How Emerging Technology Is Transforming Tomorrow's Mission, Today

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Artificial intelligence, 5G, cloud, edge computing, robotics and more all demonstrate exciting promise in their potential to transform the way government organizations operate and execute on the mission.

As organizations everywhere modernize their IT infrastructure and implement software-defined data centers and solutions to take advantage of these new tools, many government entities are already realizing some extraordinary wins in the ways that emerging tech can boost mission delivery.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, for example, has begun to tap drones in the aftermath of a disaster event in order to survey an area and better understand safety impact ahead of sending in first responders. Meanwhile,

the U.S. Cyber Command is turning to AI as a force multiplier for its cyber talent. And the Department of Defense has plans to launch large-scale 5G pilots aimed at exploring the ways the next-generation wireless technology can support augmented and virtual reality training, smart warehousing and more.

With many of these mission-enhancing projects in their beginning phases, the key to future success comes with understanding that the applications of these new technologies are only poised to grow, says Cameron Chehreh of Dell EMC Federal and vice president of Presales for Dell Technologies.

"We talk a lot about the information explosion that has occurred over the last decade and it is our point of view that it will significantly accelerate over the next three to five years," says Chehreh. "With everything becoming networked and producing information, our natural curiosity to find insights into data grows. This further drives our desire for consumption of data and the analytics that follow. This cycle is speeding up the more technology becomes embedded in our lives."

In fact, according to a recent report published by Dell Technologies and the Institute for the Future, by 2030 the pace of change will be

so accelerated that people will learn new skills "in the moment" by tapping AR and VR technologies. Moreover, change will be so dramatic over the next 10 years that 85% of jobs that will be available in 2030 haven't yet been invented.

What does this mean for government? The military space is more than likely to be impacted.

"If the past is any indication of the future we can already see the battlefield and government of the future being 100% digital to enhance the human execution of mission. This means a digital soldier who is empowered with the commander's intent but has enough information and digital infrastructure forward to make real time decisions on the battle field," says Chehreh.

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Civilian agencies will be influenced, as well.

"In the civilian space we can see the realization of much smarter cities saving citizens billions of dollars to re-invest in a modern government that underpins a modern society. For us science fiction geeks: It is not quite the Jetsons but more like Star Trek the next generation," Chehreh adds.

While exciting changes are coming down the pike, there are still a few barriers to success government and IT leaders should keep an eye on. Chehreh notes that policy will almost always need to catch up with technology, budgets will remain challenging as agencies strive to move the majority of investment from legacy upkeep to innovation, and organizations will need to approach workforce transformation carefully to ensure staff understand how to best use new technology as an asset.

As change continues to snowball, government and IT leaders can ensure they're investing in new technologies judiciously by keeping innovation small — at least at first.

"Implementing government programs over the last 30 years we have learned that big bang projects — although at times necessary — can be extraordinarily difficult. To that end we recommend small but high impact projects that allow the government to fail fast but succeed faster," says Chehreh. "It is important to learn rapidly from failures and from others experiences and drive success quickly. We have found that adopting an agile methodology, picking small quick win projects and iterating is the key to success."

Ultimately, striking this balance between rapid innovation and thoughtful implementation will allow agencies to modernize efficiently and in ways that continue to enhance the mission, without encountering as many cultural, budgetary or regulatory challenges.

"Find those quick wins that allow the rapid infusion of modern technology that allows you to bring the workforce along as quickly as possible," advises Chehreh. "Implementing technology is only one facet of modernization but sustaining that investment with a modern workforce is critical."

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