



# Maximizing State and Local Government Services With a Modern Network

MARKET TRENDS REPORT



Meraki

# Introduction

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State and local government agencies constantly seek to provide more for their citizens, particularly when it comes to making services and resources more accessible via the internet. According to Deloitte, 73 percent of state and local government officials believe their organizations are behind the private sector in terms of offering digital services. This comes at a time when citizen demand for online services is higher than ever.

One potential solution? The cloud. The adoption of cloud services in the public sector has been a gradual transition, with some departments and agencies using cloud solutions in recent years to keep pace with increasing demands. Government spending on cloud solutions is expected to double in the next five years, and with all of the potential benefits, it's no wonder why.

The cloud is also a critical component of several government initiatives, including the Internet of Things (IoT). Cloud infrastructure enables agencies to store, share and analyze data across multiple devices and platforms.

Worldwide, billions of devices are connected to the internet, and with each device comes sensors that collect data, interact with the environment and communicate over a network. Cities have already begun to incorporate IoT into services used by millions of residents every day, such as streetlights, parking spaces, traffic systems, public Wi-Fi, transit and more. When implemented correctly, this helps governments save money, increase security and improve citizen experiences.

But none of this is possible without a reliable and secure network to serve as the backbone.

To help state and local governments understand the importance of networking as they seek to expand constituent services, GovLoop partnered with Cisco Meraki, a leader in cloud-managed IT, to produce this report. In the report, we explore the challenges government leaders face when upgrading their networks to the cloud and how agencies can overcome them to provide for constituents in the digital age.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 21%

of local government IT budgets are spent on cloud.

Source: Gartner



# 58%

of U.S. citizens are satisfied with government digital services.

Source: Accenture



# \$6.5 billion

is what defense and civilian agencies combined spent on cloud services in fiscal 2018, a 32 percent increase over the \$4.9 billion spent in fiscal 2017.

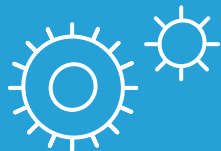
Source: Bloomberg

# \$772.5 billion

was the forecasted spending on IoT worldwide in 2018, up 14.6 percent over 2017 spending.

Source: IDC

# 85%



of U.S. citizens expect government digital services to be on par with or better than private sector digital services.

Source: Accenture



# 600



monthly cloud purchase orders were made by state and local governments in 2017, up from 150 in 2012.

Source: DiscoverOrg

## THE CHALLENGE

# Ineffective Networks

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One of the greatest challenges that state and local government IT teams face is managing and securing outdated technology. Currently, governments generally lack the coverage and capacity to keep pace with rising bandwidth demands as new apps, devices and users are added to the network. In addition, IT departments often lack budgetary resources but are still expected to improve network reliability, all while staying on top of maintenance requirements.

Without a modern network, it's nearly impossible for state and local governments to meet growing citizen expectations, security standards, maintenance requirements and more.

Matthew Schaner, Product Sales Specialist at Cisco Meraki, noted that many challenges come from the fact that government IT resources are limited and inconsistent. This not only makes managing isolated on-premises network hardware and software challenging, it also makes manually finding and updating solutions on a regular basis nearly impossible.

“These traditional networks are difficult to secure and troubleshoot, and they increase the likelihood of downtime, leaving them vulnerable to cyberattacks,” Schaner said. “There are just too many things to have to manage and update.”

Cybersecurity is a major concern for government agencies because of the sensitive data and systems they maintain, but staying secure can be difficult with traditional networking infrastructure. Agencies are often unaware of how vulnerable their systems are, and most don't know where to start to solve the problem.

“Most of the customers that we talk to today are often surprised at how old some of their equipment is, how outdated some of the firmware and software is and how vulnerable they are to security threats,” Schaner said. “It's difficult to upgrade this old equipment, and most agencies don't get around to doing it.”

Combined, these challenges make it difficult for governments to provide secure and reliable digital services to citizens.

## THE SOLUTION

# Move to the Cloud

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Considering the unreliable nature of current infrastructure and networking practices, it's clear that governments need to make a change. Moving to a cloud-managed system is one way to address these challenges with a single solution.

“A cloud-managed network is an intuitive, self-maintaining, single pane of glass that helps drastically simplify network management, decrease troubleshooting and vastly improve visibility into the network itself.”

- Matthew Schaner,  
Product Sales Specialist, Cisco Meraki

Cloud-managed IT allows governments to maintain the entire network from one place, while making sure it is always up-to-date. Having easier access to management tools saves time and frees staff up to focus on projects that directly impact citizens.

“Many of the systems that are out there now require you to use multiple tools that aren't centrally located,” Schaner said. “When a problem does arise, a lot of time is spent moving from one application to the next to try to figure out where the issue is. With cloud-managed networking, all of that information is in one spot.”

The cloud also makes it easier for agencies to manage security, networking and application control. For example, cloud-managed solutions enable agencies to remotely deploy security applications in minutes, synchronize security settings across thousands of sites using templates and schedule firmware updates to occur on a regularly basis rather than manually deploying them.

Cloud management keeps agencies in control of their network with stronger analytics, remote access and improved security. These are just some of the benefits that agencies can take advantage of when shifting away from on-premises networks.



# BEST PRACTICES

## Implementing a Cloud-Managed Network

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### 1.

#### Change your spending mindset

To adequately compare the cost of a cloud-managed networking solution with an on-premises solution, there are several things to consider. Traditionally, agencies purchase and deploy each aspect of their on-premises network individually, piecing together a number of different products and services, plus additional analytics and management tools.

By moving to the cloud, the entire network can be managed from one place, with analytics and troubleshooting tools included. Plus, by shifting to licensing as capital, tools and spending are easier to track and manage. There are also hidden costs of traditional networking solutions that are eliminated with a cloud-managed solution, including analytics and visibility tools, security solutions, support and having to hire additional personnel.



### 2.

#### Don't overlook the cultural change

To successfully implement new technologies, there must be a change in mindset. Employees must be willing to shift from the old way of doing business and embrace new tools and techniques aimed at helping them do their jobs more efficiently.

Making sure that employees understand exactly what the changes will mean for them and their work will make the transition significantly easier and avoid any fear or doubt that might come with a lack of information. This requires agencies to engage with users early and often. Town halls, demos and explainer videos are helpful ways to get feedback and give employees a chance to test new solutions before they are rolled out across the department.



### 3.

#### Collaborate with the right industry partner

As governments start deploying cloud solutions to provide better services for constituents, it's important that agencies partner with public and private sector organizations that share the same vision. Finding the right fit and ensuring new capabilities and services will align with the needs of the agency is a good starting point. Government agencies also need to weigh all of the options and make decisions based on what they're looking to accomplish, what constraints they need to consider, what resources they have available and more. Without addressing these issues, it's impossible to take the next step.



The image shows the seal of New Castle County, Delaware, which is a yellow shield with a red border. Inside the shield, there is a man in a red shirt and black hat holding a staff, a woman in a green dress holding a staff, and a dog. Above them is a ship. Below the shield is a banner with the words "LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE". The seal is set against a background of a blue sky and a white tower.

# CASE STUDY: REVAMPING THE NETWORK IN NEW CASTLE COUNTY

As the largest county in Delaware, with over 550,000 residents and 1,600 government employees, the New Castle County IT team works diligently to keep the network running without interruption. But with an outdated system and very old infrastructure, the team struggled to keep up with the demands of citizens and staff.

To help improve citizen services, the county worked with Cisco Meraki to deploy a cloud-managed network. In less than 24 months, the IT team was able to research and design a new network, rewire 25 facilities and deploy new wireless, switching and security across the county. With its new network, New Castle County immediately saw improvements in county operations, network reliability and user experiences.

Since deploying Meraki, the county has been inspired to continue adopting cloud solutions. By managing its entire network through a cloud-based dashboard, eliminating the day-to-day tasks of traditional networking solutions, new opportunities have opened up for team members to focus on more impactful projects. The IT team has started moving email, financial infrastructure and GIS platforms to the cloud, greatly improving daily operations for employees.

## HOW CISCO MERAKI CAN HELP

Cisco Meraki provides IT teams with powerful networking technology that is simple to deploy and manage, enabling state and local governments to implement smart initiatives that positively impact communities' quality of life, security and the local economy. With Meraki, state and local governments can easily manage their network from anywhere through a web browser, eliminating the need for a large team of dedicated, onsite, trained staff. By spending less time on day-to-day network maintenance, IT teams can spend more time working on impactful projects and agency initiatives, such as IoT projects and digitizing services, helping to increase efficiencies and government capabilities.

With Cisco Meraki, agencies are able to manage their network remotely, making it possible to update systems and solve problems with ease. The reduction of duplicate vendors, applications and services keeps costs down, particularly for lean IT teams with fewer resources. Plus, total network visibility in a single interface creates more opportunities for IT teams to make informed business decisions and do more with less.

Learn more here: [meraki.cisco.com/government](https://meraki.cisco.com/government)

# Conclusion

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Governments are eager to provide more for citizens, but it isn't always easy. Complex services like IoT, while incredibly beneficial for state and local governments to implement, are challenging to pursue without a strong network.

By streamlining tools, applications, security and more, cloud-managed networking helps governments achieve greater efficiencies, improve security and better serve citizens. Moving to the cloud can help state and local governments with limited IT resources, as it makes networks more cost-effective and capable of supporting citywide projects.



## ABOUT CISCO MERAKI

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Connecting your community starts with the underlying network. Cisco Meraki provides IT teams with powerful networking technology that is simple to deploy and manage, enabling state and local governments to implement smart initiatives that positively impact communities' quality of life, security, and the local economy.

Learn more at: [meraki.cisco.com/government](https://meraki.cisco.com/government)



## ABOUT GOVLOOP

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GovLoop's mission is to "connect government to improve government." We aim to inspire public-sector professionals by serving as the knowledge network for government. GovLoop connects more than 300,000 members, fostering cross-government collaboration, solving common problems and advancing government careers. GovLoop is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to connect and improve government.

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