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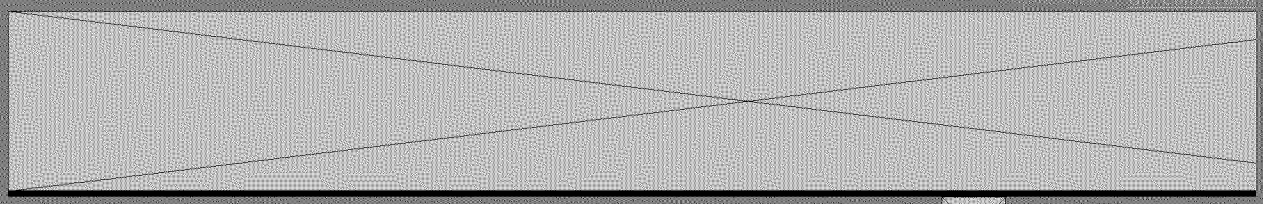

i360Gov Daily Download

Wednesday, December 21st, 2016

Policy & Technology. News & Analysis.

Federal Policy & Business

Tech group calls on Trump to assess IT vulnerabilities, lower acquisition barriers

Federal Times: The federal government needs to assess its IT infrastructure and address cybersecurity, modernization and assessment reform as equal, intertwined priorities, suggests the IT Alliance for Public Sector, a division of advocacy and policy organization for the Information Technology Industry Council. In a letter sent to President-elect Donald Trump, ITAPS declares that its membership — which includes hardware, software, services and solutions companies — is dedicated to working with the new administration to improve government operations and efficiency and reduce wasteful spending on aging inventory.

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Pay Agent Accepts New Localities, Rejects Giving Others Bigger Adjustments

Government Executive: The President's Pay Agent, the final arbiter to make recommendations to the president on federal employee compensation, approved two new localities for 2018 but rejected a proposal that would have boosted salaries for workers living on the outskirts of existing pay areas.

As recommended by the Federal Salary Council, the pay agent approved of bringing feds located in Virginia Beach, Va., and Burlington, Vt., out of the "rest of United States" pay adjustment and into their own localities. Employees in specific pay localities receive larger annual adjustments to their base pay than do those in the "rest of U.S." The salary council is made up of union representatives and other pay experts, while the pay agent consists of the Labor Department secretary and the directors of the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget.

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Reports cite VA progress, despite contrary Republican rhetoric

The Washington Post: During a period of growing Republican criticism and eagerness for major changes at the Department of Veterans Affairs, officials there might find some solace in two recent independent reviews of an agency that dishonored itself.

A Harvard Business School case study, published in November and updated this month, concludes that the team assembled by VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald has "made impressive progress over the past year." In July, a literature review in the Journal of General Internal Medicine found "the VA often (but not always) performs better than or similarly to other systems

of care with regard to the safety and effectiveness of care."

In Trump cabinet, Commerce Secretary will run trade policy

Reuters: U.S. President-elect Donald Trump plans to put his pick for Commerce Secretary, billionaire investor Wilbur Ross, in charge of his get-tough trade policy, a transition team spokesman said on Tuesday.

It is a signal of how Trump, who is also interviewing candidates to be the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), plans to elevate a crackdown on competitors in the world market and the overhaul of trade deals that he says have hurt U.S. factory jobs.

The USTR will not be merged with Commerce, but Trump transition team spokesman Jason Miller made clear that most trade policy decisions would be steered by Ross, who made a good part of his fortune by investing in distressed steel companies that benefited from stiff import tariffs imposed by former President George W. Bush in the early 2000s.

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The 2016 Public Sector Guide to Social Media Strategy & Policy
The Government Social Media Survival Guide
3 Ways Text

Messaging Exposes Government Organizatior to Massive Risk
Reach New Heights with Red River and FlexPod® for Cloud
A Natural Evolution: From Data Center Consolidatic to IT Optimizatior
Mobile E-Signatures for Government

Federal Government IT

Don't Undermine Encryption, Bipartisan Congressional Report Warns

Nextgov: Congress should not pass laws that weaken encryption, according to a bipartisan congressional report released today.

That's true even though encryption technology can make it harder for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to combat crime and terrorism, according to the report ordered in March by Republican and Democratic leaders of the House Judiciary and Energy and Commerce committees.

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Congressional report sides with Apple on encryption debate

CIO: The U.S. is better off supporting strong encryption that trying to weaken it, according to a new congressional report that stands at odds with the FBI's push to install backdoors into tech products.

On Tuesday, a bipartisan congressional panel published a year-end report, advising the U.S. to explore other solutions to the encryption debate.

"Any measure that weakens encryption works against the national interest," the report said.

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Artificial intelligence could cost millions of jobs. The White House says we need more of it.

The Washington Post: The growing popularity of artificial intelligence technology will likely lead to millions of lost jobs, especially among less-educated workers, and could exacerbate the economic divide between socioeconomic classes in the United States, according to a newly released White House report.

But that same technology is also essential to improving the country's productivity growth, a key measure of how efficiently the economy produces goods. That could ultimately lead to higher average wages and fewer work hours. For that reason, the report concludes, our economy actually needs more artificial intelligence, not less.

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Knowledge Center: Special Reports & Whitepapers

Public Sector Text Messaging Scandals and 3 Major Tips to Avoid Them

Being in the public eye is difficult. Just ask any celebrity. Everything they do or say can cause quite the stir, and anything they do serves as fodder for the court of public opinion. Similar rules and judgment—befalls employees of local and state government agencies. The only difference is their public notoriety often comes on the back of an embarrassing scandal. Download this guide to examine 3 recent government text message scandals, and proactive ways to avoid them.

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Five Steps to Creating Your Hybrid Integration Strategy

Enterprise organizations are adopting cloud-based SaaS applications at increasing rates. And many are simultaneously moving existing applications and systems to public and/or private cloud infrastructures. These trends are making hybrid IT environments the "new normal."

Gartner refers to the integration tools and technologies required for hybrid environments as Hybrid Integration Platforms (HIPs) and predicts:

"By 2018, more than 40% of organizations will use integration infrastructure that they assemble from HIP-enabling technologies." (Gartner, Market Guide for Hybrid Integration Platform-Enabling Technologies Published: 17 July 2015 Analyst(s): Jess Thompson, Eric Thoo, Benoit J. Lheureux)

Are you considering a hybrid integration platform? Then you need a hybrid integration strategy. There are many things to consider as you design your strategy—such as your integration "center of gravity," the amount of control you want to maintain, an accurate picture of your users and a plan for keeping up with project demands.

This white paper helps you better understand the important integration challenges of evolving to a hybrid IT environment, especially with the increased need to integrate with cloud-based applications and systems. In fact, as you design your hybrid integration strategy, we invite you to consider these five essential steps.

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A Natural Evolution: From Data Center Consolidation to IT Optimization

An i360Gov Special Report

As federal IT organizations make progress consolidating and modernizing their IT infrastructures, the impact of legacy platforms, technologies and traditional data centers still weighs heavy, along with each agency's ability to attract and maintain the skill sets and applications needed to meet 21st century requirements.

If agency officials choose to retain aging platforms and legacy technologies, they tend to limit their ability to take advantage of industry innovations, including cloud computing, advanced analytics and increasingly capable mobile applications.

Meanwhile, employees, partners and constituents expect the public sector to offer the self-service flexibility and instant accessibility to government applications and services that they have become accustomed to from online retailers and other suppliers.

Download i360Gov's new special report for an overview of successful initiatives including:

- An overview of how Hanscom AFB reduced server numbers while increasing services.
- An overview of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's initiative that has already saved more than 40% in overall server energy consumption alone, and 25% in computer room air conditioning energy consumption.
- Tips and best practices for moving from data center consolidation to more flexible, trusted and optimized IT operations.

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Defense / Intelligence / Homeland Security

Army Times: PALM BEACH, Fla. — President-elect Donald Trump is planning to meet with his incoming

After violence abroad, Trump schedules a meeting with his national security adviser

national security adviser, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, in the aftermath of a day of violence around the world.

Trump appeared to jump ahead of investigators in blaming Islamic terrorists for deadly incidents Monday in Turkey and Germany and vowing anew to eradicate their regional and global networks. He called the brazen shooting of Russia's ambassador to Turkey "a violation of all rules of civilized order." He added that a "radical Islamic terrorist" had assassinated the diplomat, Andrei Karlov.

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Trump Selects OCO-Opponent Mulvaney for OMB

Defense News: WASHINGTON — Team Trump's pick for White House budget director, US Rep. Mick Mulvaney, has a track record of fighting the use of the Pentagon's war account to skirt budget caps.

Mulvaney, R-S.C., over the last two years led an alliance of Republican deficit hawks and liberal Democrats in the House pushing back on what they saw as abuses of the overseas contingency operations (OCO) account.

Budgeteers have used the account as a relief valve for non-emergency funds, fueling criticism that it has become a slush fund.

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Russia, Iran and Turkey Meet for Syria Talks, Excluding U.S.

The New York Times: BEIRUT, Lebanon — Russia, Iran and Turkey met in Moscow on Tuesday to work toward a political accord to end Syria's nearly six-year war, leaving the United States on the sidelines as the countries sought to drive the conflict in ways that serve their interests.

Secretary of State John Kerry was not invited. Nor was the United Nations consulted.

With pro-government forces having made critical gains on the ground, the new alignment and the absence of any Western powers at the table all but guarantee that President Bashar al-Assad will continue to rule Syria under any resulting agreement, despite President Obama's declaration more than five years ago that Mr. Assad had lost legitimacy and had to be removed.

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Government Healthcare - Policy & IT

Drug firms poured 780M painkillers into WV amid rise of overdoses

Charleston Gazette-Mail: The trail of painkillers leads to West Virginia's southern coalfields, to places like Kermit, population 392. There, out-of-state drug companies shipped nearly 9 million highly addictive — and potentially lethal — hydrocodone pills over two years to a single pharmacy in the Mingo County town.

Rural and poor, Mingo County has the fourth-highest prescription opioid death rate of any county in the United States.

The trail also weaves through Wyoming County, where shipments of OxyContin have doubled, and the county's overdose death rate leads the nation. One mom-and-pop pharmacy in Oceana received 600 times as many oxycodone pills as the Rite Aid drugstore just eight blocks away.

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Trump advisor Michael Leavitt: ACA will be repealed in first 100 days, replaced with bipartisan support

Healthcare IT News: President-elect Donald Trump has three basic jobs right now: put a team on the field, craft an agenda for the first 100-200 days and coordinate with Congress to ensure the agenda's success, said Michael Leavitt, former Secretary of Health and Human Services and founder of Leavitt Partners.

Trump made several healthcare promises during the election, and now voters expect the new administration and Congress to put them into place, said Leavitt, who explained that one of the biggest expectations is the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act.

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Obama administration sticks with new mandatory bundled-pay demo, but Tom Price likely to intervene

Modern Healthcare: The CMS is moving forward with a new mandatory initiative that would make hospitals in 98 markets financially accountable for the cost and quality of all care associated with bypass surgery and heart attacks.The final regulations issued Tuesday came just days after the agency announced it was junking a proposed mandatory demonstration that would have tested new ways of paying for outpatient drugs under Medicare Part B in an effort to bring those prices down. Both models have drawn criticism that the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation is overreaching its mandate by compelling participation, including from President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for HHS secretary, Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.).

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Knowledge Center: Webinars

Federal Data Center Optimization: Do's and Don'ts from the Experts

As federal agencies embrace the U.S. CIO's new Data Center Optimization Initiative and keep pace with growing demand for new services and applications, best practices will help guide them around potential pitfalls. In this i360Gov webinar, leading DoD and civilian IT experts will provide insights on optimization and how agencies can achieve a mandated 25% annual reduction in federal data center expenses by the end of fiscal 2018. Agency executives will gain concrete advice on the best steps to take to achieve more agile, optimized and secure IT operations.

Speakers include:

- **Michael Valivullah**, Chief Technology Officer, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), USDA
- **Fred Whiteside**, Program Manager, Data Center Consolidation Initiative,Systems Engineering Division, OASAM/OCIO, Department of Labor
- **Bill Lemons**, Director, Federal Systems Engineering, Juniper Networks
- **Stephen Crooks**, Enterprise Solutions Architect, Affigent, LLC

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Energy - Policy & Technology

Obama's last coal rule likely headed for the chopping block in Congress

Politico: The Obama administration's years-in-the-making rule to protect streams from mountaintop removal coal mining is on track to go into effect a day before President-elect Donald Trump takes office, meaning Congress will have to step in to kill it quickly.

Trump has railed against regulations on the coal industry in general, although he has not specifically addressed the Interior Department's stream rule, which has been in the works since 2009 and was finally released Monday. His pick to be Interior secretary, Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.), is an ardent coal backer and has called for Congress to block the rule. Zinke would be in charge of unwinding the rule, but that process could take years through normal administrative channels. A quicker route runs through Congress, where Republicans are assembling a hit-list of recently passed rules they can block with little recourse from Democrats.

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Solar is top source of new capacity on the US grid in 2016

ARS Technica: The US electric grid continued to transform in 2016. No new coal plants were added, and solar became the top new source of generating capacity. Combined with wind, a small bit of hydro, and the first nuclear plant added to the grid in decades, sources that generate power without carbon emissions accounted for two-thirds of the new capacity added in 2016.

These numbers come from the US Energy Information Administration, which asked utilities about what sources they expected to have online at the end of the year. These numbers typically show a burst of activity in December, as projects are raced to completion to take advantage of the tax benefits of reaching operational status in the current year.

President Obama bans oil drilling in large areas of Atlantic and Arctic oceans

The Washington Post: President Obama moved to solidify his environmental legacy Tuesday by withdrawing hundreds of millions of acres of federally owned land in the Arctic and Atlantic Ocean from new offshore oil and gas drilling.

Obama used a little-known law called the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to protect large portions of the Chukchi and Beaufort seas in the Arctic and a string of canyons in the Atlantic stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia. In addition to a five-year moratorium already in place in the Atlantic, removing the canyons from drilling puts much of the eastern seaboard off limits to oil exploration even if companies develop plans to operate around them.

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State & Local Government - Policy & Technology

The Next Great American Streetlight Conversion

Route Fifty: Chicago is nearing the point of no return procuring a smart lighting system that will convert about 270,000 high-pressure sodium fixtures across the city to LED streetlights over four years.

The Windy City receives 3.9 million 3-1-1 calls a year, and 40 percent of those service requests are duplicates. Many of them involve broken streetlights.

Placing every LED fixture on a wireless lighting management system will ensure that they last two to three times longer—10 to 15 years each—and the city's Department of Transportation can quickly respond to issues thanks to real-time outage information.

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Let's Make a Pact: States Increasingly Problem Solve Together

Governing: They call them interstate compacts. The idea is for states -- from a handful to all 50 -- to join together contractually to ease a collective load. There are hundreds of these deals and counting, says Colmon Elridge, director of the Council of State Governments' National Center for Interstate Compacts, which is the primary driving force behind a number of these agreements.

While they may cover diverse state activities such as recognizing each other's driver's licenses or medical licenses, they're not generally well known -- either by the public or within government circles. "Most legislators have no idea their states are in a number of compacts," says Elridge.

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City Officials Go To Court To Protect New Yorkers With Municipal IDs

NPR: When New York City launched the nation's largest municipal ID program, advocates said it would give immigrants in the country illegally access to bank accounts and city services.

"They could go visit a loved one in the hospital, they could go visit their child's teacher," Mayor Bill De Blasio said at a press conference earlier this month. "If they had an interaction with a police officer, there was an ID recognized by the NYPD. It was a very basic concept."

By most metrics, the IDNYC card has been a resounding success. New York City has issued roughly 900,000 ID cards since last year. No one knows exactly how many IDNYC cardholders are in the country illegally, although the number is probably in the hundreds of thousands. But now, with President-Elect Donald Trump coming to power, there are concerns that the program could backfire.

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Education - Policy & Technology

The Blurry Definitions of Adaptive vs. Personalized Learning

Campus Technology: In June of 2015, leaders in adaptive learning hashed out the definitions of personalized and adaptive learning at a summit in Santa Fe, NM, hosted by WCET (the Western Interstate Commission for

Higher Education's Cooperative for Educational Technologies). And now, more than a year later, the adaptive learning community has moved on. The terms have been defined: "personalized learning" is any customization of learning by an instructor, while "adaptive" refers to technology that monitors student progress in a course and uses that data to modify instruction in real time.

State authorization rule, long in the works, faces opposition in new Congress

Inside Higher Ed: The U.S. Department of Education, with a month to go until the transition of power, has finalized a rule that clarifies how colleges become authorized to offer online programs to students in other states -- an effort in the works since the first years of the Obama administration. But the rule is by all indications dead on arrival.

The final rule, released on Dec. 16, requires colleges that offer online education programs to follow each state's authorization process -- which often involves filling out an application and paying a fee to a local higher education agency -- and clarifies disclosure and student complaint procedures. It also recognizes that states can participate in reciprocity agreements.

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Can Michigan Sustain Its Multitiered Supports?

Education Week: Through a statewide initiative, Michigan has launched multitiered systems of supports as a framework to improve academics and behavior in more than half the state's 900 elementary and secondary schools. But educators and researchers have found that initial buy-in, financial incentives, and even early success don't guarantee schools will sustain the model for the long haul.

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