Unisys Is a Microsoft Azure Technology Partner

Helping Georgia Provide Essential Services to State Agencies

The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) is responsible for providing infrastructure and management services for Georgia's many state agencies and the constituents they serve. But, the GTA was receiving a lot of complaints about the timeliness and quality of its services. In some instances, it was taking a year or more to stand up a server and get it turned over to the requesting agency. This created a major pain point for the agencies and their constituents.

In 2008, the state of Georgia decided to outsource its infrastructure and managed network services to bring uniformity and stability. As part of this effort, it hired Unisys in 2018 to improve service delivery and provide innovation to keep pace with industry standards and introduce changes efficiently and effectively.

"In 2018, we hired Unisys to come onboard to maintain the security, reliability and the recoverability we had established. They have brought a keen focus on the quality and timeliness of service," says GTA Chief Operating Officer Dean Johnson.

This case study describes how Unisys was able to incorporate Microsoft Azure products and services to help the GTA transform its state's infrastructure within two years and how that transition enabled state agencies to provide essential services to their constituents during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Building a Multi-Cloud Solution to Serve Every Need

In assessing the GTA's needs, Unisys learned that even within the same state, the various agencies had radically different requirements. Working with the GTA, Unisys built a multi-cloud environment that gave agencies the flexibility to operate in Azure, commercial cloud or on premises. In this way, each agency was now free to run applications and store data in the most optimal, secure and cost-effective way for them.
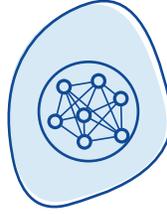
One example of this is the Georgia Departments of Labor and Public Health, which set up a COVID chatbot built on Azure QnA Maker and Bot framework services to which citizens can submit an inquiry such as, "What are the symptoms of COVID-19?" and receive an immediate response. This has allowed the agencies to provide automated responses to 3–4 million inquiries, and that's all running in the GTA Azure environment today. Furthermore, the GTA was able to set up that functionality and bring it online in a matter of hours—a task that would previously have taken the better part of a year.

"Unisys has been great to work with," says Johnson. "They are very customer-centric in the way they approach the individual agencies and the way they work with the Georgia Technology Authority."

Overcoming the Challenges of COVID-19

In early 2020, the GTA's infrastructure platform was put to the test by the public health crisis created by COVID-19. Almost instantly, nearly every agency's employees—including those from the GTA—were transitioned to work from home. This created a huge instant demand for end-user computing resources. In March and April, Unisys provided proof-of-concept testing of Windows Virtual Desktop, after which agencies began submitting service requests (averaging 1,000-1,200 per request) as they looked for ways to reduce operating costs and improve security to support their remote workforce. Unisys was able to quickly implement—over the course of a weekend—a Windows Virtual Desktop solution to help agencies rapidly deploy access for all of their remote workers.

As a panicked public took to the Internet for COVID information, Georgia's official web platform saw an 11,000% increase in traffic. Again, the GTA's infrastructure platform was able to scale its services and add a new COVID-19 website to handle the enormous volume of traffic.

Concurrent with that was a demand to provide COVID-19 testing information to Georgia citizens. Working with the Department of Public Health, Unisys and the GTA were able to quickly stand up a Microsoft Dynamics solution, enabling them to perform contact tracing and manage the results of COVID-19 tests across the state.

"During the pandemic response, Unisys brought leadership to the table. We've been able to deliver quality solutions in a timely manner that's meeting the ever-changing business needs of the agencies we serve."

—Dean Johnson
COO, Georgia Technology Authority

Driving Innovation, Efficiency, and Value

As a Microsoft Azure Technology Partner, Unisys was able to help the GTA quickly stand up solutions to meet the needs of its agencies using CloudForte®. It has driven value back into the agencies in a way that wasn't possible just two years ago.

"In 2018, Unisys established managed server provisioning capabilities and cloud brokered services within our North Atlanta Data Center. Since then, we've been able to be much more responsive to the business needs of the agencies," says Johnson.

The GTA is continually finding new benefits in its technology platform—and its relationship with Unisys and Microsoft—as it strives to increase the quality of its services, improve security and reduce IT expenditures. Currently, the GTA is looking to Unisys to help them significantly reduce their North American data center footprint. The data center consolidation project is expected to reduce the GTA footprint from 30,000 sq. ft. to 6,000 sq. ft. by the end of 2021, thanks to virtualization and cloud services.

About GTA

The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) manages the delivery of IT infrastructure services to 85 executive branch agencies and provides managed network services for 1,300 state and local government entities. IT infrastructure services encompass mainframes, servers, service desk, end-user computing, disaster recovery and security. Managed network services include the state's wide and local area networks, voice, cable and wiring and conferencing services.

About Unisys

Unisys is a global IT company known for building highly secure, modern digital platforms and solutions that enhance people's lives through secure, reliable advanced technology.

Unisys is built on nearly a century-and-a-half of game-changing innovation focused on accelerating industry-leading digital workplace services, delivering next-generation cloud and infrastructure services and providing the world's most secure operating environment for high-intensity enterprise computing.

Learn more about becoming a Microsoft Azure Technology Partner.

Visit www.microsoft.com/azure/partners for more information.

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