# PUBLIC POLICY FORUM
## FORUM DES POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES

**PPF**

# DIGITAL STATUS QUO SURVEY FOR GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVES

**Please note this survey was conducted in English only.**
**Veuillez noter que ce sondage a seulement été effectué en anglais.**

## ABOUT THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

In recent years, the profusion of digital technologies in the economy has changed the way people receive services, e.g., online and mobile banking, and completely transformed many industries. The digital trend also has a profound impact on citizens' expectations for how they receive services from government. Governments around the world are responding to citizen's changing expectations by embracing digital transformation. The Canadian government has committed to becoming digital-first. Digital transformation can take many forms from providing public servants digital tools to work more efficiently, to enabling citizens access to existing services online, to linking up services across departments providing citizens with a seamless experience around major life events, to enabling open access to data to encourage the development of new or enhanced services, etc.

Governments are grappling with how to pursue digital transformation to achieve the efficiencies and experience citizens are demanding. A key challenge facing governments around the world as they grapple with digital transformation is the need to cultivate innovative practices and processes within a culture that has traditionally been risk averse.

### What the survey will contribute to the issue

Successful digital transformation requires much more than the adoption of digital tools. It requires culture change. In this survey we are seeking to understand the Canadian public service's attitudes toward the risks of digital transformation compared to the risks of the status quo, and their views on how to increase readiness for digital transformation.

**Why you have been selected**

You have been selected for this confidential survey because you have an important perspective on the readiness and progress of your department in digital transformation.

**What you will get out of it**

By participating in the survey, you will be making an important contribution to research on this pressing issue by providing an on-the-ground perspective of Canadian public servants on digital transformation. Please be aware, your responses will remain completely anonymous.

You will also receive access to the research results, as the Public Policy Forum will publish a paper summarizing the findings of the research project. The paper will provide an overview of public servants' perspectives on risk and accountability based on the survey results, the findings of interviews conducted with leaders from Canadian and international governments, and the review of relevant literature on the topic. The paper will also provide practical strategies and case studies of how governments can succeed with digital transformation.

# DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

**My department or agency primarily provides services to (choose one):**
- The public
- Other government departments
- Other (please specify)

**The total number of employees in my department or agency is (choose one):**
- Less than 2,500 FTE
- 2,500-24,999 FTE
- 25,000-74,999
- More than 75,000

**From my perspective, my department or agency (choose one):**
- Has opted not to pursue digital transformation
- Is contemplating embarking on digital transformation
- Is in the early stages of a digital transformation
- Has made significant progress towards completing a digital transformation
- Has completed one or more digital transformation initiatives

My <u>primary</u> role regarding digital transformation in my department or agency is to (choose one):

- Provide executive leadership
- Provide technical leadership
- Provide expertise on the department's business processes
- Provide expertise on "customer" needs
- Provide expertise on technical digital matters
- Other (please specify)

**What is the nature of the digital transformation initiatives in your department or agency?**

| | We are *considering* this type of transformation | We are in the process of *implementing* this type of transformation | We have *completed* this type of transformation | We are *not considering* this type of transformation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Providing information via a website | | | | |
| Providing digital access to existing services | | | | |
| Providing new digitally enabled services | | | | |
| Enhancements to internal communication tools (e.g. email, smart phones, etc.) | | | | |
| Linking services across departments to provide seamless citizen experience, e.g., streamlining services around a life event, e.g., birth, retirement, new address, etc. | | | | |
| Providing open access to data | | | | |
| Other (please specify) | | | | |

**In my department or agency we <u>effectively</u> use analytics (analysis of data) to:**

| | Not at All | Very Little | Some-what | Quite a Bit | A Great Deal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Understand the raw needs of the public and/or internal government customers | | | | | |
| Understand the level of our digital 'debt', i.e., legacy systems and their impact | | | | | |
| Inform the development of our digital transformation strategy | | | | | |
| Track the progress of our digital transformation<br><br>If answered a great deal to this question, ask 6d-2. | | | | | |
| Pivot our digital transformation strategy to respond to lessons learned during implementation<br><br>if answered quite a bit or a great deal to this question, ask 6e-2. | | | | | |
| Other (Please share other ways in which your department uses data analytics to navigate the digital transformation journey) [Open ended] | | | | | |

6d-2) If you answered that in your department you track the progress of digital transformation, please specify how often you measure progress

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually
- Sporadically

6e-2) If you answered that your department pivots your digital transformation strategy to respond to lessons learned during implementation, can you identify how many times you have done this in the last year?
- Once
- 2 to 3 times
- 4 to 5 times
- 6 or more times

Please rate how the following aspects currently influence decision makers in your department or agency to maintain the status quo and avoid digital transformation.

| | Not at All | Very Little | Some-what | Quite a Bit | A Great Deal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of pressure or incentive for change | | | | | |
| Concerns about gaining leadership support for large digital transformation projects that are complex, or long term (e.g., 5 or more years) or where the end game is unclear | | | | | |
| Personal concern on the part of decision makers that a failed project would have a negative impact on their careers | | | | | |
| Prioritization of short-term over long-term considerations, e.g., opting to patch a legacy system rather than replacing it because it's cheaper in the short term, but in doing so incurring a higher overall cost in the long term | | | | | |
| Concerns about security/privacy breaches | | | | | |
| Concerns about inadequate resources for organizational change | | | | | |
| Insufficient access to in-house and/or external digital skills and capacity | | | | | |
| Silos between my organization and other departments that make it hard to link up services across government to enhance the customer's experience | | | | | |
| Procurement rules that don't support agile approaches | | | | | |
| Funding rules and/or financial controls that don't support agile approaches | | | | | |
| Other [Open ended – 500-character limit] | | | | | |

**Please rate how the following aspects currently influence decision makers in your department or agency to embrace digital transformation.**

| | Not at All | Very Little | Some-what | Quite a Bit | A Great Deal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Desire to better serve citizens, e.g., get them online, link up services across government, provide open data | | | | | |
| Increased flexibility, speed and agility to develop and change services with cloud tools compared to legacy systems | | | | | |
| Potential for cost savings | | | | | |
| Potential for enhanced efficiency in how government works within and across departments | | | | | |
| Potential to enhance data privacy and security | | | | | |
| Avoid being seen as a digital laggard compared to peer government organizations. | | | | | |
| Other [Open ended – 500-character limit] | | | | | |

**To what extent would the following strategies help to increase your department's or agency's readiness for digital transformation?**

| | Not at All | Very Little | Some-what | Quite a Bit | A Great Deal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clarity on vision for digital transformation initiatives and on the value that each initiative will create for citizens, and how it aligns with government goals | | | | | |
| Improved understanding of the current state of digital transformation by, for example, better understanding the scope of the technical and organizational change required to achieve transformation | | | | | |
| Alignment of performance incentives with desired behaviour for innovative risk taking | | | | | |
| Use of multidisciplinary teams to design services to meet the needs of both citizens and departments | | | | | |
| Reframing of "fail fast" mantra to "learn & mitigate risk", for example, by experimenting with pilot projects, conducting pre- and post-mortems on all experiments to identify expected and actual learnings, and by sharing and celebrating lessons learned | | | | | |
| Embed the risk management function and clarify accountability for risk taking in digital transformation teams to achieve a more balanced view of potential risks and benefits | | | | | |
| Adapt approval/funding and oversight processes to be more agile | | | | | |
| Evolve procurement processes to support agile approaches, e.g., prioritize performance/flexibility over price, enable experimentation and innovation, and provide greater opportunity for more timely access to smaller and/or emerging providers | | | | | |
| Establish one or more government organizations (e.g., a Digital Investment Fund, a Digital Academy, a Centre of Digital Excellence) to support agile approaches, training, talent attraction, etc. | | | | | |
| Other [Open ended – 500-character limit] | | | | | |

Thank you for taking the time to answer.

## ABOUT PPF

**Good Policy. Better Canada.** The Public Policy Forum builds bridges among diverse participants in the policy-making process and gives them a platform to examine issues, offer new perspectives and feed fresh ideas into critical policy discussions. We believe good policy is critical to making a better Canada — a country that's cohesive, prosperous and secure. We contribute by:

- Conducting research on critical issues

- Convening candid dialogues on research subjects

- Recognizing exceptional leaders

Our approach — called **Inclusion to Conclusion** — brings emerging and established voices to policy conversations, which informs conclusions that identify obstacles to success and pathways forward. PPF is an independent, non-partisan charity whose members are a diverse group of private, public and non-profit organizations.

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