

Government Networks' Key Role in Digital Transformation Initiatives



Caribbean government, along with businesses, is poised to enter a new digital age. Recent advances, like cloud, the Internet of Things (IoT), data analytics, and social media, are changing how they deliver their services. The evolution promises to streamline processes, lower costs, and improve citizen satisfaction. However in many cases, the change will only be effective if government agencies also upgrade their network infrastructure.

Delivering government services is a difficult, time consuming, and manually intensive process. Solutions today often require that workers spend their time simply keeping systems and processes running rather than simplifying them for both constituents and employees.

New Network Requirements Emerge

Recent dramatic changes unfolded on a few fronts. The pandemic forced agencies to move workers out from central sites to remote locations. Therefore, they needed new tools and network connections to complete their work.

The Internet of Things (IoT) shrunk computer processing power down into small sensors that can be placed in new locations. Smart cities are gaining attention because they have the ability to provide more insight into how agency services perform, simplify delivery processes, and enhance citizen satisfaction.

New applications are emerging. Increasingly, cities are deploying surveillance cameras to oversee traffic conditions, keep the streets safe, and respond to emergencies. In sum, workload requirements are growing.

The Need for Reliable Network Infrastructure Increases

As the Internet, digital, and cloud solutions increasingly power applications, many government agencies realize they have 20th Century networks that cannot support their 21st Century applications. Problems arise on many fronts.

- Routine chores, like implementing software patches and updates, overwhelm the network and slow system performance to a crawl
- Agencies lack the ability to scale gracefully as they expand system capabilities
- Costs rise as they extend government offices to new locales
- Security challenges increase as network services become more complex
- Equipment often has to be manually upgraded because the systems support little to no automation
- Network management is conducted in a siloed manner, so a lot of time is spent on data consolidation
- State and local governments are in an uphill race to recruit and retain competent network talent
- As a multitude of new endpoints are connected to their distributed network, the attack surface becomes broader and more complex to manage

Compounding the problem, government works with multiple vendors and has deployed best-of-breed piecemeal solutions. Managing the disparate pieces on their own intensifies the IT burden; raises costs; and increases the risk of errors, poor performance and downtime.

Time to Evaluation Network Options

Such issues intensified as digital transformation takes root. In this increasingly complex environment, government must take a step back and examine their network operations end-to-end. They need to improve service delivery. They must enhance performance and productivity, maintain cost-efficiency, and scale up their monitoring and security processes. Many agencies find that their existing networks cannot meet these challenges.

They can improve their position by upgrading their existing system. Emerging solutions, like Software Defined Wide Area Networks (SD WAN), enable government to connect multiple locations with high bandwidth networks, lower their costs, and ensure secure connections.

Another plus is a network transformation provides an intelligent, more automated-approach. The network no longer is based on legacy, physical hardware components that require significant manual input. Instead, it becomes a cluster of virtual devices controlled by intelligent software. They gain simplified, centralized management of critical

network functions, reducing equipment costs, shortening provision times, and improving traffic management.

In addition, new networks include high levels of automation. Leveraging them ensures that any network changes are seamlessly translated across all IT environments. Automation also features one-touch security policy updates that are enforced at all ingress and egress points, streamlining critical system monitoring and reporting.

Cost is another plus. Local and state governments connect operations directly to the Internet for less expensive gigabit broadband circuits, in certain cases receiving 10 times or more the bandwidth than they had previously.

Security becomes tighter. New networks include built-in security features, such as firewalls, that empowers government to connect employees to software applications whether they're in the office, a coffee shop or an airport lounge and have maximum security.



Call in a Network Expert

For government agencies looking to achieve their public missions in an increasingly digital landscape, network transformation is as critical as digital transformation. However, it is a daunting prospect, one fraught with many choices.

In many cases, government lacks the time and expertise to wade through their choices, make the right choices, and deploy and then monitor the network infrastructure. Third parties are able to take on that work. These network experts have deployed solutions for many Caribbean agencies, are experts in the different products, have sophisticated control centers, and established best practices.

Offloading network deployment and management to them has many benefits. They take advantage of best practices that their partners established after working with other customers. It enables government

IT staffs to concentrate more on enhancing application performance and less on just keeping the infrastructure running. Agencies gain control over budgeting as they pay set monthly fees. Most importantly, they become more agile as their new network is built on modern technology and more capable than legacy systems.

Nowadays governments recognize that the network is a critical component of their digital transformation. Therefore, they need to make it a strategic priority rather than an afterthought. New networks streamline communications, scale, lower costs, and improve performance providing citizens, employees, and partners with more satisfying experiences.