# Next Steps: How to Implement AI-Ready Systems in Government

Government is at an AI inflection point: The technology's rapid rise has heightened expectations for faster and easier access to services, but it also exposes agencies to new risks. How can organizations securely and responsibly get the most out of what AI offers?

Experts from government and industry explored the issue during a recent GovLoop online training. They described emerging AI use cases for government, discussed AI cybersecurity strategies and highlighted resources that can help agencies on their AI journeys. Below are takeaways from their conversation.

## Speakers

**Tim Paydos,** Vice President for Mission Solutions, ServiceNow's Global Public Sector

**Jessie Posilkin,** Acting Executive Director, Technology Modernization Fund, U.S. General Services Administration

**Apostol Vassilev,** Research Manager, Computer Security Division, National Institute of Standards and Technology

## AI Comes to Life

Agencies are realizing AI's potential in many settings, said Tim Paydos, Vice President for Mission Solutions at ServiceNow Global Public Sector. The company's recent report titled "The State of AI Powered Transformation in Government" explores the current lay of the land.

"We interviewed about 1,200 government leaders from all levels," Paydos said. Many reported that they actively use AI to bring automation to important IT processes and to how they govern their data and workflows, he said.

For example, some defense agencies need a streamlined way to ensure that staff don't disclose sensitive information when sharing intel with partner nations. "They have artificial intelligence take a run at doing the redaction," said Paydos. That speeds the process, while giving an extra layer of assurance to the humans tasked with vetting the information.

On the civilian side, he pointed to a state that required constituents to interact with up to 18 agencies to access some social services. "No human being could read all the benefit information for all those 18 different agencies," Paydos said. To streamline and simplify access, the state put an AI-enabled platform across the top of the system.

In a fast-changing world, government needs "the resiliency, the agility, the flexibility to handle whatever's coming down the pike," he said. AI, especially Generative AI, has "the ability to address a lot of that, just at a time when those challenges are intensifying."

## Safe and Responsible

To get the most from AI, government must use it sensibly and safely, noted Apostol Vassilev, Research Manager at the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Computer Security Division. Doing so can help restore people's trust in government, when constituent confidence is at record lows, he said.

But how can government use AI technology correctly? NIST has developed a risk management framework for AI to help answer that question, creating the tool "in a very open and transparent manner in close collaboration with the critical stakeholders in that space: government, industry, academia," Vassilev said.

The framework offers valuable guidance to leaders, including sound governance and security principles specifically related to AI, he added.

The guidance looks at how AI is used and how it's supported across the IT environment. "When you are dealing with artificial intelligence, it doesn't mean that you can take a model, plop it in your organization and it's done," Vassilev said. "You have to integrate it into the infrastructure that you have, connect it to the data sources, adapt it to those. There's a lot of infrastructure [and] software development that needs to happen."

In terms of cybersecurity, NIST is building on Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency recommendations, with guidance to help agencies understand "what attacks can be mounted against them, what mitigations people can use, and how to develop their own risk budget" as they pursue AI projects, he said.

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In general, "you don't want the system to provide bad information that can harm either you or your users. It has to be privacy-enhanced. It has to be transparent," Vassilev explained. NIST provides "the resources that can be used by government leaders in order to lead the adoption of these technologies within their organization," he said.

Those efforts fall within the realm of IT modernization.

## The Modernization Journey

The Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) helps tackle "a number of agency challenges that they are hoping to address with both artificial intelligence and automation in general," said Jessie Posilkin, TMF's Acting Executive Director at the U.S. General Services Administration.

To be effective in the AI space, agencies must confront the sheer volume of data that will inform AI-driven applications, she said, and that involves digitizing the data, much of which lives in paper form, to make it usable and accessible.

The TMF can help drive those efforts. This is a great moment to pursue modernization, Posilkin said. With so much interest in the potential for AI, the time is right to address "the under-girding, the backend work that really needs to happen to bring all of our data information and systems into the 21st century."