

# Accelerate Digital for Future-Ready Government

Frameworks for composable tech, empowered  
citizens and the future of work



## Introduction

Governments around the world had to adapt to radically shifting conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for some public services, such as unemployment benefits, has risen sharply, and so has the need to support an increasingly remote workforce.

Many government CIOs believe that their organizations have responded well, but digital initiatives will remain critical to the ability of government organizations to pivot and continue to deliver against new demands.

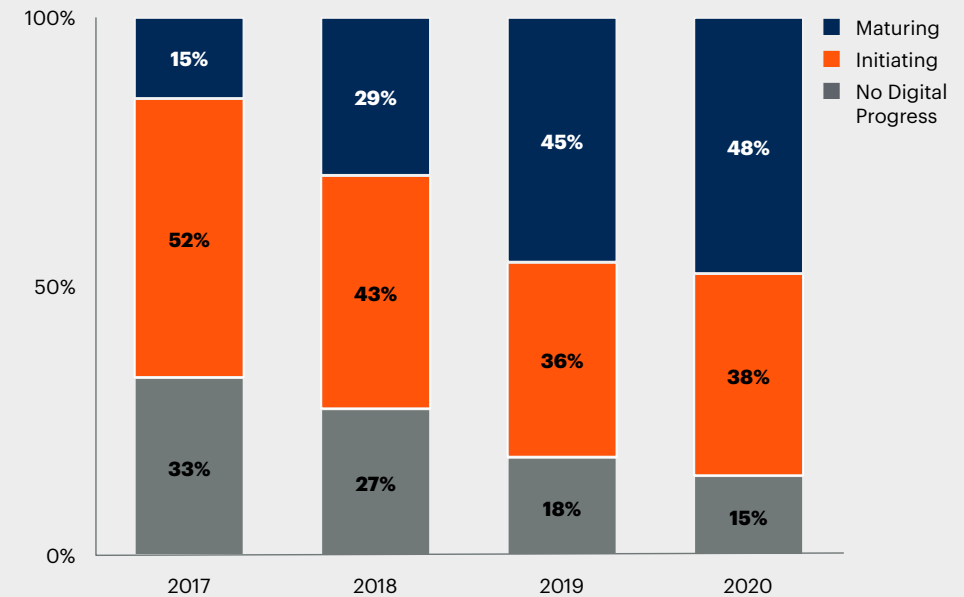
Examples of mission-critical priorities include delivering new digital services for citizens, enabling remote or hybrid workplace at scale, and sustaining an effective supply chain.



**Andrea Di Maio**  
Managing Vice President  
Gartner Government & Education

## Reported maturity of digital initiatives by government over past four years

Percentage of respondents



n = 2017 (441); 2018 (528); 2019 (130); 2020 (227)

Q: Which of these best describes the stage of your organization's digital initiative — i.e., your organization's digitalization efforts?

Source: 2021 Gartner CIO Survey

Note: Dates on the chart reflect year of data collection, not the cover year of the report. May not sum to 100% due to rounding; No Digital Progress = No Digital Initiative, Desire/Ambition. Initiating = Designing, Delivering. Maturing = Scaling, Harvesting/Refining

## How government CIOs step up digital acceleration

- 1 Assess your digital maturity
- 2 Set up for acceleration
- 3 Prioritize what to accelerate
- 4 Sustain digital momentum
- 5 Invest in future-ready capabilities



**74% of government CIOs report that they have increased the level of their business knowledge.**



**73% of government CIOs report that they have assumed leadership of high-impact initiatives.**

Source: Gartner

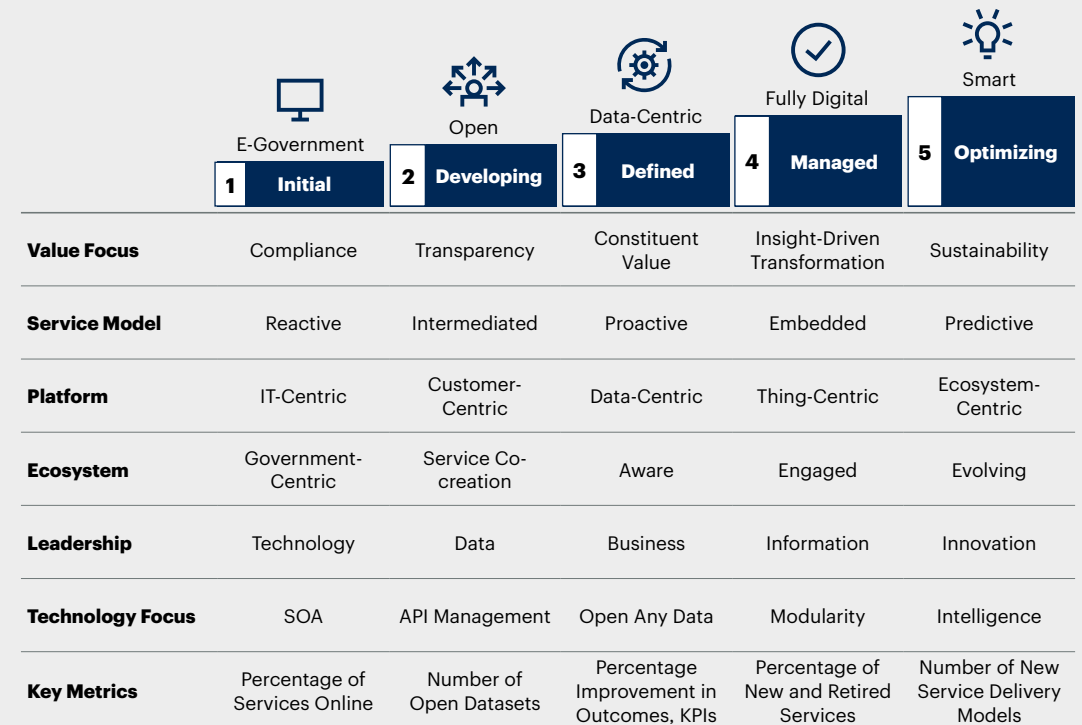
## Assess your digital maturity

Digital pioneers are already creating new data- and tech-enabled services and business models that can increase the value delivered to their constituents. Those still operating with legacy infrastructure and analog processes will struggle to keep up.

Many government CIOs say their digital initiatives are maturing, but many also confuse progress with maturity. Just because digital initiatives are going well doesn't mean the organization's digital initiatives are necessarily mature — and this misperception could undermine long-term investment in digital maturity.

To transform public services, government CIOs will need to candidly assess where their organization stands in relation to its goals and take strategic steps to increase digital maturity. Only this type of sustained digital government strategy will systematically make public services and operations more adaptable, affordable and sustainable.

### Digital government maturity model



Source: Gartner

Note: KPI = key performance indicator; SOA = service-oriented architecture

# Set up for acceleration

Government CIOs and their teams can leverage four digital business accelerators.

## Accelerate digital in government



### Digital government acceleration



#### Reset strategic path

Assess the urgency and readiness for further transformation and the maturity to adopt new business models, operating models and platforms.

**Example:** Drive data and insights deeper into your services.



#### Unleash force multipliers

Embrace actions that power momentum whether they are internal to the organization, such as a business model innovation workshop, or external, such as citizen demand.

**Example:** Run a scenario planning exercise.



#### Banish drags

Remove the negative forces that add friction to the business, such as supply chain disruptions or outdated processes.

**Example:** Adopt robotic process automation (RPA) to modernize legacy.



#### Redirect resources

Recapture resources from areas such as physical counters or real estate and redeploy them to digital priorities.

**Example:** Retire underperforming channels.

# Prioritize what to accelerate

To prioritize near-term digital investments, define the urgency by categorizing investments into five speed lanes according to their strategic intent and use case and balance investments across them in a “portfolio” model:

## Triage immediate priorities

### Immediate direction



Source: Gartner

## Invest in future-ready capabilities

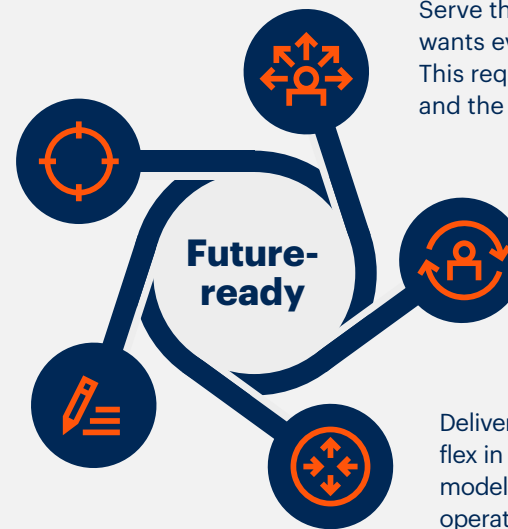
Balance near-term digital investments with longer-term aspirations. Gaining future-ready capabilities is critical, especially to build a resilient organization able to sense and respond to volatility and disruption.

### Digital business acceleration is execution at speed

#### Longer-term capabilities

Pursue **right-scoped value**, combining incremental growth with wholesale value proposition changes.

Build a **composable technology** foundation based on a modernized data and technology core that lowers costs and provides agility.



Serve the **everything constituent** who wants everything to be in person and digital. This requires the speed and ease of digital and the hand-holding of human interaction.

Craft an **adaptable workforce** that adopts agile learning to shape talent to demand and leverages nontraditional workforce models.

Deliver **any-scale operations** that can flex in size or scope and across workforce models without too much impact on operating expense ratios or infrastructure.

## Sustain digital momentum

Pandemic fatigue threatens to allow a backslide into suboptimal, predigital ways of working.

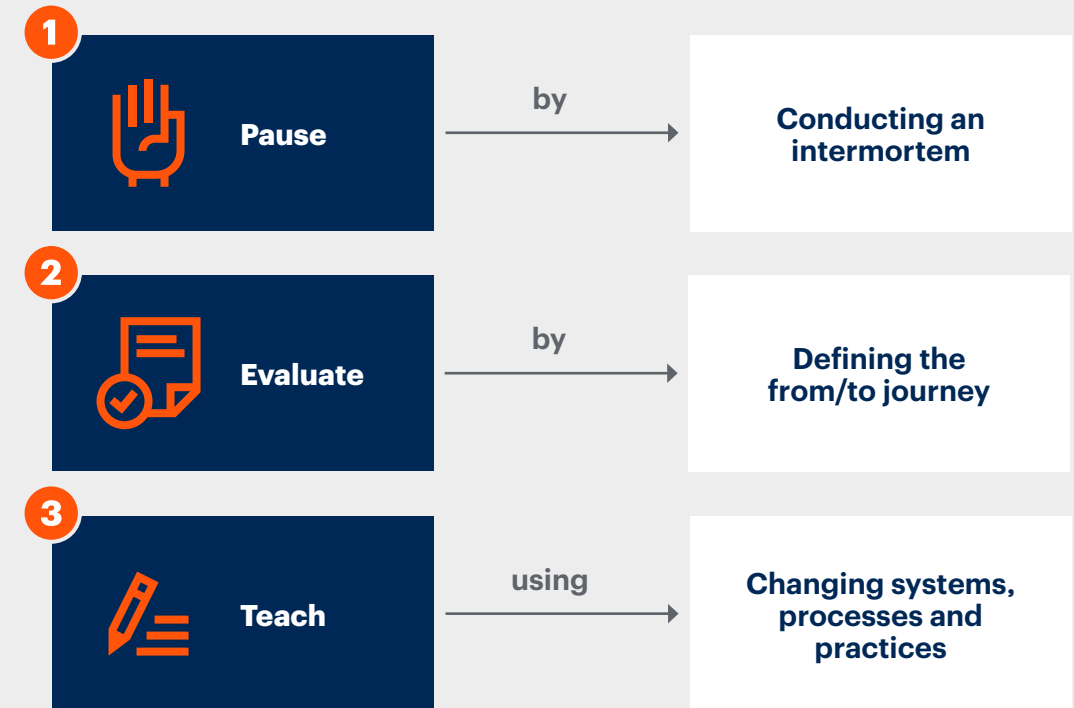
As organizations begin to return their people to the office, environmental cues could especially trigger old behaviors and stall digital ambitions.

To sustain momentum, government CIOs must institutionalize their new digital ways of working using systems, processes and practices and (re) commit to execute digitalization at speed.

### To reinforce behavior and culture change:

- Pause, discuss and document the progress made on your digital plans.
- Evaluate what adjustments are required to maintain or accelerate digital plans.
- Teach the organization what needs to be done differently.

### Three steps to prevent digital backsliding





## Three key priorities for government CIOs

### 01 Citizen needs

- Meet new citizen expectations
- Deliver breakthrough citizen experiences at scale

### 02 Talent

- Build, develop and retain agile talent
- Champion agile learning

### 03 Technology

- Invest in emerging technologies
- Aim for a scalable and secure digital platform



Source: Gartner

**By 2022, half of all digital government key performance indicators will include a citizen/customer experience metric to ensure that services delivered are citizen-centric.**

# 01

## Meet new citizen expectations

Citizens are one of the main stakeholders and the focus of many of the digital initiatives undertaken by governments.

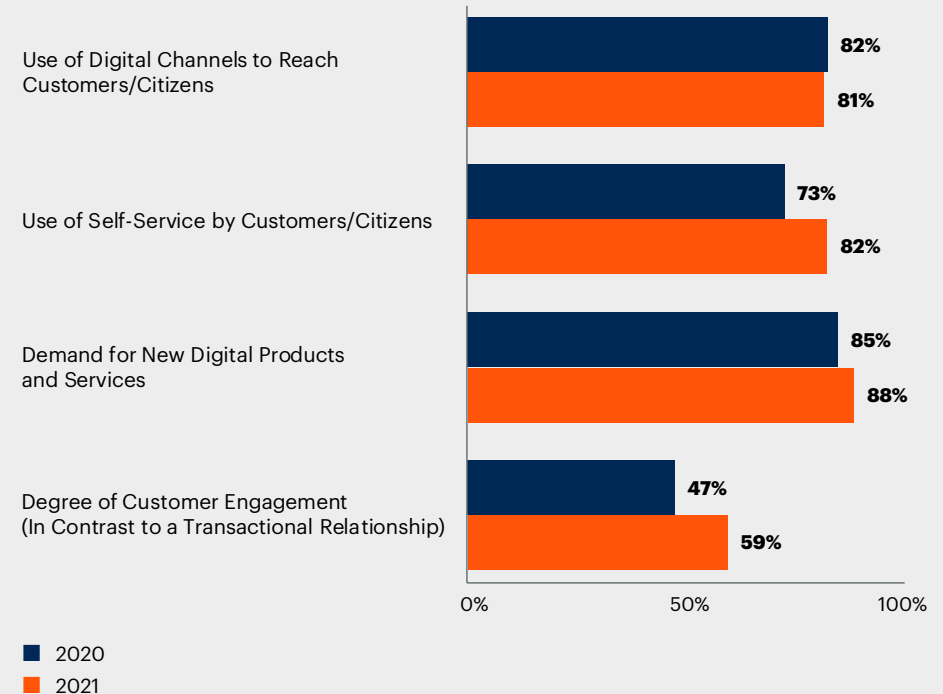
Even prior to 2020, governments were focused on improving the experience of the citizens they support, but citizens' expectations for digital services skyrocketed when the world was suddenly locked down.

The pandemic has forced governments to respond rapidly to keep citizens and stakeholders informed — making digital channels a critical means of reaching citizens as stakeholders.

Accelerating digital initiatives will be key to continuing to responding to the extensive economic and social ramifications of the pandemic — and the associated needs of citizens.

### Change in citizen expectations due to COVID-19

% of government CIOs



n = -224 Government; Excludes "not sure/not applicable"  
Q: How would you characterize the changes that have occurred in your enterprise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in each of these areas?  
vs. How do you expect these aspects of your enterprise to change in 2021 compared with their status today?  
Source: 2021 Gartner CIO Survey

# 01

## Deliver breakthrough citizen experiences at scale

In an increasingly cloud-based environment, social and immersive computing scenarios have raised people's expectations for citizen or user experience (CX/UX), availability, performance, security and even business impact.

In this dynamic environment, traditional, technology-centric approaches to software quality fail to quickly deliver the innovation and breakthrough experiences required to succeed at digital government today.

Instead, government CIOs must cultivate a shift in how their people think to focus less on whether applications fulfill a long list of requirements written by a business analyst, and more on whether they deliver a compelling CX/UX.

That means moving away from the traditional technology-centric model of quality to an outside-in, citizen-driven perspective. By infusing quality into every step, from the inception of an idea through to operations, and by building links among citizen experience (CX), multiexperience (MX), UX and employee experience (EX), you build what Gartner calls digital dexterity — which rapidly drives tangible business benefits.

By 2025, organizations who invest in building digital immunity will increase customer satisfaction by decreasing downtime by 80%.



Source: Gartner

**By 2023, more than 60% of governments will have tripled citizen digital services, but less than 25% will be integrated across organizations' silos.**

# 02

## Build, develop and retain agile talent

To drive the digital ambitions of the enterprise, government CIOs must develop in themselves and their people the competencies they need to ensure high-performance software delivery.


Digital leaders are snapping up in-demand talent, while also developing their people — for example to increase citizen centricity while innovating with technology.


A delivery approach based on agile and product-centric principles aligns teams with citizen and agency priorities, rapidly delivers and improves digital products, and empowers teams to make decisions — enabling the agility crucial to success with digital government.

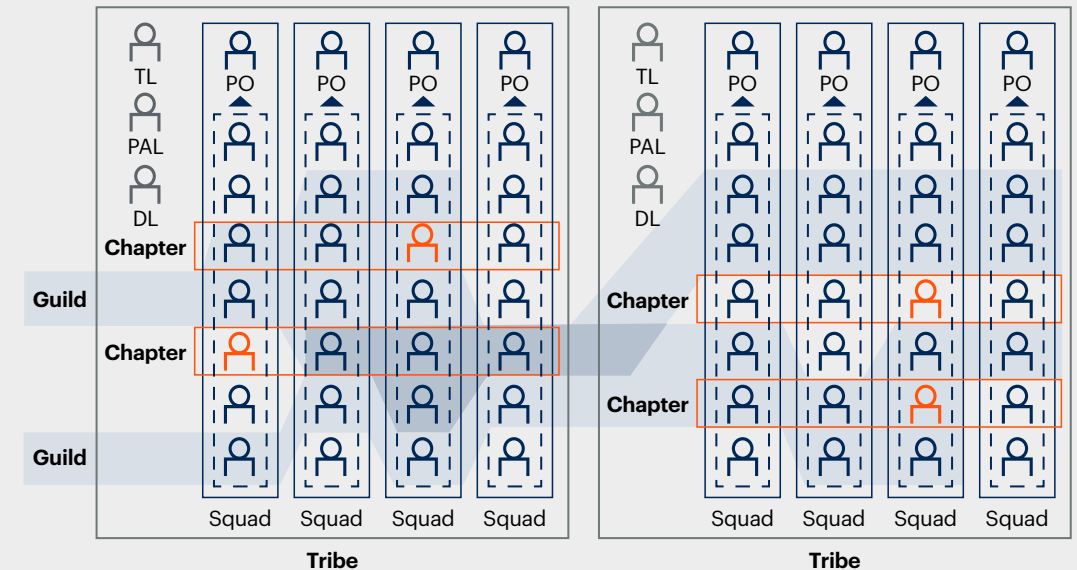
The use of what Spotify has termed “guilds” — also known as communities of practice — is one tactic that can drive organizational learning, talent development and flexible career paths to retain that talent.

### Spotify chapters and guilds

- A chapter provides personal growth and professional development. It meets regularly to discuss its subject area and to develop members' expertise.
- Guilds are lightweight communities of interest that promote collaboration to develop competencies.

 **Chapter Lead:** Line manager for members.

 **Guild Coordinator:** Creates an active learning space to help members to develop their skills.



Source: Gartner  
Note: TL = Tribe Lead; PAL = Product Area Lead; DL = Design Lead; PO = Product Owner

# 02

## Champion agile learning

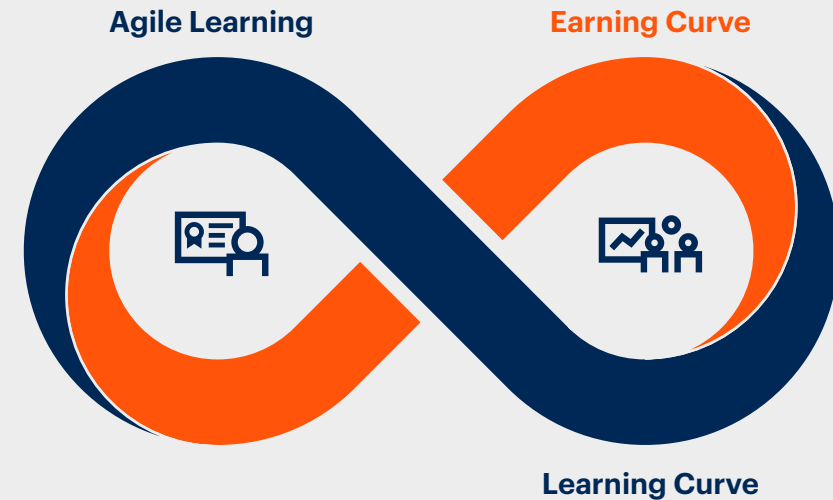
Team members return the investment that organizations make in the new employment deal by applying and growing their skills in service of digital acceleration. Sought-after skills include those tied to in-demand technologies and tools, such as AI and data, and “soft” leadership skills from design thinking to empathy.

Well-resourced organizations are snapping up in-demand talent, while also developing in-house teams through agile learning based on eight principles:

- 1. Learning to earning.** Belief that the enterprise’s financial performance is inextricable from individual advancement
- 2. Motivation multiplier.** Easy access to learning and consumable content, and opportunities to apply it
- 3. Just-in-time microbursts.** Short, well-designed chunks, applied immediately and practiced regularly
- 4. Dynamic pathways.** Learner-directed and adapted
- 5. Progressive layering.** “Skills for life,” skills for a career path and skills in the latest techniques in their field
- 6. Flow of value delivery.** Embedded learning in everyday work
- 7. Data-driven, AI-enabled.** The right learning experience at the right moment with the right learners and teachers
- 8. Socially amplified.** Social connections powering people to help one another learn and create a learning culture

### The agile learning manifesto

Agile learning connects learning curves with earning curves. For employees, learning advances their career, future-proofs them against change and increases their value.



### Primary values of agile learning over a more traditional training focus

- Business outcomes** over knowledge gained
- Real-time embedded** over training time offline
- Growth mindset** over current skill set
- Community compounding** over individual practicing

# 03

## Invest in emerging technologies

Many government CIOs have already deployed a combination of existing and emerging technologies as part of the response to the pandemic, but most expect investment to remain strong in a range of emerging technologies.

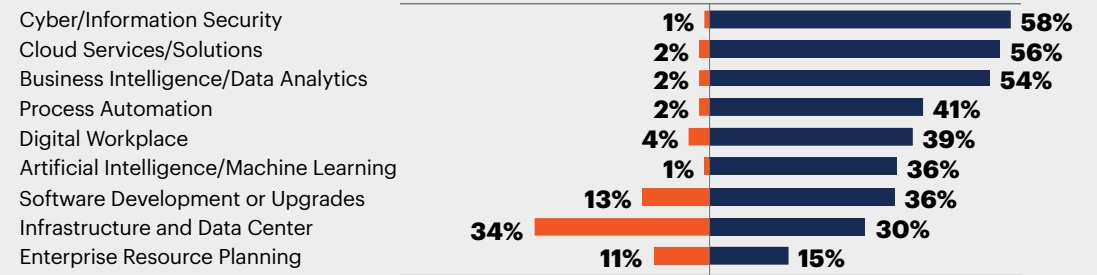
Investments in cybersecurity, cloud services and business intelligence remain the most in-demand technology investments, which has been the case for several years.

Investment, of course, depends on government CIOs being able to secure funding — at a time when governments are heavily focused on funding recovery efforts. Even when funding is available, any perception that IT areas are spending unnecessarily will reflect poorly on the CIO.

Government CIOs will need to spend time educating their executives on the merit of the investments being made, and crafting a compelling case that links these investments to mission outcomes.

### Changes in technology investments by government CIOs

Percentage of government respondents (select responses only)



- Percentage of Respondents Decreasing Investment
- Percentage of Respondents Increasing Investment

n varies by question, Government respondents; Excludes "not sure"

Q1: What are the technology areas where your enterprise will be spending the largest amount of new or additional funding in 2021 compared with 2020?

Q2: What are the technology areas where your enterprise will be reducing funding by the highest amount in 2021 compared to 2020?

Source: 2021 Gartner CIO Survey

Note: Showing technologies with at least 10% of government respondents reporting plans to increase spending.

# 03

## Aim for a scalable and secure digital platform

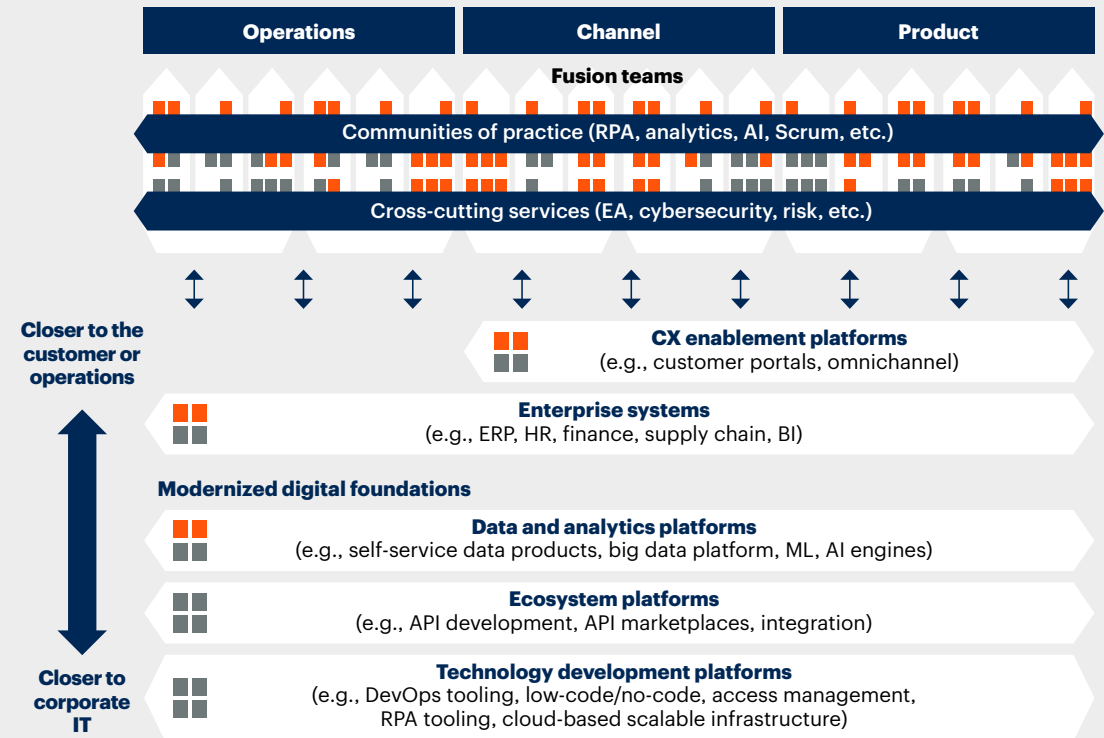
The most successful digital businesses use a wider range of products, architectural techniques and services than others. Progressive software engineering leaders must therefore champion the move from legacy monolithic systems to the kind of flexible digital foundation that digital leaders employ.

A composable digital platform flexes with today's ever-changing business demands, allowing you to switch building blocks in and out as teams assemble or reassemble business processes and citizen or employee experiences.

Composable digital platforms are more fitting for modern digital experiences — and reflect the reality that the IT organization is no longer the sole provider of information and technology delivery.

The challenge for government CIOs is to envisage and enable the composable architecture that brings digital capabilities closest to the point of value. You'll also need to equip people with the tools and practices they need to innovate, regardless of where they sit in the organization.

### New model for enterprise I&T including the digital foundation



■ IT department ■ Business areas

Source: Gartner

Note: AI = artificial intelligence; BI = business intelligence; CX = customer experience; EA = enterprise architecture; ML = machine learning; RPA = robotic process automation

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