



# The Connected Republic 2.0

## New Possibilities & New Value for the Public Sector

A Point of View from the  
Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG)

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### Executive Summary

Today's increasingly connected world offers huge opportunities for the public sector. This new world favors a more collaborative and flexible approach to getting things done and provides a platform for empowerment, choice, and personalization. Public sector organizations can build a new kind of relationship with citizens, putting skills and resources directly at their disposal and enabling them to play a much greater role in public policy. They can also harness the "power of us" and pull people together to create public value in new ways.

In our view, the promise of the Connected Republic should be at the heart of every government's plans for modernization and reform. Following are 10 key messages for enabling the Connected Republic vision.

#### 1: We live in a connected world.

We live in world in which meaning and value—drawing on the instinct for connection and the idea of community—are a function of how well people, ideas, and communities connect in new patterns of communication and collaboration, animated by a common goal and enabled by shared processes.

It is a world in which clumsy hierarchy and monolithic institutions are fracturing into smaller pieces and looser, more open and democratic affiliations and practices. In this new, connected world, speed, agility, and responsiveness are the hallmarks of top performance.

This transformation has been driven by a combination of social change and a new wave of Internet technologies that lie at the heart of new models of productivity, inclusion, and service.

These trends are particularly relevant given the nature of problems confronting the public sector. Increasingly, these issues are not susceptible to simple solutions delivered by a single agency. Rather, skill and expertise need to be drawn from a range of organizations and people who might nominally occupy a place in the private, public, or nonprofit sector, but whose real value is measured by their contribution to a complex public value chain.

**2: This new, more connected world creates challenges and opportunities for all organizations and institutions, including the public sector.**

These changes are transforming the structure and operation of business, and the way people connect to, and communicate with, friends, families, and colleagues.

They are also starting to impact the structure and operations of the public sector and, just as important, raise the prospect of dramatic changes in the way we govern. We are shifting from a public sector of large, monolithic institutions to a world of consumers, businesses, citizens, and governments working together in new and surprising ways.

We expect that process to accelerate over the next few years.

**3: As part of the response by the public sector, existing e-government investments remain relevant and important.**

The work of the last 10 years of e-government will play an important part in the way the public sector adapts to this new world:

- Creating a suite of robust, enabling business processes and systems that all agencies need, and that can increasingly be provided on an enterprise, whole-of-government basis, including identity management, authentication, security, information management policies and standards, privacy, and payment and billing systems
- Completing and improving core electronic service delivery systems, ensuring that they provide a reliable and increasingly convenient experience for citizens and service providers
- Investing in basic communications infrastructure, including “real” broadband networks designed to accommodate evolving services and applications
- Refining, improving, and integrating the various service delivery platforms on which citizens rely for quick, safe, and easy access to information and services, and for use as communication channels they can use to provide feedback to agencies
- Continuing early investments in a “networked virtual organization” model that integrates a wider range of organizations in the delivery of public services and the creation of public value. The boundaries between the different sectors will be less clear-cut, and individual public sector bodies may well be smaller as they move from traditional delivery roles to a greater emphasis on orchestrating and empowering.

**4: Those investments help to increase the value of e-government, which grows as it becomes transparent and pervasive.**

Existing investments lay the groundwork for achieving e-government’s full potential, which is realized only to the extent that it:

- Is central to the work and purpose of the public sector and the public policy process

- Impacts the larger concerns of public sector reform, democratic renewal, and the changing role of government in the knowledge economy
- Becomes synonymous with what government is about: orchestrating and sometimes leading the creation of public value by putting people and communities at the center of responsive networks of knowledge, service, trust, and accountability

**5: Governments have to realize the benefits from existing e-government initiatives and, at the same time, gear up for a new transition.**

The challenge now for governments is to realize the full promise, and the practical benefits, of these investments in technology-enabled service delivery and operational reform. At the same time, they should be gearing up to take full advantage of the next transition to the new, networked models of “government 2.0.”

**6: We describe the vision for this next transition as the “Connected Republic.”**

Adapting to this new world involves moving toward what IBSG calls the “Connected Republic.” This is a vision of public sector transformation based on empowering citizens.

Three fundamental principles underpin this vision:

1. The network becomes an essential platform for collaboration and creativity.
2. Public value is created as governments “empower the edge” to make the best use of all available expertise and experience.
3. Harnessing the “power of us” becomes part of a new public policy business model to create knowledge, solve problems, and deliver better services.

This is a model of public management that relies on, and feeds, an ethic of high trust and openness. It assumes that knowledge, expertise, and insight are dispersed throughout communities and at all levels of formal and informal power. From this perspective, one of the central tasks of governing—over and above the enduring obligations of law and regulation, taxation and redistribution, and security—is to find ways to connect that dispersed knowledge and wisdom to a practical form on which to base policies, programs, and initiatives.

**7: The vision draws on two big ideas: distributed networks and “small pieces, loosely connected.”**

The two big ideas animating the Connected Republic are, firstly, the power of distributed networking and, secondly, the way in which the Internet is enabling intriguing new ways to create value and meaning from “small pieces, loosely joined.”

In the world of distributed networking, the edge can be as powerful and as influential as the center; indeed, the whole concept of “edge” and “center” becomes ambiguous.

**8: The innovation fueled by those two ideas will give rise to important changes in the work, structure, and operation of the public sector.**

As innovation takes root, we predict a number of changes:

- The shape and focus of government programs and services will become steadily more influenced by the views and values of the people they serve, whose preferences will have greater influence on priority setting and program design.
- Governments will have to invest more heavily in “sense and respond” capabilities, systematically seeking out the views, experience, and expertise of customers and service users.
- New models of more open deliberation will emerge and create new patterns of power, authority, and control between citizens and government.
- Governments themselves, as large and complex enterprises, will take many of the same collaborative tools and business models they use with citizens and start applying them to the way they work internally. As a consequence, public sector organizations will become more agile, more efficient, and more attractive to talented employees they need to attract.

**9: Those changes will feed a process of profound transformation in government, which is both necessary and possible.**

Although they are at various stages of development, we believe that governments around the world face the same imperative for profound transformation and system change, which we think is both necessary and possible. It will take time, careful investment, and sustained political leadership. But it is essential if governments are to maximize the public value that citizens expect and demand.

**10: In the Connected Republic, e-government merges with, and enables, the larger endeavors of national economic and social transformation.**

Ultimately, governments should start to harness the capabilities of the network to achieve their central policy ambitions: economic resilience and competitive differentiation, quality education and skills for all, better health and aged care, sustainability, and social inclusion. As that happens, e-government will cease to be exclusively about technology-enabled public services reform, and will start to play a less visible, but more central role in larger national and global conversations about economic resilience and social transformation.



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### More Information

The Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the global strategic consulting arm of Cisco, helps Global Fortune 500 companies and public organizations transform the way they do business—first by designing innovative business processes, and then by integrating advanced technologies into visionary roadmaps that improve customer experience and revenue growth.

For further information about IBSG, visit <http://www.cisco.com/go/ibsg>

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