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Subject: 'Avatar' Fighters and Drone Swarms (and the Rest of Today's Headlines for Government Professionals)

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## i360Gov Daily Download

Wednesday, March 9th, 2016

Policy & Technology. News & Analysis

### Federal Policy & Business

#### Protecting small business with the rise of contract vehicles

Federal Times: For agencies, contracting vehicles serve as a terrific one-stop shop for securing the goods and services they need fast, at competitive prices. But for small businesses, contracting vehicles can leave them shut out of federal opportunities. And while many point fingers at prime contractors for not extending opportunities to small business partners, the onus falls more squarely on the contracting officer to make space.

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#### The FBI and NYPD make peace, focusing on fighting terrorism and not each other

The Washington Post: NEW YORK — In the long, bitter and testosterone-rich rivalry between the New York Police Department and the FBI, few things aggravated the G-men more than the repeated towing of their cars by the local cops. And the practice was one of the first things that NYPD Commissioner William J. Bratton banned when he took over in late 2013 and tried to defuse tensions with his most important counterterrorism partner.

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#### Union Tries to Delay April 1 Start of Pentagon's New Civilian Personnel System

Government Executive: A federal labor union is balking at the Defense Department's approach to implementing a new performance rating system for civilian employees, although union officials insist they support the program overall.

The main sticking point seems to be that the Pentagon wants to begin rolling out the program, known as New Beginnings, on April 1, starting with about 10,000 non-union employees. Officials plan to assess the initial

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implementation before determining how to fold the rest of the workforce into the new personnel system.

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## Obama administration tries to find homes for \$1.9B in 'orphaned' earmarks

USA Today: WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is freeing up \$1.9 billion in so-called "orphan" earmarks, five years after a USA TODAY investigation discovered that billions in highway funds authorized by Congress were stuck in a bureaucratic no man's land.

New guidance released by the U.S. Department of Transportation Tuesday allows states to move federal funds previously assigned to politically connected projects to other priorities. Because Congress had earmarked that money for specific pet projects in previous spending bills, only Congress could free up the money — which it did in the omnibus spending bill last year.

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### Special Reports & Whitepapers

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[Smart City Readiness: Understand the Issues to Accelerate the Journey](#)

[The Evolving Face of Cyber Threats](#)

[Incident & Emergency Management Animated Infographic](#)

## Federal Government IT

### Metrics can aid IT transformation

Federal Times: Many agencies are trying to modernize IT, and are exploring paths such as cloud computing and data center consolidation in an attempt to reduce costs and improve service.

To make the transition effective, organizations should use a variety of metrics to evaluate their technologies, according to an article at BizTech.com.

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### 5 Charts that Show Where the Federal IT Budget is Headed Next Year

Nextgov: Most federal agencies will see boosts in IT spending under President Barack Obama's fiscal 2017 budget proposal, and the overall amount spent on computers, software, mobile devices and tech personnel across the federal government is set to top nearly \$9 billion for the first time.

Of the 25 largest civilian agencies, 19 are due for an increase, according to an agency-by-agency breakdown of federal IT spending recently posted online by the Office of Management and Budget.

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### Congress will hear from head of Google self-driving car project

Reuters: The director of the Google self-driving car project and auto industry executives will testify before Congress next week on effort to develop safe and effective autonomous cars.

Senator John Thune, a South Dakota Republican who chairs the Senate Commerce Committee, said on Tuesday that Chris Urmson, director of self-driving cars at Alphabet Inc unit Google, will testify at on March 15.

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### Johnson: Recruit patriots to boost cybersecurity

Federal Times: A love of country should be the one characteristic the government focuses on to recruit cyber warriors, according to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson.

"We've got terrific career people, but I agree with what [Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del.] said, which is that we ought to appeal to people's sense of patriotism," he said. "[We can say], 'Hey, how about spending a couple of years serving your country, working for the government in cybersecurity, which will better enable you to get that terrific job later on in the financial sector, in the private sector with some terrific cybersecurity firm in Silicon Valley.'"

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### Flipping the 80/20 Rule to Gain Agile Application Development

An i360Gov Special Report.

Because agencies typically spend 80 percent of IT budgets managing legacy systems and only 20 percent on new technology -- the more agencies can adopt agile application development methods, the faster they will increase efficiency and improve performance.

Agility in software development requires keeping code simple, testing often and delivering functional bits of an application as soon as they are ready. This special report takes a closer look at recent high-profile failures, along with intensifying regulatory scrutiny agencies face. Readers gain tips, advice and insights from organizations working to modernize apps to make them more scalable and speedy -- and keep their operations out of news headlines.

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### The Importance of the Internet of Things for Communities

Five Essential Elements for your Digital Community

IDC answers your questions about how the Internet of Everything (IoE) can create amazing opportunities for your community to innovate faster, create a better quality of life for citizens, and make the best use of limited resources. Download this informative, complimentary whitepaper now.

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### The Evolving Face of Cyber Threats

Cyberattacks are a clear and present threat to government agencies. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) estimated the annual global cost of cybercrime is upwards of \$445 billion in a 2014 study. The report further states the average cyberattack continues undetected for several months. Full and detailed data analysis is one of the only emerging ways to get ahead of these threats. According to industry experts, cyber threat analysis currently relies on automated as well as human input.

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### The Fight Against Fraud

Digital analytics helps level the playing field in the battle against all types of electronic fraud

The better known forms of fraud involve the theft of someone's actual identity information such as social security number, address and phone number. Criminals then pass themselves off as that real person to steal money or get access to services.

There's another kind of fraud, though, that involves completely fictitious identities. This has quietly pushed itself to the top of the heap.

Synthetic Identity Fraud (SIF), in which thieves combine actual and fake information to create a completely new identity, has been around for years. According to a recent study by ID Analytics, a risk analysis and management company, since 2010 criminals have more than doubled the average rate of fraud using synthetic identities.

Read this paper to learn more about Synthetic Identity Fraud, it's impact on government agencies, and what you can do to prevent this from happening at your agency.

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## Defense / Intelligence / Homeland Security



## House Homeland Security Committee Finds 75 ISIS-Linked Plots Targeting West

Homeland Security Today: The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) has been tied to at least 75 terrorism plots against Western countries, with the United States as the group's main target, according to a recent report by the House Committee on Homeland Security.

The Committee's report, "Terrorism Gone Viral," revealed a significant increase in terrorist plots against the West over the past several years. In 2014 there were 19 ISIS-linked plots against the West; in 2015, the figure more than doubled to 48. The high success rate—with more than 40 percent of total plots executed—indicates that the group will likely continue to initiate frequent attacks, versus long-term plots.

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## Veil of secrecy lifted on Pentagon office planning 'Avatar' fighters and drone swarms

The Washington Post: High over Alaska last summer, the Pentagon experimented with new, secret prototypes: Micro-drones that can be launched from the flare dispensers of moving F-16s and F/A-18 fighter jets. Canisters containing the tiny aircraft descended from the jets on parachutes before breaking open, allowing wings on each drone to swing out and catch the wind. Inch-wide propellers on the back provided propulsion as they found one another and created a swarm.

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## Iran fires ballistic missiles, U.S. hints at diplomatic response

Reuters: Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) test-fired several ballistic missiles on Tuesday, state television said, challenging a United Nations resolution and drawing a threat of a diplomatic response from the United States.

Two months ago, Washington imposed sanctions against businesses and individuals linked to Iran's missile program over a test of the medium-range Emad missile carried out in October 2015.

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## ISIS leader possibly killed in U.S. strike

CNN: The U.S. military and intelligence community is assessing whether a targeted U.S. airstrike killed a top ISIS leader, known as Omar "the Chechen," several U.S. officials told CNN.

The strike took place on Friday near the Syrian town of al-Shaddadi.

Abu Omar al-Shishani, the ISIS leader targeted in the strike, has a reputation as one of ISIS' most capable commanders. There has been a \$5 million reward on his head from the U.S. State Department. Shishani is a former member of an elite Georgian military unit.

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## Government Healthcare - Policy & IT

### MedeAnalytics, Epic EHR give Mississippi Medicaid a data-exchange first

Healthcare IT News: The Mississippi Division of Medicaid is being touted as the first Medicaid agency in the country to send and receive clinical data in real-time with a health system using an Epic electronic health record.

The exchange, powered by data analytics company MedeAnalytics, was with the University of Mississippi Medical Center, in Jackson, the state's biggest Medicaid provider.

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### CMS wants to change Part B drug payments

Modern Healthcare: The CMS is proposing new models for Medicare Part B drug payments as a way to curb costs and improve beneficiaries' quality of care. The new structure, which comes out of the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation, would shift doctors towards a value-based care model. Medicare Part B covers drugs that are provided in a doctor's office or a hospital outpatient department. Clinicians would be allowed to prescribe the drugs they deem more useful for treatment.

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## VA CIO: We need to take a step back on VistA, consider other EHRs

Government Health IT: The U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs CIO LaVerne Council said last week that the VA needs to reconsider whether its proprietary Veterans Information Systems and Technology Architecture is the best EHR moving forward across its more than 1,200 VA healthcare sites.

Council explained during testimony to US House appropriators that changes in the VA's healthcare delivery plan, such as emphasis on mobility, security and women's health as well as connections with private sector providers, are forcing the reconsideration of VistA.

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## HHS to Accept Nominations for Cybersecurity Task Force

Healthcare Informatics: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the formation of a new Health Care Industry Cybersecurity Task Force as called for in the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015.

In December, President Obama signed the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 into law, with the goal of increasing cybersecurity information sharing between the private sector and the Federal Government. The Act provides various protections to non-federal entities that share cyber threat indicators (CTIs) with the federal government.

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## Knowledge Center: Webinars

### Overcome Obstacles to Agile Application Development

Federal government agencies face intense pressure to build next-generation applications, despite resource constraints and growing requirements to incorporate security, accessibility and analytic capabilities. Rising complexity and overburdened IT systems only contribute a lack of agility – which is something government agencies desperately need to support the demand for new apps and services. Add the backlog of application change requests, inflexible infrastructures and the difficulties inherent in managing mobility and migrating to the cloud, and it's no surprise government executives feel frustrated.

Join us for this **complimentary** webinar on Feb. 17 at 2pm, to learn how you can overcome these obstacles and effectively reduce the time it takes to launch efficient and properly vetted applications that leverage the transactional data flowing through your organization today.

Speakers:

- Cathy Ricketts, DISA Global Command and Control System - Joint (GCCS-J) Program Manager, Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA)
- Zahid Chaudhry, Branch Chief, Enterprise Application Development, Chief Information Office, U.S. Forest Service.
- Chris Steel, Chief Solutions Architect, Software AG Government Solutions

**Please note:** All webinar registrants will also receive a link to view the archived event.

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## Energy - Policy & Technology

### 116 Day MIT Sit-in Ends In Mediocre Deal For Climate Action

Clean Technica: After 116 days, the Fossil Free MIT sit-in has ended with the announcement of an agreement for a deal on climate action.

The longest ever sit-in for fossil fuel divestment concluded this earlier this month when an agreement was reached between student activists from Fossil Free MIT and MIT's Vice President for Research, Maria Zuber.

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### Did Shell's Failure to Disclose Climate Risks Break the Law?



Inside Climate News: Three members of Congress have asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to investigate whether Shell Oil Co. violated securities laws by failing to adequately disclose material business risks from climate change.

Members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, led by California Democrat Ted Lieu, said in a letter to the SEC that Shell understood the consequences of climate change and made business decisions based on that knowledge.

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## The Big Question Day 19: What Is Your Greatest Concern for Your Industry in 2016?

Renewable Energy World: Where will the industry stumble and where will it thrive? We asked executives at major renewable energy companies to talk to us about their worries, fears and concerns as we head into 2016.

We will update the responses below daily to give you insight on The Big Question: What Is Your Greatest Concern for Your Industry in 2016?

Lend your own voice to the discussion in the comment section below.

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## Obama administration pays out \$500m to climate change project

The Guardian: The Obama administration has made a first installment on its \$3bn pledge to help poor countries fight climate change — defying Republican opposition to the president's environmental plan.

The \$500m payment to the Green Climate Fund was seen as critical to shoring up international confidence in Barack Obama's ability to deliver on the pledges made at the United Nations' climate change conference in Paris in late 2015.

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## State & Local Government - Policy & Technology

### Planning for California bullet train allowed to move forward

San Francisco Chronicle: SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A judge has removed a major hurdle to California's high-speed rail system, ruling that the \$64 billion system does not violate promises made to the voters who approved it and that planning and financing can proceed.

The ruling announced Tuesday came in a lawsuit filed by attorneys for Kings County and a group of landowners who claim the state's projections on ridership, construction and operating figures are not reliable.

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### Why Taxing the Wealthy Can Be Trouble for States

Stateline: As the gap between the rich and the poor widens, states are finding that taxing the incomes of the rich means living with unstable budgets.

That's because wealthy Americans are more likely to have investments in the stock market. When the market falls, so do their tax payments. Stock market turmoil can hurt state pension funds, too. But while it takes years for states to feel that impact, a dip in the markets — or a lackluster Wall Street bonus season — can create an immediate fiscal crisis.

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## White House Helps Cities, Residents Improve Quality of Life by Opening Data, Offering Digital Services

Government Technology: On March 7, the White House released a trove of open datasets and tools to cultivate job growth, transportation, education and affordable housing under an initiative it calls the Opportunity Project.

At a morning press conference, U.S. CTO Megan Smith unveiled the project, saying it is meant to promote economic mobility using modern digital services and data that helps cities and residents enhance their quality of life. The vision, she said, was to create a joint platform with local communities, businesses, technologists and other groups to help residents prosper. The initiative drew support from a variety of cities and tech companies that worked with the White House to create 12 different Web apps on the Opportunity Project's site at [Opportunity.census.gov](http://Opportunity.census.gov).

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## California leaders tell Supreme Court that undocumented workers are making the state stronger

The Los Angeles Times: A cross section of California leaders in business, education, law enforcement and religion joined Tuesday in urging the Supreme Court to uphold President Obama's plan to offer temporary relief and work permits to as many as 5 million immigrants who have been living in the U.S. illegally.

They drew a sharp contrast with Texas, which has complained of the burden imposed by immigrants and led the legal fight to block Obama's executive action.

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## Education - Policy & Technology

### Alabama Superintendent Creates Digital Hub in Rural Town

Education Week: Piedmont, Ala., is a town with three traffic lights, a defunct textile industry, and few job opportunities. But students in the small school district there have MacBook laptops, free Internet at home, and shiny new school media centers that look like they've been transplanted from Google headquarters.

All those projects—and more—are the brainchildren of Matt Akin, the superintendent of the 1,200-student district. Akin has made it his mission not only to improve the prospects and education for the students in the Piedmont city schools, but also to provide a boost in self-esteem to the entire community.

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### In Illinois and Pennsylvania, budget stalemates force colleges to cover their losses

Inside Higher Ed: When Illinois failed to pass a budget back in July, Jack Thomas was sure the stalemate would end by August.

But August came and went, and with no end in sight, the clock kept ticking. Illinois's Republican governor and Democratic Legislature still haven't come to an agreement, and Thomas, president of Western Illinois University, hasn't seen state appropriations in eight months.

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### Faculty Alert: You Can't Put the Mobile Genie Back in the Bottle

Campus Technology: Way back in 2013, in a research report on the bring-your-own-everything (BYOE) era of higher education, Educause Chief Research Officer Eden Dahlstrom and co-author/CIO Stephen diFilipo cautioned: "Device proliferation is manic, and unmanaged growth could result in a 'tragedy of the commons' situation, where too many devices find their way to campus networks too fast and institutions find more opportunities lost than taken."

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### States assess their readiness for digital learning

eSchool News: When Ray Timothy, executive director of the Utah Education and Telehealth Network, saw the results of a new statewide inventory of technology deployed across all 989 Utah public schools, one figure jumped out at him in particular.

It was the 100-percent response rate from the survey.

"We knew most districts and schools would respond, but a 100-percent response rate shows that technology is a high priority for education leaders throughout the state," he said.

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