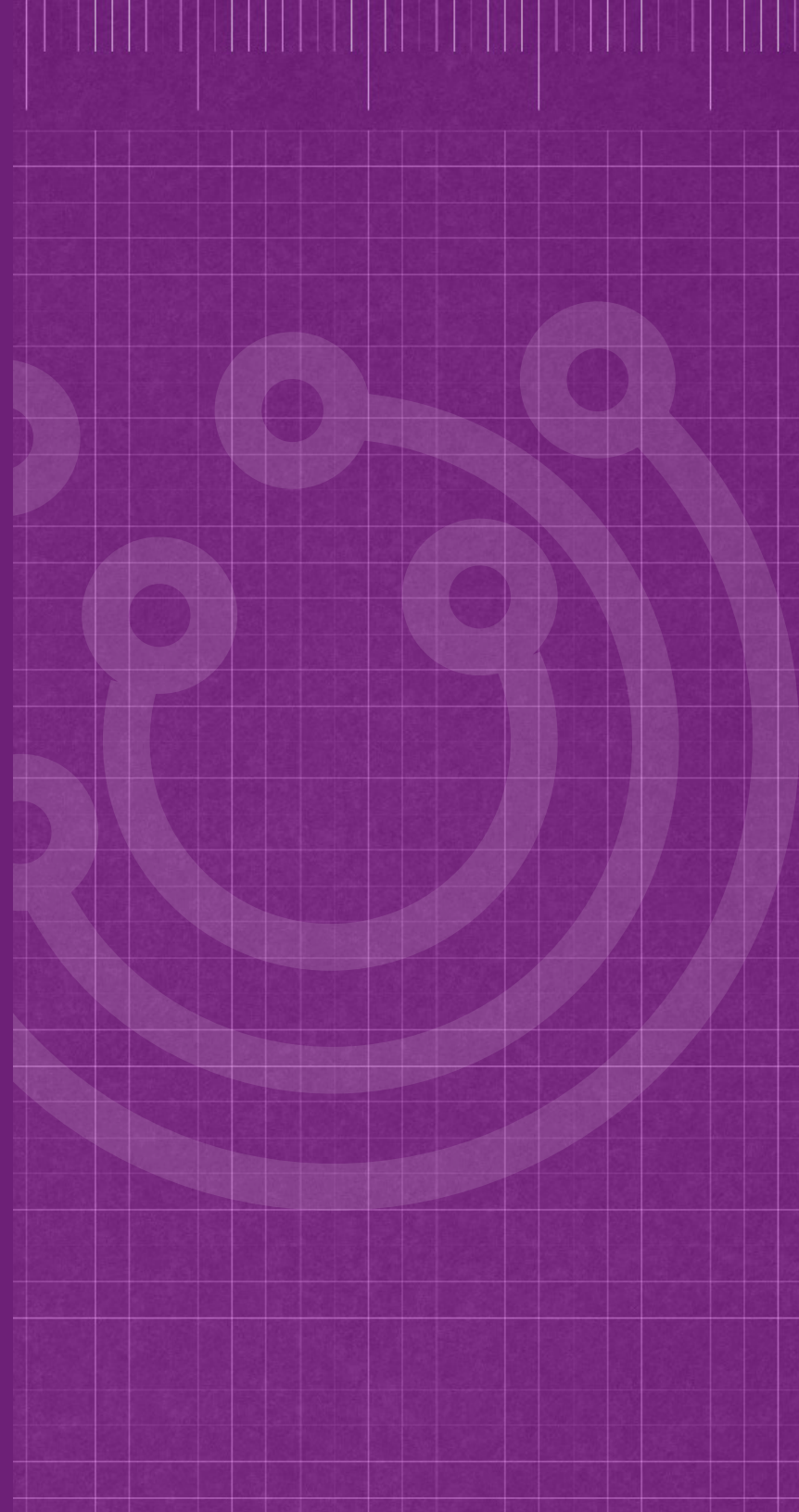




# E-Democracy

Bringing Federal Agencies Online  
via Digital Transformation





# Low-code and no-code are two examples of technologies that are helping the public sector kickstart its digital transformation processes. For federal organizations just starting out in their digital transformation journey, what do they need to know?

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Citizens are more connected than ever. To meet constituents where they are, the federal government should start investing in digital transformation. But what exactly is digital transformation and how can it benefit agencies?

“Digital transformation is about improving services, reducing costs, creating value and improving your cyber posture,” said Joe Klimavicz, managing director for KPMG, during the final installment of the **“Blueprints for a Modern Government”** series, produced by GovExec and underwritten by KPMG. During the roundtable discussion, which was hosted by George Jackson, director of events at GovExec, federal leaders came together to discuss how they’re investing in digital transformation and the lessons they’ve learned along the way.

Here are a few key takeaways from their discussion.

1. Establish Holistic Data Governance Strategies
2. Make Cybersecurity the Focal Point
3. Apply Human-Centered Design Principles
4. Reskill and Retrain Your Workforce





# 1 Establish Holistic Data Governance Strategies

For agencies looking to kickstart their digital transformation journey, implementing holistic data governance strategies is critical. But this is often easier said than done.

"I think one of the biggest challenges is governance," said Klimavicz. "You have to figure out how you're going to make decisions in these [digital transformation efforts], setting that strategic direction, getting executive sponsorship [and] making sure that employees are engaged [and] feel like they're part of the process."

Data and IT leaders at the Defense Logistics Agency are working together to address this challenge. Adarryl Roberts, information operations program executive officer, and Lindsey Saul, chief data and analytics officer, teamed up to create holistic data governance strategies within the organization.

"It's a holistic effort from a governance perspective, for us to make sure that we're not just providing transparency, we're not just processing transactions, but we're also getting the data to a point where we can do more predictive analytics and AI and machine learning in the future," Roberts said.



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**Adarryl Roberts**

Information Operations Program Executive Officer  
Defense Logistics Agency

# 2 Make Cybersecurity the Focal Point

Without a doubt, security is a crucial element within any data strategy. Klimavicz and others during the roundtable highlighted this, speaking specifically to how cybersecurity must be built-in from the get-go.

“The thing about cybersecurity [is] you’re always being attacked from some facet, whether it be foreign enemies or hackers that just want to see if they can break into your system,” said Roberts. “For us [that’s why] we’ve baked cybersecurity into our development.”

But what can federal organizations do to better protect and defend against malicious actors? Saul expanded upon this question by highlighting several things the DLA has done to better protect and defend its most critical asset.

“Cybersecurity does play a huge role in this,” said Saul. “As we expand our data to mobile applications and make it more accessible, we also have to be cognizant of the risks that come with that. . . So as part of our data governance framework, we have in place our Chief Privacy Officer . . . working to make data more secure.”

Aside from establishing a chief privacy officer role, organizations can strengthen their data security by implementing data protections like multi-factor authentication and encryption. Introducing these protocols can help organizations minimize the risk posed during the digital transformation processes.

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# 3 Apply Human-Centered Design Principles

When successful, these transformation efforts provide citizens with seamless digital experiences.

“Governments are becoming modern and digital, so they can serve their constituents in a more empathetic, seamless and frictionless way,” said DeAnna Bennett, advisory managing director at KPMG. “Modernizing their technology and their infrastructure allows them to connect a citizen experience that puts the citizen first in the way they access services at the heart of how they’re working today.”

Failure to provide seamless experiences can cause friction and frustration among key stakeholders. In government, for instance, **websites crashing and elevated wait times at call centers** make it difficult for constituents to get what they need.

To improve the citizen experience and ultimately reduce friction, organizations should focus on incorporating human-centered design principles.

“When we were going through that process to develop this new platform, we really focused on that human-centered design element,” said

Jennifer Buaas, director of strategic digital services at the State of Texas’ Department of Information Resources. “[We] focus[ed] on the end-user and their outcome . . . looking at what is our constituent or consumer struggles, and then how do we help them with those?”



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# 4 Reskill and Retrain Your Workforce

States across the country are adopting a digital-first outlook, **with many looking to invest taxpayer dollars in expanding broadband access** to remote and rural communities. Until these communities come online, however, the federal workforce needs to be prepared to operate within a hybrid culture.

In order to deliver on performance goals within a hybrid culture, employees need to know how to interact not only with their constituents, but also with new tools like chatbots and digital assistants.

“The workforce will now be retrained and reskilled to pick up and interact with technology in a very different way,” said Buaas. “But ultimately, it provides a more quick [and] easy service to the citizens [with] better outcomes.”

Organizations can start training their employees on these technologies by establishing learning sessions, where technical experts highlight how chatbots or digital assistants can help augment the employee experience. Additionally, providing hands-on learning can help employees gain real-

time experience with these technologies, leading to a deeper understanding of how the tools can incorporate into their daily workflow.

For agencies across the country, these technologies are just one facet of the digital transformation process. By pursuing overarching IT modernization and digital transformation goals, the federal workforce will be able to augment business processes and better deliver upon mission goals and objectives.





Learn more about how KPMG can help guide your agency through its digital transformation journey.

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