



government experience

A digital future for all

Summary of the Roundtable held at the World Government Summit 2019, Dubai, UAE



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foreword

future of government services

We are living through a period of unprecedented change. Change that runs deeper and wider than ever before, at a pace that has never been experienced. From service design and delivery through to communication and interaction with stakeholders, every aspect of government function and performance will be affected. Understanding the causes and effects of this change will enable government agencies and their partners to plan more effectively and harness their energy in a positive way.

In February 2019, a group of experts from the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Estonia, India, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, UAE, the United Kingdom, and the United States came together at the inaugural Government Services Forum at the World Government Summit in Dubai for a debate and discussion on the role of digital transformation in government services.

Launched by the Emirates Government Service Excellence Program, and supported by EY and Winston & Strawn, the forum welcomed a panel of experts renowned in their fields. We heard them draw upon their experience from central government, local and regional administration, and the private sector.

Despite their diverse backgrounds and experiences, the members of the panel were in broad agreement over many of the challenges and opportunities facing the services domain. Being able to debate them in full at the World Government Summit provided the ideal arena for sharing ideas and insight.

The participants discussed the issues surrounding digital transformation in government services, raised questions, searched for – and delivered – answers, and provoked insights that will help shape the agenda for similar forums in the future.

– H.E. MOHAMMED BIN TALIAH

*Assistant Director General for Government Services Sector
Prime Minister's Office in the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the Future, UAE*



"The objective of the forum was to create an environment where global ideas could be shared and discussed with an orientation towards action. As anticipated, this group was not reserved in sharing valuable insights. While the group was diverse and occasionally disagreed, more often there was agreement. It was notable that experiences and views of the future, despite cultural, political, and geographical differences, were remarkably aligned. All participants agreed that government experiences were changing quickly, and that significant re-engineering would be required in the future, including deep integration between services, a greater focus on data management, improved digital identity, and more emphasis on protecting privacy." summarized the moderator of the session, Dr Jonathan Reichental.





consensus

- 1 Citizens have high expectations when it comes to interacting with government agencies**
- 2 Meeting these expectations calls for more, and better, technology**
- 3 Many legacy technology platforms are complex and services have developed in silos**
- 4 Greater service integration is needed**
- 5 Managing data is a sensitive topic – it must be handled with great care**
- 6 Privacy and trust are key to success**

“The expectation is that transactions with government should be as seamless, as straightforward as buying a pair of shoes when you go online. This is what the young generation currently expects. And frankly there are no technical reasons for why this should not happen. There are all sorts of other reasons but they are not technology driven reasons. The frame of reference has shifted quite dramatically from where we were barely 10 years ago”



– GEORGE ATALLA
Global Leader, Government and Public Sector, EY

Citizen expectations are increasing, technology is playing a far greater role, and complexity of systems, data, and integration is posing challenges.



– DR JONATHAN REICHENTAL
Consultant and Professor, City of Palo Alto, USA

a customer-centric perspective: changing expectations

The ubiquity of services like Uber, Netflix, and Amazon has done something fundamental to the way people relate to the businesses they deal with; the term ‘on demand’ is becoming embedded in people’s expectations. Contrast that with the kind of interaction most people experience with their city authorities and it immediately becomes clear that the public sector still has a long way to go. A lengthy wait for a service to be activated, even after payment has been made, both looks and feels anachronistic.

But the trade-off in the private sector examples, particularly around social media, has been that the user effectively trades their data for access to a service. There is no cost to be a Facebook or Instagram user, and a tacit acceptance exists that these businesses will mine our data to generate their revenue streams. When it comes to engaging digitally with the government, the stakes are a little higher – it’s more than your browsing or *likes* history that you are sharing.

“To build a public sector that is fit for the future, government must reinvent itself. Digital transformation is not just about new technologies, but requires an overhaul of organizational structures, governance, work processes, culture and mindset.

It also means realizing a wider vision of relationships and business models that will redesign how public services function. Only then will governments capture the wider benefits that digital transformation can bring to people and society.”

– KAPIL RAGHURAMAN
EY Lead Partner, MENA Digital & Innovation

evolving service models

Being customer-centric is so much more than a nice-to-have, aimed at giving private individuals an enhanced experience. According to **Jane Wiseman**, CEO of the US-based Institute for Excellence in Government: **“When it comes to the provision of services like garbage collection, your city authority has a monopoly; no neighbouring city is hatching a plan to offer an alternative service,”** she explains.

Being able to get a swift resolution to your refuse collection queries will feel important if you're the one who needs a collection. But other than in exceptional circumstances, it's little more than an inconvenience. Private citizens are not the only audience a government agency needs to consider, though. At the national and local level, businesses matter greatly to government bodies.

“Cities compete with one another all the time when they're trying to attract businesses,” Wiseman points out. **“The high-profile Amazon headquarters story in the US was one famous example of this. But every day, there are countless smaller businesses that city authorities need to attract to their locale. That's why it is so important to make it as painless as possible for a business to register in your area, to sign up for services, to make tax payments, and so much more. There's a very real and very clear argument for removing as many hoops and barriers as possible.”**

If you're establishing a business in a new city, you're most likely going to have to register with the authorities for a range of services. You might need permits and consent. You will almost certainly have rates or levies to pay. You may want your business refuse collected, or maybe to sign up for a recycling scheme. There could also be additional sources of help you wish to access – funding, training, networking and so on.

Ian Khan, Technology Futurist at Futuracy, sees an experiential divide between people's experiences with government offices when compared with retailers

“For governments, in order to have great customer satisfaction or excellent service, it is important to think about the best way of using technology.”



– IAN KHAN
Technology Futurist, FUTURACY

and other commercial organizations. **“Emerging technology has changed how people experience things on a day-to-day level – chiefly that's through their use of smartphones which make so many transactions incredibly easy.”**

Contacting each office or department separately could keep you busy for several hours, only to be sent paperwork that takes even more time to complete before you sit back and wait for it to be actioned. Being able to register once via an app or a portal, verify your identity and sign up for all the relevant services instantly is a world away from that.

To anyone working in the public sector and tasked with securing inward investment and attracting businesses, it could be the difference between success and failure. Often there can be very little difference between the day-to-day advantages of one location over another. The final decision on where to base your business can be an emotional decision as well as a pragmatic one – I feel valued here, this is the kind of progressive city I want to be part of.

“A lot of this is about treating citizens with greater respect. Taking more of an interest in what people, and businesses, need and want, then making efforts to provide it. In this respect, the public sector is following the private sector's lead in trying to make transactions as easy and straightforward as possible,” Wiseman concludes.

Calls to action

- Listen to the voice of the citizen
- Partner with the private sector to enhance citizen experience
- Use social listening to gauge citizen feedback and pain points
- Redesign core services based on experience



barriers to success and the role of future technology

“If you’re two-thirds of the way through your 30-year career working for the city, why would you take risks with your pension, with your regular pay check?”



– JANE WISEMAN
CEO, Institute for Excellence in Government, USA

Let’s revisit the question of why the public sector isn’t as fast as the private sector. In some parts of the world, you can reorder your prescription medication from an online pharmacy that will contact your doctor and process your order within 24 hours. Two days later, your order will arrive in the mail.

Technology is a key part of the solution, of course. But it’s just the enabler of service delivery. The real change has as much to do with culture and people; being an agent of change takes a certain amount of bravery and vision, as **Jane Wiseman** explains: **“In the public sector, there are risks associated with being the first to try an idea out. If it doesn’t work, you’re the one in the firing line – quite literally, sometimes.”**

While it’s not terribly helpful to generalize about what motivates people in the public sector, it is important to be aware of what’s potentially at stake for an individual who has pushed an agenda for change should things go wrong. No one wants to be the one left with the responsibility for projects that go wrong. Sometimes this may lead to a very risk-averse outlook which, if allowed to become entrenched, can be a barrier to progress.

“The culture of the public sector might be about to change though,” Wiseman continues. **“The millennial generation is famous for the frequency with which people change jobs or even whole careers, after a relatively short time. If that mindset exists in the next cohort of public service employees, which is going to be increasingly made up of millennials, what will happen when they all start moving on?”**

trust and confidence

Clearly, it's too early to know what – if any – impact that might have on the culture of public sector organizations. It's not inconceivable that hiring practices may have to change in order to reduce staff turnover rates. That might involve establishing a more entrepreneurial culture within those organizations and doing more to encourage people to push new ideas forward.

Marloes Pomp, Head of Blockchain Projects for the Government of the Netherlands, sees cultural change as a priority. However, she also believes that technology can start to change people's perceptions, leading to a more open mindset. **"It's entirely possible to use a technology platform and have**

trust in it without knowing the intricacies of how it works. But in both the corporate and government sectors damage can be done to that trust if there is a lack of transparency about the way in which something is being used. Particularly where people's data is concerned."

The Netherlands is a very digitally oriented economy and is trialling the use of a variety of technologies across government, including AI and blockchain. There is a strong culture of collaboration in the creation of new services there, involving the government, business and universities. **"We're a small country,"** Pomp says. **"It's relatively easy for us to bring people together to collaborate**

on projects. Better collaboration means better resource allocation and we're able to maximize results. It's possible that in some cases, things move a little slower but are examined and tested rigorously along the way. This means new ideas can be turned into effective new services."

Some of the panelists felt that much greater collaboration between citizens and government agencies will be needed in order to ensure services are relevant and fit-for-purpose.

"The emphasis needs to be on sharing data in a privacy-friendly way to improve services."



– MARLOES POMP
Head of Blockchain Projects, Government of Netherlands



the role of data transparency in building trust

One of the most contentious topics in the digital world is the issue of personal data. There are numerous horror stories about data being stolen by hackers. One of the largest involved Yahoo – all 3 billion of its user records were accessed unlawfully in 2013. In 2017, Uber was found to have attempted to conceal a data breach, an act that resulted in two senior executives losing their roles. And in 2016, the UK-based telecoms operator TalkTalk was fined £400,000 (\$520,000) due to a hack the previous year.

Governments face the same security headaches as businesses, of course. But they are subject to an additional level of suspicion from private individuals – *is Big Brother watching me; is someone tracking my every move?*

It is important to acknowledge these kinds of fears, and not to dismiss them. But there is a considerable gap between what people fear will happen to their data and how much snooping governments do. The average citizen may well believe their government already

has access to all their data. But the reality is quite different; **governments aren't typically great at sharing, so while citizens' data is frequently sitting within different departments, there are few instances of it being shared to form a rounded picture of a person's life.**

In addition, there are strict legal prohibitions about what can be shared and around how data has to be stored.

One of the obstacles hindering the ability of governments to deliver citizen-centric services is the lack of a data-sharing infrastructure that, among other things, builds trust between government and communities and tackles data security fears resulting from engaging with online services.

Balancing the need to protect data and respect privacy with sharing information between various departments and entities, whether public or private, may be attained by putting in place a legislative framework that captures all elements of the data-sharing process. This includes laws and regulations required to create the right platform to ensure data is shared securely and achieves integration between the various service providers.

The ideal legislative framework is one built on a suitable and efficient governance model, has the right safeguards in place to ensure the entire cycle of data sharing is protected, mitigates against any risks the process is potentially exposed to, is fully integrable, utilizes technology with flexibility to adjust to its rapid advancement, and is redelivered to customers such that they would want to engage. Having said that, it is key to ensure that the framework is built in a manner that seeks to ease and protect the process more than hinder it, as regulation in some instances could be an obstacle and create challenges.

From an implementation point of view, it is vital to establish a data-protection regulator to oversee the data-sharing process, ensure the objectives are achieved, design a vision to continue enhancing the process and break down the silos between the agencies and citizens, and lead initiatives in relation to updating the infrastructure to adapt to citizen needs and demands.

That regulator will be the focal point between the government and citizens with respect to data sharing and this ultimately leads to building community trust in the system, and increasing the level of engagement between the government and citizens with regards to improving services.

Calls to action

- Establish a data-protection regulator
- Break down silos between agencies and citizens
- Make security a priority
- Maintain excellent stakeholder communications

“Once the data resides in an e-government framework, it needs to be redelivered to the customers such that they would want to engage. One way to address this, could be through the introduction of citizen data dashboards. This will allow people to see their data; they can then start to make informed choices and decisions based on the veracity of that data, how it is being used, and who they are happy to share it with.”

Assuming citizen data dashboards are established, a comprehensive legal framework will include regulations and directives explaining who owns the data, how citizens may access the data and how citizens will be kept informed with regards to the data being collected.

- Create “ring-fenced” information policies, e.g. medical information should not be shared with non-medical entities. Information can be classed and provided in specific encrypted files and access restricted to relevant parties.
- Establish effective amendment processes when information is incorrect
- Define expiry period (e.g. 3 years) for outdated information.
- Examine current state of data and privacy laws in the country.
- Review integration and compliance with global regulations such as GDPR.

“In the connected world, data is like water. It needs to be carefully channelled, distributed, preserved and supplied equitably to ensure that it nurtures all future e-government services.”

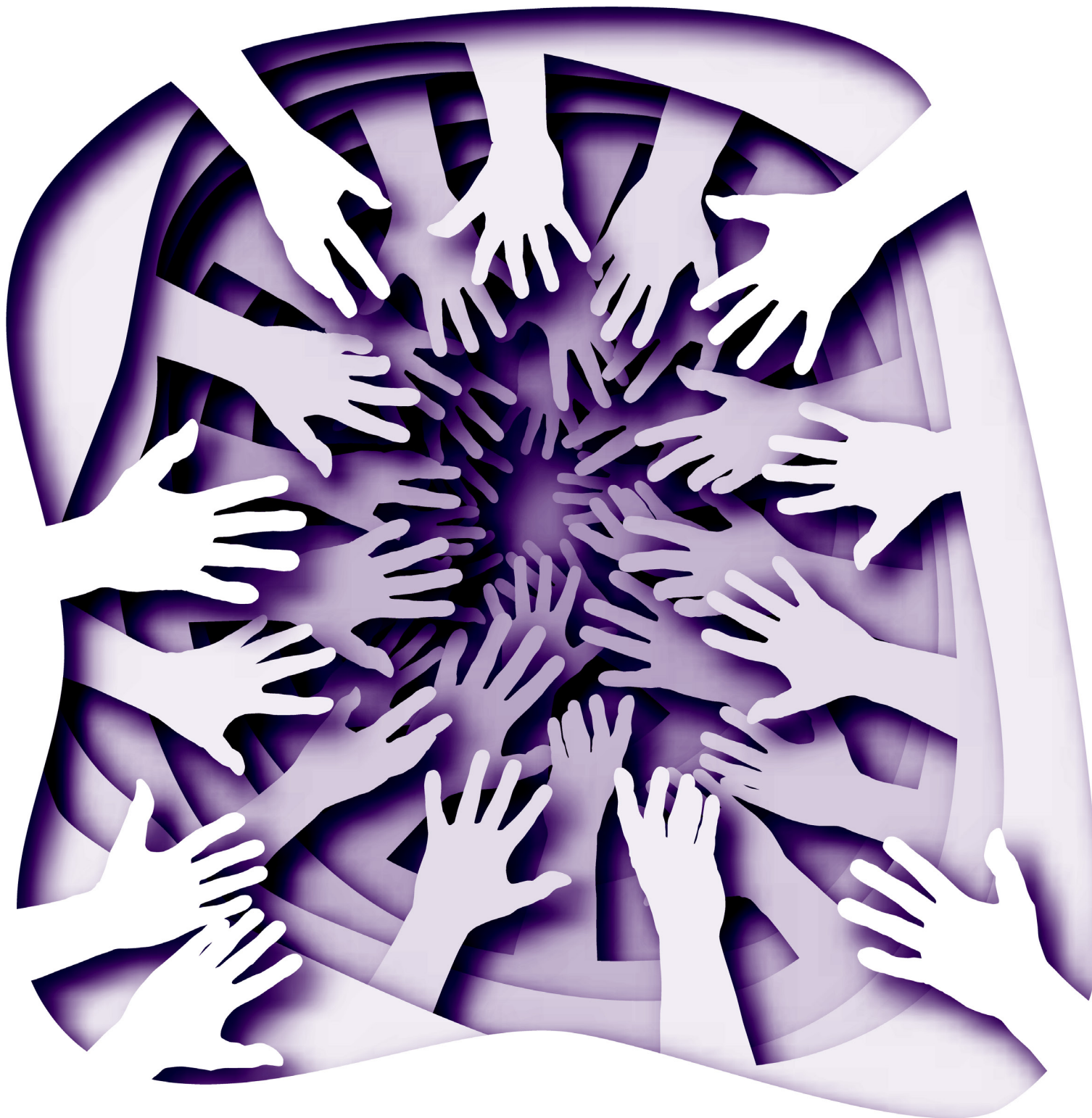


– GAURAV DWIVEDI
Secretary to The Chief Minister, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Gaurav Dwivedi, Secretary to The Chief Minister, State of Chhattisgarh, India believes there must be an increase in regulation around data sharing and privacy, and a steady flow of communication about how that data is being used. **“The recent developments in the private sector, especially the way in which social media companies are being asked to self-regulate and how the state itself is regulating them when it comes to sharing of data, is a precursor of how the state will have to regulate itself in the near future.”**

“In the Indian context, there are public welfare schemes involving the flow of millions of dollars based on the socio-economic status of the citizen that require identification, including biometrics, to create a seamless flow between various interconnected e-government services. We have barely scratched the surface in terms of individual data privacy in this context, though the central government has drafted the Personal Data Protection Bill 2018, that may soon provide a comprehensive legislative framework under which all entities will have to protect individual data.”

“Going beyond data protection there needs to be a common understanding and appreciation of individual data protection and privacy safeguards when government departments exchange this information. Such a framework will evolve once e-government services become nimbler and more intuitive.”



developing future-fit service delivery

There are already some interesting examples of how personal data can be held, processed and shared with the individuals it relates to, without causing any friction or anxiety. Credit agencies hold huge amounts of data on people. In fact, there's not much they don't know.

In many countries, it's common for them to make a report available, free of charge and most likely annually, so people can see what is on their file. Or it can be possible to subscribe to their service and have routine access to your file. If there are errors, you can see them and there's a mechanism for getting them fixed. For most people, most of the time, these reports hold little real value unless you are about to apply for something like a mortgage.

Consequently, from the point of view of a government body wanting to be open and transparent about the data it holds, there probably isn't a great deal of value in developing complex online portals. Citizens might be curious about their data, but if there's no intrinsic value, resources could be better used elsewhere. However, there needs to be a robust and accessible paper trail for anyone with questions about their data and how it's being used. Without that option, the whole thing can start to feel hidden and unapproachable.

In many ways, this journey is only just beginning. But when governments truly manage to add value rather than just deliver services, the benefits will be felt by everyone. Consuming digitally delivered government services needs to be as frictionless as making a one-click purchase on Amazon. The focus should be on making the machinery of government invisible and putting the emphasis on the value creation – this is what's meant by reimagining service delivery models.

It's an approach that will necessitate more of a customer-facing outlook, based on increased levels of targeted support and intervention similar to that seen in the private sector. But for the public sector, and those working in it, this is an exciting prospect. **Rather than just deliver services, they can start to develop nuanced solutions for people's complex lives.** This is a period in government service delivery that presents both challenges and many opportunities. Service delivery has long been the

mainstay of e-government programs. Now, it's time to take that forward and to seize the chance to add lasting value to people's everyday lives.

This is something Eng. **Ali Al Asiri**, Director General of YESSER, Saudi Arabia's e-Government Program, is committed to. **"YESSER is working to create an integrated system of government digital solutions and systems. This integrated system is able to meet the accelerating demands of digital transformation in the Kingdom and contribute to improving the lives of people and society for the better."**

For YESSER, and Saudi Arabia as a whole, meeting the expectations of businesses and individuals is key. **"The program has adopted a major approach in shaping the future of government services in the Kingdom: the creation of a pioneering and multi-channel government experience that meets all customers' needs through a unified identity. The main focus of this experience is the customer – whether a citizen, resident, business owner or visitor to Saudi Arabia, their ambitions and aspirations are met in a customized and proactive manner based on a single source of information,"** Eng. **Ali Al Asiri** concludes.

Calls to action

- Never forget people's data matters a great deal to them
- Establish a robust and accessible paper trail for anyone with questions about their data
- Think beyond service delivery and consider how to really add value to people's lives
- Update technology infrastructure to adapt to people's demands

“Many governments will fall behind. But some will forge ahead, and those that do will create new standards in improving quality of life and nurturing sustainable communities. They will use the advances in mobile apps, AI, blockchain and data analytics to greater effect. In fact, we are inclined to say some of these innovators will take a cue from the private sector and even use wearables and sensors to not only enhance experiences but also the way we work and live.”

– SALEM BELYOUHA AND CHETAN CHOUDHURY

epilogue

The growth of digital transformation throughout government services is now a fact of life for the public sector. A large proportion of the demand for change, for the increasing use of digital technology by government offices and agencies, is coming from customers, as has been discussed; whether private individuals or businesses. But another driver – which is arguably just as significant – is the need to increase efficiency. Put simply, governments need to carefully manage the resources at their disposal; they need to prioritize their spending.

The future is almost certainly going to see the growth of new data-driven services and the development of smart cities all over the world. They will be underpinned by the internet of things (IoT), and by big data, which will combine to feed into self-managing intelligent systems that keep urban environments ticking over smoothly with minimal human intervention.

Connected devices, smart sensors and everything that makes up the IoT has the potential to be regarded as a security risk. Neglecting the importance of securing anything that is connected to the internet is unwise. But while the security needs of tomorrow's smart cities are a challenge yet to be fully interrogated, they should not become a barrier to progress. Instead, it will be more productive to

acknowledge the risks and then plan accordingly, using technology to help mitigate and defend against cyber threats.

Making progress on the development of new services will depend on governments and citizens being in regular dialogue. After all, different people and different groups have different expectations. **So, while technology lies at the heart of the future of government services, feedback from residents, customers, and citizens will always play an important part in the process of defining and delivering these new services.**

As Salem Belyouha and Chetan Choudhury from the Prime Minister's Office in the UAE discussed, governments around the world will continue to move forward in their quest to better understand citizens and enhance the customer experience.

Digital transformation is now a public sector imperative. Governments that effectively manage digital transformation will create a world-class quality of life for their citizens, regain public trust and improve their country's competitiveness within the global economy. They will also be in much better shape to weather the next surge of disruption, whatever form that may take.



panelists



Ali Al Asiri
Director General, Yesser, Saudi E-Government Program



George Atalla
Global Leader, Government and Public Sector, EY



Alain Bejjani
CEO, Majid Al Futtaim Holding



H.E Mohammed Bin Taliah
Assistant Director General for Government Services Sector at the Prime Minister's Office in the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the Future, UAE



Catherine Carlton
City Council Member, City of Menlo Park, USA



Gaurav Dwivedi
Secretary to The Chief Minister, State of Chhattisgarh, India



Ian Khan
Technology Futurist, FUTURACY



Daniel Korski
CEO, Public Group International Ltd.



H.E Ulvi Mehdiyev
Chairman, State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, Republic of Azerbaijan



Marloes Pomp
Head of Blockchain Projects, Government of Netherlands



Siim Sikkut
Government CIO, Republic of Estonia



Tim Unwin
UNESCO Chair in ICT4D, Royal Holloway, University of London



Jane Wiseman
CEO, Institute for Excellence in Government, USA

moderator



Jonathan Reichental
Consultant and Professor, City of Palo Alto, USA



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Emirates Government Service Excellence Program

منتدى الخدمات الحكومية GOVERNMENT SERVICES FORUM



This report provides a summary of the discussions held at the Government Services Forum at the World Government Summit in February 2019.

Inputs have been provided by the panelists, knowledge partners EY (Kapil Raghuraman), and Winston & Strawn (Christopher Skipper), as well as representatives from the UAE Prime Minister's Office (Salem Belyouha and Chetan Choudhury). These inputs were obtained mostly during the panel discussion as well from interviews conducted after the event.

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