



## **Moving to the Cloud: Business as Usual or Opportunity for Change?**

Dennis D. McDonald, Ph.D.

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# Moving to the Cloud: Business as Usual or Opportunity for Change?

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By Dennis D. McDonald<sup>1</sup>

Once upon a time I managed a large enterprise system consolidation project. Initially brought in to take over the database consolidation component of the project, our team quickly discovered that a separate team was also managing an upgrade to the application software running the target system, a customer support system with hundreds of inhouse daily users.



Initially our customer resisted consolidation of the two projects. As manager of the PMO it was easy for me to see the touch points of the two projects where alignment was absolutely essential. After all, if you're converting a massive database to run on

another system with a significantly different data model, you want the converted data to support the application software when you finally make the switch, right?

I've been reminded of that project while researching NOAA's use of cloud vendors to support both its [IT infrastructure transformation](#) and its [big data project](#). Making the move from one infrastructure to another isn't just a question of moving data and applications from one host location to another. For one thing, the new infrastructure may require accommodation of new management oversight and administrative processes. Even if legacy data management and application software are being moved over "as is," a variety of basics may have to be adapted such as backups, recovery, security, user authorizations, and maintenance and support. But you also need to keep in mind that systems -- even legacy systems -- have to evolve to keep up with changes such as new requirements, policy and program changes, user population changes, metadata and language standardization, competition, and increasingly, requirements for openness and transparency.

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<sup>1</sup> Copyright © 2015 by Dennis D. McDonald, Ph.D. Dennis is a management consultant based in Alexandria, Virginia. His experience includes consulting company ownership and management, database publishing and data transformation, managing the integration of large systems, corporate technology strategy, social media adoption, statistical research, and IT cost analysis. Clients have included the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Academy of Engineering, and the National Library of Medicine. He has worked as a project manager, analyst, and researcher in the U.S. and in Europe, Egypt, and China. His web site is located at [www.ddmcd.com](http://www.ddmcd.com) and his email address is [ddmcd@yahoo.com](mailto:ddmcd@yahoo.com). On Twitter he is [@ddmcd](https://twitter.com/ddmcd).

Targets tend to keep on moving. Some of these moves involve several different systems whose evolution needs to be intelligently coordinated.

I'm interested in how one coordinates the management of multiple activity threads based on my own project management experience as well as my consulting and project management interests in [open data programs](#). Sometimes it makes sense to consider open data programs and cloud infrastructure transformation at the same time. Each can impact the other especially when a program like NOAA's [big data project](#) includes requirements for both public access and support for third-party product development.

If you have to change both your business processes and your IT infrastructure at the same time, someone has to be in a position to monitor and control what's going on. How do you keep things under control if you're outsourcing both your IT infrastructure as well as pieces of your service and support operations? If you are inside the government and responsible for generating data that are now being made available via a cloud based service, to what extent can you also remain aware of how your data are being used by third party commercial developers and their customers?

I'm researching these issues. Other Federal agencies -- and potential contractors and business partners -- are also looking at efforts like NOAA's as a possible model for their own infrastructure, open data, and program support programs.

Please let me know if you would like to talk about this, off the record if you prefer. My email address is [ddmcd@outlook.com](mailto:ddmcd@outlook.com).

#### ***Related reading***

- [\*Challenges of Public-Private Interfaces in Open Data and Big Data Partnerships\*](#)
- [\*The Changing Culture of Big Data Management\*](#)
- [\*Compendium: My Guest Posts for the BaleFire Global Open Data Blog\*](#)
- [\*Is Making the CFPB's Consumer Complaint Database More "Open" Good Or Bad?\*](#)
- [\*Planning for Big Data: Lessons Learned from Large Energy Utility Projects\*](#)
- [\*Recouping "Big Data" Investment in One Year Mandates Serious Project Management\*](#)
- [\*The State of Government Data Transparency, 2013\*](#)
- [\*Understanding How Open Data Reaches the Public\*](#)
- [\*What Are YOU Trying to Do with Mobile Technologies in the Enterprise?\*](#)
- [\*What Will Forrester's 'Top 15 Emerging Technologies' Mean to You?\*](#)
- [\*When it comes to marketing data, "With much data comes much responsibility"\*](#)
- [\*Will NOAA's "Big Data Partnership" be a Model for Other Government Agencies?\*](#)