January 3, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR AGENCY CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS

FROM: Vivek Kundra
                 U.S. Chief Information Officer

SUBJECT: Delivering for the American People

As the New Year begins, I'd like to reflect on some of our key accomplishments over the past two years in closing the technology gap to deliver results for the American people:

I. Fixing Large-Scale IT Management

To improve the performance of government, we have changed the way we manage Federal IT projects. We launched the IT Dashboard to shine light on the more than $80 billion in annual Federal IT spending.

We used the IT Dashboard to power in-depth accountability reviews to turnaround, terminate, or halt major IT projects. So far, we have reduced the budgets of underperforming projects by $3 billion and on average accelerated delivery of meaningful functionality from 24 months to eight months.
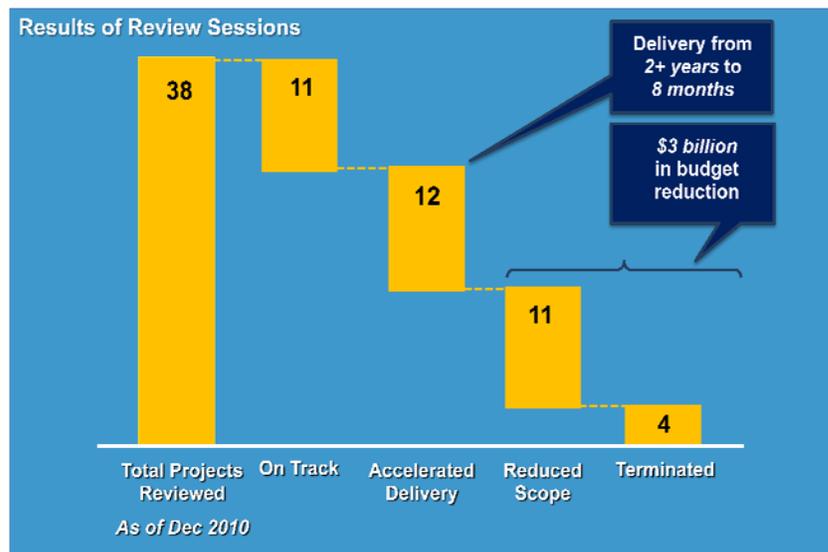
The Department of Justice terminated its troubled case management modernization project, the Litigation Case Management System, avoiding an additional $193 million in wasteful spending. The Department of the Interior accelerated delivery of incident management and reporting system to the 6,000 law enforcement officers protecting the

nation's natural resource and cultural monuments from 24 months to every six months. The Department of Homeland Security also terminated its troubled National Flood Insurance Program IT modernization project, avoiding an additional $24 million in spending.

II. Adopting More Efficient Technologies

To accelerate adoption of more efficient technologies, we instituted a "cloud first" policy and stood up government-wide contract vehicles to provide agencies access to cloud-based infrastructure solutions. The Department of Agriculture is migrating 120,000 users across 5,000 locations to the cloud, saving $6 million annually, while the General Services Administration is shifting 15,000 mailboxes to the cloud, reducing costs by $15 million over the next five years. The Census Bureau deployed a cloud-based customer self-service tool in just 25 days, rather than the six months it would have taken conventionally. The shift to the cloud has already led to lower costs and faster deployments.

To crack down on redundant infrastructure investment, we embarked upon the largest data center consolidation effort in history. Over 800 data centers will be eliminated by 2015. The Department of the Interior will save $500 million by 2020 by aligning technology resources under the CIO through a customer-centric approach.

III. Promoting Accountability and Innovation through Open Government

We shifted power to the American people by democratizing data on every aspect of government operations.

Data.gov was launched with 47 datasets of government information. Today, there are more than 305,000 datasets, hundreds of apps created by third parties, and a global movement to democratize data. Already nine cities, 22 states, 10 nations, and international organizations such as the World Bank and OECD have followed our lead in making data available to the public.

From these datasets, citizens have developed hundreds of apps that include helping parents keep their children safe, letting travelers find the fastest route to their destinations, and informing home buyers about the safety of their new neighborhood. Never before have people been so empowered with the information they need to make everyday decisions.

We also tapped into the ingenuity of the American people through prizes and challenges for innovative ideas and solutions. So far, the American people have helped the Government find the innovative path through over 50 competitions held to date on Challenge.gov. The Apps for Army competition spurred the development of 53 web and

mobile apps, with the top five winning apps supporting physical training, mental health, disaster relief, mapping, and recruiting.

Now, for the first time, Congress has granted agencies the authority to use prizes and challenges to spur innovation through the America COMPETES Act.

IV. Enhancing Federal Cybersecurity

For too long, the focus of Federal cybersecurity has been on compliance rather than performance.

To provide for more effective security at a lower cost, we shifted the cybersecurity policy of the Federal Government from old-style, paper-based reports to continuous monitoring; launched a centralized platform run by the Department of Homeland Security for meaningful and actionable insight into agency cybersecurity postures Government-wide; and directed agencies to fund tools to support continuous monitoring and improve incident response.

Agencies such as the Department of State, the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Justice are leading the way by implementing systems enable real-time monitoring and remediation.

Monitoring systems alone is not sufficient. That is why the Department of Homeland Security launched CyberStat – face-to-face, evidence-based accountability sessions – to advance agency cybersecurity postures, with the first session focused on the Department of Education.

V. Improving Delivery of Government Services

The ultimate goal in closing the IT Gap is to improve the delivery of government services to the American people.

To make it easier for the public to access government services anytime, anywhere, we launched more than 100 mobile apps, from an app that gives consumers instant information on safety recalls of products such as toys and food to an app that provides travelers with real-time information on wait times at airport security lines across the country.

To help our veterans and Medicare beneficiaries, we created the "Blue Button" Personal Health Record. This new feature on the My HealtheVet and Mymedicare.gov websites ensures users can easily access and download their personal health records anytime-anywhere. Having control of this information enables users to share this data with health care providers, caregivers, and other people they trust.

To improve access to education for students, we modernized and streamlined the Federal student aid application and eligibility determination process, eliminating over 70 questions.

To demystify the citizenship application process for potential citizens, we put a case tracking system online that provides prospective citizens a way to track the status of their immigration case just by entering a number, as they would a FedEx shipment, rather than waiting in line or holding on the phone.

By leveraging technology, we have improved the delivery of critical government services to veterans, seniors, parents, students, and prospective citizens and transformed the way they interact with the government on a daily basis.

In just two years, we have transformed the way we manage information technology across the Federal government. We have significantly reduced the budgets of underperforming projects, cracked down on redundant infrastructure investments, democratized data to spur innovation, advanced the Federal government's cybersecurity posture, and improved delivery of services to the American people.

Moving forward, we are continuing to take bold steps to confront the structural barriers that get in the way of consistent execution through the 25-Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management. Implementing these reforms will require leadership and focused efforts from each of you.

As the New Year begins, I am more confident than ever that we can build upon our momentum to close the technology gap. I thank you for your hard work and look forward to continuing our efforts to leverage the power of technology to deliver results for the American people.