thereby allowing all parties involved with a view of current data. Likewise, your own ability to access data from other parties is in near real time.

Disparate Data Formats

In this way, organizations can leverage the technology to better address legal and policy demands by supporting the privacy and residency requirements they impose. Agencies can maintain governance while gaining insight into other agencies' data and are more able to ensure applicable regulatory compliance.

As data collaboration becomes the norm, some agencies will have Google, some will use Amazon or Azure, and without anticipating it they may find they essentially have three different stovepipes of data. A true modern data platform must be involved in that mix to effectively mobilize data and movement of data seamlessly across clouds; in fact, a modern data cloud platform is essentially another layer of abstraction over the infrastructure and will transcend private or public clouds while delivering the governance public agencies need.

Finally, agencies need to be able to work with disparate data formats — structured, unstructured, and semi-structured — from a single platform in order to gain the needed visibility to make better data-driven decisions. Ultimately, the ability to truly innovate new and necessary citizen services will rely on the ability of public agencies to work across parties to share data.

Visit snowflake.com/public-sector to learn more about how the Data Cloud can help your organization. ■

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