10 Government technology trends for 2019-2020

Gartner has identified 10 government technology trends for 2019-2020 that have the potential to optimise or transform public services and suggests Government Chief Information Officers (CIOs) take these into consideration when planning for the next 12 to 18 months.

Source: Supplied

Gartner's top 10 strategic technology trends for government were selected in response to pressing public policy goals and business needs of government organisations in jurisdictions around the globe. They fit into a broader set of macro-trends that demand the attention of today's government leaders, including social instability, perpetual austerity, an ageing population, rising populism and the need to support sustainability goals.

"Now more than ever, technology priorities must be established in the context of business trends such as digital equity, ethics and privacy, widening generational chasms and the need for institutional agility," according to Rick Howard, research vice president at Gartner.

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"Public sector leaders expect government CIOs to find ways technology can reduce costs, create efficiencies and improve outcomes for citizens and businesses. They also expect CIOs to consider the social, technological, economic, environmental and political trends that impact the constituents they serve."

Gartner's top 10 government technology trends for 2019-2020

The list of strategic technology trends is designed to help government CIOs establish the rationale, timing and priority of technology investments. They do not represent what government CIOs are spending most of their time or budget on today. The trends will vary in importance depending on the tier of government (national, regional or local), region and business context. It is for this reason that they are not ranked in numerical order.

1. Adaptive security

An adaptive security approach treats risk, trust and security as a continuous and adaptive process that anticipates and mitigates constantly evolving cyber threats. It acknowledges that there is no perfect protection and that security needs to be adaptive, everywhere, all the time.

2. Citizen digital identity

Digital identity is the ability to prove an individual's identity via any government digital channel that is available to citizens. It is critical for inclusion and access to government services, yet many governments have been slow to adopt them. Government CIOs must provision digital identities that uphold both security imperatives and citizen expectations.

3. Multi-channel citizen engagement

Governments that meet citizens on its own terms and via its preferred channels, such as in person, by phone, via mobile device through smart speakers, chatbots or via augmented reality, will meet citizen expectations and achieve programme outcomes. According to a 2018 survey, more than 50% of government website traffic now comes from mobile devices.

4. Agile by design

Digital government is not a 'set and forget' investment. CIOs must create a nimble and responsive environment by adopting an agile-by-design approach, a set of principles and practices used to develop more agile systems and solutions that impact both the current and target states of the business, information and technical architecture.

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5. Digital product management

In the 2019 Gartner CIO Survey, more than two-thirds of government CIOs said they already have, or are planning to implement, digital product management (DPM). Often replacing a 'waterfall' project management approach, which has a poor track record of success, DPM involves developing, delivering, monitoring, refining and retiring 'products' or offerings for business users or citizens. It causes organisations to think differently and delivers tangible results more quickly and sustainably.

6. Anything as a Service (XaaS)

XaaS covers the full range of IT services delivered in the cloud on a subscription basis. The 2019 Gartner CIO Survey found that 39% of government organisations plan to spend the greatest amount of new or additional funding in cloud services. The XaaS model offers an alternative to legacy infrastructure modernisation, provides scalability and reduces time to deliver digital government services.

7. Shared services 2.0

Many government organisations have tried to drive IT efficiencies through centralisation or sharing of services, often with poor results. Shared services 2.0 shifts the focus from cost savings to delivering high-value business capabilities

such as enterprise-wide security, identity management, platforms or business analytics.

8. Digitally empowered workforce

A digitally enabled work environment is linked to employee satisfaction, retention and engagement — but governments currently lags other industries in this area. A workforce of self-managing teams needs the training, technology and autonomy to work on digital transformation initiatives.

9. Analytics everywhere

Gartner refers to the pervasive use of analytics at all stages of business activity and service delivery as analytics everywhere. It shifts government agencies from the dashboard reporting of lagging indicators to autonomous processes that help people make better decisions in real-time.

10. Augmented intelligence

Gartner recommends that government CIOs reframe artificial intelligence as 'augmented intelligence' a human-centred partnership model of people and artificial intelligence working together to enhance cognitive performance.