



MODERNIZING FEDERAL DIGITAL SERVICES: UNIFYING SECURITY AND USER EXPERIENCE

Unified intelligence solutions are empowering federal agencies to enhance security and improve digital services.



KEY THEMES UNCOVERED

[Executive Order 14058](#) and the [President's Management Agenda](#) are driving a new era of digital transformation across federal services, with a clear mandate for agencies to prioritize user-centric, secure digital experiences. As agencies work to create unified digital experiences, leaders must prioritize enhancing the user experience.

During a recent webinar, titled "[Collaborate and Secure: Enhancing Digital Experiences for Federal Agencies](#)," Tanura Elie, deputy assistant commissioner of revenue collections management for the U.S. Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, and Jason Warfield, head of global solutions and adoption engineering for Cisco ThousandEyes, discussed how federal leaders can successfully focus on the user experience while still delivering secure, accountable digital services. Here's how.

START WITH DEFINING KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bureau of the Fiscal Service, acting as the federal government's financial intermediary, manages essential transactions on behalf of citizens, such as student loan payments and Social Security benefits. Whether a citizen is making a payment or receiving benefits, every transaction moves through its systems.

In working with other agencies, the Bureau must navigate varying levels of modernization. Elie explained that the agency often relies on several different methods to ensure seamless, integrated experiences – from lockboxes for mail-in payments to pay.gov. While this diversity could present challenges, the Bureau effectively manages the complexity by establishing clear guidelines and expectations for all processes.

"We've taken more of a data driven approach to ensuring that agencies are capturing key data from their customers up front and managing that customer relationship," said Elie. "That, in turn, allows Fiscal to focus on the safe and secure processing of the financial transactions on the back end."

LOOK TO UNIFY OPERATIONS ACROSS SECURITY AND DESIGN

Securing federal assets amid increasing threats is essential, but agencies must strike a delicate balance. Overly aggressive security protocols risk creating poor user experiences, potentially hampering efficiency and effectiveness. The challenge lies in implementing comprehensive security measures that safeguard sensitive information and systems without burdening legitimate users or impeding the agency's core functions.

"You need to balance security with making sure that the user experience [of] accessing these digital services are as simple, as well as effective," said Warfield. "What we've seen organizations do is start to converge the two and take more of a unified approach."

This requires federal leaders to bridge a historical divide between the security and customer experience (CX) teams. Traditionally, both groups operated in silos, each focusing on similar sets of information but for different reasons. Deploying integrated tooling can help both teams access and share information in real time. For security analysts, this means that as a new application launches, team leads can validate its security posture. Simultaneously, designers can identify any initial bottlenecks and process lags as they occur, enabling greater efficiency and practicality.



“It’s critical to have visibility into the entire ecosystem, both things you own and control, and things that you leverage from a third-party perspective, to ensure a consistently great user experience,” said Warfield.

LEVERAGE AI TO FURTHER ENHANCE USER EXPERIENCES

Creating these seamless digital experiences can be complex, especially as federal agencies face resource constraints, budget shortfalls, and aging infrastructure. For Elie and Warfield, now is the time for federal agencies to be explicit in the benefits of modernization.

“It takes time to get not only the agencies, but the individuals, to buy in on the actual transition to electronic if they’ve always sent their tax return with a check,” said Elie. “Helping them understand and quickly realize the benefits of moving to our more automated, electronic process, and how it’s quicker, safer and more convenient is always going to be a challenge.”

Increasing adoption rates starts with educating key employees and stakeholders about the benefits of the technology. As federal agencies look to unite security and design tooling, leaders should collaborate with team leads to establish benchmarks based on current performance. By setting performance baselines, agencies can measure the impact of emerging technologies on digital services.

“First and foremost you need to understand what [your] performance looks like today,” said Warfield. “The only way to know if you’re going to actually deliver that outcome is to baseline performance prior to the migration.”

Once a baseline is set, emerging technologies can help teams increase performance and enhance digital experiences across the board.

“It’s important to have not just a unified approach but be able to have an AI-driven approach because there’s just far too much information for people to manually sift through,” said Warfield. “Being able to leverage a platform that unifies that information, applies an AI-driven approach to identify potential threats and vulnerabilities that you take action against is critical in this day and time.”

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