

ATLASSIAN + STATE OF UTAH

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CORONA NGATUVAI

Chief Technical Architect, Division of Technology Services



division of
**Technology
Services**

90%+

Faster change
reviews after cloud
migration

2.5 years

Ahead of original
migration schedule

How the State of Utah migrated to Atlassian Cloud Enterprise

How the State of Utah exited all Atlassian data centers years ahead of schedule and migrated to the cloud.

STATE OF UTAH

The Division of Technology Services (DTS) is the information technology (IT) service provider for the executive branch of the State of Utah, offering state agencies a wide variety of services. The vision of DTS is to be a technology leader that delivers value and simplifies the lives of Utah residents.

INDUSTRY

Government

LOCATION

Americas

NUMBER OF USERS

2,600

ATLASSIAN PRODUCTS & APPS



Jira Software

Project and issue tracking



Trello

Collaborate visually on any project



Confluence

Document collaboration



Atlassian Access

Security and control for the cloud



Bitbucket

Git code management

THE CHALLENGE

As thousands of employees neared retirement, the State of Utah needed to update their infrastructure and processes to attract the next generation of workers, embrace remote work, and maintain institutional knowledge.

THE SOLUTION

Utah's Department of Technology Services (DTS) set out to adopt cloud technology and migrate all Atlassian software housed in data centers by 2025.

THE IMPACT

Since migrating to Atlassian Cloud Enterprise 2.5 years ahead of schedule, employees are collaborating more; delivering more value faster with fewer resources; and attracting new team members.

A smart strategy preps the State of Utah for the “silver tsunami”

One of the largest generations in the U.S. workforce is rapidly aging and retiring, forming a “silver tsunami” that’s delivering multi-sided, high-stakes challenges for many sectors – especially state and local governments like the State of Utah. As of 2020, 30-40% of local government workers across the U.S. (and growing) were eligible to retire, and all Baby Boomers will be 65 or older by 2030. For the State of Utah, this upcoming exodus from the workforce illuminated the need to fill a massive resource gap, maintain institutional knowledge (one of the largest assets for any government organization), and attract a new generation of workers who have different values and needs than those before them.

The State of Utah developed a smart strategy to prepare for this impending shift: cast a wider net to attract workers who live in rural areas. To accomplish this goal, they launched a telework and digital transformation initiative in 2018. One of the goals of this initiative was to adopt cloud technology and fully exit Atlassian’s software off the state’s data centers by 2025. Little did they know that COVID-19 would accelerate the need for cloud infrastructure almost overnight.

With newfound urgency, the State of Utah fast-tracked their efforts and completed their cloud implementation in June 2022 – 2.5 years ahead of schedule. Migrating to the cloud has not only enabled telework, which will help attract rural workers and younger employees, but has also drastically improved the quality and speed of the state’s software development processes. By shifting to cloud technology and a more collaborative framework, development teams are operating with greater efficiency and effectiveness than ever before – a monumental transformation that has enabled them to deliver even more value for constituents today and pave the way for a prosperous future.

A vision for the future

When the Utah Governor’s Office launched a strategic project to uncover the top pain points of various state agencies, they pinpointed several key challenges related to digital transformation: inability to securely access files when working remotely; development delays due to siloed teams and infrastructure; and the

significant resources required to maintain and update server-based systems. A cloud migration presented the opportunity to solve these challenges and help teams across the state optimize their operations. “As essential workers, the State of Utah ran towards change,” says Atlassian Enterprise Advocate Elisa Aviles-Bodoin. “They did not shy away and saw this as an opportunity to really be the change they sought and lead their modernization practices into a new era. This empowered their teams to be efficient at an accelerated pace.”

Corona Ngatuvai, former Chief Technical Architect for Utah’s Department of Government Operations’ Division of Technology Services (DTS), recalls that exploring a cloud migration also opened the door to modernize processes and tools in order to deliver faster, optimize budgets, and take advantage of cloud benefits. He says, “Within the State of Utah, we’re changing the way we’re structured and the tools we’re utilizing to facilitate our vision of becoming a more agile organization and deliver maximum output to our citizens with fewer resources.”

“ We are very happy with the result of moving individual, on-prem and cloud Atlassian accounts to a managed, enterprise cloud service that speeds up provisioning, improves collaboration, and ultimately supports our move to enterprise agile. The result is improved project management, better collaboration, and more transparency into projects across the State of Utah.

DAVE FLETCHER
Chief Technology Officer

Several teams across the State government were already using Atlassian tools, including Trello, Jira Software, Bitbucket, Confluence, and Atlassian Access. Trello had become particularly popular as an intuitive project management tool that anyone could learn fast. As it spread quickly and organically, many employees had created their own instances, thus unknowingly creating security risks. Fortunately, IT caught these issues with help from Atlassian Access and reinforced to leadership the need for a more centralized, secure, cloud-based ecosystem. “We spent time talking about pain points and what it would look like if we addressed those,” Corona says. “Then it was easier to have a more strategic discussion rather than only addressing the cost.”

As Corona and the DTS team put together a cloud migration plan to present to leadership, they collaborated with Atlassian Enterprise Advocate Elisa Aviles-Bodoin to map out a phased migration strategy based on each agency’s readiness, budget, and license renewal timeline. This phased approach also helped with buy-in from users and stakeholders. “We found that if we implemented changes in smaller increments, it was easier for people to accept those changes and transition their culture to adopt long term,” Corona says. “One of our goals in government is to be as transparent as possible. Allowing people to see what we were doing and how we were going about it helped develop a new level of trust between our constituents and partners.”

After several conversations with key stakeholders within the State of Utah, the DTS team gained approval to migrate to Atlassian Cloud Enterprise and refocused on developing a plan to make the State’s vision a reality.

Multiple data centers, 1 iterative migration, 2.5 years ahead of schedule

As DTS [planned the State’s migration](#), they opted to embrace cloud infrastructure in a hybrid model by migrating the state’s Atlassian software from data centers onto a multi-cloud network with single-domain support, while keeping a few special exceptions on servers at a smaller, state-run data center.

The Department of Human Services was the first to begin migrating their Atlassian tools to the cloud, with other agencies following suit. DTS used Jira

Software Migration Assistant, Confluence Migration Assistant, Cloud Migration Manager, and an Atlassian Cloud Migration Support Engineer to help navigate the process. After legal and security reviews, the team audited each State agency's Atlassian Marketplace apps to determine which ones should be moved to the cloud based on usage, requirements, and compatibility, as well as which ones would need to be modified or re-architected.

Batch by batch, the State migrated agencies to Atlassian Cloud Enterprise after all reviews, audits, and mapping were complete. Corona's role as a champion was key throughout this phased process. With his leadership and the collaboration of hundreds of colleagues across the state, Utah successfully completed their cloud implementation in June 2022.

Corona continued to meet on a monthly basis with Atlassian Customer Success Manager Nicole Enriquez to review usage metrics for the State's core Atlassian products and identify key features that were being underutilized. Using this data, Nicole and her Atlassian colleagues developed a strategic success plan to help the State maximize the value gained from the platform and maintain accountability for all parties to help meet the organization's goals.

Unlocking efficiency and effectiveness in the cloud

Today, the State of Utah relies on an integrated ecosystem of Atlassian Cloud Enterprise tools to serve their constituents: Jira Software for continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD), Bitbucket for securely storing code, Trello for non-technical project management, Confluence for knowledge management, and Atlassian Access for single sign-on and enterprise-grade identity management.

Together, these tools have helped teams across the state transform the way they work. CTO Dave Fletcher says, "The exciting thing for me as the CTO is to see DTS to move towards greater consistency in project management. This aligned well with our CIO's goal of implementing SAFe agile development practices across the organization. Prior to Jira, we were using at least 14 different project management systems. The move to Jira Cloud provides DTS with better provisioning capabilities, which we expect to provide even greater benefits in the future."

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Chief Technical Architect, Division of Technology Services

Perhaps nowhere have these improvements been more apparent than in software development. For example, IT teams throughout Utah's agencies unlocked the ability to embrace DevSecOps by integrating security early and often using Atlassian collaboration and development tools. Although the perception is often that increasing Security's involvement extends timelines, the State of Utah found the opposite to be true.

“Security was always something we addressed after our development teams were ready to deploy. If there were issues, deployment delays would occur. We changed our perspective on security. Instead of vilifying it as something that impedes our progress to adoption, we started inviting Security to participate early and often so we could overcome hurdles well in advance of implementation,” Corona explains. “IT and Security operated as two separate departments before. After migrating to the cloud, it allowed Security to be a part of our development team and engaged from development to testing to deployment.”

The State's migration to Atlassian Cloud Enterprise also rapidly increased the speed with which IT can securely implement changes. “Our change control

process used to take around two weeks because we wanted to understand what we were changing and what the impact was. It was very frustrating for our developers,” Corona says. “With our new Atlassian software development tools, we have gone from deployments that took weeks to under 24 hours, and in some cases, minutes.”

What’s more, cloud access has made it possible for more people to participate in the change management process. “We already had a change management meeting every week by phone. We thought, ‘What if we make that a video call so we can see what someone is presenting and share a recording if someone can’t attend?’” Corona says. They applied this same approach to processes and meetings across the state, facilitating remote work and collaboration at all levels – making a meaningful improvement for current team members and adding attractive benefits for new employees.

A “once in a tenure” accomplishment

In an era of unprecedented government transformation, implementing Atlassian Cloud Enterprise tools helped the State of Utah move from legacy technologies and processes to modern capabilities in less than three years. Teams rely on these agile, collaborative tools to build, test, release, and provide support faster and easier than ever before, enabling continuous development and deployment of new applications and services.

“We completed a 100% data migration to the cloud. For IT folks, it happens once in a tenure,” Corona says. “Cloud migration opened the door for modernizing our development environment. We upgraded to Jira Software and Confluence Cloud, which allowed our developers to move from silos to a collaborative culture, resulting in an overall faster, leaner, better team.”

CTO Dave Fletcher adds, “We are very happy with the result of moving individual, on-prem and cloud Atlassian accounts to a managed, enterprise cloud service that speeds up provisioning, improves collaboration, and ultimately supports our move to enterprise agile. The result is improved project management, better collaboration, and more transparency into projects across the State of Utah.”

Utah may be one of the first state governments to fully migrate to Atlassian Cloud, but they surely won't be the last. Although migrations are significant undertakings, Utah has demonstrated that with an iterative and strategic approach, passionate champions, a dedicated team, and collaborative support, the results are worth it. "Change always looks scarier before you begin," says Trello Enterprise Advocate Diana Castiblanco. "Take it one step at a time, and know that Atlassian is here for support." This advice and guidance served the State of Utah well, and they hope to be a shining example for other states who also want to modernize for the benefit of their employees, constituents, and community.

➤ Considering a cloud migration?
Take the [migration assessment](#).