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MarkLogic

This Database Can Help Government Transition

Here's how government can make workforce pivots quickly and easily.

Over the next few months, presidential appointees will file in and agencies will adjust internally to ensure organizational structure continues to align with mission.

Organizations have traditionally relied solely on internal datasets, like resumes and individual self-evaluations, to complete that sort of assessment. But as shifts (such as this transition) increase in complexity, it becomes more difficult for any large agency to make a pivot successfully.

During workforce realignment, agencies' greatest asset is intelligence about their own operations, especially the skills and specialties of their employees. The problem is that government has become reliant on an information retrieval model that doesn't paint a holistic picture of personnel resources. This can lead to staffing delays and, worse, inappropriately staffed projects—little missteps that have the potential to throw government off track in irreparable ways.

Because it relies on static, internal information, the systems government currently uses essentially ask users to know the answer to a search query before they even make it, MarkLogic Chief Technology Officer Idriss Mekrez says.

"This model is breaking down," he says. Agencies are realizing that they need a simpler, more detailed way of finding the right people for specific jobs in a reasonable amount of time.

A large government agency has already started to overcome these challenges by developing a system that uses Strategic Workforce. This solution can be built atop MarkLogic, which is a NoSQL database—meaning it can store all information, regardless of format.

Mekrez says the MarkLogic Strategic Workforce solution has the capacity to change government by revolutionizing the way information is stored as well as how users search for it. From a storage standpoint, the solution allows agencies to integrate their internal data—the resumes, annual reviews and other HR information that have long served as the bedrock of workforce management—with less structured information from both internal and external communications. This second piece leverages blogs, reports, publications and projects that an employee has completed for an agency or publicly elsewhere.

Then, when it comes time to do a workforce assessment, the MarkLogic Strategic Workforce solution functions for agencies the same way that a search engine does for the everyday internet user, Mekrez explains. This is possible because MarkLogic searches employ semantics and geospatial data, meaning queries are made with informational and situational context in mind. Deeper search capabilities

allow federal leaders to make smarter decisions based on the granular details that make up an individual's unique skillset.

So, for example, if an agency suddenly needs to staff a project in the South China Sea with an expert in maritime law, they can leverage the Strategic Workforce solution to find a staffer whose composite body of work makes them right for the job.

"Imagine making that decision," Mekrez says. "You'd store all the papers and reports that have been developed by analysts in MarkLogic, and you'd be able to identify very quickly who speaks Thai, is a navigation lawyer and has recent experience delivering projects in that region."

These capabilities will become increasingly vital in the coming months as a new administration enters the White House and agencies across government start to ripple with appointments and readjustments.

"Presidential transitions call for thousands of positions to be filled, for experts to be identified and appointed quickly." Mekrez says. This will be a lot easier if agency leaders can get a comprehensive view of their workforce—blogs, social media information, etc.—on top of a resume, which itself may be dated.

Most importantly for government, MarkLogic's Strategic Workforce solution can be searched securely. Every single piece of information is secured to maintain confidentiality, Mekrez says. The database operates at a variety of classification levels, restricting what users can see or do based on their credentials.