Cloud Commission Advises State and Local Governments to Evaluate, Collaborate

Sarah Rich | February 16, 2012

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. — For state and local government agencies, cloud computing is no longer a choice — it has become an " imperative" the public sector must carry out, according to a new recommendations released Thursday, Feb. 15 by an advisory commission.

At a press conference held on a Microsoft campus, the panel of technology executives, and state and local government IT officials discussed the state of cloud computing deployment in the public sector and addressed the challenges to moving agencies and departments into a cloud environment.

California Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom said state and local governments are still behind on properly adopting technology tools such as cloud computing. Newsom said the federal government's Cloud First policy mandates cloud computing deployments is a " wonderful notion," but it needs to be manifested.

"We've got to wake up to this new reality," Newsom said.

To help educate lawmakers and help IT decision-makers move in the right direction, the TechAmerica Foundation's State and Local Government Cloud Commission released its new report, *The Cloud Imperative: Better Collaboration, Better Service, Better Cost* to advise government agencies on how to evaluate, procure and implement cloud services. TechAmerica also unveiled a new website that will function as a hub for learning and interacting with others about cloud technologies.

The TechAmerica Foundation, the nonprofit arm of the U.S. technology industry's advocacy organization, brought the SLG Cloud Commission together in August. The commission is chaired by Tarkan Maner, president and CEO of Wyse Technology. The vice chairmen are David L. Cohn, program director of Smarter Cloud at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center, and Daniel Kent, Cisco's chief technology officer (CTO) for public sector. Another three dozen executives are on the panel, joined by an advisory group of prominent IT leaders in the public sector.

The Cloud Commission envisions improved collaboration within and between government agencies, and better services to governments and citizens — all while reducing costs.

According to the report, four phases should be followed when implementing a cloud solution in a state or local government space: business case and readiness assessment, risk assessment, implementation and operation of the new environment. Some of the report's best practices for cloud implementation include, but are not limited to:

- create a core evaluation team;
- determine "proof of concept" strategies;
- define clear business cases and performance goals for adoption based on industry-proven use cases;

- encourage up-front planning for multi-tenant environments;
- define compliance, security and recurring audit requirements compliant with your agency's requirements; and
- define an adoption strategy and road map in alignment with prioritized business cases.

The full report also contains best practice case studies, discussions of different cloud computing models, and lists of key takeaways and step-by-step recommendations. The report can be downloaded for free [here](#).

A Phased Approach

Some state and local governments already have begun the process of moving applications and infrastructure to the cloud. During a panel discussion, Gina Tomlinson, CTO of the city and county of San Francisco, said the city saw a need to upgrade its IT infrastructure and that cloud computing was means to do so.

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In advance of the Cloud Commission's meeting, Bethann Pepoli, CTO of state and local government and education for EMC, told Government Technology she believes that cloud adoption will spike this year since government agencies have had time to do research about the cloud and decide on implementation strategies. Within the government space, she thinks one of the up-and-coming trends will be agencies developing "community clouds" — multiple government entities using shared services in the cloud.

"A number of states get together and put out a single RFP for an application to be delivered in a cloud environment that all of those states would share," Pepoli said.

http://www.govtech.com/policy-management/Cloud-Commission-Advises-State-and-Local-Governments-to-Evaluate-Collaborate.html