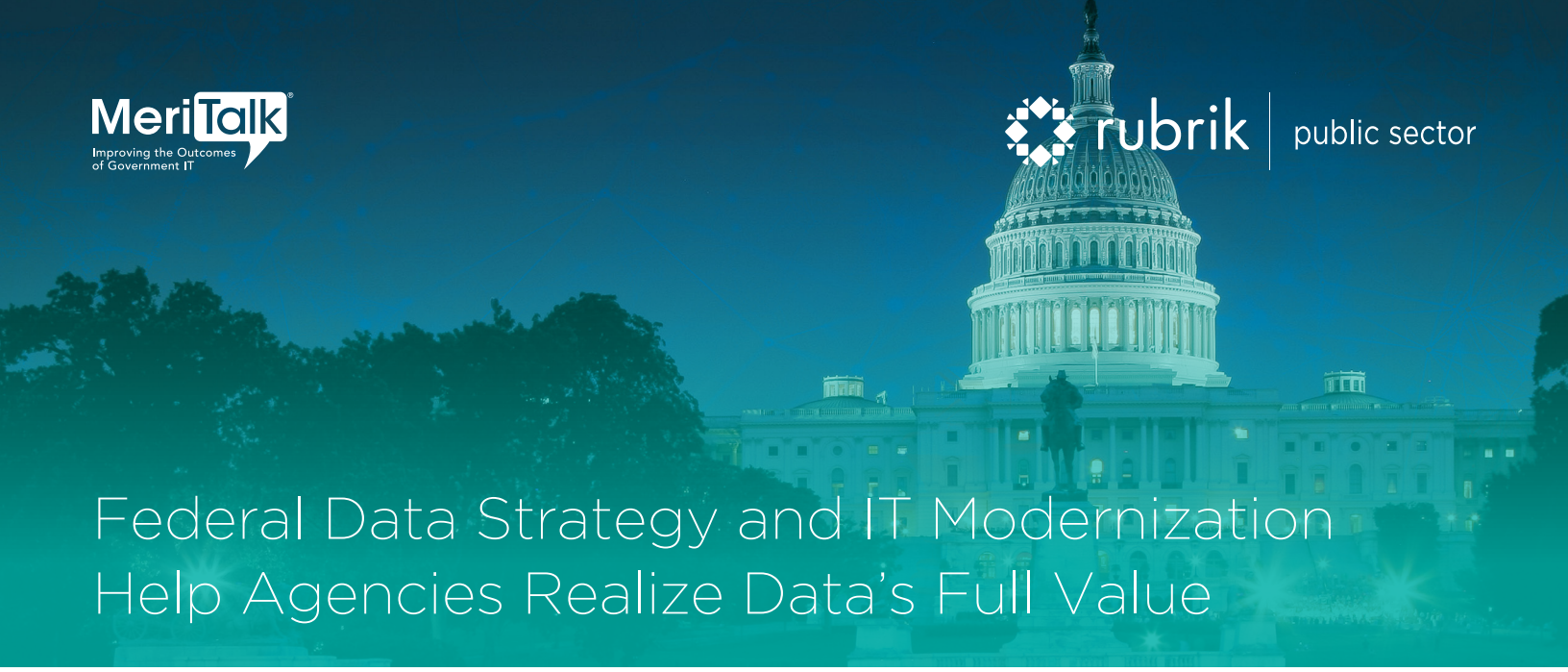

Federal Data Strategy and IT Modernization Help Agencies Realize Data's Full Value

The Federal Data Strategy (FDS), a 10-year roadmap, is designed to help Federal agencies leverage data for strategic advantage and serve the public. Its importance is amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic as agencies confront new requirements for data analysis and sharing, and must enable access and security for a widely dispersed workforce.

IT modernization is essential to data access and sharing in today's work environment. Centralized data repositories worked well when employees were in office buildings, using government-furnished equipment. Now, with the "tactical edge" extended to employees' homes, agencies need to extend data out to that edge. As a result, agencies are accelerating their embrace of cloud and other modern technologies.

Cloud environments help agencies more effectively store, manage, and secure data, and share it internally and with other agencies. For example, the departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Veterans Affairs could share demographic information about veterans, but not their names, to help improve services provided to them.

The FDS lays out a best practices framework that agencies can use to develop and execute data management plans that meet their specific needs, noted Jeffrey Phelan, public sector chief technology officer for Rubrik.

"Every agency is unique. A one-size-fits-all approach isn't feasible," he observed. "Much like agencies have moved from reactive to proactive in the cybersecurity space, the FDS helps agencies move from reactive to proactive in the data management space."

Cloud and Automation Foster Efficiency and Cost Savings

The FDS and IT modernization can help agencies overcome inefficiencies created by manual processes and budget pressures created by annual capital outlays for hardware and software.

Automation helps agencies eliminate manual data management processes.

"If your data has to be curated or it takes days to go through a process and your mission requires access to the data in seconds, you already have a big disconnect," he said.

Cloud solutions enable agencies to pay for data management on a consumption basis, potentially *saving* millions annually. But agencies must first understand the financial aspects of on-premises and cloud models before rolling out new initiatives. While the cost to store a petabyte of data in the cloud may be minimal, the cost to analyze it in the cloud with artificial intelligence and machine learning tools is not.

Lifecycle Data Management Enables Mission Success

To realize the promise of the FDS, agencies are facing challenges:

- Adapting the workforce
- Meeting expectations for real-time data access
- Enabling cross-agency data sharing

Often, skilled data managers working with on-premises solutions are concerned about their job security, but they shouldn't be, Phelan said.

"These folks have been working on the car, so to speak, for years. They are going to continue to work on the car, but the car is now parked in someone else's garage – the cloud services provider."

Today's missions require – and workers expect – secure, real-time data access across the enterprise. It's a substantial challenge. Controlling access to and from an on-premises server may present different challenges than providing access to a distributed workforce over the internet, so organizations require tools and technologies that can seamlessly move data across data centers, to and between various clouds, and to the tactical edge or end user.

Under the FDS, the government has developed data quality measuring and reporting guidance, and is developing and piloting tools to help agencies collect, manage, and protect data. This guidance and the new tools can work together to enable cross agency data sharing – but it's a complex task. Infrastructure, cloud, and application teams may be using different tools and workflows. Moving a data set across organizations requires permissions that likely are not in place, and data sets may be too large – and therefore very expensive to move or analyze in real time. Rubrik's software-defined data management platform is an end-to end solution that automates the secure access, storage, and replication of data in motion and at rest, and provides near-instant access – no matter where data is stored.

Rubrik Helps Agencies Realize the Art of the Possible with Real-time Data Recovery & Access

Rubrik is a software-defined data management platform for physical, virtual, and hybrid environments that can help agencies implement the FDS and realize the true value of their data. Rubrik's Enterprise Data Management Platform unifies backup, instant recovery, replication, search, analytics, archival, compliance, and copy data management into one secure software fabric that serves as a data management operating system across data centers, authorized cloud deployments and even for tactical edge and denied communications environments.

Key features include:

- A single console to manage all data
- Automated data policy and SLA management
- Automatic, immutable backups that protect against ransomware and cyberattacks
- Instant recovery for one-click file and database restoration
- Global deduplication and compression to minimize costs
- Global, real-time file level search capabilities
- Encryption throughout the data lifecycle
- Customized analytics on data management, compliance, and capacity planning

Organizations that deploy Rubrik typically experience significant cost avoidance through tool and licensing decreases as well as lower personnel requirements to manage the data lifecycle. One large Defense Department agency streamlined data management so effectively that it reduced personnel requirements for data management from eight to two full-time employees and redeployed those staff members to other mission-critical areas.

Similarly, leveraging Rubrik's API-first and automation capabilities, a very large enterprise reduced its workflows and scheduling from 1,200 incremental jobs to less than 50 with newly automated policies that intelligently schedule, manage, and apply data protection on a 24x7 global basis. As a result, this enterprise reduced its collective "review" workload from nearly 15 hours per day to less than 15 minutes per day – a massive efficiency and cost savings benefit that enables its security and infrastructure teams to invest in and collaborate more on overall IT and data management priorities.