Studio R&D Validation Phase

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Close Out Summary

Between October 2024 and January 2025 TTS Accelerators Division's Public Benefits Studio led two research sprints to explore two opportunity spaces (known as "bets") that TTS could develop into another federal shared service.

The focus of this validation phase was to understand:

- What is the most narrow and opportune problem for our solution?
- What shape must our solution take to fit that problem?
- Which solution space is most ripe to move forward?

After completing these two research sprints, we recommend moving the Document Submission bet towards prototyping and that the Auto-Enrollment bet be reassessed against other existing 10x / TTS priorities related to data sharing and verification.

Bet: Improving Document Submission

This bet sought to understand how we might support government agencies to enable applicants to easily share necessary documents digitally while reducing administrative burden for processing staff as part of the application process.

Validation Research

We started our validation by creating product concept sketches to gather feedback from potential customers. After understanding what components of a future solution were most desirable, we scanned the vendor landscape to understand available market solutions and identify what document processing gaps exist.

Some of the key insights we've uncovered include:

- Applications and document collection methods are increasingly becoming mobile friendly for members of the public, allowing more flexibility and choice to submit necessary documentation digitally.

- Increased flexibility for members of the public shifts burden to administrators, with many staff hours put towards coding static files (images, PDFs) into agency data systems.

- While document processing technology (like OCR) is not new, agency approaches to purchasing lean towards large complex multi-year engagements when modernizing IT, often leading to technology that is outdated before it's live.

Our latest research summary can be found [here](#).

Recommendation

We strongly recommend investing in prototyping a document processing tool focused on data extraction. Our proposed solution is well-positioned to meet TTS's criteria for success, delivering impactful, scalable improvements to document processing across government agencies.

- **Desirable:** Nearly all our interviews with potential customers (state administering agencies), delivery partners in the document solution space, as well as data management system experts, have pointed to a need for better document processing tools for public sector agencies.

- **Viable**: Reducing manual administrative burden is essential for agencies operating with tight budgets and limited staff. Business departments are willing to invest in tools that enhance efficiency and have historically trusted federal solutions.

- **Feasible:** Our proposed solution aligns with existing commercial technologies. While OCR and similar technologies are not new, recent advancements make them a strong foundation for testing and future growth.

- **Leverage TTS:** A "Better Document Submission" tool has wide applicability, any agency that collects information from its customers has a potential use case. This is an ideal case for TTS's ability to work across government to make it easier and cheaper for people with the same challenges to use the same tools.

These findings indicate that while document submission challenges remain significant, there is strong demand for automation solutions, justifying further investment.

Next Steps

Given strong market signals, our next step is to build and test an automated data extraction prototype that converts PDFs and image files into machine-readable formats to reduce the manual burden of data entry for administrators. In this next phase of work we seek to learn:

> **How might we get data out of a document into a machine readable format to reduce the manual burden of data entry for administrators?**

Immediately, the team is moving towards building out a technical proof-of-concept to surface possible development pathways and limitations.

Once completed, the proof-of-concept would be tested with potential customers in order to understand what product functions should be prioritized and what is key to ensuring any future solution works alongside agency processing work flows.

Bet: Automating Enrollment Proofs

This bet explored how proof-of-eligibility information is shared across safety net programs, specifically for programs that:

- Are linked by adjunctive and categorical eligibility policy

- Are often considered outside Integrated Enrollment and Eligibility (IE&E) structures

- Lack automation or practical implementation of technology, leading to manual and duplicative processes

Validation Research

We approached this investigation by conducting research interviews with Federal and SLTT government agencies, policy experts, and technical stakeholders and evaluated existing eligibility verification tools like the National Verifier to assess the feasibility of a federally supported cross-program enrollment 'look-up' solution.

We learned:

- Most large safety net programs are moving towards Integrated Eligibility & Enrollment (IE&E) systems and consolidate state-level data, reducing the need for a federal lookup tool.

- Safety net programs that exist outside of IE&E systems often lack robust data-sharing infrastructure, making them strong candidates for automation but a single federal solution is not institutionally viable.

- Programs need federal leadership in data automation but not a mandated system

- Automating enrollment requires flexible and scalable frameworks that respect State autonomy and individual-privacy.

Our close out research summary can be found here.

Recommendation

Given these insights, we recommend pausing the Auto-Enrollment exploration, in favor of the more opportune document submission bet (above). To close out this work, the team proposed a set of alternative pathways forward for TTS to assess against wider

organizational priorities:

Pathway	Potential Impact	Tactical Way Forward
State of Systems Dashboard	A centralized dashboard and template hub could streamline modernization efforts, saving potentially years of time and millions in development costs by enabling governments to learn from existing best practices and leverage existing work.	Time-bound 10x exploration to deepen understanding of key user needs and map a path to MVP.
Federated data-matching tools and access frameworks	Federal data-access standards could reduce inefficiencies and fragmentation, leading to faster, more accurate eligibility determinations. A federated framework could accelerate implementation by 2-3 years and save millions in infrastructure and admin costs.	Time-bound 10x exploration to validate viability of a low-integration data matching product offering for TTS
Accelerated automated verifications	Automating verification processes can streamline enrollment, reduce fraud, cut redundant administrative tasks and improve program integrity at scale. Increased federal automated verification solutions could save years and millions in costs.	Scope a 10x and Login.gov partnership to accelerate data verification (beyond identity) centered on client-based consent