



Rethinking the Use of Technology in Government Agencies

Executive Summary

Our research findings are clear: disparate, poorly integrated software and communication systems make it difficult for government workers at all seniority levels to do their jobs effectively.

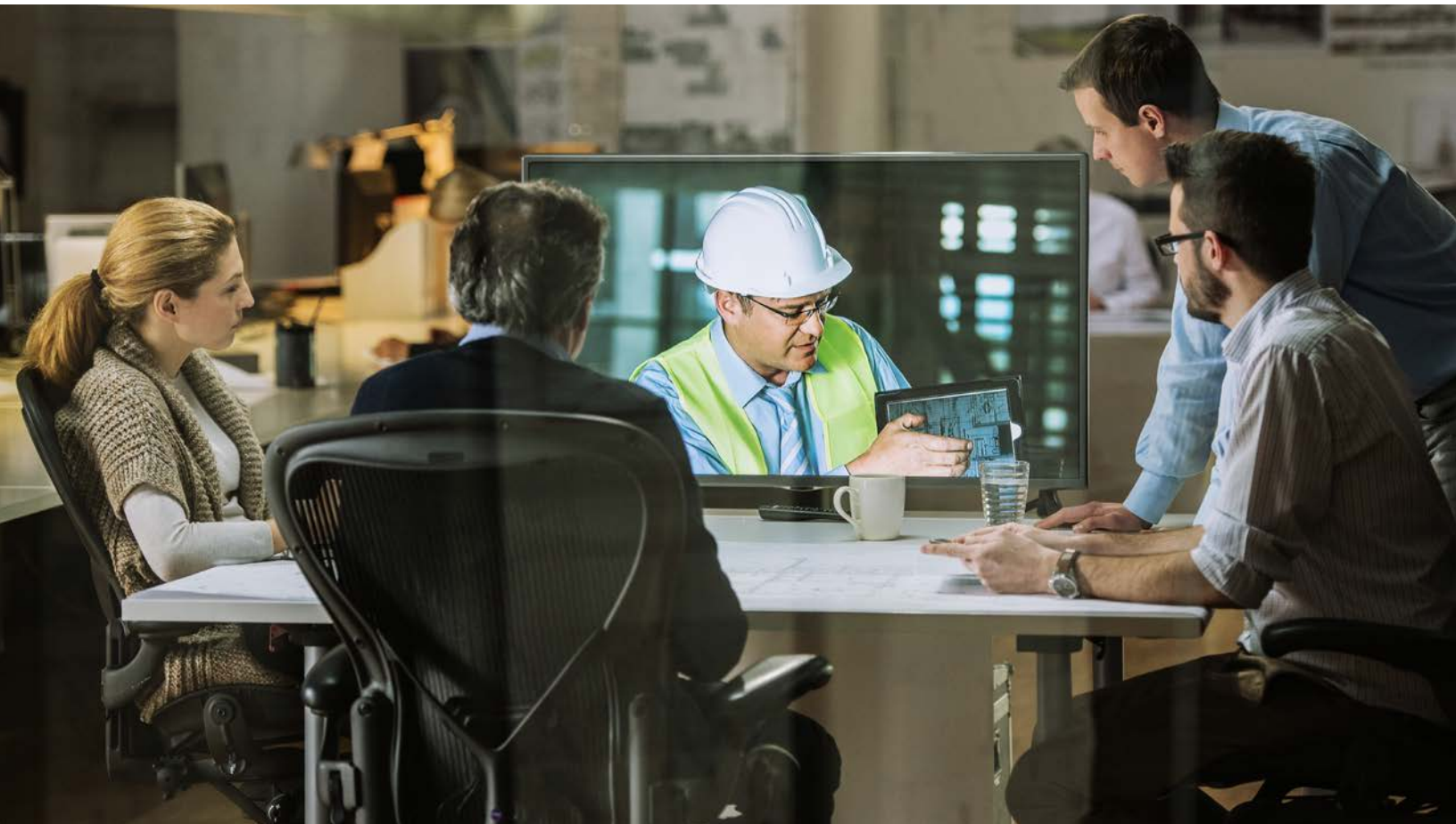
We conducted a survey of 883 government workers about how important access to data is to their job as well as how easy it is to access the needed data, 9% work in small agencies, 67% work in large central departments/Ministries of State and 16% are in leadership positions.

Here are some key takeaways:

- Over 86% of respondents said that data is either 'critical' or 'important' to get their job done
- One in five said it is difficult or impossible to find and process the data they need, while another 56% said the process for accessing data needs improvement

- Over half (53%) estimated that consolidating all agency data on one platform would save at least 30 minutes per day
- Respondents who work in larger agencies and departments have a more negative view of data accessibility

Read on for more details about how keeping information trapped in silos is preventing government workers from doing their job and wasting time that could be dedicated to providing better service for residents.





Research Findings

Importance of data

In central government departments, key activities include requesting an action, logging a change in circumstances and keeping colleagues constantly abreast of these changes.

Most of these activities require data—a fact that’s reflected by 86% of respondents who say data is “important” or “critical” to performing their job effectively. Ideally, tasks like these should take a few moments to complete, with the relevant information easily available to those who need it.

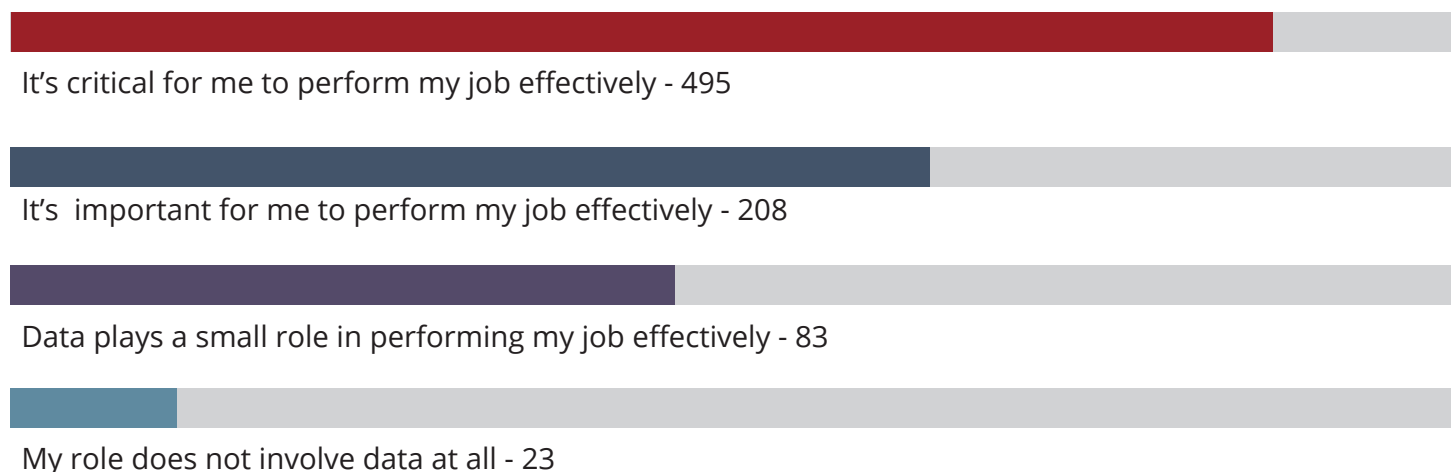
Timely, accurate data is the lifeblood of most central government departments, be it for emergency planning, assessing customer eligibility or any number of vital activities. 61% of respondents told us that data is “critical for me to perform my job effectively”, while another 25% claimed it was “important for me to perform my job effectively”.

Clearly, easy access to data is of paramount importance to these workers and their customers. We asked respondents to score the following out of 10 for “importance:”

- Knowing where information is located
- Having accurate data at their fingertips
- Being able to update information easily

Mean scores for the above were **9.01**, **8.84** and **8.64** respectively, which implies that many staff will routinely have to find work-arounds to cope with the reality of their job.

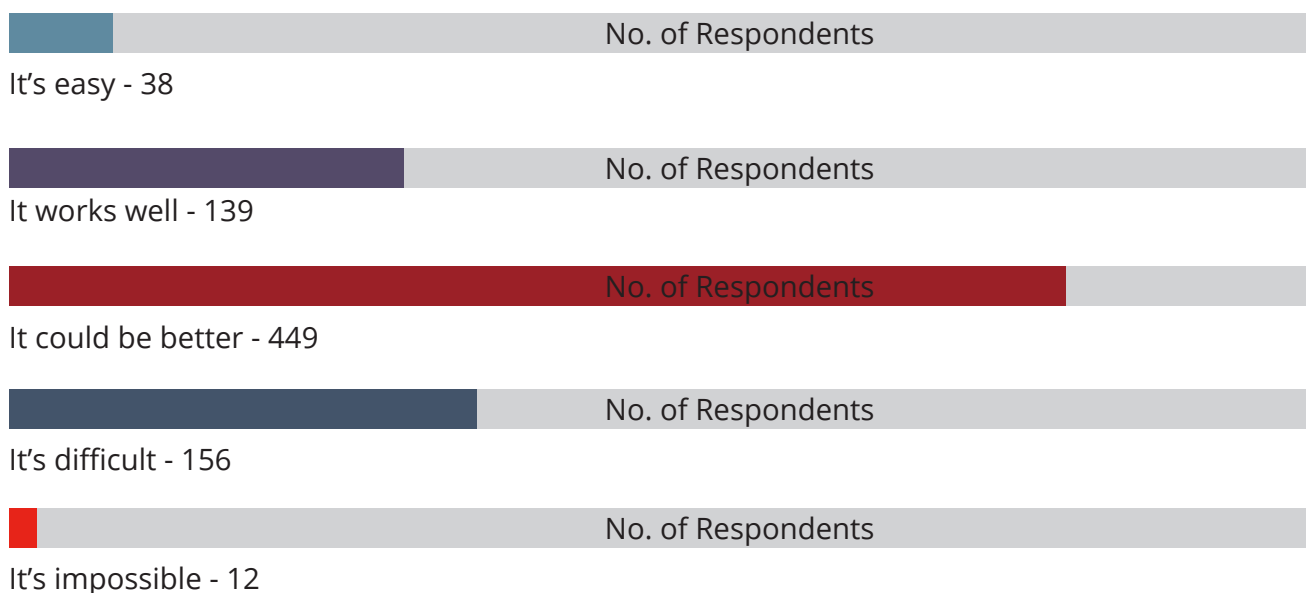
Figure 1: *How much do you rely on gathering information from computer applications or services i.e. data to perform your job effectively?*





Useful information: A needle in a haystack

Figure 2: *How simple is it for you to process, find, and collate the information?*



Our survey results, however, suggest that this is often not the reality. When asked about their daily experience of finding and using information, 21% of respondents gave a wholly negative answer, while an additional 56% indicated there was “room for improvement”.

Respondents who worked in smaller agencies were most likely to say they could find the information needed. This suggests that the larger a department, the more complex its systems are likely to be.



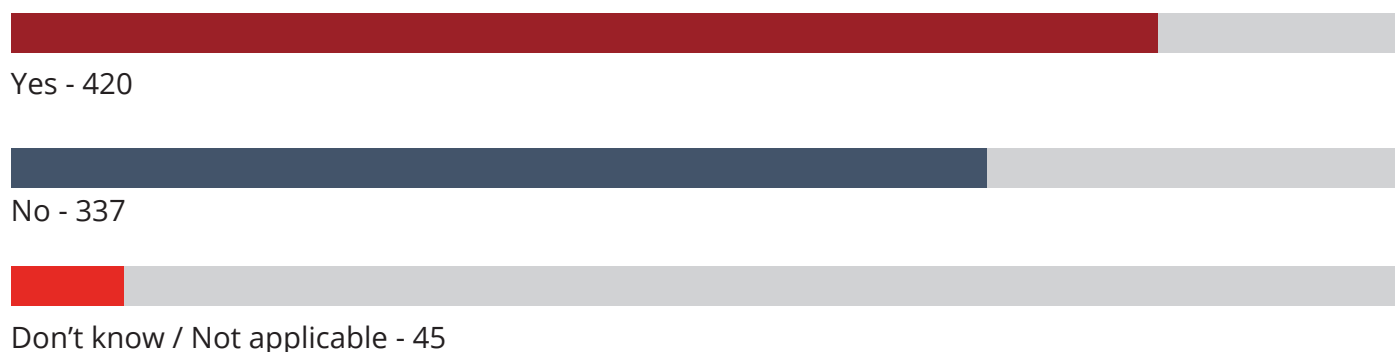
Legacy Systems Hindering Productivity

When asked to describe their experiences, several respondents cited instances where applications took minutes to load and often froze while loading. They also noted that accessing relevant information can require over a dozen different applications, making answering queries or updating management a time-intensive process. For others, day-to-day work means using databases that don't interact with each other, requiring them to spend excessive time cross-referencing.

Worryingly, over 40% of respondents said they lacked the systems necessary to do their job effectively. This suggests a considerable gap between what agencies expect of their technology and what it actually delivers. Technology that provides easy access to the data civil servants need could dramatically affect productivity and customer experience.

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Figure 3: *Do your existing tools and technologies provide you with the information/ data and functionality necessary to do your job effectively?*

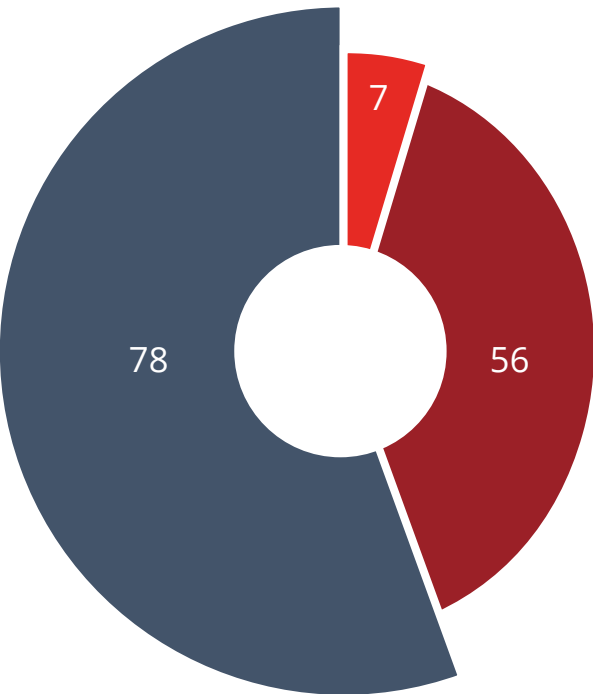




Research findings

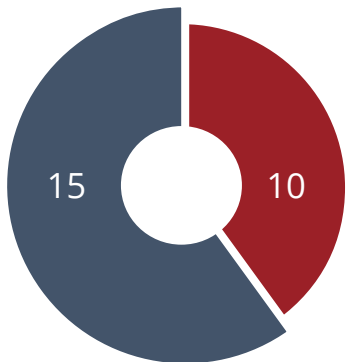
Figure 3: Do your existing tools and technologies provide you with the information/ data and functionality necessary to do your job effectively?

Work in large department



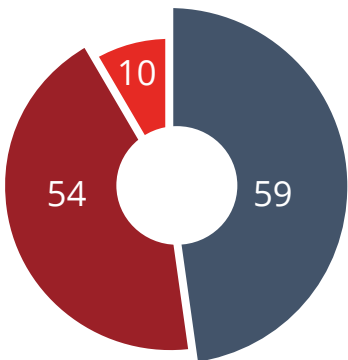
Yes No Don't know / Not applicable

Work in small agency



Yes No

Senior grades



Yes No Don't know / Not applicable

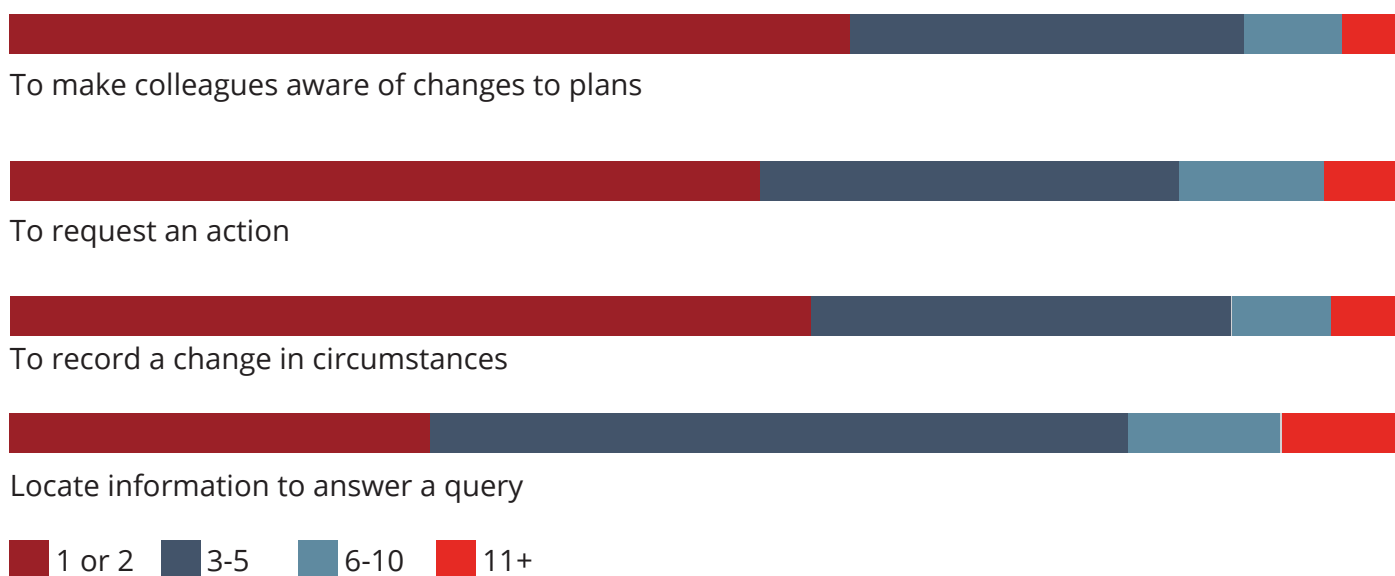


Those who worked in smaller agencies tended to be most satisfied with their technology systems. Even here, though, the cumbersome nature of many processes often leaves staff unsure if they have the right information onscreen. What's more, a lack of accurate data increases the likelihood of mistakes, which can impact customer service and in some cases puts vulnerable people at risk.

To put it simply: by storing data in a mix of databases, government departments risk leaving employees feeling frustrated and unable to do their job properly. Many respondents said they had to use more than six applications just to notify colleagues of a change of circumstances.

This state of affairs has many underlying causes. Frequent reorganisations in central government have created departments with a range of legacy networks and systems. Because these systems have never been integrated, it's hard for users to extract and analyse information effectively. What's more, there seems to be little ring-fenced funding to address the issue.

Figure 4: *How many applications do you currently use in order to...?*



Managing data as it enters the organisation

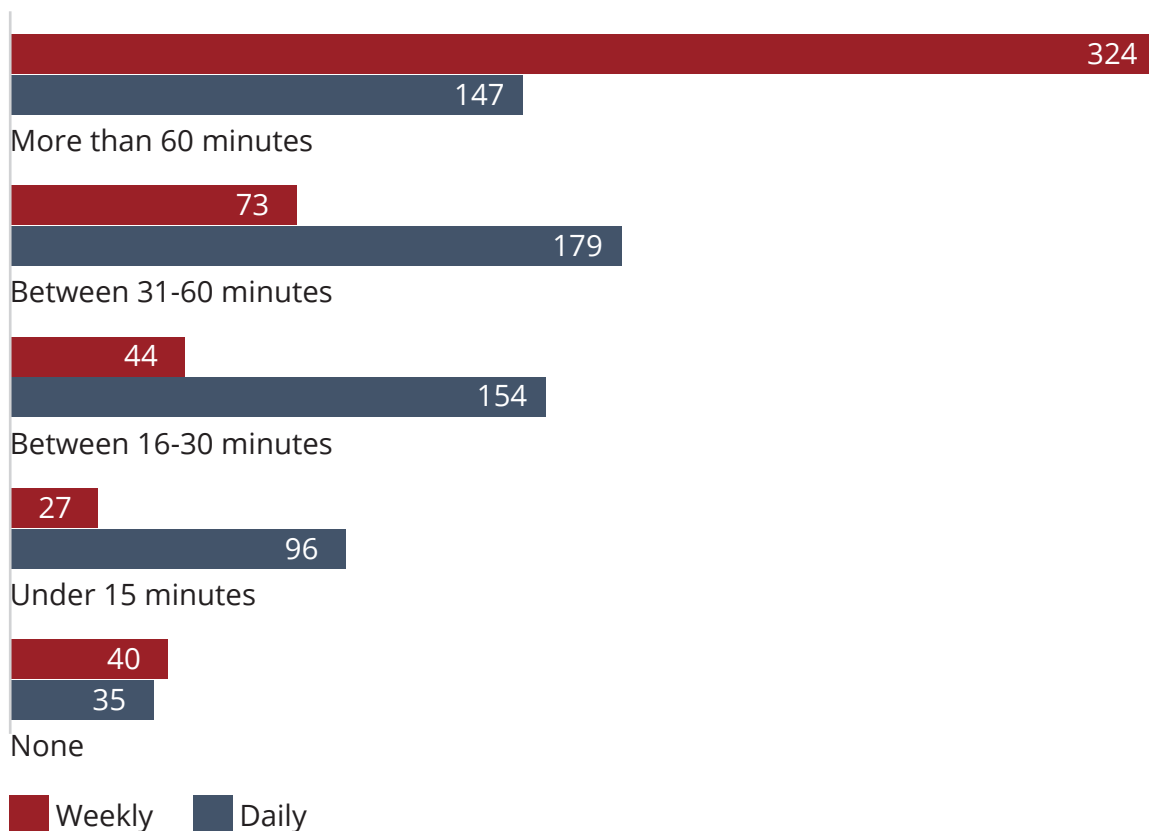
We asked respondents: “what benefits do you believe having a better connection between your communication tools and your systems of record (ERM, CRM etc.) would provide to employees and citizens?”

This provoked a wide variety of ideas. For example, respondents thought productivity would increase if information was available on a single tool or platform, since queries would then be quicker to make. Productivity would also benefit because staff wouldn't have to rekey information, reducing the likelihood of errors as well as the time spent correcting errors.

Respondents saw other wide-ranging benefits in a unified data system. Job satisfaction would increase in line with people's ability to work more effectively, as would their confidence in providing a world-class service. Respondents also commented that efficiency gains could improve the public reputation of their department. What's more, by bringing data together, the right technology could increase overall clarity and help the department meet the demands of GDPR regulation.

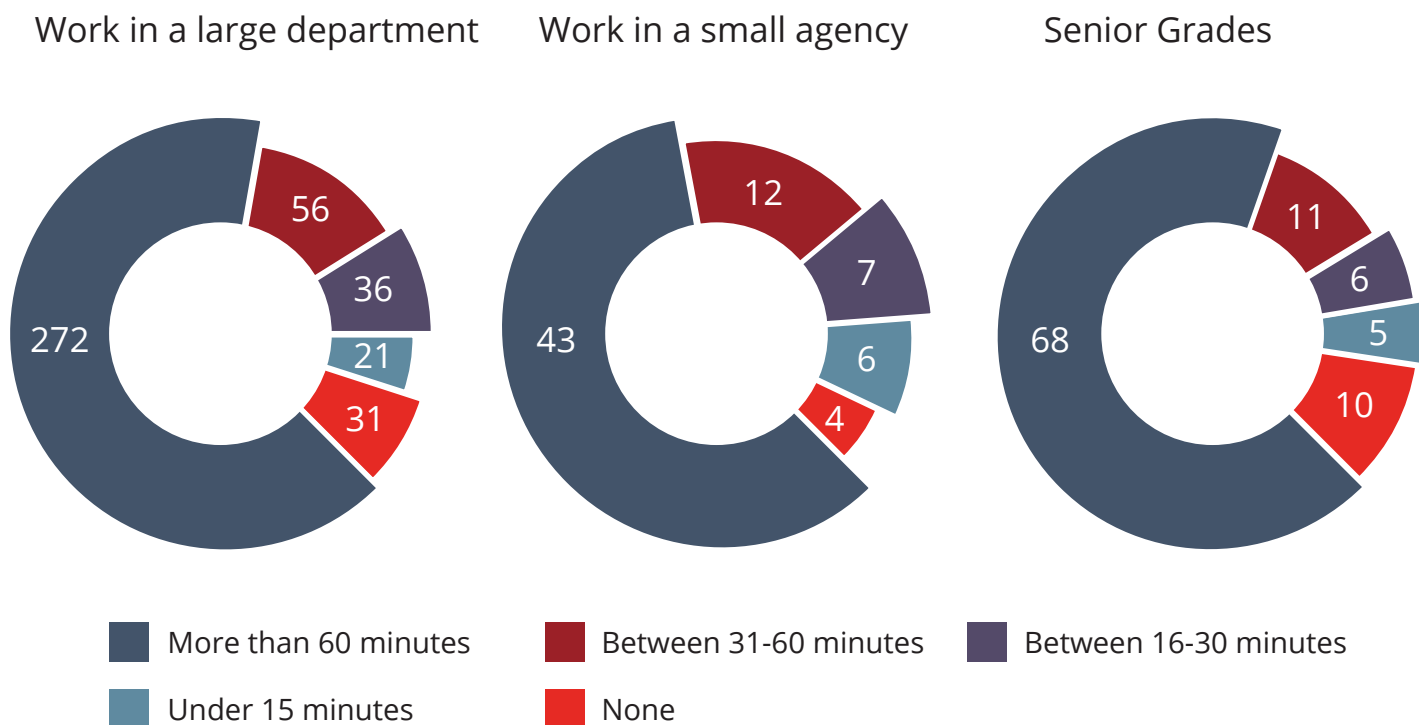
Most importantly, respondents believed that such a solution would be a time saver—a fact that's summarized in the chart below.

Figure 5: *If you could access all the required information in a single application (systems of records, citizen engagements etc.), how much time, on average, do you think you would save on a daily and weekly basis?*



Research findings

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As shown above, the biggest time savings would be for those that work in large departments, and those at senior grades.

More than half of respondents thought that consolidating their software applications would save them over 30 minutes a day. Currently, many are wasting up to half a day as a result of perceived deficiencies in their existing technology.

Methodology

Dods Research was commissioned by 8x8 to poll UK civil servants about their use of software applications and communication systems.

Fieldwork was carried out during December 2018 and January 2019 via an online survey.

The survey achieved 883 responses from across 67 organisations. These included large government bodies such as HMRC and smaller agencies including the Driving Standards Agency.

The survey includes responses from senior managers, team leaders and those in more administrative roles.

Data Improvements that Drive Productivity

As part of the survey, we asked respondents to include suggestions for improving how data is collected and used in their agencies. Here were the most common suggestions coming from government workers:

- Improve the search functionality, including a way to search multiple applications and networks at the same time
- Involve end-users in the system design, with the goal of creating a more user-friendly, intuitive interface for accessing data
- Expand the use of collaboration tools to make it easier for colleagues to work together and help each other when it comes to using data
- Automate data processing and data input, to reduce the risk of errors as well as to free staff from time-consuming data entry
- Use data extraction tools and artificial intelligence for data analytics to make better use of the existing data

The thread connecting all of these suggestions is that staff wants a way to both improve productivity as well as find ways to use data to improve the experience for residents interacting with the organisation.

Rethinking the use of technology in government

The challenges our research highlights are a symptom of over-reliance on siloed legacy system that don't give users the data they need. Improving productivity in the government sector, especially for the many workers who rely on communications systems and access to data, requires moving to modern communications tools that facilitate data collection and analysis.

Embracing the digital workplace of the future, one that provides intuitive and immediate access to data, doesn't require a major capital expenditure. Most cloud communications systems like 8x8 use an opex model, making them more accessible for budget-strapped government agencies.

With over one million business users and extensive experience providing communications solutions to all levels of government, 8x8 can help you modernise your communications system and get all of your data in one place.



Cloud Communications from 8x8

Communications. Transformed.

8x8 helps public sector organisations around the world transform their customers' experience. We combine one system of engagement for phone, messaging, meetings and contact centre with one system of intelligence for all your customer data. One cloud platform allows employees and customers to interact in the way that suits them best, whether by voice call, email, web chat or social media.

8x8's solutions offer "out-of-the-box" integration with leading business software, including Skype for Business, Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Office 365, Salesforce and NetSuite. This makes your communications data available inside other business applications and creates one platform to access all of your organisation's data—there's no need to search through multiple applications to find all the right data points. The data is saved automatically, so staff do not have to spend time on error-prone data entry.

A customer example

For many of our public sector customers, making better use of existing resources is a key priority. In a recent case, 8x8 helped a central government agency boost productivity to such a level that they were able to support other departments with overflow requests.

Before using 8x8, the agency's customers experienced long wait times. Queries came in via 30 different phone numbers and 60 different email addresses. By implementing 8x8 Contact Centre, the agency was able to use VOIP call technology, ensuring queries were routed to the right person, the first time around. Wait times were reduced and the agency was able to consolidate its vast number of telephone numbers and email addresses. Where appropriate, enquiries can also be handled using web chat, while other features enable call recording, remote working and advanced data analytics to deliver vital insights. The agency is also better able to make use of in-house expertise.

This new technology investment is credited with a 25% increase in productivity, not just because less time is spent passing customer calls between teams, but because the system's ever-evolving knowledge base allows team members to answer complex queries in a confident, consistent way.

As a final, unforeseen benefit, the agency is now able to deploy its staff more efficiently, diverting more people to work in its contact centre and enhancing customers' overall experience.



Ready for the next step?

Our dedicated team of public sector specialists can help you deliver a digital transformation with positive impacts for your whole organisation. We take solutions that have been proven in commercial businesses and adapt them to the specific needs of the public sector, as well as your particular agency requirements.

Find out more

To learn more about how 8x8 can help you improve both customer and employee engagement, contact one of our Solution Experts on **0333 043 8888** or visit **[8x8.com/uk](https://www.8x8.com/uk)** to learn more about how 8x8 can help improve both customer and employee engagement.

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8x8, Inc. (NYSE:EGHT) cloud solutions help businesses transform their customer and employee experience. With one system of engagement for voice, video, collaboration and contact centre and one system of intelligence on one technology platform, businesses can now communicate faster and smarter to exceed the speed of customer expectations. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com/uk, or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.