AI PILOTS PROLIFERATE AMONG FEDERAL AGENCIES, LEANING INTO EDGE AI

Eighty-five percent of Feds agree that government can do more to embrace AI technologies at the network's edge

Alexandria, Va., May 24, 2021 – Seventy-one percent of Federal information technology (IT) decision-makers say their agency is being challenged to grow localized artificial intelligence (AI) projects beyond the pilot stage. No existing AI-ready infrastructure presents a formidable hurdle, according to *From Pilots to Proficiency: Operationalizing Federal AI*, a [new study](#) from [MeriTalk](#), a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT.

While the majority (59 percent) have more than 10 AI pilots, less than half have taken critical steps to establish a foundation for widespread AI integration. Further, 81 percent say their agency needs help understanding what an AI-ready compute infrastructure entails. There is strong consensus for modernization progress, with a focus on edge applications, modeling/simulations, and robotic process automation.

Focus On the Edge

Eighty-five percent agree that government can do more to embrace AI technologies on the outer reaches. Leaders call out several applications of AI at the edge as most attractive, including: AI model training, high-performance computing (HPC), intelligent wearable technology, and intelligent video analysis.

Ahead of the Curve

Agencies leading the AI race say that federated learning, a machine learning approach that computes at the device itself using local data, is one of their top AI priorities (90 percent of leaders versus 64 percent of peers).

The AI Opportunity

Looking to the future, 90 percent of Federal IT decision-makers agree the Federal government must quickly and responsibly adopt AI to protect the United States' technical advantage.

"Unlocking AI's enormous potential is a challenge that our Federal government must overcome," said Anthony Robbins, vice president of Federal at NVIDIA. "Federal agencies understand that AI can help them more effectively meet their mission objectives, but only with a firm commitment to develop it and a clear strategy to operationalize it across the Federal enterprise."

From Pilots to Proficiency: Operationalizing Federal AI is based on an online survey of 150 Federal IT decision-makers familiar with their agency's use of, or plans for, AI in April 2021. The study is underwritten by Dell Technologies and NVIDIA. The report has a margin of error of ±7.97 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. To download the full report, please visit https://www.meritalk.com/study/pilots-to-proficiency/.

About MeriTalk

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