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Big data swamps state, local government

Data grown too big to analyze with old processes, technologies

April 30, 2014

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Only 2 percent of state and local governments have a complete [big data](#) strategy.

That's despite one in three surveyed agencies indicating that their data set has grown too big to analyze with the processes and technologies in place today, according to a report published Monday by MeriTalk, [The State and Local Big Data Gap](#), which comes on the heels of MeriTalk's [study on federal agencies and big data](#).

That chasm exists even though participants recognize the value inherent to data management. Indeed, the top three benefits include: improved overall efficiency, speedier decision-making, and a "greater understanding of citizen needs."

But 39 percent of respondents said their agency is just learning about big data and how related technologies might benefit them — while 44 percent have not yet started talking about the topic.

[See also: [Commentary: Big data, big challenges.](#)]

The report listed significant challenges to managing large amounts of data as storage capacity, speed of [analytics](#), analysis, distribution and sharing, search/retrieval, talent, capture, and visualizing as well as an understanding of who, exactly, owns the data.

"State and local agencies say they need to double their [data storage](#) and computation power and triple their personnel to successfully manage big data," the report's authors wrote. And while some are working to close the IT gap, only about 25 percent are tackling the need for more personnel and those that have thus far spent time training existing IT employees for big data or educating senior management on the benefits.

[See also: [Plenty of healthcare data, but what to do with it?.](#)]

So it follows that just about 60 percent of respondents noted they are analyzing the data they collect, while less than half are harnessing it for decision-making purposes — perhaps because "57 percent say their current enterprise architecture is not able to support big data initiatives," according to the report.

Big data projects, however, are not likely to get any easier since 97 percent of respondents expect their data to grow by an average of 53 percent in the next two years.

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