

Submission to the Commission d'enquête sur la gestion de la modernisation des systèmes informatiques de la Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec

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What does it take
to put digital
reforms into
action?

Digital government
modernisation is a complex
public administration reform
project facing many deeply
rooted barriers to success

Barriers to digital government reform

- Status quo biases
- Vendor capture and poor contracting practices
- Internal administrative burdens
- Policy and process mismatches
- Underinvestment in digital expertise
- Weak and/or spotty political investment in reform

Four Recommendations for the Government of Quebec

1. Invest in In-house Digital Expertise

- To build and maintain in-house when appropriate
- To be smart shoppers and effective overseers of outside contractors
- To directly reduce costs
- What is the right balance? No clear rule, but certain roles should be a priority for in-house capacity building (e.g. product owners for clear locus of accountability)

How to Build In-house Digital Expertise

- Attract digital talent:
 - Competitive compensation and career progression models
 - Appeal to public service motivation
- Update skills of future and existing public servants outside the digital stream
- New training and accountability frameworks for senior leaders
- Recruit and empower senior leaders with track record of successful digital delivery
- Leverage local ecosystem of digital talent and expertise

2. Work in the Open

Working in the Open

- Plain language, accessible and timely communications about digital transformation efforts

Making identity verification simple, secure and trusted

[Identity Verification Team](#), 16 October 2025 - [Changes to UK company law](#), [Companies House transformation](#), [Digital transformation](#)

From 18 November 2025, [directors and people with significant control \(PSCs\) will be legally required to verify their identity](#). We'll be phasing this in over 12 months and we're contacting companies with guidance on what to do and when.

Identity verification will help make sure that the people setting up, running and controlling companies are who they say they are. [This will help boost business, and support growth](#).

We're proud of the work we've done to make sure that identity verification standards are as high as they need to be, while the process is as simple as it can be. We estimate that 6 to 7 million people will need to verify their identity by mid-November 2026. We've done lots of testing with users to make the process straightforward, and most people will only have to verify once. There are 2 ways to verify your identity:

- directly with Companies House through GOV.UK One Login
- through an [Authorised Corporate Service Provider \(ACSP\)](#)

About Companies House blog

We use our blog to talk about the work we're doing, offering tips and advice on starting, running and closing a company. We also share the latest developments on the changes to UK company law.

All information is accurate at the time of publishing. For the latest information and guidance, [visit our guidance pages on GOV.UK](#).

[Find out more about this blog](#).

Categories

Select Category 

Changes to UK company law

The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act has given Companies House the power to play a more significant role in tackling economic crime and supporting economic growth.

[Find out how this affects you and your company](#).

Working in the Open

- Stronger reporting on contract values, terms and outcomes and vendor performance

The Open Contracting Data Standard

The Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS), is a free, non-proprietary open data standard for public contracting, implemented by over 50 governments around the world.

It is the only international open standard for the publication of information related to the planning, procurement, and implementation of public contracts and has been endorsed by the G20, the G7 and major international organizations.

The OCDS describes how to publish data and documents at all stages of the contracting process. It was created to support organizations to increase contracting transparency and enable deeper analysis of contracting data by a wide range of users.



3. Process and Policy Reform

- Without changing underlying processes and politics, you risk faux agile and defaulting to waterfall. Both outcomes are risky and irresponsible.

3. Process and Policy Reform

- HR and Team Structures → Enable multidisciplinary collaboration
- Budget Flexibility → Support agile iteration
- Reporting and Evaluation → Focus on outcomes, not rigid outputs
- Reducing Red Tape → Build trust and enable innovation

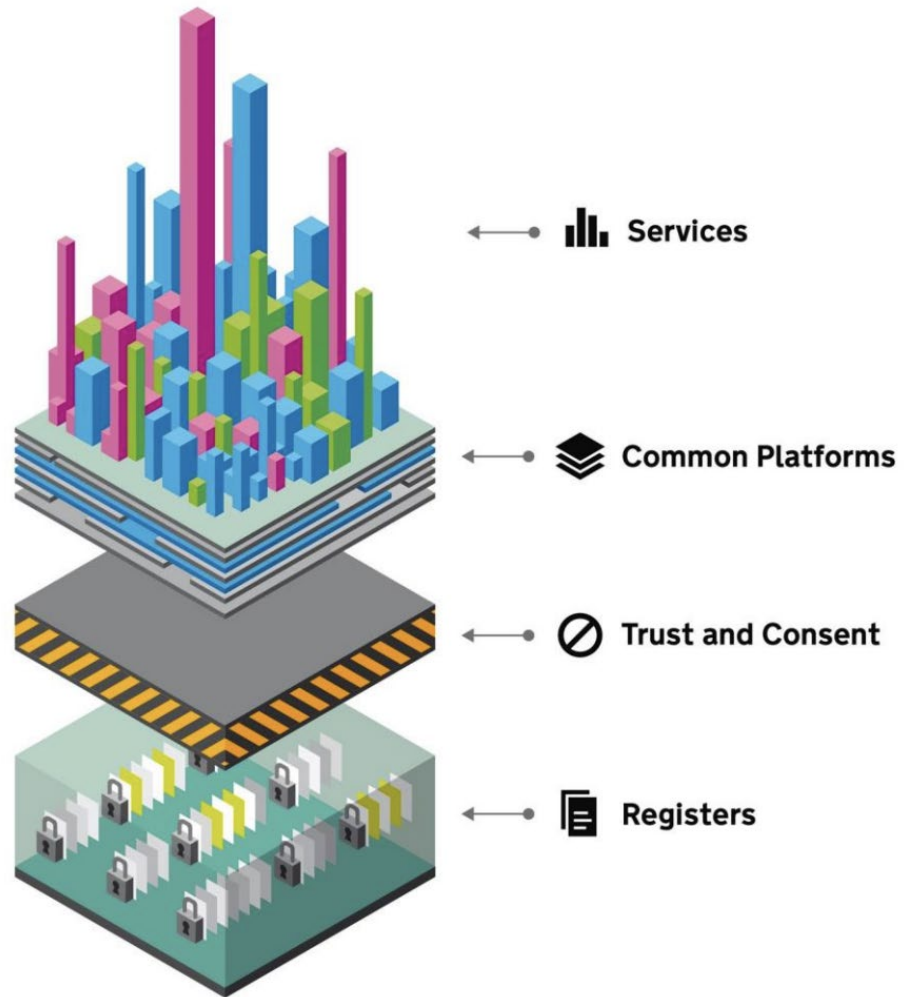
4. Empower a central digital ministry to force good behaviour

The MCN in Context

- Increasingly common for governments to develop dedicated digital ministries and departments
 - Ukraine - Ministry of Digital Transformation
 - Estonia - Department of Digital Government in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
 - Nova Scotia - Department of Cybersecurity and Digital Solutions
 - UK - Government Digital Service
 - Canada - Canadian Digital Service
 - Ontario Digital Service
 - Australia – Digital Transformation Agency
 - US - United States Digital Service and 18f

Why create centralized digital government units/ministries?

- Attract digital talent
- Show and tell – driving adoption of modern digital practices across the administration
- Build common components and drive platform government
 - Coordination and joined up policymaking
 - Efficiency and savings
 - Supports the user experience



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- **To force change that is otherwise difficult to achieve**

Essential digital reforms will not materialize unless a central institution mandates them.

How to design a central digital unit so it succeeds

1. Clear statutory authority and clear lines of accountability
2. Dedicated and well-resourced budget
3. Clear levers of power over other ministries - hiring, spending, mandatory use of common components
4. Clear lines of accountability
5. Leadership and staff combining proven track record of digital delivery with high emotional intelligence
6. Consistent and powerful ministerial leadership
7. Compliment with capacity building efforts in line ministries

Conclusions

- The barriers to digital modernisation are persistent and deeply rooted
- Digital modernisation requires significant public administration reforms
- Failure can precipitate massive reforms; it also may lead to no change at all or regression
- The costs of the status quo are high and unacceptable