eGUIDE

OneNeck® IT SOLUTIONS a TDS® Company

presents

Transforming Government with Hybrid IT

In today's state and local governments are continually called on to do more with less. Not only must they strive to satisfy an increasingly demanding constituency that expects services to be always-on and delivered in real time, but they must do so in the face of a reduced staff and budget. In addition, government CIOs must increase performance, ensure security and provide a flexible environment that allows for rapid changes in application development.

A hybrid IT approach can transform how government operates, solving critical problems while meeting the requirements to satisfy both the mission of delivering quality service and staying within budget.

Read more...

We offer this eGUIDE to provide insight on the benefits of a hybrid IT approach within your government entity. Included, you will find articles on hybrid IT in today's modern government, as well as some examples from OneNeck customers embracing this approach.

As experts in hybrid IT solutions, OneNeck is committed to helping our customers connect with citizens in a seamless manner, foster mobility, govern more agilely and efficiently, all while improving transparency, performance and governance.

We can help you understand your best options and realize the benefits of a hybrid IT solution.

We start with an IT assessment in which we examine your complete environment to help you make the right technology choices for your organization, and then provide the roadmap of hybrid IT solutions including cloud, hardware and applications that will support your growth and agility, while reducing cost and risk, allowing you to move forward with confidence.

This eGUIDE is just another tool to demystify hybrid IT so you can begin to gain maximum benefit from your hybrid IT strategy.

City of Minneapolis

Minneapolis is the largest municipality in Minnesota with more than 400,000 residents, forming half of the Twin Cities with the neighboring state capital, St. Paul. Minneapolis serves as a center of commerce for the region, including support for a large agricultural region with food processing, as well as manufacturing, computing and health services. In fact, 15 Fortune 500 companies maintain corporate headquarters in Minneapolis. Running the City's infrastructure requires a complex enterprise network with customized software for each government department and agency.

The Challenge

The City of Minneapolis had been working with their previous IT outsourcing partner for 13 years and desired to find a new managed services and outsourced IT partner to manage the City's IT infrastructure. In addition, the existing network infrastructure was aging, and the City needed an experienced IT services partner to provide cloud and managed services that encompassed server, storage, network, security, database, OS and data protection services. After issuing a comprehensive RFP for outsourced IT services, the City of Minneapolis selected OneNeck® IT Solutions out of a field of 18 prospective partners to handle this comprehensive list of services.

The City chose OneNeck because of the company's track record in dealing with large customers making complex transitions, as well as the projected cost savings, experience-backed Service Level Agreements (SLAs), flexibility and extensive cloud services. In signing the contract with OneNeck, Otto Doll, CIO for Minneapolis, said, "Their ability to meet our objective for fast, flexible provisioning of services is only one of the reasons why the City selected OneNeck."

DOWNLOAD

Case Study

City of Bend

Reliabiity Connecting the City

The City needed to develop a secure, robust and fail-proof data center without investing hundreds of thousands of dollars. They turned to OneNeck for help.

Download Now

OneNeck also has strong company roots in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area following the acquisition of a local IT company by OneNeck's parent company, Telephone and Data Systems, Inc. (TDS). OneNeck has 65 employees based in the Minneapolis area and the ability to deliver a variety of hybrid IT solutions including colocation, managed services, hosted services and cloud computing. After signing the multi-million dollar, five-year contract with the City, it was up to the OneNeck team to demonstrate they could do the job and implement a successful transition in less than 10 months.

The OneNeck IT Solutions Answer

Because of OneNeck's comprehensive hybrid IT service offerings, OneNeck had all of the resources needed to manage the City of Minneapolis' computing infrastructure. As part of the contract, OneNeck would provide colocation services leveraging OneNeck's national footprint of purpose-built, highly-secure data centers it owns and operates. One data center was to host the City's production application environment, while disaster recovery for mission-critical and business-critical applications would be supported from another OneNeck data center.

OneNeck also was able to bring all the expertise required to maintain enterprise operation including managed services for networking equipment such as routers, switches and firewalls across 70 locations. Data hosting using OneNeck's' ReliaCloud® infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) platform was able to support more than 250 servers with 180 terabytes of data, including dedicated servers for non-virtualized assets.

The OneNeck team also brought the expertise to transition and upgrade critical components the City's PeopleSoft environment to support human resources and finance. Migration included transitioning and supporting hundreds of applications for specific city services, such as waste management, land management, parks and recreation and more.

Like any IT transformation, there were bumps along the way that the City and OneNeck worked through together. Since the existing contract was still in place when the new contract was signed, the OneNeck team was unable to gain access to the computing environment prior to the hand-off. There was no way to perform an initial assessment. However, when the contract did expire, OneNeck was able to work with the installed systems and initiate the migration without any real problems.

Part of the reason for the success was the ongoing communications between the OneNeck team and the City's IT team. From the first day the contract was signed, the City demonstrated their eagerness to forge a partnership and committed their time and resources to the project. To ensure success, the OneNeck project team and the City's IT group met twice each day to plan and assess progress.

As the OneNeck team moved through each phase of the project, they encountered a few surprises. For example, they discovered that most of the installed enterprise systems were at the end of their lifespan. There was no alternative but to take the outdated systems and make sure they continued to work; letting the system go down was not an option.

The biggest surprise came with the implementation of the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). Before work could begin on the CJIS project, the entire OneNeck Operational Support team, more than 100 professionals, had to be screened for security clearance, including fingerprinting and background checks. However, OneNeck worked closely with the City to satisfy all of the City's security and compliance requirements, even though it impacted progress on the overall transition project with the City.

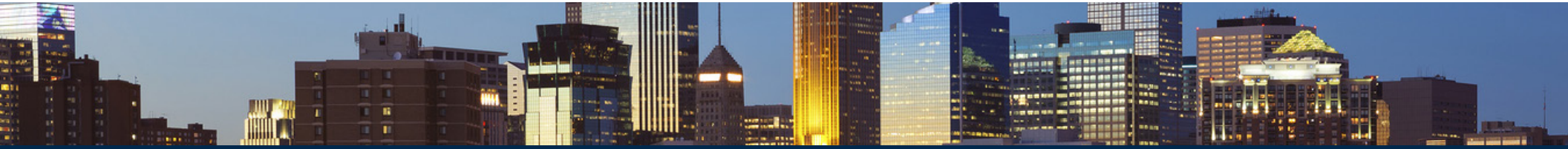
The Benefits

Despite these challenges, the OneNeck team was able to complete Phase 1 of the project on time and within budget. Some of the IT environments were even ahead of schedule.

OneNeck was able to scale the capacity of the ReliaCloud environment quickly to accommodate 70 separate locations and 3,500 users with more than 250 servers and 180 terabytes. Much of the first six months of the project included migrating data and workloads from the existing service provider's data center to ReliaCloud.

As the relationship evolves, the City of Minneapolis will continue to look to OneNeck as a strategic service provider. OneNeck continues to supplement the City's team with diverse expertise, across many technologies, bringing solutions and resources as needed, even outside the originally contracted services.

The City is already seeing on-going benefits as they are more flexible and more responsive to stakeholders needs. City administrators expect to save more than $3 million annually with OneNeck, and as new upgrades and applications are needed as part of organic growth, the City will continue to benefit from OneNeck's versatility and ability to plan and manage a dynamic IT infrastructure.



SLED's Journey to the Cloud - 3 Key Considerations

State and local agencies are buried by regulations and are pressed by tight budgets. The cloud offers these organizations a way to reduce costs, meet regulatory requirements and upgrade to modern systems, but many are unsure of how to best migrate to the cloud.

To begin answering their questions, an examination of primary cloud drivers can be critical to the decision process. According to 300 Federal, state, local, and education (SLED) cloud adopters surveyed by MeriTalk for its report, Destination Cloud: The Federal and SLED Cloud Journey, 82% of government agencies and higher education institutions say they will increase spending on cloud computing in 2017.

What are the key considerations?

1. **Public vs Private Cloud:** When debating private cloud vs. public cloud, cloud adopters surveyed agree that the decision to use a public or private cloud heavily depends on the primary function of the application. A private cloud is heavily favored for applications that handle sensitive information, are specialized and used by a limited audience, and applications that are continually evolving. While 53% of the respondents cite costs savings as a draw of the public cloud, 61% are concerned with privacy and security.

2. **Migration Strategy:** When SLED agencies/institutions are ready to head to the cloud, preparing for migration to the cloud they report taking the following steps:

   - 57% Identify and mitigate risks
   - 56% Develop a migration strategy
   - 52% Prioritize applications for migration

   But less than half take the following steps that are just as critical for success:

   - 47% Assess the required computing, network, and/or storage needs
   - 46% Develop a cost model
   - 45% Prepare the workforce for the transition

   Migration to the cloud needs to be planned out in phases as not all applications will be ready at once. Cloud adopters in the survey reported that email, web hosting, backup and collaboration applications needed modernization before migration could take place.

3. **Selecting a Provider:** The report states that when partnering with cloud service providers, agencies/institutions should take care to build trust and monitor performance along the way.

   They recommend the following steps to build trust with cloud providers:

   1. Require certification of security measures taken by cloud vendor(s)
   2. Build detailed security planning into the outsourcing contract
   3. Keep security functions on-premise and in-house (including managing access controls and all monitoring functions)
   4. Require that data is located on dedicated (non-pooled) server, storage, and network infrastructure
   5. Require full access to the cloud provider to conduct security and procedural audits

Key Recommendations

The cloud opens up a world of cost-savings and flexibility to scores of industries looking to save money and stay current with IT trends. The top takeaways from MeriTalk report are:

- Plan for the journey by assessing cloud goals, identifying the most critical cloud-ready apps and developing cost models.
- Establish your path by which cloud makes the most sense for your applications — public, private or a hybrid solution.
- Prepare your workforce for the transition and establish trust with your cloud provider.

OneNeck IT Solutions has expertise leveraging a broad range of technologies and services will help you operate more efficiently. We provide an end-to-end, technology-independent approach that includes a complete suite of hybrid IT offerings across infrastructure, applications and managed services. This approach enables governments to realize benefits, not only internally but externally as well, leading to happier, more productive citizens.

Digital Strategy a Must for Today's Government Leaders

As government IT infrastructure ages, the need to embrace a digital strategy has become even more critical. State and local governments are continually called on to do more with less. Not only must they strive to satisfy an increasingly demanding constituency that expects services to be always-on and delivered at real time, but they must do so in the face of a reduced staff and budget. What's needed is a digital strategy that enables government leaders to drive productivity, engagement, and innovation – without breaking the budget.

State and local governments are continually called on to do more with less. Not only must they strive to satisfy a constituency that expects self-service, on-demand services, and to always be connected, they must do so in the face of a reduced staff and constrained budgets.

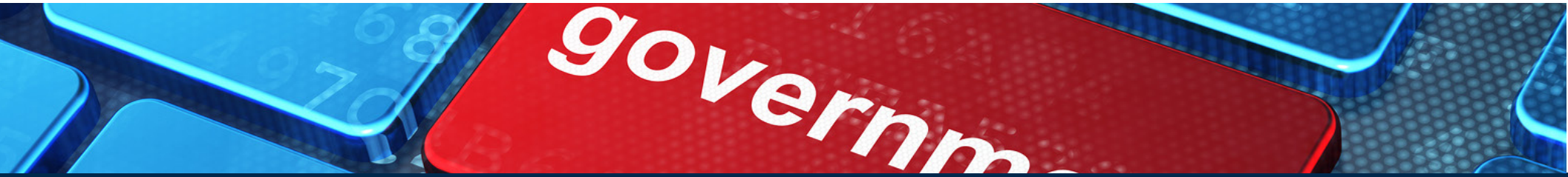
A 2015 Gartner report states that "a digital strategy for government, whether at a national or agency level, is critical in driving productivity, engagement and innovation. As technology continues to offer new and often revolutionary options in service delivery, citizens are increasingly comparing their experience in the commercial arena with that of government. The nature of this new competitive tension is often keenly felt by the government CIO when challenged to explain those differences." Developing a digital strategy is challenging for government agencies. As government IT infrastructure ages and public pressure to innovate increases, the need to embrace a digital strategy has become even more critical, especially as governments are challenged to:

- **Balance both incremental and transformative change.** With many legacy systems still in place, government infrastructure was not built for the cloud and changes will need to be made incrementally. In addition, a digital architecture with a shared-resources model allows for agencies to lower costs, but also makes procurement, security and management more complex.

- **Put constituents' needs front and center.** Meeting constituents needs by implementing innovative products and services, monitoring usage and customer experience, and retailoring the approach will ensure agencies efficiently and cost-effectively meet expectations — today, weeks, months and years down the road.

- **Nurture cross-departmental innovation.** Innovation in government often happens in silos, where a lack of input and buy-in often leave agencies vulnerable to budget cuts. Adopting a cloud strategy throughout the government ensures that all departments can participate and add their expertise to any new processes or services.

- **Improve security.** Rising digital threats such as malware and ransomware are becoming increasingly complex, just as government IT budgets continue to be underfunded. In fact, while the private sector spends 10% of its IT budget on security, the average state or local government spends less than 5%. Securing sensitive data needs to be a higher priority across all government agencies.



As governments look to digitally transform operations in order to better serve constituents and reduce costs, many are turning to:

- **The cloud:** Cloud platforms offer governments with greater flexibility and efficiency, without the need for huge capital outlays. In addition, recent strides in security make the cloud a more viable option for government.
- **Services-as-a-platform:** Many state and local governments are restructuring systems so that all agencies can participate and use shared capabilities and common IT processes, such as call centers, to improve overall efficiencies and increase performance.
- **Social collaboration:** Forward-leaning government agencies are turning to social media as a cost-effective way to listen, respond and interact with constituents, fostering trust and stronger relationships.
- **Internet of Things (IoT):** IoT devices and applications can improve efficiencies and service delivery through better data collection. For example, many cities and towns are outfitting key infrastructure with smart sensors to collect, use and act on real-time data for traffic control, water leaks and much more.

To meet the challenges in driving forth a digital strategy, it's important for government CIOs to understand employee and constituent expectations in the current digital age and promote its importance to government executives, elected officials and key stakeholders.

OneNeck IT Solutions understands the challenges **state and local governments** face in transforming IT to meet today's connected, on-demand and self-service culture. OneNeck follows best practices to improve the delivery, **security** and processes of your **public sector** operations while meeting budget constraints. **Learn more.**

How Hybrid IT Solutions Transform Government IT Infrastructure

The United States federal government wastes billions of dollars on legacy systems that barely work, with the bulk of its IT budget spent on decades-old hardware that needs a good upgrade. Seventy-five percent of IT financial resources were allocated to operations and maintenance in 2015, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, with just over 20 percent used for development, modernization and enhancement. Old, outdated hardware not only drains cash but poses security risks, too. Could hybrid IT infrastructure provide a much-needed solution?

The Challenges of Government IT Infrastructure

Chief Information Officers (CIOs) face a number of challenges when dealing with government legacy systems. Out of date hardware is a major concern, with some government departments using slow, antiquated infrastructure from several decades ago. The Department of Defense, for example, uses a backup system for nuclear control that runs on a 1970s IBM Series 1 computer — complete with eight-inch floppy disks.

Security is another challenge. Old hardware is vulnerable to security risks, and many components are no longer available from the original manufacturer. Moreover, old-fashioned hardware can experience sudden power failures, which can result in damaged data.

There have been several instances of hardware-related problems in government departments. In February 2016, the Internal Revenue Service encountered a hardware failure that left many of its tax processing systems unavailable.

The Benefits of a Hybrid Solution

Hybrid IT infrastructure — where some resources are kept in-house, while others are outsourced to cloud providers — provides the government with a more robust security solution. Hybrid cloud deployment ensures a department's data is continuously backed up, so files can be accessed after a natural disaster or security violation.

Hybrid solutions modernize legacy systems, bridging the gap between old and new. As a result, government departments can reduce operations and maintenance expenses and invest the money they save into new infrastructure.

These systems are already been used by commercial enterprises in various niches. "Hybrid clouds are designed in a manner as to quickly scale the company's needs," says Priya Viswanathan from tech website Lifewire. "Since several standardized processes run together to achieve harmony between various types of clouds, it makes it the ideal solution to load heavy projects, which cannot be easily handled by a company's in-house servers."

How to Choose a Hybrid IT Solution

There are various factors that government departments should consider when choosing the right mix of hybrid IT solutions. Security, for example, is paramount when moving to a cloud environment. In a recent survey, commercial organizations cited loss or theft of intellectual property, malware infections and compliance violations as some of the risks associated with cloud implementation.

System latencies — the amount of time it takes for a system to perform a task — should also be of concern, as should the management applications and tools available to the end user. Hybrid cloud infrastructure needs to integrate well with existing government systems, too, preventing delays and loss of valuable data. Selecting a combination of public and private cloud services would benefit a government department who wants to enhance security without compromising service.

Outdated legacy systems cost a significant amount of money to maintain and are laden with security issues. Hybrid environments, on the other hand, streamline data management and optimize security. Eighty-two percent of commercial enterprises now have a hybrid cloud strategy — eight percent more than in 2014. Now it's time for government departments to invest in this technology, too.

At OneNeck, we have expertise in guiding government entities down the cloud path, ensuring that they improve operations and save costs while meeting all of their compliance and security regulations. Whether they choose to colocate their critical data in one of our highly-secure data center facilities or utilize our secure, hosted private cloud, ReliaCloud, or even utilize some form of public cloud, we guide you each step of the way to ensure your data remains secure and on the right cloud, or clouds, for your government organization.

(855) ONE-NECK

www.OneNeck.com

OneNeck®
IT SOLUTIONS
a TDS® Company