

# TechAmerica's Twentieth Annual Survey (2010) of Federal Chief Information Officers: Transparency and Transformation through Technology

## Interview Guide

This year our survey theme focuses on the first year of the Obama Administration and leveraging technology in creating transparency and enabling transformation. The new Administration will introduce a period of increased change and provide opportunities to influence the future direction of government and how it uses IT. As always, the primary intent of this year's survey is to identify those key issues that will be faced by federal CIO's, the federal IT community, and the Administration and Congress; to offer insights from leaders of these organizations; and, as appropriate, to offer suggestions and observations from TechAmerica on how federal leadership might focus on the challenges that confront them.

The federal officials that are being interviewed during the TechAmerica CIO Survey have been provided a general description of our areas of interest, but not a set of detailed questions. This Interview Guide is designed to assist you in directing the discussion to cover the areas of interest, but it is not prescriptive; you are free to modify the questions and process to fit your style and the interview environment. Please complete the interview within one hour. There is a short attachment, "The State of the CIO Survey" form, which we would like the CIOs to fill out and return as part of the survey. We provided a copy of that form with the TechAmerica letter confirming this interview. If the CIO does not provide a completed copy, please provide an additional copy, with a request to fax to the number provided on the form.

### Section 1—Top challenges

Looking at your present set of challenges, and those challenges you expect to confront your agency/department as you look out over the next year or so, what are the Top 3 Issues that the CIO and CIO office are facing? Can you rank them from most difficult to least difficult?

1. IT security
2. IT infrastructure
3. IT management
4. Resources
5. IT workforce
6. Application systems

You can anticipate the six challenges above being mentioned, as well as other challenges.

For any challenge mentioned by a CIO, I would suggest trying to get the following questions answered:

- Get a clear understanding of the challenge. How does the challenge affect your department/agency? What makes the challenge a top priority? Is the challenge a new one, or a continuation of an existing problem?
- Is the challenge a common one across agencies, or unique to your department/agency? If a common one, are there common solutions available, such as a line of business or industry best practice?

- How do you expect to address the challenge? How long will it take to achieve success? Do you have funding? Do you expect to engage industry in the solution? If so, how?
- Is the ability to address this challenge within the purview of the CIO, or are other senior executives important to the solution? If others are important, do they view the challenge with the same priority that you do? Is there a governance mechanism to assist with cross-organizational solution management?

## Section 2—Transparency and transformation through technology

The emphasis of the Obama Administration on both transparency and performance management has produced both challenges and opportunities for the federal CIO community. Technology will be the key enabler for creating a transparent view of the current performance of all federal programs as well as the key tool in measurement of the effectiveness of government investments in new methods for serving the needs of the government and its citizens. Please pursue questions to the CIOs in the following areas:

- Do you have a clear understanding of what transparency means? How would you summarize?
- What impact has the call for transparency had on your day-to-day operations?
  - Resources?
  - Allocation of time?
  - Ability to respond?
- Have you been tasked with additional responsibilities associated with implementing the Recovery Act? What are they?
- How is your agency managing implementation of the Recovery Act?
- What new technologies do you anticipate deploying? What are the government problems they address?

## Section 3 Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity has received considerable attention over the last several years. Other aspects of information security, such as the privacy of individuals with respect to the information collected about and around them, are also getting increasing attention. Please pursue a conversation about the status of the CIO's efforts in these areas:

- Describe the three major challenges in cybersecurity for your agency. How do you plan to meet/resolve these challenges?
- Describe your agency's status in implementing Administration priorities. Are you meeting OMB's expectations? What are some of the challenges you face in pursuing these initiatives?
- How comfortable are you with your network and system monitoring capabilities with respect to cybersecurity? How would you describe the threats you face in this area? How often are you engaged in cybersecurity matters?
- How do you balance the need to secure your information assets and the need to share critical information across levels of government in your organization? Has your organization developed a workable strategy for this? Is there sufficient guidance from OMB to enable you to move forward?
- Does your agency/department collect or process information for which there are privacy concerns? Do you have an official designated as the lead for privacy? What are the main issues regarding the development and operation of your privacy program?

## Section 4—Cloud Computing

With this question, we want to get a sense of how CIOs are expecting to approach Cloud Computing strategically, what kinds of benefits they expect to gain and what programs or initiatives are in their tactical plans. You may wish to ask the following questions:

- As most often described in the federal IT environment, Cloud Computing is a strategic approach to transferring operational management and delivery responsibility from the government to a vendor service provider to improve and make more efficient IT operations. From this perspective, is Cloud Computing part of your CIO organization strategy?
- If so, can you describe your Cloud Computing strategy? What is the current status?
- What are the benefits you expect to gain from moving to a Cloud Computing approach?
- What services areas are included in your strategy?
- Please describe the political and change management challenges that you face in moving to Cloud Computing.

### **Section 5—IT workforce**

One of the major challenges in the federal CIO space is the recruiting and retention of a capable IT workforce. Please engage with the CIO in the following areas of questioning:

- What are your key challenges in maintaining adequate levels of IT workforce to perform your mission?
- What has been the impact if the “in-sourcing” initiative?
- What are the challenges of maintaining the blended workforce?
- Do you have effective support from your HR specialists as well as OPM in satisfying your technical workforce requirements?

### **Section 6 - Performance management/accountability**

With this question, we want to seek an understanding of how well the strategy and operational results for the CIO organization are communicated to other management and program mission organizations, to organizational leadership within the department/agency the CIO represents, and externally. To pursue this line of inquiry, you may wish to ask the following questions:

- Does the CIO organization have a written strategic plan? Does the plan contain descriptions of expected support and results, and/or measures of success? Has it been updated to address the requirements of the Obama Administration?
- How do the program and management executives in your organization participate in the IT governance process?
- How will the Obama Administration’s IT Dashboard be used within your organization? Are the results visible across the department/agency? Are the results credible with non-CIO organization executives? Will transparency create pressure to deliver better results? Will the result be better results?
- Does your performance agreement contain specific measures of performance for achieving results with the CIO organization? How visible are those measures and the results reported to other executives in your organization?

### **Section 7—Acquisition reform and sourcing**

With the technology change cycle of 18 months, timely acquisition of mission-capable technology is a major challenge. Please engage with the CIO in questioning about technology procurement in the following areas:

- What challenges do you see with the government procurement processes keeping up with the tech industry?
- How has the nature of tech infrastructure changes, including Cloud, affected your acquisition support requirements? What changes are needed?
- How will the changes in cybersecurity strategy and policy affect your acquisition and sourcing requirements?

- Do you deploy open source, and what impact does this have on your acquisition and sourcing?

## **Section 8—other issues**

To the extent that you have time, please continue the interview by asking questions in the following areas:

### **Recovery Act**

The Administration's program to implement the Recovery Act has had variable effects on the agencies and departments. To what degree has the Recovery Act created demand for technology capability to manage the implementation? Has Recovery Act funding resulted in/directed the fueling of new technology-related capabilities in order to deliver new services and capabilities to citizens?

### **Web 2.0**

A broad definition of Web 2.0 is the use of Internet technologies to enhance creativity, information sharing, and, most notably, collaboration among users. Web 2.0 is getting significant attention from the federal Government and CIOs. Please ask the CIO about how Web 2.0 fits into his/her organization's strategy, whether any initiatives or pilots are underway, for status on any efforts related to Web 2.0, and for a description of benefits that are expected to result.

### **Emerging technologies**

If you have time, you might ask the CIO to comment on any other emerging technologies that are being considered for use at his/her agency. Areas of interest would be to identify the technologies, how they would be used, the benefits that are expected to result, and the status of initiatives to study/pilot/introduce the technologies.

### **Thin Client**

With the evolution of Cloud Computing and the impact of privacy and cybersecurity strategy/policy, is this an IT infrastructure approach whose time has come?

### **Green IT**

What specific strategies and plans does the CIO have in this area? What is their environmental/energy posture for IT acquisitions?