Expanding the Role of the Chief Information Officer:
Insights from Joseph Klimavicz, Deputy Assistant Attorney General/Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of Justice

By Michael J. Keegan

While the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has a varied and wide-ranging mission, its core objective is to protect the American people. Information and technology have an important and powerful role to advance, protect, and serve the DOJ mission. Faced with the challenges of increasingly frequent and complex cyber threats and an uncertain budget climate, information technology (IT) as a mission support function must be adapted to foster efficiencies, serve in new roles, and enable the department's components to focus their time and resources on unique mission-critical activities. What are the responsibilities of the chief information officer at the U.S. Department of Justice? What is DOJ's information technology strategy? What is the DOJ doing to build a Future Ready Workforce? Joseph Klimavicz, chief information officer, U.S. Department of Justice joined me on *The Business of Government Hour* to provide his insights into these questions and more. The following is an edited excerpt of our discussion complemented with additional research.

What are your responsibilities and duties as chief information officer at Justice? How is your office organized and how do your efforts support the department's overall mission?

Joseph Klimavicz: As CIO, I provide leadership and oversight of the department's information services and technology programs in support of the overarching department mission. Specifically, I'm responsible for overseeing DOJ's IT resources, delivering IT services to senior leadership and senior management offices, and providing enterprise services across the department, protecting DOJ's information and information

systems from data loss or unauthorized access. My office is engineering, developing, and brokering new IT services. I also have department-wide responsibility for radio frequency spectrum use, geospatial activities, and inter-agency law enforcement information-sharing activities.

The office has four staff boxes that report to me: service engineering, service delivery, cyber security services, and policy and planning staff. In aggregate there are about 250 federal employees supported by about another 750 contractors.

We support a department that is comprised of approximately 40 separate component organizations. On the federal side, 114,000 employees ensure the department carries out the individual missions of each component. We're headquartered in Washington, DC, but most of the work occurs in field locations throughout the country and overseas. The department's critical mission is supported by an annual budget of roughly $27 billion.

Given your portfolio and mission-critical services you provide DOJ, what are some of challenges you face and how have you sought to address them?

Joseph Klimavicz: My number-one challenge has to be cybersecurity. I think it is for most federal CIOs. The cyber attacks are increasing in aggression and sophistication, and bypassing a lot of traditional security tools. I'm really focusing on strengthening security posture and ensuring that it is as good as it can be to defend against these attacks and protect our sensitive law enforcement, national security, and other government personnel data, as well as the infrastructure that houses it.
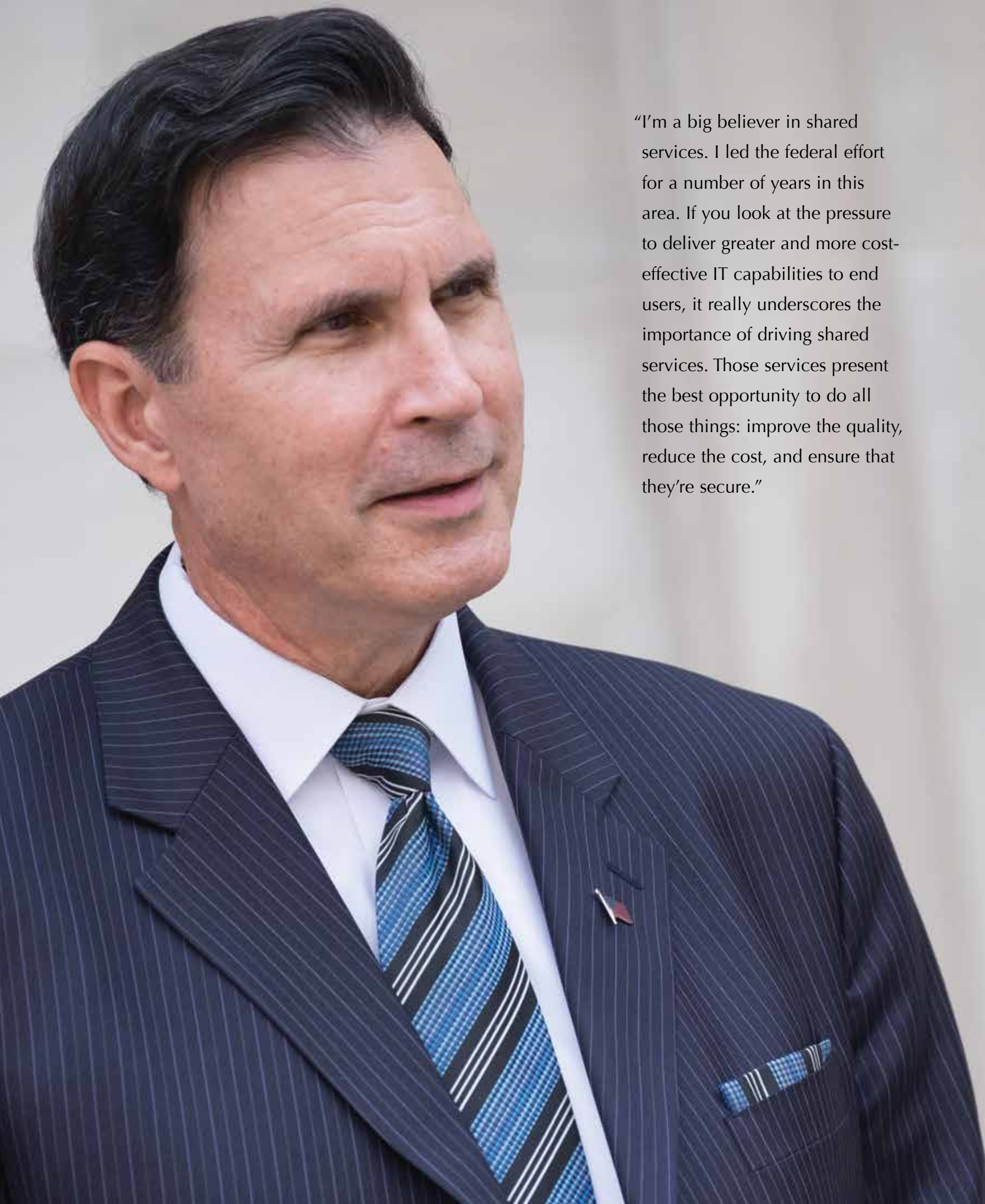
"I'm a big believer in shared services. I led the federal effort for a number of years in this area. If you look at the pressure to deliver greater and more cost-effective IT capabilities to end users, it really underscores the importance of driving shared services. Those services present the best opportunity to do all those things: improve the quality, reduce the cost, and ensure that they're secure."

From an administrative perspective, we are still feeling the effects of past hiring freezes and are challenged by a complex hiring process. We also have gaps in important areas including cybersecurity and project/program management. Beyond these technical skills, our employees need the right skill sets and knowledge to really lead transformation and modernization efforts. Finally, there is always competition with the private sector for top talent.

The next challenge involves having to operate in an uncertain budget climate. Given this, I have to look continuously at improving the quality of IT services while driving down the cost of those services.

DOJ views information, data, and technology as strategic assets. To that end, would you tell us about your strategic plan and goals?

Joseph Klimavicz: We recently developed an information services and technology strategic plan that outlines how we're going to support the achievement of DOJ's broader mission. This document will guide our organization's initiatives and activities for the next three years. The strategic plan is actually published on our public website under Justice Management Division publications and resources. Our strategic goals include:

- **Exceed customer expectations.** I don't want to just meet customer expectations, although that may be a necessary precursor; I want to exceed them. This means having strong customer engagement and quality of service, which translates on the operations and delivery side to acting as a trusted advisor to DOJ program and mission leaders. As a priority, the department will support its customers, both internal and external, and together, help fuel new and improved ways of doing business. To that end, IT will be seen as a tool that improves DOJ employee productivity and efficiency, and the customer experience.

- **Manage taxpayer funds wisely.** I want to manage taxpayers' money wisely. My office continuously seeks ways to operate more efficiently and cost effectively. Mature governance processes are needed and must be integrated throughout all operations to strengthen accountability, increase performance, and capture information to drive better decisions. The department will strengthen its governance framework though the implementation of the Federal Information Technology

Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA). This increased visibility and authority will result in enhanced transparency and oversight of IT investments at an enterprise level. Serving as an advisor, IT can help connect components to ensure the department is using the greatest value of its data resources, and identify potential applications of data for decision making. IT will also identify new opportunities to save with initiatives such as consolidating data centers, adopting cloud technologies, rationalizing and optimizing the IT portfolio, and implementing shared services. The goal of these cost-saving initiatives is to reinvest funds into the mission.

- **Enable innovative sharing of services and information.** I want to enable innovative sharing of services and information. Essentially acting as a service broker, I want to build a trusted environment for data management and interoperability. Following that, I want to promote data and information accessibility not only to the private sector, but also to foster better collaboration with the 40+ components that comprise DOJ. Shared services allow for the ability to quickly adopt new innovative solutions and enable our components to focus their limited time and resources on unique mission-critical activities.

- **Protect the mission.** Our next goal focuses on protecting the department's mission, combating cyber threats, enhancing the identity credential access management, preventing and detecting insider threats, and then applying analytics in near real-time so that we can react faster. To that end, the department will increase visibility by performing advanced data analysis to provide synthesized, near real-time views of our risk posture across the enterprise. It is my charge to make sure IT services and solutions are based upon advanced security capabilities that protect the department's mission.

- **Build a future-ready workforce.** Our last—but certainly not least—goal is to build a future-ready workforce. Our greatest asset is our people. As the department's IT needs evolve, the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the IT workforce will need to evolve as well. We will focus on hiring and retaining top talent, and providing training and professional development opportunities for them. As part of this goal, we are developing strategies to address the following questions: How do we attract a high-quality, diverse workforce? How do we retain and cultivate a workforce with the right skills? How do we build a culture of engagement and reward innovation?

What can you tell us about your efforts around shared services and technology? Would you tell us a little bit about that effort and the benefits derived?

Joseph Klimavicz: I'm a big believer in shared services. I led the federal effort for a number of years in this area. If you look at the pressure to deliver greater and more cost-effective IT capabilities to end users, it really underscores the importance of driving shared services. Shared services is the best opportunity to improve quality, reduce costs, and ensure security. In partnership with DOJ components, we are executing our goals and objectives in a way that not only optimizes our IT spending, but also improves our capabilities. My strategy is to leverage shared services as a "de facto" way of doing business. We're inclusive in our search for better services. We want to learn from others. I spend time working and learning from the industry as well as from other government agencies.

To that end, we created a strong service broker function in our service engineering organization. It acts as a trusted advisor and as an enabler of IT capabilities that delivers efficient and effective services across the enterprise. Within the last year, we published the first DOJ IT shared services catalogue. In order to use shared services, you need to know these services exist. We're issuing updates to this catalogue every quarter. I expect our catalogue will continue to expand as we add new services, work in partnership with components to understand the demand and types of services that are needed, and identify offerings components can make available to the enterprise. I'm committed to this enterprise shared services model: How many systems do we have in a certain area? How do we move from stovepipe systems to shared services in that area? This allows us to take advantage of economies of scale and consistency of performance.

What can you tell us about your efforts to expand information sharing? How are you driving collaboration internally and with the broader law enforcement community?

Joseph Klimavicz: As I noted, one of my strategic goals is to enable innovative sharing of services and information. From my perspective, the department's data and information are a national asset and it's crucial to the successful execution of the overall mission. Sharing information compounds its value, allows new uses and insights. Furthermore, the data that is shared with the public has potential to spur economic growth and innovation. We need to balance the sharing of information with protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. It may be easier to focus on the technology aspect of the role, but I'm always reminded that you're the chief information officer and I recognize that we need to do more in this area. I have sought to improve the sharing of information with law enforcement components within the department and with our federal, state, local, tribal, and international partners.

With an increasingly mobile workforce, the department will develop solutions that enable employees to access DOJ data and IT tools from where they need to work. Collaboration tools will be provided that allow employees to improve productivity, hold virtual meetings, conduct brainstorming sessions, and gain insights.

The information sharing challenges that the department faces exceed the ability of any one component. Many of the information sharing challenges are not primarily technical in nature. There are many other things that contribute. It's important that we get the department to work and treat information as a shared resource and treat information from a holistic perspective rather than a product of a collection of disparate unconnected systems. I want to make sure that we're committed to adopting a standard operating procedure, a standard way of doing business. I spend time working with the department and component leaders trying to improve the technical side while also working to coordinate policies.

What are you doing to build a future ready workforce?

Joseph Klimavicz: I'm glad you asked about the workforce because one of the greatest assets of Department of Justice IT is its people. That said, addressing workforce needs brings with it many challenges. First, we're competing with industry and other federal agencies to attract the top talent. Secondly, our current workforce must gain new skills and competencies in order to use evolving technologies. Third, when you look at the metrics, we have a significant part of

our IT workforce who can retire or are about to be eligible to retire. Given this reality, we are focusing on succession planning and our ability to quickly replace those who leave.

I am committed to building a work environment that attracts top talent from universities and market-leading corporations. I want to also make sure that we've retained the existing workforce through participation in mentoring programs, job sharing, and exchanges. There's much that needs to be done in this area. Some of the most critical skill sets include program management, cyber security, technical engineering, and acquisitions, which are just a sample of the areas we are focusing on.

Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) was signed in December 2014 as part of the National Defense Authorization Act. Would you give us the high points of this law? Where are you in implementing the provisions of the law? Would you elaborate on what you mean by saying that the speed and level of implementation could be "a bit uneven" across agencies?

Joseph Klimavicz: FITARA strengthens the CIO's responsibility and accountability for agency IT programs. The CIO must have a significant role in decision-making processes for IT resources in planning, programming, budgeting, and execution. The CIO must approve agency IT budget requests. The CIO must be involved in the management, governance, and oversight of IT programs. The CIO must monitor performance of IT programs and advise agency leaders to continue, modify, or terminate IT programs. The CIO must review and approve IT acquisitions, must review and approve reprogramming actions, and must approve the appointment and performance assessments of component CIOs or IT directors.

FITARA is a great opportunity for CIOs. It solves many high-level challenges within the federal IT space. It increases responsibility and accountability. It gives the CIOs the tools

that we need to drive innovation and realize efficiencies. With all of this authority, FITARA forces CIOs to take ownership of their IT portfolio. We started planning for its implementation as soon as it passed. We conducted a gap analysis. We want to take advantage of existing processes and governance structures and build on them, tweak them, optimize them. Our assessment indicates that in certain areas such as IT resource planning, we're close to meeting the baseline requirements as defined by OMB's FITARA guidance. In other areas such as acquisition review, we have to strengthen our accountability and performance by again leveraging processes such as the Department Investment Review Council. We need to make sure that we have staff in place to expeditiously review and make decisions on IT acquisitions.

Given the vast difference in size and complexity of federal IT portfolios, meeting these requirements may be somewhat uneven among agencies. I expect smaller agencies are going to be able to move much faster in implementing FITARA requirements. ◼

To learn more about the U.S. Department of Justice, go to www.justice.gov/jmd/about-division#731.

To hear *The Business of Government Hour* interview with Joseph Klimavicz, go to the Center's website at www.businessofgovernment.org.

To download the show as a podcast on your computer or MP3 player, from the Center's website at www.businessofgovernment.org, right click on an audio segment, select Save Target As, and save the file.

To read the full transcript of *The Business of Government Hour* interview with Joseph Klimavicz, visit the Center's website at www.businessofgovernment.org.