TRIBALHUB *magazine*

A PUBLICATION FOR TECHNOLOGY MINDED PROFESSIONALS IN TRIBAL GOVERNMENT TRIBAL HEALTH, TRIBAL GAMING AND NON-GAMING TRIBAL ENTERPRISES

SUMMER 2025

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WELCOME
### TO THE PAGES OF TRIBALHUB'S MAGAZINE

I'm thrilled to welcome you to this exciting edition of the TribalHub Magazine—a snapshot of the powerful conversations, groundbreaking ideas, and inspiring innovations shaping tribal technology and governance today. As we gear up for the TribalNet Conference & Tradeshow this September, our community and our team has never been more energized!

In this edition, we're diving deep into the topics that matter most to tribal nations. Tribal Self-Governance is taking center stage as tribes continue to lead with sovereignty, innovation, and resilience. We're exploring how AI is not only revolutionizing tribal services but also how it intersects with tradition, ethics, and the preservation of culture. Cybersecurity—with an emphasis on awareness—is more critical than ever, and we're bringing practical strategies to help you build strong, cyber-aware communities.

From IT Project Management and Ransomware Defense to Cyber Gamification and IT Governance, this edition is packed with content that will equip you to lead with confidence. We're also focusing on Personal Growth—because strong leadership starts with strong people. Also a big thanks to our advertisers and agency update contributors for keeping us all informed. Whether you're in gaming, finance, health, education, or government, there is something in this edition for you!

I hope you find value in the pages ahead and be sure you are getting ready for TribalNet coming up soon! We've got an incredible lineup of sessions, speakers, and networking opportunities waiting for you in September. Let's come together to elevate, protect, and advance tribal communities and enterprises through technology.

Shannon Bouschor
Director of Operations, TribalHub
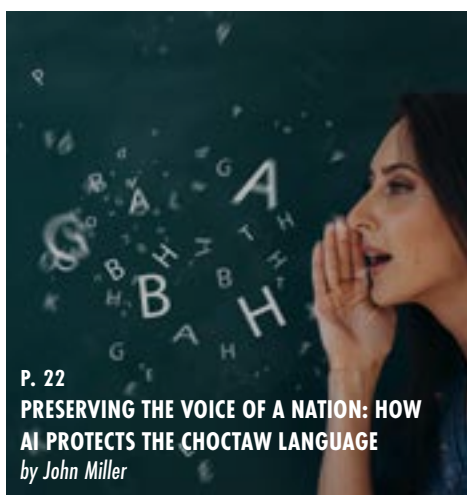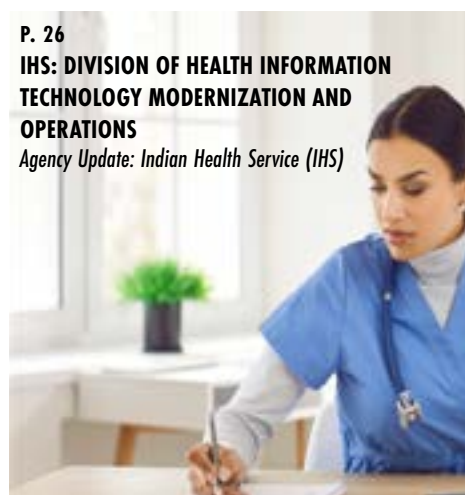
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BY
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BY
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CYBER CRIMINALS ARE HUNGRY TO EXPLOIT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: What's Your Appetite for AI & API Risk?

In today's hyperconnected world, Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) serve up powerful digital interactions and are the engine behind Artificial Intelligence (AI). Whether you make reservations at your favorite restaurant or request directions from an AI-assistant, APIs are a big part of our digital infrastructure. A recent security report said APIs now account for 71% of all internet traffic, creating an enormous attack surface. Threat actors are incentivized to leverage single points of failure within digital architecture and the rapid deployment of AI has created new threat vectors.

UNDERSTANDING HOW APIS WORK AND WHY THEY ARE A DELECTABLE ATTACK VECTOR

An API is a set of rules and protocols that allows one piece of software to communicate with another. It defines how systems exchange information, request services, and deliver responses while abstracting the complexity of what happens under the hood. APIs often connect to large data lakes that store treasure troves of personal information.

The most commonly used and easy-to-understand analogy compares APIs to a restaurant server. Imagine ordering a sausage pizza at your favorite restaurant. The waiter (API) hands you a menu (API documentation). You (the user) place your order (API call) and the waiter (API) communicates your request to the kitchen (database or backend system). The kitchen prepares your pizza (API response) and hands it back to the waiter (API), who delivers it to your table. In this scenario, the waiter (API) acts as an intermediary between you (the user) and the kitchen (the backend system), shielding you from the complexity of watching the proverbial sausage be made. Importantly, the menu and waiter determine which items can be ordered, facilitates proper communication, and prevents customers from entering the kitchen directly. APIs play a similar role in digital systems. They restrict what external applications can request, validate those requests, and shield backend systems from unintended interference.

HOW CYBER CRIMINALS EXPLOIT APIS

APIs are a lucrative threat vector for cyber-attacks and cyber criminals are increasingly focused on exploiting them. Below are four of the most common and dangerous API attack vectors:

- **Broken Object Level Authorization (BOLA):** BOLA occurs when an API fails to properly verify whether the requesting user is authorized to access a specific object or record. For example, in a financial system, an attacker might manipulate identifiers in an API request to gain access to another user's account information. Without strict validation of user permissions for each object, sensitive data can be easily exposed.

- **Injection Attacks:** Injection attacks happen when an attacker submits carefully crafted malicious input that deceives the backend system into executing unintended commands. APIs that fail to properly validate or sanitize incoming data can unintentionally allow attackers to manipulate database queries, access unauthorized information, or change system behavior.

- **Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Attacks:** In a DDoS attack, an API is flooded with an overwhelming number of requests, depleting server resources and making the service unavailable to legitimate users. Such attacks often take advantage of poorly designed API endpoints that lack sufficient rate-limiting, resource allocation, or failover protection.

- **Broken Authentication:** Broken authentication vulnerabilities allow attackers to bypass identity verification mechanisms. Weak credential management, predictable tokens, poorly secured session identifiers, or improperly implemented access controls can enable unauthorized individuals to impersonate legitimate users or maintain ongoing access to protected systems.

AI ACCELERATION IS COMPOUNDING THE API PROBLEM & INCREASING SUPPLY CHAIN RISK

Businesses are eager to consume the benefits of AI in the workplace, sometimes bypassing normal third party risk management processes and increasing associated risks. When "AI-powered" tools or SaaS products are rolled out quickly, security protocols and defense in depth must also be quickly deployed. Without proper oversight, an AI-powered chatbot or automation tool with unrestricted API access can quickly turn into an unintended insider threat.

PROACTIVE API SECURITY IS LEGALLY REQUIRED

Cyber criminals are actively seeking ways to exploit AI and the data lakes they connect to — which means businesses must implement technical and organizational controls to safeguard systems and data to comply with laws that require "reasonable security." Demonstrating responsible use of AI and "reasonable security" starts with following an AI governance framework. Technical controls can include API access controls, identity management, and real-time monitoring. Organizational controls include developing actionable AI and cyber governance policies, creating training programs for the workforce and engineers, updating incident response plans specific to the attack vector, and shifting risk to vendors through contracts. Without documented and defensible guardrails, businesses may be eating more cyber risk than their stomachs can hold.

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AGENCY UPDATE

CISA: Cybersecurity is EVERYONE's Responsibility

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As technology advances, what are you doing to protect yourself from online threat actors trying to steal your personal or business data or conducting ransomware attacks? We are more and more connected every day — from messaging family and friends, shopping online, or ordering supplies for our small businesses. It's important that we all take steps to stay safe when using our phones, laptops, and smart devices.

The mission of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is to lead the national effort to understand, manage, and reduce risk to our cyber and physical infrastructure. One of the ways we accomplish this effort is by providing practical and impactful cybersecurity awareness actions that individuals and organizations can implement to strengthen their cyber defenses and protect themselves online.

CISA understands that the effort to increase awareness and improve cybersecurity behaviors and protections cannot be impactful or effective without established and trusted partnerships. By fostering partnerships among businesses, industry leaders, cybersecurity experts, and government agencies, CISA can broadly share access to up-to-date resources that will mitigate risks and strengthen defenses against cyber threats.

For our agency, cybersecurity awareness is an ongoing, year-round discussion that highlights four simple actions that will make you, your family, and your business exponentially more secure:

- **Use strong passwords,** meaning long, random, and unique to each account. Use a password manager to generate them and to save them if possible.

- **Enable multifactor authentication on all accounts.** We need more than a password on our most important accounts, like email, social media, and financial accounts.

- **Recognize and report phishing, or as we like to say, think before you click.** Be cautious of unsolicited emails, texts, or calls asking you for personal information. Resist the urge to click on unknown links or open attachments from unknown sources.

- **Update software regularly.** In fact, enable automatic software updates on all devices so the latest security patches are continuously up to date.

Nation-state adversaries and online criminals look for easy targets, like people who don't take basic precautions. In addition to these simple tips, CISA offers a diverse range of helpful cybersecurity best practices and free cybersecurity services and tools tailored to address your cybersecurity needs.

FOUR EASY WAYS TO STAY **SAFE ONLINE**

BY
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EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY AMID FEDERAL CUTBACKS:
A PATH FORWARD FOR TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNANCE

Early in his career, John Lennon was once asked about the secret to The Beatles' success. He famously replied, *"If we knew that, we'd form new groups and be their managers."* Predicting the future is never easy. Even day-to-day forecasts — like the weather, stock market trends, or sports scores — often miss the mark.

Still, here's one prediction I believe will hold true:

With ongoing cost-cutting trends in the federal government, Native American tribes will increasingly need to operate with fewer resources and take on responsibilities that were previously handled by federal agencies. This shift, however, is not entirely new. In fact, it reflects a trajectory that tribal governments have been on for decades. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 — a milestone piece of legislation that laid the groundwork for tribal self-governance. It affirmed what many already knew: that tribes are often best positioned to serve their own communities.

In 1994 and 2000, this policy was strengthened through additional legislation. Today, more than half of all federal Indian programs are managed directly by tribal governments.

At Handel IT, we've seen firsthand the benefits of this shift. One notable example is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. As of 2022, there were 76 federally-approved Tribal TANF programs serving more than 285 tribes and Alaska Native organizations.

In the past, one of the greatest barriers to tribes assuming control of complex programs like TANF was the scale and cost of managing the required data and information systems. States traditionally outsourced these programs to large consulting firms, investing years and millions of dollars in building custom IT solutions. For tribes with comparatively modest IT budgets, replicating these systems was simply out of reach.

Fortunately, that landscape has changed. Today, the market is filled with cost-effective, scalable IT options tailored specifically for tribal government needs.

Does that justify reduced federal support? Absolutely not. But there may be a silver lining: in the long term, reduced federal oversight may foster greater tribal autonomy and control. More programs administered directly by tribes means more opportunity for innovation, efficiency, and outcomes that better reflect community values and priorities.

From our vantage point as long-time builders of information management systems for tribal programs, we see real promise in this shift.

Historically, federal information systems were built primarily for oversight and compliance. They offered little value to the people actually using them: tribal members, frontline employees, or tribal decision-makers. Because these systems were required in order to receive funding, and because they were "good enough," most tribes didn't see the need — or couldn't justify the cost — of developing their own.

Even when a tribe wanted to create a better internal system, the burden of building and maintaining data exchanges with federal systems was often too great.

But things are changing.

Today, dozens of Tribal TANF programs are operating their own case management systems. The federal government now allows tribes to submit quarterly TANF reports directly into its reporting platform — a clear improvement in flexibility and autonomy.

Another example came earlier this year when the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced it would no longer support the Child Care Data Tracker. As of this fall, tribes will no longer be able to use the aging database that had long been standard. They will now need to find their own solutions — or, in the worst case, submit data manually. Fortunately, companies like ours already have modern, tribe-focused solutions ready to go.

These changes are more than administrative hiccups. **They are opportunities** — opportunities to build systems that do more

than meet federal reporting requirements.

A new tribal information management solution should be more than a tracking tool. It should be designed to:

• **Deliver better outcomes for tribal members**
• **Reduce the data-entry burden on tribal employees**
• **Empower informed, data-driven decision-making**
• **Ensure tribes maintain ownership and control over their own data**

When these goals are achieved, federal compliance becomes a byproduct — not the primary objective.

The path ahead may be challenging, but it is also full of potential. With greater control comes greater opportunity — and we believe tribes are more ready than ever to seize it.

AGENCY UPDATE

USDA Rural Development High-Speed Internet Programs

BY CHRISTOPHER MCLEAN
USDA Rural Utilities Service Acting Administrator
www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs

USDA Rural Development's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Telecommunication (Telecom) Program provides a variety of funding options to expand broadband access and increase distance learning and telehealth opportunities across rural America.

Broadband access has become essential due to the social and economic benefits it provides to American residents, businesses, governments, and communities. Broadband is crucial for increased health, educational, and economic opportunities, as well as for job creation and business growth.

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program

The ReConnect Program provides funding to build, improve or acquire facilities and equipment to provide high-speed internet in rural communities lacking sufficient access.

Under its most recent round of funding, USDA has announced $476.45 million for ReConnect projects that will create or improve high-speed internet access for rural customers across 23 states. USDA expects to announce additional awards in the coming months.

Since its inception, USDA has invested over $5.5 billion through the ReConnect Program.

Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees (Infrastructure) Program

The Infrastructure Program provides financing for the construction, maintenance, improvement and expansion of telephone service and broadband in rural areas.

By helping private and non-profit providers secure the necessary financing, this program helps maintain a seamless nationwide telecommunications network and provides access to broadband for education, employment, healthcare, and public safety for all Americans regardless of where they live.

The Infrastructure Program is open to federally recognized tribes, non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses. Applications are accepted year-round.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant program assists rural communities by financing equipment to help people access virtual education and healthcare resources.

Earlier this year, USDA published a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants for Fiscal Year 2025. In total, 290 applications were received requesting over $172 million in funding. Applications are currently under review and awards are expected to be announced later this year.

Community Connect Grant Program

Earlier this year, USDA also published a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Community Connect Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2025. The Community Connect Grant Program provides financing for entities to construct broadband networks that provide service to rural areas on a community-oriented connectivity basis. Thirty-one applications were received, requesting more than $82 million in funding. Application reviews are underway,

Creating Hope, Trust, Compassion, and Stability in Tribal Leadership

BY
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher is an HR & leadership development consultant that has served Indian Country for 26 years and worked in an HR leadership role for 17 years. He is also an enrolled member of the Pit River Tribe in Northern California. You can contact Christopher via email at chris@createleadershipco.com.

As technology continues to shape and disrupt so many aspects of the modern workplace, there is one constant that technology can never replace: effective leadership that values and recognizes the humanity in our teams. In 2025, Gallup released their **Global Leadership Report: What Followers Want.** Gallup's research points to four critical needs people have from their leaders: hope, trust, compassion, and stability. For technology professionals serving Native American organizations, these needs take on a unique and profound significance, deeply connected with cultural values, heritage, community well-being, and the mission-driven nature of our tribal organizations.

HOPE: THE BELIEF IN A BRIGHTER FUTURE
Hope is the belief in a better tomorrow, and leaders can provide a clear path to make it a reality. People want to believe their work is connected to the deeper meaning of working in Indian Country. This is a call for leaders who can articulate a bold vision that honors traditions while embracing progress and innovation to best serve our stakeholders. Leaders instill hope by connecting our daily responsibilities to the organization's broader mission, whether it's preserving cultural heritage, promoting economic development, or ensuring the health and well-being of tribal members. In the context of tribal technology, leaders who can articulate a vision

for how technology can uplift their communities, preserve cultural heritage, and drive prosperity in both tribal and surrounding communities will give hope to everyone in need of the belief in the brighter future we naturally yearn for.

TRUST: THE FOUNDATION OF COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION
Trust is the foundation of any high-performing team. Within Native American organizations, building trust requires transparency, integrity, and a deep respect for tribal sovereignty and self-determination. This means open communication, honest decision-making, and a consistent commitment to the best interests of our communities. We must also recognize we cannot effectively serve those who we do not understand. To truly build trust, leaders must actively listen to the diverse perspectives within their tribal communities, honor traditions, and ensure that their actions align with tribal values. Empowering our employees, delegating effectively, and demonstrating faith in their extraordinary talents and abilities all contribute to a strong foundation of trust. We also need to be honest about the unique challenges within our tribal communities, communicate decisions clearly, and consistently act in the best interests of these communities.

COMPASSION: UNDERSTANDING AND SERVING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES
In leadership, having compassion is about showing empathy, understanding, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others. Recent Gallup research shows that compassion can positively impact overall employee well-being. Gallup's recent **State of the Global Workplace report** reveals that global employee engagement declined to 21% in 2024, with managers experiencing the largest drop. Leaders who exhibit compassion understand the unique challenges faced by our employees and can help reverse these trends. From a technology standpoint, these leaders also understand how technology solutions can be tailored to be accessible, culturally appropriate, and truly beneficial. This might involve supporting community initiatives, advocating for social justice where it's needed most, or ensuring

that services are delivered with cultural sensitivity and respect. Within our workplaces, compassion means fostering a supportive work environment, recognizing individual talents and contributions, and addressing employee needs with empathy and understanding.

STABILITY: ENSURING A SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
Stability provides security in what can feel like chaotic times. Within Native American organizations, stability in leadership means contributing to responsible self-governance and a commitment to long-term sustainability. This stability is crucial for fostering genuine hope. When employees and community members experience consistent leadership, they gain confidence in the organization's ability to navigate challenges and achieve long-term goals. Their livelihoods feel steady for their families. An employee

with the comfort of knowing that an organization has a clear and hopeful direction – and the resources needed to contribute to their shared mission – has a solid foundation upon which hope for future growth, community well-being, and sustained cultural strength can genuinely flourish.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE: A HOLISTIC APPROACH
Leadership has never been about titles; it's about a holistic approach that integrates professional expertise with understanding and a fierce commitment to the well-being of others. By consciously cultivating hope, trust, compassion, and stability, we can empower our teams, strengthen our organizations, and ultimately contribute to the enduring well-being and self-sufficiency of Native Nations throughout Indian Country. These principles are not just leadership ideals; they are essential elements for building a thriving future for generations to come.

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AGENCY UPDATE

AISES: Advancing Indigenous Excellence in STEM

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AISES
ADVANCING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN STEM

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) continues to broaden its reach and deepen its impact across North America through innovative programs, partnerships, and events designed to support Indigenous students and professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). As we move through 2025, we are proud to highlight key accomplishments and invite you to participate in exciting opportunities ahead.

2025 National Conference – Minneapolis, MN

Mark your calendars for the 48th AISES National Conference, taking place October 2-4, 2025, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This annual event is the largest convening of Indigenous STEM students and professionals in North America, bringing together thousands of attendees for three powerful days of learning, networking, cultural celebration, and career development. From thought-provoking keynotes to hands-on workshops and an expansive College and Career Fair, the conference is a hub for connection and opportunity. Attendees include students, educators, tribal leaders, corporate partners, and federal agencies committed to Indigenous excellence in STEM. Whether you're interested in registering to attend or exploring sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities, this is a must-attend event for those working to strengthen Indigenous representation in STEM.

Strong Showings Across Our Gatherings

In 2024 and early 2025, AISES hosted a record number of gatherings across Turtle Island, including regional conferences, summits, and our National Gathering in Canada. These events served as important platforms to elevate Indigenous perspectives in STEM and highlighted student research, cultural presentations, and collaborative approaches to equity and inclusion. The momentum continues this summer with the upcoming AISES East Region Conference, scheduled for July 11-12 at the Friday Center at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, located in the heart of the Research Triangle. This event provides an excellent opportunity for Indigenous students and professionals from across the Eastern U.S. to connect, learn, and grow together.

Workforce Development & Partnerships

AISES remains focused on building sustainable pathways into the STEM workforce through strategic partnerships with tribal nations, corporations, and academic institutions. A key example is our collaboration with TribalHub, which supports the RISE (Resources for Indigenous STEM Education) program, powered by Aristocrat Gaming. RISE is designed to support Indigenous participation in gaming, technology, and cybersecurity careers by providing exposure, mentorship, and scholarships. Through this initiative, AISES has awarded scholarships for students to attend the TribalNet Conference, where scholars gain industry insights, connect with potential employers, and explore real-world applications of their education and training.

Stay Connected

We encourage you to explore our 2025 Partnership Guide to learn more about how to engage with AISES — whether as a sponsor, mentor, volunteer, or member. Your support helps fund scholarships, expand programming, and ensure Indigenous voices continue to shape the future of STEM.

Thank you for being part of the AISES mission. Together, we are building a future where Indigenous people are not only represented but *leading* the way in science, innovation, and community transformation.

Preserving the Voice of a Nation:
How AI Protects the Choctaw Language

BY
JOHN MILLER
IT DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John has over twenty-three years of unique experience in diverse technology domains that extend globally. He leads a diverse technical team, focusing on member services, education, judicial systems, housing, culture, public safety, and community broadband. The team(s) provide a creative approach to application management, technical support, and technical expertise for the Choctaw Nation. This is achieved by defining, recommending, and supporting "best-in-breed" solutions that deliver enhanced value and experiences to our members, employees, and communities.

L anguage is more than a mere means of communication — it embodies the very heartbeat of a culture and serves as a vessel for history, values, and worldview. For the Choctaw Nation, one of the largest and most resilient Native American tribes, the Choctaw language, or Chahta Anumpa, is a sacred thread that weaves generations together. However, like many Indigenous languages, it faces the looming threat of fading into silence. At this crucial juncture, artificial intelligence presents a transformative opportunity — not just to preserve the Choctaw language, but to elevate it into the future.

The Choctaw language carries centuries of wisdom, oral traditions, and spiritual teachings. It encapsulates unique perspectives on community, respect, and our relationship with the land — concepts that are complex and often untranslatable into English. When a language disappears, so too does a unique worldview. Therefore,

revitalizing Choctaw transcends a mere cultural project; it is a vital human endeavor. AI can serve as a bridge across generations. With advancements in speech recognition, natural language processing, and machine learning, we can develop interactive language learning applications, voice assistants, and digital archives that make the Choctaw language accessible to both young learners and fluent speakers. Picture a child in Durant or Dallas learning Choctaw through an engaging AI-powered game, or an elder in a rural community utilizing voice-to-text tools to document stories for future generations. These are not distant dreams; they are attainable realities.

Moreover, AI does more than preserve language — it empowers communities. By integrating Choctaw into AI systems and creating a corpus, we assert the significance of Chahta Anumpa in the digital landscape. We ensure that the language is not

merely confined to museums or textbooks, but thrives and evolves within contemporary society. This integration sends a compelling message: Choctaw is not an artifact of the past — it is a living, dynamic language that continues to evolve in the present and future. AI also has the potential to bridge access gaps. Many Choctaw individuals reside in remote areas where language classes or fluent speakers are few and far between. AI tools can provide these individuals access to the language — on their phones, in their homes, and at their own pace. This democratizes learning and fosters a deeper connection and pride in cultural identity. Additionally, there is a broader social justice context at play. For centuries, Indigenous languages were stifled through policies of assimilation and erasure. Utilizing AI to revitalize Choctaw represents an act of reclamation. It asserts that

we are still here, and our language holds immeasurable value. It symbolizes healing, a restoration of what was lost, and the creation of a future where Indigenous voices are not only heard but celebrated. Nevertheless, this work must be approached with care. AI should serve the Choctaw people, not supplant them. It must be guided by tribal leaders, language experts, and community members. The data utilized to train AI models must be sourced ethically, and the technological tools must reflect Choctaw values and methodologies of learning. This endeavor is not merely technical; it is deeply cultural, steeped in respect and collaboration.

Ultimately, safeguarding the Choctaw language through AI is about more than technology. It encompasses identity, sovereignty, and survival. It ensures that the songs, prayers, and stories of the

Choctaw people persist through time. With AI as a collaborative ally, we can carry the voices of our ancestors into the future, ensuring they are never silenced again.

Regional Tribal Technology Forum

Brought to you by **TRIBALHUB**

A Recap of the **Spring Regional Tribal Technology Forums**
Connection, Collaboration, and Community

From Michigan to California, our Spring Regional Tribal Technology Forums brought together leaders and innovators working at tribal government, casinos, enterprises and health facilities along with solution providers also working in this space, for meaningful conversations and collaboration.

Each forum delivered unique insights and valuable discussions tailored to the needs of the region's tribes.

That's a wrap on our SPRING regional forums! Two more are happening in November 2025 before we announce 2026 dates for all SEVEN regions we come to! Learn more at:
TribalHub.com/events

A big thank you to our Regional Ambassadors whose support made these possible. Your dedication drives the event agenda, topics and ultimately the success of these gatherings.

2025 Michigan Regional Ambassadors

CHRISTOPHER WILSON, Controller, Soaring Eagle Casino Resort & Saganing Eagles Landing Casino | **DAWN MCGRADY,** CFO, Soaring Eagle Casino Resort & Saganing Eagles Landing Casino | **AMY GATES**, Director of IT, Saganing Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan | **RYAN O'BRIEN**, Director of IT, Little River Casino Resort

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2025 Midwest Regional Ambassadors
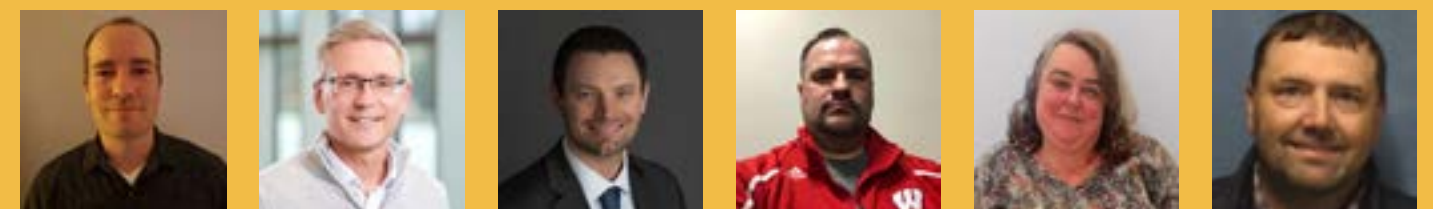
ALAN WALT, Director of IT, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa | **MARK TREAT**, VP of IT, SMSC Gaming Enterprise, **ADAM GRUSZCYNSKI**, IT Director, Potawatomi Casino Hotel | **JASON DOXTATOR**, CIO, Oneida Nation | **TRACEY HAMMER**, Director of IT, Prarie's Edge Casino Resort | **TIMOTHY JOHNSON**, Director of IT, MLCV Professional Services

AGENCY UPDATE

IHS: Division of Health Information Technology Modernization and Operations

BY: MITCHELL THORNBRUGH

Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Director of Office of Information Technology (OIT), Indian Health Service (IHS)

To follow the continued journey of PATH EHR and learn how the IHS is working with I/T/UIOs to shape the future of health IT, visit our website or follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, and X.

The Indian Health Service (IHS) is making steady progress on the Health Information Technology (IT) Modernization Program. The Program remains actively engaged in the development and implementation of the new IHS enterprise electronic health record (EHR) solution, PATH EHR. The Program's recent accomplishments represent more than a technology shift; they reflect our commitment to aligning care delivery with the cultural values, wellness priorities, and long-term health goals across Indian Country.

IHS Division of Health Information Technology Modernization and Operations (DHITMO) and the Lawton Service Unit continue to collaborate to ensure a seamless pilot site implementation of PATH EHR. This site will implement the functionality, usability, and compatibility of PATH EHR in a real-world healthcare environment in the summer of 2026. This will allow the IHS to identify and address any issues, refine the solution, ensure patient safety, and gather feedback to improve its implementation for other healthcare facilities in the future. In preparation for site implementation, the DHITMO team toured the Lawton Service Unit facilities, met with facility leaders to align on long-term site engagement, and connected with tribal members to enable a deeper understanding of healthcare needs across Indian Country.

The IHS is committed to configuring PATH EHR collaboratively with expert users from participating IHS federal facilities, tribes, and urban Indian organizations (I/T/UIOs). To accomplish this, The Program established the Enterprise Collaboration Group (ECG), which began meeting regularly in early 2025 to review evidence-based practices and recommendations for operational aspects of PATH EHR implementation and deployment.

The ECG is comprised of the following 15 domain groups representing a wide variety of clinical and business areas:

- Ambulatory
- Behavioral Health
- Community Care
- Emergency Department
- Inpatient Care
- Laboratory
- Patient Engagement
- Pharmacy
- Population Health
- Public Health
- Purchased/Referred Care
- Radiology
- Revenue Cycle/Coding
- Surgical Services
- Women's Health

Members from the DHITMO team and the ECG participate in enterprise design workshops to help inform the build and configuration of PATH EHR. The Program hosted two workshops to date, bringing together over 300 participants across 381 breakout sessions. Enterprise design workshops will continue throughout 2025 to ensure PATH EHR reflects the needs of end-users and is built with our partners, not for them.

DHITMO is also working on the Four Directions Warehouse (4DW), a cloud-based system that will store, organize, and provide secure access to clinical data from within PATH. 4DW supports the transition of legacy data into a modern infrastructure. By preserving historical clinical data and preparing IHS for future needs, 4DW will enable data sharing across facilities and inform the future of health record management across Indian Country.

The IHS looks forward to implementing PATH EHR across Indian Country to modernize technology and enhance the user experience for patients and providers. The Program aims to minimize system disruptions and streamline access to patient data across facilities, granting patients greater control over their care and providing clinicians with a comprehensive care overview.

5 GREAT WAYS TO DISAPPOINT YOUR IT STEERING COMMITTEE

BY
RENITA DISTEFANO
PRESIDENT & CEO
SECOND DERIVATIVE, LLC

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Renita is the founder, President and CEO of SECOND DERIVATIVE, LLC, a Native American, woman-owned business that provides a broad spectrum of technology services featuring strategic business/technology alignment, information security strategy, PMO & Portfolio Management capabilities. Renita has performed as both a CIO and a CISO, creating business, technology and information security strategy for medium to large sized businesses. One of the first Native American women to become a CISO, Renita is regarded as a pioneer in her field and one of just a handful of IBM iSeries information security specialists.

In a world where resources are limited but ideas are plentiful, organizations face the challenge of navigating the art (with a sprinkle of science) of IT Governance. Whether it's launching a new system, strengthening cybersecurity defenses, or implementing process improvements, not every project can be a top priority. That's where project prioritization comes in. Prioritization is a disciplined approach to aligning your resources with your most important goals. Without clear prioritization, organizations risk spreading themselves too thin, failing to deliver value, and losing focus on what truly matters. Teams can become overwhelmed, resources can be misallocated, and projects with high strategic impact may fall by the wayside. A sound prioritization process helps leaders make informed decisions that maximize impact, reduce risk, and align with the organization's mission. Prioritization transforms project selection from a political tug-of-war into a transparent, criteria-based process that drives clarity, alignment, and results.

But deciding which projects earn top billing is just the first step in the process. Here are some common pitfalls to avoid if you want to keep your steering committee engaged.

1. **Don't Prioritize by Number Only.** If you lead business executives through the process of prioritizing projects (Priority #1, #2, #3, etc.) and then re-order the cadence of implementation because of a variable other than numbered priority, you can quickly be faced with criticism or a disenfranchised steering committee. It's very important to understand that ranking implies order. As an example: Let's say that leveraging AI to perform predictive analytics that tracks individual player behavior in order to personalize offers is ranked as the #1 priority. Replacing your Casino Management System is ranked as a #4 priority. However, completing priority #1 — the AI Project — before priority #4 — replacing your CMS — might not make sense. In that case, the logical order of completion should be understood by everyone during the decision-making process, or you could face the hard question, "Why did you bother asking me to prioritize tasks and then change the cadence and timing?" This is not to say that prioritization isn't important because it certainly is. It just can't exist in a vacuum relative to project dependency, timing, and cadence.

2. **Don't Hide Infrastructure Projects.** Today's executives are becoming more and more savvy when it comes to understanding that infrastructure projects are not just technical upgrades — they are business initiatives that directly impact operations, customer experience, and strategic growth. Infrastructure projects often provide the foundation for more transformational projects. For example, an "order at table" project could require the implementation of a secure, high-speed wireless network with segmented guest and point-of-sale (POS) traffic. Infrastructure projects are really business projects and should have as much visibility as projects with much sexier names.

3. **Don't Blame Regulatory or Compliance Requirements.** While it is true that some projects aren't optional — such as those tied to regulatory mandates, security requirements, or grant compliance — you should avoid playing the blame game. Regulatory projects will likely not generate revenue, but failure to act can result in fines, legal risks, or security vulnerabilities. Still, putting too much emphasis — or blame — on regulatory requirements can come across as misleading.

4. **Don't Under or Overstate Financial Impact.** This includes ROI, cost savings, or potential revenue generation. A project that unlocks recurring operational savings or brings in new revenue streams might take precedence, but it must be coupled with an honest analysis of financial impact, risk, and organizational capacity. Technology without process change may not yield the desired impact. Measure the before and after.

5. **Don't Overstate Business Impact.** This is what I call shiny object syndrome. Organizations often chase trendy projects with no clear value (ahem …. AI?). To get it right, be honest with the committee about how many people the project will affect and how deeply it will benefit key stakeholders including internal users, customers, or, in the case of tribal or public organizations, the broader community.

Project portfolio management is a continuous process. As competitive threats emerge, funding shifts, and strategic goals evolve, organizations must regularly revisit and adjust their project queues.

Final thought: Is it priority or order? I say it's both! Governance is ultimately about making choices based on what creates the most value, mitigates the greatest risk, and aligns with the organization's strategic direction. Order, timing, and cadence are just as important within the context of portfolio management. IT Governance is hard, but for those who get it right, it can unify, drive clarity, build momentum, and ensure that time, energy, and dollars are spent where they matter most.

TRIBALHUB HOSTED FIVE REGIONALS EVENTS THIS SPRING:

- Midwest
- Northwest
- Michigan
- Southern California
- Northern California

We asked each of these regions to weigh in on their thoughts on AI readiness. Take a look at some of the findings from all five regions…

How Prepared Are You and Your Tribe/Enterprise for AI Use and Growth?

- 34%
- 34%
- 20%
- 10%
- 2%
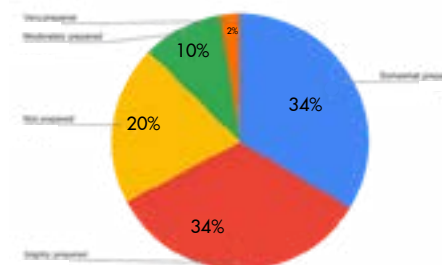
We Have an AI Data Protection Policy and Security Procedure in Place

- 71%
- 21%
- 8%
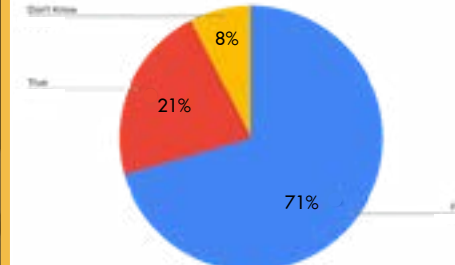
I Think AI Will Drastically Change Our Entire Organization Over the Next Two Years

- 66%
- 17%
- 17%
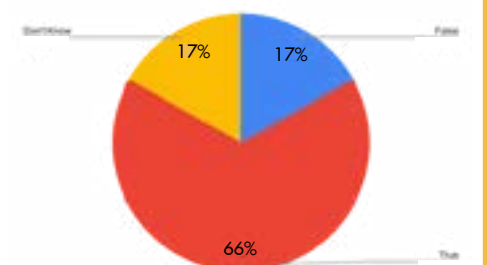
AI is changing our world and we are just at the beginning. Things are moving FAST and CIO's will be expected to lead in a future that's already arriving. How do you keep up? Keep connected with your peers and don't navigate alone.

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- **Cloud & Software:** Microsoft

As one of only six Microsoft Authorized Government Resellers (LSPs), Minburn supports over 450 Active Microsoft agreements and has over 50 Tribal EA's. Connect with your dedicated Minburn team to explore how our partnership and expertise can be your partner in this technology/AI transition.

Which Ransomware Groups Have Impacted Tribes?

*Most statistics were obtained from eCrime Threat and Risk Intelligence Services under a paid subscription with Gate 15.

BY
JENNIFER LYN WALKER
DIRECTOR OF CYBER DEFENSE
GATE 15

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Lyn Walker is the Director of Cyber Defense for The Gate 15 Company. She is a cybersecurity professional with over twenty-three years' experience supporting critical infrastructure organizations. In her current role at Gate 15, she provides senior cyber analytic support to the Tribal-ISAC and is the Director of Infrastructure Cyber Defense for WaterISAC. Jen is experienced in malware analysis, cyber threat intelligence, cybersecurity awareness, compliance, insider threats, threat assessments, and OT/ICS cyber safety and security.

Tribal organizations, enterprises, and casinos are no strangers to ransomware incidents. For every attack we learn about, there is likely at least one more we don't. Considering ongoing ransomware activity against tribes, tribal casinos, and commercial casinos, this article discusses notable ransomware groups claiming responsibility for recent attacks and data leaks so other tribes can validate protection against these groups' known behaviors and capabilities.

Since the beginning of 2024, there have been thirteen ransomware incidents impacting gambling facilities across the U.S. Nine of these incidents were specifically related to tribal gaming. Three incidents pertained to commercial gaming and one incident involved a gaming vendor. The sum of these ransomware attack behaviors highlights the importance of heightened awareness and proactive measures to mitigate risks associated with any ransomware attack.

COMMON BEHAVIORS
Ransomware actors' behaviors aren't much different than other threat actors. Many actors use similar well-known social engineering methods and technical vulnerability exploitation. Some actors execute those methods better than others. Additionally, the prolific Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS) model perpetuates this sharing of resources and lowers the barrier of entry to the most novice miscreants with little or no technical expertise. These common behaviors typically

involve phishing and the resultant compromised credentials to gain initial access to   critical systems. Likewise, during the execution of attacks, ransomware actors increasingly use living-off-the-land techniques by abusing legitimate, built-in system tools and processes present on victims' networks to evade detection and maximize effectiveness. Finally, to multiply impact and increase the likelihood of payment, many ransomware groups leverage the double-extortion method: the combination of both encryption and exfiltration of data.

RANSOMWARE GROUPS WITH A PENCHANT FOR TRIBES
Prior reports for Tribal-ISAC members over the years have discussed ransomware groups that have attacked tribes, from the likes of BlackSuit, Lockbit 2.0, REvil, DoppelPaymer, Conti, DarkSide, and more. As stated above, Tribal-ISAC has tracked at least **nine** ransomware incidents impacting **tribal-specific gaming** in the U.S. While no tribes are identified by name, this article is offered as an overview of some of the ransomware groups and their behaviors that have impacted tribes in order to ensure all tribes can proactively protect against these kinds of attacks. This article will briefly highlight four groups with respect to the most active groups overall as referenced in the **FBI's IC3 Internet Crime Report 2024**, notably Akira, RansomHub, Cicada 3301, and Nitrogen.

Akira ransomware is a **highly active** and disruptive threat that has targeted organizations worldwide since its emergence in March/April 2023. Its operators gain initial access primarily by abusing remote access through compromised virtual private network (VPN) credentials, especially those **lacking multi-factor authentication.** Akira also exploits vulnerabilities in Cisco products and conducts spear-phishing campaigns. Reportedly, Akira has aggressively targeted VMware ESXi environments, maximizing operational disruption by **encrypting entire virtualized infrastructures.**

RansomHub emerged in February 2024 and quickly rose to prominence as one of the largest active RaaS operations, claiming **numerous victims** and collaborating with other cyber-criminal groups. While RansomHub's current status is unclear, the group gained notoriety for its aggressive recruitment of affiliates, offering lucrative ransom splits and a simplified entry into

ransomware operations, which attracted less technically skilled actors.

Cicada3301 has been active since June 2024. The group typically gains initial access using stolen or brute-forced credentials, often **leveraging botnets to automate** credential attacks against VPNs and remote access services from vendors like Cisco, Fortinet, Palo Alto, and SonicWall. Cicada3301 has been observed targeting both Windows and Linux environments.

Nitrogen is relatively new (September 2024) but observed to be highly organized, likely due to strong collaboration with other ransomware groups such as BlackCat. Most notable is that Nitrogen's ransomware campaigns **target IT professionals** and primarily gain initial access through **malicious search results** that lead to fraudulent websites hosting trojanized installers for remote access, file sharing, or administration software. The

Nitrogen group exemplifies the rise of multi-stage, socially engineered ransomware campaigns that blend malvertising with popular post-exploitation frameworks.

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR RANSOMWARE RESILIENCE: DON'T FORGET THE BASICS
Basic cybersecurity controls and cyber hygiene go a long way in keeping ransomware from impacting tribes' bottom line. Protecting against the common initial infection vectors, including compromised credentials and advanced forms of social engineering is key. CISA's #StopRansomware Guide is a recommended resource to help ratchet up ransomware resilience. The guide includes recommendations that can help tribes with prevention and response during and after a ransomware or data extortion attack.

TRIBALHUB'S CYBERSECURITY SUMMIT:
2025 EVENT RECAP & 2026 LAUNCH

Each year, TribalHub's Cybersecurity Summit brings together top cybersecurity experts and fellow leaders to address the most pressing cyber threats facing tribes today — and 2025 was no exception. Held at the Miccosukee Casino & Resort in Miami, FL, this year's summit was packed with actionable insights, powerful conversations, and connection.

From packed breakout sessions to lively networking events, this year's summit delivered both education, energy and alligators!

NEW FROM 2025 - VENDOR EXPO!

The vendor space was packed with solutions providers meeting and connecting with technology and executive teams from tribes across the country, building relationships and exchanging ideas on secure infrastructure, incident response, and more.

Shout-out to our 2025 sponsors and vendors who made it all possible—your support drives collaboration that protects tribal nations.

HERE'S WHAT'S COMING IN 2026

We're taking the momentum straight into 2026, and you won't want to miss what's ahead.

Join us for the 6th annual TribalHub Cybersecurity Summit for another unforgettable experience focused on tribal cybersecurity and resilience.

EXPECT:

More hands-on workshops
Fresh content aligned with emerging threats
New peer collaboration opportunities
Tribal-ISAC updates, training, and connections
Golf outing in support of Tribal-ISAC

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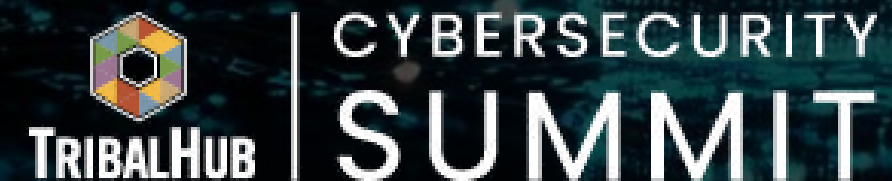
AGENCY UPDATE

NIGC: Strengthening IT Compliance and Controls

BY EDDIE HALL
NIGC TRACS Auditor

nigc.gov

The National Indian Gaming Commission's (NIGC) Technical Regulatory Assessments and Compliance (TRACS) Audit office serves as the regulatory advisor for information technology. It supports Gaming Commissioners and operations personnel assessing IT compliance with 25 CFR §543.20, which outlines NIGC Minimum Internal Control Standards (MICS). To ensure regulatory adherence, IT Audit personnel conduct **Internal Control Assessments (ICA)** that are recognized under 543.20. For technical assistance, tribal operations may also request NIGC to perform **IT Vulnerability Assessments (ITVA).** Once complete, the IT Audit office formally reports its assessment results to the relevant Gaming Commissioner.

During assessments, NIGC applies standards based on the MICS established in 25 CFR §543.20, codified as **Agreed-Upon Procedures (AUPs)**. AUPs enable Tribal Gaming Regulatory Authorities (TGRAs) to create operation-specific **Tribal Internal Control Standards (TICS)** and **System of Internal Control Standards (SICS)**.

Between 2017 and 2021, the NIGC IT Audit Office identified the two most frequently recurring IT compliance findings in tribal gaming operations:

1. User Controls – §543.20(f)(5)

Access credentials for terminated users must be deactivated within a timeframe set and approved by the TGRA. This control minimizes the risk of unauthorized access. Key considerations include:

- **Are user accounts protected with strong authentication (e.g., passwords and multi-factor authentication)?**
- **Are responsibilities for access management clearly defined and TGRA-approved?**
- **Are access changes documented including who, when, why, and what actions were taken?**

2. Incident Monitoring and Reporting – §543.20(i)

Gaming operations must have defined procedures for identifying, responding to, documenting, and reporting IT security incidents. This ensures timely mitigation of threats such as cyberattacks or system faults. Key questions to assess readiness include:

- **Has the organization identified its most critical assets and risks?**
- **Is there a documented and communicated security strategy?**
- **Are proper tools in place to detect incidents in real time?**
- **Has the incident response plan been tested and validated for effectiveness?**

Addressing IT audit findings remains a challenge for many gaming operations. A strong understanding of 25 CFR §543.20 is essential for building effective and sustainable internal controls. To assist, the NIGC IT Audit office has developed a §543.20 Toolkit aligned with MICS requirements. However, because every operation is unique, this toolkit does **not** replace the need to test and validate operation-specific TICS and SICS.

The NIGC encourages all tribal gaming operations to go beyond the minimum standards and **adopt robust, customized controls** that reflect their unique operational environments. Strengthening internal controls is critical to ensuring regulatory compliance, safeguarding systems, and supporting long-term success.

BY
APRIL BACON
PARTNER
WIPFLI

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

April Bacon is a Partner at Wipfli and has been part of the Tribal Tech Service Line for 9 years. She has an MBA Business with Accounting emphasis. Prior to her tenure at Wipfli, she gained valuable knowledge and expertise within the operations of Tribal Gaming for 15 years. She is dedicated to sharing her love for the tribal gaming vertical with Tribes across the country by empowering leaders to improve upon their current practices for a more efficient, effective, real-time finance and accounting experience through finance transformations and Intacct Financial software implementations.

BY
STEVEN DREWES
DIRECTOR
WIPFLI

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven Drewes leads the national Tribal Gaming Client Advisory Services team. In this role, he serves as a key client point of contact to casinos that have trusted their accounting and finance functions to Wipfli. Steven also provides consulting to aid internal finance groups by assessing and sharing efficiency techniques learned from closing books in high volume casinos.

5 WAYS TRIBAL GAMING LEADERS LEVERAGE OUTSOURCED ACCOUNTING

Tribal casino leaders who want to strengthen organizational performance and streamline processes are increasingly turning to a valuable approach: outsourced accounting to help implement an enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform like Sage Intacct.

Using outsourced accounting services makes it simpler for your organization to replace outdated systems and adjust to change while easing the burden on your internal team so you can focus on your core business processes. The right outsourcing partner can also offer you support around month-end close and help with adopting industry best practices.

Let's explore five ways in which outsourcing can support your casino's financial ERP implementation and streamline your financial reporting.

1. HELP ENSURE AUDIT-READY FINANCIALS

Maintaining audit readiness for your tribal casino helps stakeholders throughout your organization stay informed with detailed drill-down capabilities into your financial data in your ERP. The key to doing this is getting help putting the right systems in place.

If you're used to in-house accounting functions, you may benefit from a mindset shift. Embracing a willingness to change is the first step in delivering modern-day solutions for your business process needs.

Your team will benefit from working with subject matter experts who can ease the burden of moving from antiquated systems to a more modern solution. An accounting partner who possesses experience in the industry and knows how to implement tech platforms can help you move quickly and avoid mistakes.

Upgrading to a cloud-based system is useful for audit readiness by providing data to monitor day-to-day financials and prepare for the year-end audit. With supporting documentation attached, you can easily access requested audit information. You may even allow auditors read-only access to your system to speed up your audit preparation, allowing for fieldwork to be conducted remotely with reduced audit expenses.

Users will gain better visibility throughout your entire organization, starting with the department manager who can access data in real time at the level of detail desired based on their role.

2. USING AUTOMATION TO HELP ENSURE PROPER SEGREGATION OF DUTIES, DOCUMENTATION AND DETECTION OF ANOMALIES

A cloud-based financial platform can automate processes within your business. An accounting partner who knows how to implement an ERP platform like Sage Intacct can help identify automation possibilities that deliver results more quickly. Streamline your financial workflows, automate approval processes with audit trails, and alleviate the need to track approvers down for manual signatures. Tasks you used to do by hand now happen at the click of a button.

Outsourced accounting working collaboratively with the implementation team ensures proper segregation of duties within your ERP platform, streamlines information, enhances business processes such as check signatures, and builds robust automated approval processes to detect coding errors before they are posted to the general ledger.

3. SUPPORTING REGULATED PROCESSES

The casino business is highly regulated, making it especially important to find outsourcing partners and financial systems that support the needs of a regulated entity, respect tribal sovereignty, and provide solutions flexible enough to adapt to those needs.

Turning to an off-the-shelf software solution and attempting to implement it on your own might sound like a good idea — but after months of trying to implement it, you may realize that a subject matter expert is invaluable for meeting the regulatory requirements of the tribal casino industry. With outsourced accounting, you will have assistance in implementing a cloud-based platform that's tailored to your organization as well as accountants who know how to use it.

4. INTEGRATING FRONT-OF-HOUSE SOLUTIONS FOR STREAMLINED REVENUE AUDITS

Ideally, your financial platform should gather data on all your revenue streams in one place. You should be able to see your gaming income, food and beverage sales, hotel earnings and other ancillary revenues.

Finding an ERP platform with a robust API to allow for integration with front-of-house platforms can be a game-changer. Sage Intacct allows you to pull daily revenue data from various systems into your general ledger system seamlessly. You can also compare actual revenue to metered data or actuals from the same period last year for easy comparative reporting and anomaly detection.

5. LEVERAGING OUTSOURCED ACCOUNTING SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

We've talked about several benefits of working with an outsourced accounting and tech team to implement a cloud-based ERP. Once complete, you can continue to use outsourced accounting for:

- Advanced budgeting needs
- Data integration work that ties together various sources of key financial data
- Ongoing financial analysis
- Perspective to make real-time business decisions
- Enhanced financial reporting
- Support to expand your in-house accounting team

Redefining the Casino Experience:
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The casino floor has always been a dynamic environment, where timing and experience matter. But as guest expectations and technology have rapidly evolved, the need for faster, more personalized engagement has never been greater. Today's operators want insights they can act on immediately, not after the fact.

That's where IGT comes in.

With contextual real-time data, IGT is helping casino operators move from reactive to proactive, reimagining the possibilities for guest engagement, operational efficiencies, and revenue potential. From marketing and loyalty to slot performance and guest services, properties can now move in sync with their players, not behind them.

> " IGT ADVANTAGE X with **real-time** event services **flips the script** "

THE OLD WAY ❯
Playing Catch-Up in a Fast-Paced World

When marketing teams rely solely on end-of-day reports and post-trip play history to guide their campaigns, they miss an opportunity to reach a guest within a trip. By the time a campaign hits, the guest is already gone and often, so is the chance to influence their behavior.

The lag doesn't just slow down operations. It impacts revenue. The cost of acquiring new players is significantly higher than retaining existing ones. Without timely data, even loyal players could be overlooked, and new opportunities often slip through the cracks.

THE NEW WAY ❯
Real-Time Intelligence, Real Results

IGT ADVANTAGE X with real-time event services flips the script. With access to real-time, spin-level slot data, operations teams are empowered to make timely, high-impact decisions that directly improve the player experience. Imagine being able to instantly see when a high-limit player increases their bet, triggers a bonus round, or is on a losing streak and then responding with a targeted reward, a host visit, or a comp offer. These small moments, when captured in real time, add up to stronger engagement and better outcomes.

Real-time game data also helps optimize the slot floor itself. Casinos can identify underperforming machines, reallocate resources, or react to sudden spikes in player demand, as it's happening, not hours or days later.

And the benefits extend beyond known players. Real-time analytics help identify behavioral patterns among uncarded guests, enabling

new strategies for converting anonymous play into tracked, rated activity. Paired with live service alerts, staff can also be notified the moment a machine needs attention, or a VIP guest shows signs of play decline, allowing teams to intervene before the experience slips.

From the marketing team to slot operations and guest services, IGT is giving casinos the tools to act in real time to deepen relationships, enhance loyalty, and ultimately drive better outcomes.

IGT ADVANTAGE X

The Next Generation of CMS is Here ❯

What used to be aspirational is now operational. From player tracking systems to digital displays, loyalty platforms to real-time operational dashboards, IGT's ecosystem is fully integrated and designed to put real-time data to work in every corner of the casino.

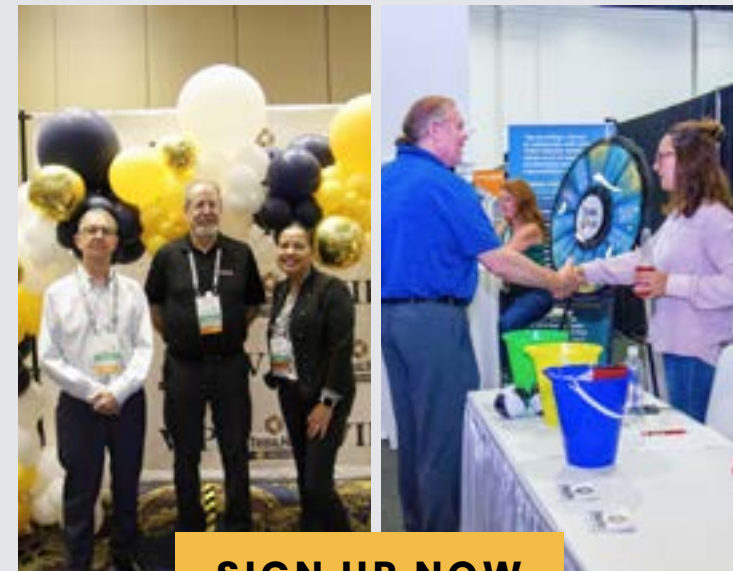> " IGT's ecosystem is **fully integrated** and **designed** to put **real-time data to work** "

The spin-level data is there. The platform is ready. What happens next depends entirely on how quickly operators embrace what's now possible. ∎

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A strong culture of cybersecurity goes beyond policy — it's about mindset and muscle memory. It means that everyone, from the receptionist to the CEO, understands that security is part of their job. It means employees question unusual requests, verify links, and think twice before forwarding sensitive documents. It means they care.

Culture isn't built by accident. It's built intentionally — through leadership, clear communication, and continuous training.

PROACTIVE TRAINING IS A GAME CHANGER

Most organizations offer security training once a year to check a compliance box. That's not enough. Real change happens through ongoing, proactive education: monthly micro-trainings, simulated phishing attacks, real-world breach breakdowns, and open conversations about threats. The goal isn't just knowledge — it's behavior change. The best training is interactive, relevant, and rooted in real-world scenarios. Employees shouldn't be scared into compliance — they should be empowered to become active participants in the organization's defense.

THE PAYOFF IS MEASURABLE

Companies that invest in human-centric security programs see measurable results:

- Lower click rates on phishing tests
- Fewer incidents tied to credential misuse
- Faster reporting of suspicious behavior
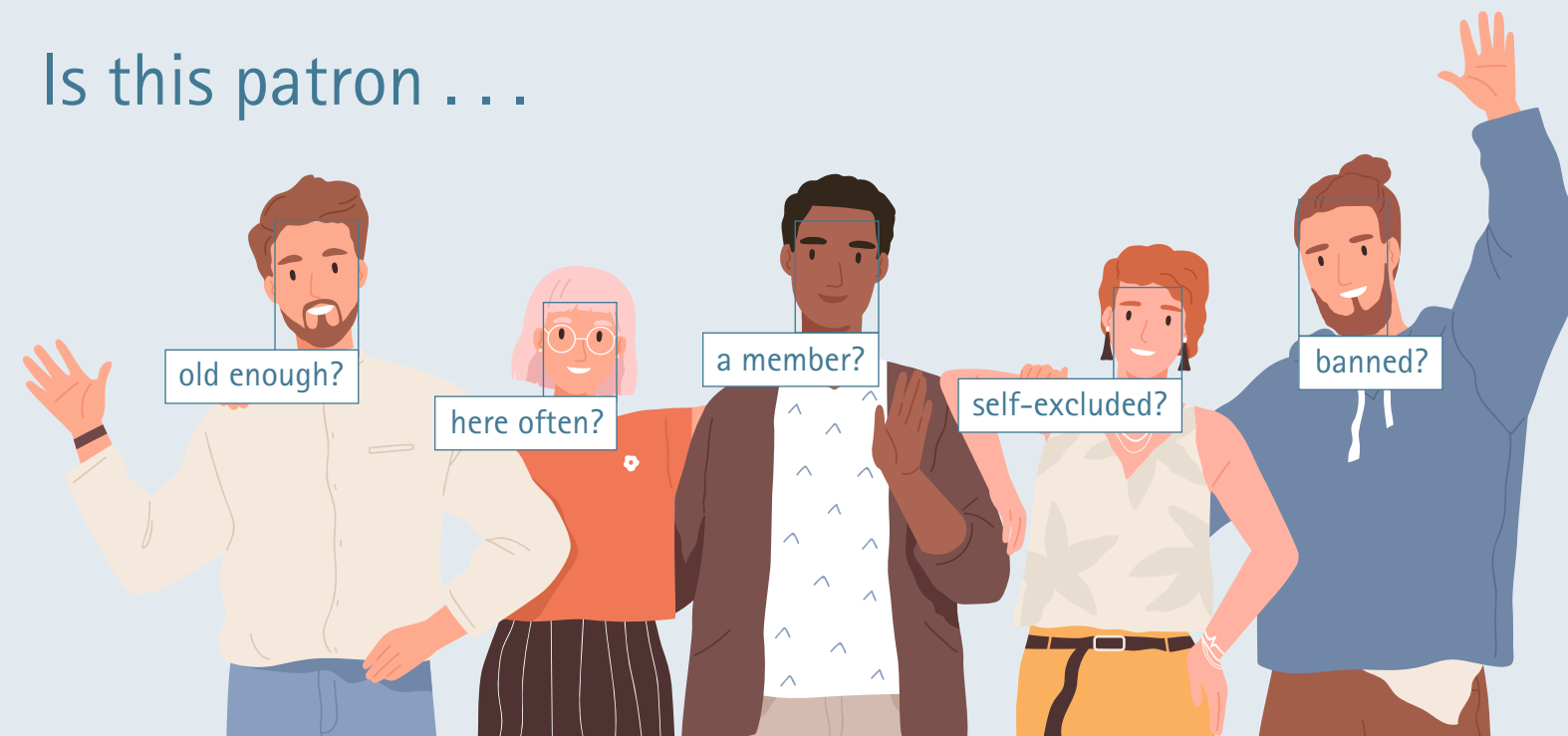- And, ultimately, fewer breaches

Even more, they create trust — internally and externally. Clients and partners want to work with organizations that take security seriously at every level. A strong security culture is not just a defense mechanism — it's a competitive advantage.

BOTTOM LINE: CYBERSECURITY IS EVERYONE'S JOB

We need to stop thinking of cybersecurity as something owned by IT or the security team. In today's threat landscape, every employee is part of the attack surface — and part of the solution. That means building a culture where people aren't afraid to ask questions, where mistakes are used as learning moments, and where security is woven into the day-to-day fabric of the business.

Human error will never be eliminated entirely — but with the right culture, the right training, and the right leadership, its impact can be dramatically reduced. In cybersecurity, your people are either your weakest link — or your strongest defense. The choice is yours.

BY

MIKE MILLER
VCISO
APPALACHIA TECHNOLOGIES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Miller is a Chief Information Security Officer for Appalachia Technologies. For over 25 years, Mike has specialized in both offensive and defensive cybersecurity, and GRC (Governance, Risk, and Compliance). He has served as an effective liaison between technology and stakeholders, for organizations of all sizes. Mike continues to follow his passion by helping organizations understand business risk and strategically aligning a company's security posture to protect it.

THE REAL THREAT IN CYBERSECURITY ISN'T HACKERS
— IT'S HUMAN ERROR

When most people think of cybersecurity breaches, they imagine hackers in hoodies, sophisticated malware, or zero-day exploits. The truth is, most breaches don't start with a complex attack. They start with a mistake. A misclick. A reused password. An untrained employee.

HUMAN ERROR IS THE #1 THREAT VECTOR

Study after study confirms this reality: human error is responsible for the majority of cybersecurity breaches. Over 70 percent of breaches happen because of human mistakes, such as falling for phishing emails, misconfiguring cloud environments, or clicking on malicious links. Even the most advanced security tech stack in the world can't compensate for a workforce that hasn't been trained or supported to think securely.

The greatest risk to your organization's security isn't the outside attacker — it's someone inside your company making an honest mistake.

CYBERSECURITY CULTURE > CYBERSECURITY TOOLS

You can spend millions on firewalls, SIEM platforms, and vulnerability scanners, but without a cybersecurity-aware culture, you're just putting a high-end lock on a wide-open door.

SPECIAL THANK YOU

To Our Dedicated TribalNet Advisory Board Members

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Our engaged Advisory Boards are your peers from tribes across the nation! They help to guide our direction and ensure Tribalnet is bringing attendees the content that matters the most.

"The advisory boards are a great representation of those in the audience each year at TribalNet. It's their effort that gives us the opportunity to host an event that boasts such diverse and valuable sessions for technology-minded individuals at tribes and enterprises nationwide. A big thanks to them for committing their time to making this year's event a must-attend!" **Shannon Bouschor, Director of Operations, TribalHub**

AGENCY UPDATE

FCC Program Updates

TO ASK QUESTIONS OR SEEK TRIBAL CONSULTATION, WRITE TO:
Native@fcc.gov

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:
FCC.gov/Native

FCC Tribal Consultation announced on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 Process of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and ONAP announced in Public Notice (DA 25-538) an opportunity on July 15, 2025, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EDT for federally-recognized Tribal Nations and Native Hawaiian Organizations to consult with FCC staff regarding the NEPA and the Section 106 process of the NHPA. Visit ONAP's Events webpage for more details.

FCC Seeks Submission of 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Fee Collection Data
The Wireline Competition Bureau is requesting that states, political subdivisions, tribes, and Alaska Native villages and regional corporations to submit information on their jurisdiction's authority to collect 988 fees or charges, the amount of revenue collected from the 988 fee or charge, and how the revenue collected from the 988 fee or charge was used, covering the period from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. The deadline is July 17, 2025. Read more here.

Available: Video and Handouts for MEP Webinar
On May 6, 2025, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau co-hosted a webinar on the Missing Endangered Person (MEP) emergency alert code. This informational opportunity described the MEP Emergency Alert System (EAS) event code. The MEP code could facilitate the delivery of missing and endangered person alerts. By creating a unique EAS event code for missing and endangered person alerts, it may enable a more rapid and coordinated response to incidents. The video and handouts are posted on the FCC's MEP Code webpage.

FCC Eliminates Administrative Burden for Broadband Data Filers
During the FCC's June Open Meeting, the FCC took action on a Report and Order (FCC 25-34) that changed previous FCC rules requiring a "certified professional engineer" to certify a provider's data in the biannual Broadband Data Collection filings. The updated requirement entails having the provider's data certified by a "qualified engineer" who is familiar with the design of the network and has a minimum number of years of experience. In practice, very few engineers specializing in RF engineering and broadband network design are "certified" by a state licensure board, thus making it difficult and costly for providers to meet the certification requirement. FCC's action provides clarity, reduces costs for filers, and removes the need for additional waivers.

FCC Welcomes Commissioner Olivia Trusty
On June 17, 2025, FCC Chairman Carr released a statement congratulating Olivia Trusty, who was nominated by President Donald J. Trump, for her successful U.S. Senate confirmation to serve a five-year term as an FCC Commissioner and expressed, "I am confident that her deep expertise and knowledge will enable her to hit the ground running, and she will be an exceptionally effective FCC Commissioner."

MOTIVATION MADNESS

ARE YOU "MOTIVATING" YOURSELF WITH A WHIP OR WITH COMPASSION?

BY
D.J. VANAS
SPEAKER, BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, PRODUCER AND OWNER OF NATIVE DISCOVERY INC

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

D.J. Vanas is a celebrated speaker, best-selling author and host of the PBS special Discovering Your Warrior Spirit. A member of the Ottawa Tribe and former Air Force officer, he shows people and organizations how to emulate traditional warrior principles to get better results in life, leadership and service to others. He can be found at: www.nativediscovery.com

I grew up learning to motivate myself with harsh corrections, cajoling, threats, and at times, insults. All that mattered was getting to the finish line. I came from a generation taught by coaches who'd say, "Walk it off" to almost any injury — or my favorite line from my high school soccer coach: "Rub some dirt on it." This tough-guy language was part of my family culture, my schooling, and even my service in the military. How many of us fall prey to the "24/7 crushing it" culture, where you're either killing it or failing, always on the grind and to do any less is weakness? I sense many of you readers squirming as you consider that uncomfortable truth.

Coming from this conditioning, I could force myself to any level of achievement. And I did. On paper, the narrative was there in full glory: loads of accomplishments, a prestigious education, many accolades and huge wins… but I paid dearly for it, and so did those I love. I struggled with self-inflicted anxiety, stress, and constant feelings of overwhelm. After years of deep personal work and learning new ways to navigate my life, I now motivate myself with compassion, self-coaching, encouragement, and at times, tenderness.

It has made all the difference.

I used to fear that motivating myself in a kinder way would make me complacent, lazy, or soft. I was concerned that I'd no longer have ambition or a drive for achievement. Not only was I completely wrong,

but I also desperately needed this hard pivot. I was in the middle of a painful separation that led to divorce, trying to pay all the bills in two households with a crushed-down business, creating a nationally-aired PBS special, and crafting a proposal that led to getting a contract to write my book, "The Warrior Within" — all during a pandemic. I was heartbroken, scared, and stressed out of my mind. I was at a tipping point. Or rather, facing a breaking point. I had to manage my life differently and adding pressure to pressure wasn't going to work this time, if it ever really did.
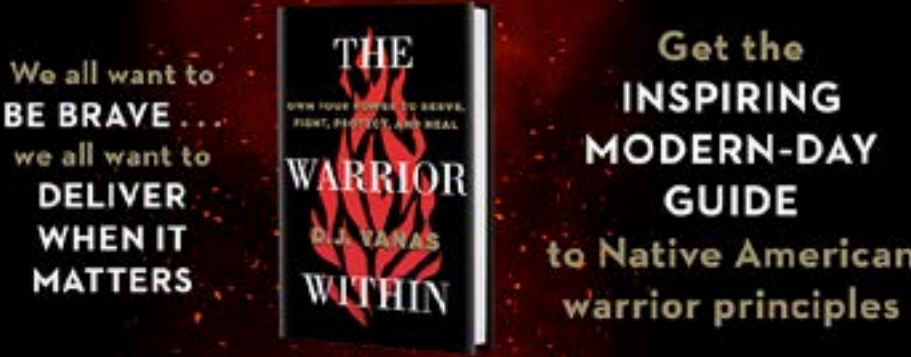
So, I stopped.

It was one of the best decisions I've ever made for myself. I started taking breaks, moving slower, carving out quiet time, doing things that created joy in me, prioritizing adequate sleep, exercising and eating purposefully. I stopped watching the news and instead started reading things that lifted me up. I worked the first half of the day and took the second half to be outdoors, regardless of how much work I still had left to do. That alone was tantamount to blasphemy in the context of my old "work until exhausted" mantra. Most importantly, I started talking to myself like I would talk to a friend and found my inner voice was no longer like the drill instructor from the movie Full Metal Jacket and more like the goofy, lovable coach Ted Lasso. I started working with — not against — the energy of the day. I embraced my

inner voice, which guided me to what I needed and instructed me on how to bring out my best.

And it worked.

Leading myself with compassion has not only birthed work results that are better than ever before — chock full of deeper insights, higher-quality and more creative work – but I'm also enjoying my journey more than I ever thought possible, with a sense of peace and inner balance I've never known before. And I know the people around me can feel it too. Choose your motivational fuel — pain or love — both can get results, but the costs for the former are just not worth the exchange. Motivating with love is priceless and provides a steady, sustainable (and enjoyable) leveling up as we engage in our work and service to others. It's never too late to learn and to do better.

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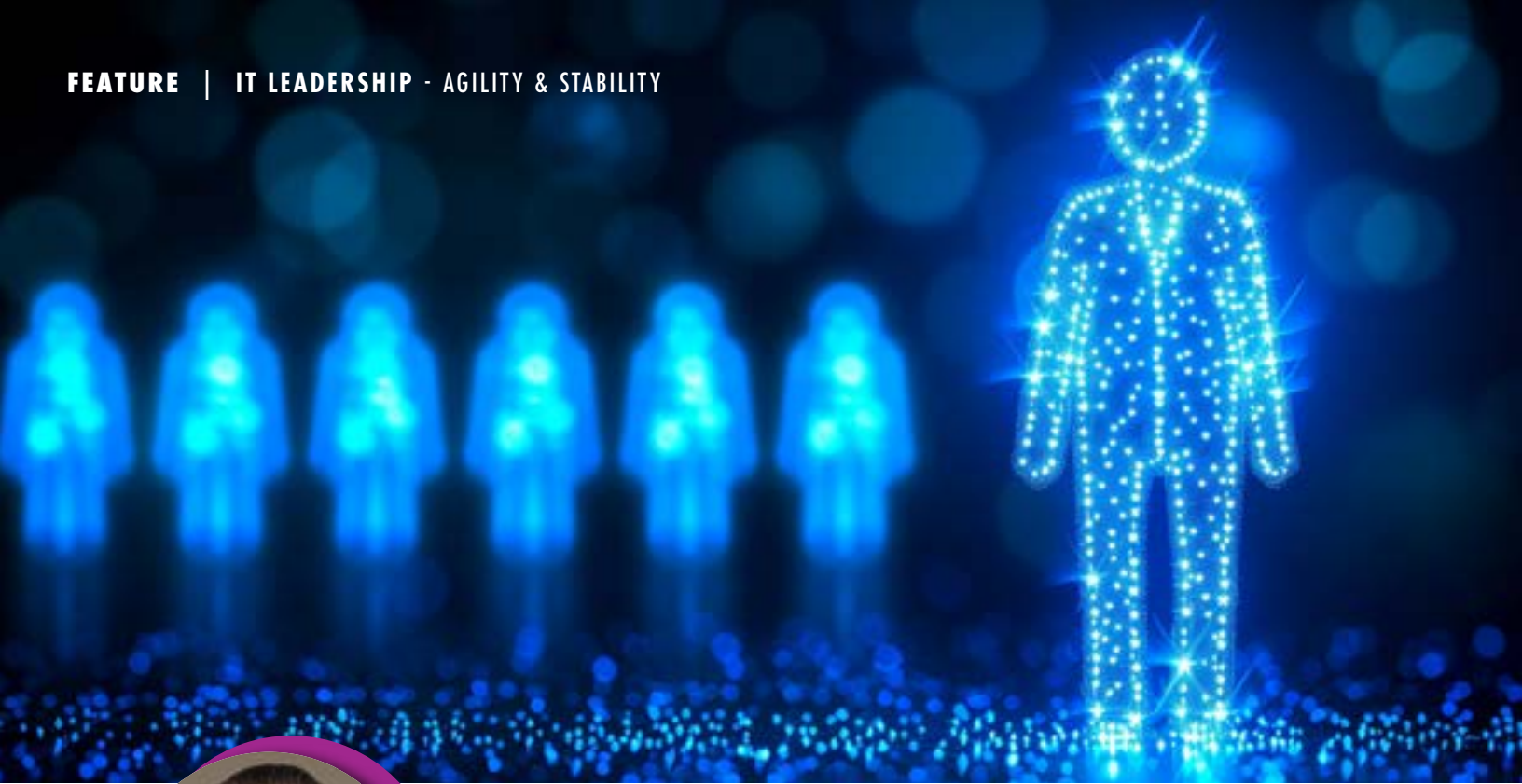
BY

ROBBY JAKOVLJEVIC
DIRECTOR OF IT
PASKENTA BAND OF NOMLAKI INDIANS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am a dedicated IT professional with a passion for cybersecurity and a proven track record of driving positive change in both people and systems. With a keen eye for trends and a relentless commitment to enhancing operations, I inspire individuals and teams to thrive in both business and life while ensuring the utmost security of digital assets. My career is marked by a deep focus on cybersecurity, where I have consistently improved customer experiences, provided critical research and analysis, and played a pivotal role in system design and implementation with a strong emphasis on safeguarding against cyber threats. As an IT Director, I have elevated IT infrastructure, policies, and processes, working collaboratively with stakeholders to support business growth while enhancing the organization's cybersecurity posture with new resources and guidance.

From Fortress to Nervous System:
The New Mandate for IT Leadership

I often reflect on our role as IT leaders. My career, spanning logistics, ski resorts, and casinos, has given me a front-row seat to massive technological shifts. It has led me to a critical question: **Are we, as IT leaders, enabling our businesses to be agile, or is our diligence in maintaining stability inadvertently constraining them?** This isn't a critique, but rather a quiet conversation I feel many of us are having: Are we truly serving our organizations today, and more importantly, will we continue to do so tomorrow?

ARE WE TRULY SERVING OUR ORGANIZATIONS?

Historically, our mandate was noble: secure the data, maintain the infrastructure, and keep the lights on. We built robust, often rigid, defenses out of a deep commitment to stability, acting as the dependable backbone of businesses. This was — and in many ways still is — essential. However, I believe our role must evolve. **We are no longer just a fortress wall; we must become the organization's nervous system.**

A nervous system doesn't just protect. It senses, communicates, and coordinates, enabling the entire body to adapt and thrive. It translates sensory input — such as market intelligence, customer feedback, and internal metrics — into intelligent action. This shift from a reactive "guardian" to a proactive, integrative "nervous system" is a fundamental transformation of our purpose. If the nervous system is slow or siloed, the entire business suffers a form of sensory deprivation, becoming dangerously slow to adapt.

WHEN "KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON" DIMS PROGRESS

For too long, IT has been viewed as a cost center, our value measured in disasters prevented, not opportunities created. This perspective is limiting, fostering a vicious cycle. Being seen as a cost leads to underinvestment, which makes it harder to demonstrate strategic value. In this context, we become custodians of a museum, not architects of the future. I've seen this firsthand in complex enterprises, where a lack of unified technology direction hinders growth. When cloud migration is off-limits and data collection is manual, marketing can't get timely sales data, finance can't perform predictive modeling, and operations can't see the holistic customer journey. We become viewed as the friction before the end goal.

The cautionary tales of BlackBerry and Blockbuster serve as stark warnings. These companies didn't fail due to a lack of resources, but rather from an inability to innovate and embrace digital transformation. The "old school" IT leader, acting solely as a technical gatekeeper, is becoming a dying breed. Our organizations don't just need gatekeepers; they need guides, navigators, and strategic partners.

RIDING THE WAVES OF CLOUD, AI, AND REAL-TIME INSIGHT

Conversations around Cloud and AI often get lost in jargon, but their business value is simple. The cloud is a scalable, accessible platform needed to power the AI that drives modern business. Yet, our organizations are often drowning in data while starving for wisdom. We capture every transaction, but can't alert a host in real-time that a high-value guest just walked in. That missed opportunity isn't just a technology failure; it's a hospitality failure. We miss the chance to make a loyal guest feel seen and valued.

The key is real-time data integration. We must break down silos and orchestrate seamless data flows from all sources. This urgency exists because instant access to data drives faster decisions, enables the hyper-personalization customers expect, and powers the AI models that deliver competitive insights. Our true value isn't as gatekeepers, but as strategic navigators, guiding our organizations to adopt these technologies thoughtfully and securely, in full alignment with business goals.

EMBRACING THE FULL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Deep technical expertise remains vital, but today it must be paired with equally deep **business acumen**. It's no longer enough to understand system architecture; we must understand our business's architecture — from the P&L to the operational realities of every department. Our success must be measured by tangible business outcomes. **Did we increase revenue, improve retention, or enhance productivity?**

To do this, we must become "bilingual" — **fluent in the languages of both technology and business,** able to translate server latency into its impact on booking abandonment rates. As the nervous system, IT must be a proactive, **cross-functional collaborator.** This means initiating conversations, not waiting for trouble tickets. We must listen to our colleagues' challenges and co-create solutions. A lack of this proactive engagement leads to "shadow IT" — a desperate search for agility that creates security vulnerabilities and data black holes.

LEADING WITH HEART IN A DATA-DRIVEN WORLD

In a data-driven world, it may seem counterintuitive to emphasize soft skills, but I believe **empathy, active listening, and genuine care** are now non-negotiable leadership competencies for IT. Our role must be like marketing, not advertising. Advertising is just broadcasting a message, like resolving tickets. Marketing is holistic; it involves research, relationship-building, and a deep understanding of needs to co-create value.

Our technical expertise gives us credibility, but empathy builds the trust that shifts the dynamic from "us vs. them" to a collaborative "we." Our role isn't just reacting to pain signals; it's proactively enhancing the organization's capabilities.

As an example, imagine the possibilities in the gaming industry: interactive story-based slots where a player's choices create a unique narrative arc; AI-enhanced table games where the dealer can offer friendly tips to a novice player or present a stiffer challenge to an expert; or casino-wide quests that turn a simple visit into an adventurous, gamified experience. These ideas are born not from a technical checklist, but from an empathetic fusion of what is possible with what is desired.

A CALL TO EVOLVE, TOGETHER

My friends and colleagues, the message is clear: the ground has shifted, and the traditional IT playbook is no longer sufficient. This isn't a eulogy for the IT leader; it's a fervent call to rebirth. **We have an unprecedented opportunity to move from the server room to the boardroom as indispensable strategic leaders.**

This evolution requires courage, a commitment to learning, a deep understanding of business, and profound empathy. The journey isn't easy, but I have immense faith in our collective ingenuity and resilience. Let's support each other, sharing our successes and knowledge. **When we evolve from preventing failure to crafting success, our organizations will thrive.**

Listen to the TribalHub podcast with Adam Gruszcynski, IT Director for the Potawatomi Casino Hotel on Leadership: *Onsite at the Midwest Regional: Leadership, Tribal Tech—and a Bit of Flavor with Adam Gruszcynski*

AGENCY UPDATE

FirstNet: Expanding Broadband Coverage Across Tribal Lands

BY JACQUE WARING
Tribal Liaison, First Responder Network Authority
Jacque.Waring@firstnet.gov

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FIRSTNET AUTHORITY'S ONGOING WORK WITH TRIBAL COMMUNITIES, VISIT
FirstNet.gov/tribal

FirstNet Authority

Access to broadband technology has been a challenge across Indian Country, sometimes impacting the ability of tribal first responders to protect and serve their communities. The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) was created to deliver a nationwide broadband network for public safety, including those agencies operating in rural and tribal areas.

Network buildout supports tribal public safety

Since 2018, the FirstNet Authority's network contractor, AT&T, has made significant progress in building out this nationwide network, known as FirstNet. According to AT&T, more than 575 new cell towers serving tribal nations have launched since the beginning of the FirstNet build, expanding wireless coverage on tribal lands by more than 64%.

These sites provide coverage for public safety operations and when not in use by responders, can provide connectivity to tribal residents — boosting both safety and communications for the broader tribal community.

$2 billion investment to expand coverage

The FirstNet Authority continues to invest in the network, including expanding coverage on tribal lands and in rural communities. Our objective is to extend coverage to all areas where public safety agencies operate.

To guide this effort, we are hosting Coverage Enhancement Workshops in each state and territory. These collaborative sessions provide state, local, and tribal officials the opportunity to provide feedback on their public safety coverage needs.

Additionally, our team is working closely with tribal associations represented on our Tribal Advisory Group to deliver Coverage Enhancement Workshops for tribal agencies in specific regions. We will continue to plan regional meetings and specific meetings with individual tribes.

We encourage public safety personnel — whether FirstNet subscribers or not — to attend these workshops and share their unique communications needs. Public safety officials know best where their teams need coverage — your input is critical as we continue to expand the network.

Reach out to make your voice heard

Public safety has always been the guiding voice behind FirstNet. The FirstNet Authority team remains committed to engaging with public safety officials across the nation to capture their needs and reflect those in network upgrades and coverage expansions.

If you have specific coverage needs or concerns, or if you would like to participate in a Coverage Enhancement Workshop, please reach out to me at Jacque.Waring@firstnet.gov. We will bring you into the process and ensure your community is heard as we work with AT&T to build a stronger, more reliable network for first responders across the nation.

THE TRIBALHUB PODCAST

Listen to the TribalHub podcast with Gabriel Cook, IT Director for the Suquamish Tribe to explore the rollout process of a tribally owned fiber network: *Wired for Sovereignty: Inside the Suquamish Tribe's Fiber Rollout*

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WHY VISIT OUR BOOTH AT TRIBALNET 2025
Please join us in a private room that will have Copilot training and Q&A. Room to be assigned. Look for Minburn Technology Group.

QUOTES/TESTIMONIALS/REFERENCES FROM CUSTOMERS
Our customers say that we have been their partners through their Microsoft contracts and love that we respond within hours for a million-dollar contract or 50 dollars. We are dedicated to providing the best customer service and interaction that you and we expect to receive.

Sunday Funday

26TH ANNUAL
TRIBALNET
CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW
BY ◆ TRIBALHUB

The TribalNet Conference & Tradeshow isn't just another conference—it's an experience. So why not kick off your conference week by joining us for connection and community at one or both of these great networking events!

Join us for Sunday Funday on September 14, 2025!

4th Annual Tribal-ISAC Golf Outing
A Day of HACKtivism - Fore the love of Tribal-ISAC

September 14, 2025 • 9 AM PT
The Club at Arrow Creek - Challenge Course

Tee up for a cause! This 4-person scramble supports the mission of the Tribal Information Sharing and Analysis Center (Tribal-ISAC)—advancing the cybersecurity posture of tribes nationwide.

There is no cost for this event, but registration is required for anyone interested in playing! Register now and start working on that swing! Transportation will be provided! Go to TribalISAC.org for details and to register.

REGISTER NOW | **TRIBALISAC.ORG**

TribalNet Boat Cruise on Lake Tahoe

September 14, 2025 • 5 PM PT
Aboard the M.S. Dixie on Lake Tahoe

Climb aboard the M.S Dixie as we cruise Lake Tahoe for an incredible way to kick off the conference week! Soak in breathtaking views of Lake Tahoe at sunset—complete with appetizers, drinks, music, and great company. You'll share stories and make memories that last well beyond the conference.

A ticket for the TribalNet Boat Cruise must be purchased separately through TribalHub. Transportation from golf or Grand Sierra and back will be provided. Visit TribalHub.com/events/ for details.

REGISTER NOW | **TRIBALHUB.COM**

BY
JESSICA GULICK
FOUNDER AND CEO
CYBERSECURITY GROWTH HACKER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica, a cybersecurity expert with 25+ years of experience, champions workforce development through cyber games. She founded the US Cyber Games, US Cyber Team, and US Women's Cyber Team. She hosted the 2023 IC3 and Global Cyber Games and founded Wicked6. Jessica holds an MBA, PMP, and CISSP.

SECURING THE FUTURE:
How Cyber & AI Can Empower Tribal Nations

O ur digital future offers unprecedented cybersecurity threats, yet it also presents opportunities for connection, economic development, and cultural preservation. For tribal nations facing unique challenges in accessing educational resources and economic pathways, cybersecurity is not just a technical issue — it's an innovative and engaging educational opportunity that can transform lives by providing more opportunities.

A critical gap exists in cybersecurity education within Indigenous communities. **Only about 59% of Indigenous students attend schools that offer a computer science course, a number that plummets to a mere 20% for high schools on reservations.** This stark reality underscores an urgent need for innovative and accessible solutions. This is where cybersecurity games and leagues can play a transformative role, offering a dynamic and engaging path to empower tribal nations in the digital age.

Cybergames are not just for students; they can also help adults who are pivoting or re-entering the workforce. Micro-credentials, game metrics, and win rates can be cited on resumes and in interviews to demonstrate skills in meaningful ways.

THE POWER OF PLAY: GAMIFYING CYBERSECURITY EDUCATION

A traditional classroom setting may not resonate with every learner, especially when engaging with a complex and abstract subject like cybersecurity. This is where the inherent power of games, esports, and sports shines. Cybersecurity games transform abstract concepts into tangible, hands-on learning experiences; instead of passively absorbing information, participants actively engage in simulated cyber scenarios, learning by doing as a team. They might be tasked with defending a virtual network, identifying vulnerabilities, or thwarting a simulated cyberattack.

This hands-on approach offers several key advantages:

• **Learn to Play:** Many cybersecurity games are designed to be accessible, with varying levels of difficulty that cater to beginners and experienced individuals alike. Similar to PC games, there is a low barrier to entry. Dedicated communities help provide an immersive experience that increases the speed and depth of learning.

• **Play to Learn:** Games provide immediate feedback, allowing learners to quickly understand the consequences of their actions and refine their strategies. Furthermore, many games require learning open source and enterprise tools, providing real skills.

• **Engagement and Motivation:** The competitive and problem-solving nature of games inherently motivates participants. The thrill of discovery, the challenge of overcoming obstacles, and the satisfaction of winning keep learners engaged and eager to deepen their knowledge.

• **Safe Learning Environment:** Cybersecurity can have serious real-world implications. Games provide a safe, sandboxed environment where learners can experiment, make mistakes, and learn from them without risking actual systems or data.

BUILDING A PIPELINE: CYBERSECURITY LEAGUES AS PATHWAYS TO CAREERS

Imagine establishing a dedicated league that provides a learning experience by fostering teamwork, strategic thinking, and sustained engagement. What if there was a Tribal Cyber & AI Training League that provided a supportive place for professionals to learn, play, and explore careers. A structured environment that mirrors real-world cybersecurity and network team operations. Set up similarly to a sports program, there could be a season for training, a season for gaming, and a final tribal championship game. If this speaks to you, please reach out. We are actively looking for help to make this a reality!

Cyber and AI leagues represent an innovative and effective strategy for empowering tribal nations in the digital age. By transforming complex subject matter into engaging, hands-on experiences, these initiatives can accelerate learning, remove barriers, and cultivate a new generation of skilled cybersecurity professionals. This, in turn, fosters economic growth, strengthens sovereignty, protects cultural heritage, and contributes to the broader national security landscape. Investing in these programs is an investment in a secure and prosperous future for tribal nations.

CTF

At TribalNet – be sure to sign up for the CTF event happening Tuesday 9/16

AGENCY UPDATE

FEMA: Announces 10th Tribal Training Week at its Center for Domestic Preparedness

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER, SEND AN EMAIL TO FEMA-
FEMA-TribalNationsCDP@FEMA.DHS.GOV

FOR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT
RubyDawn Manning (256)419-3985

The Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) will host the Tribal Nations Training Week during the week of Sept. 20 – 27, on the CDP campus in Anniston, AL. CDP training is completely funded for state, local, tribal and territorial emergency responders to include roundtrip airfare, meals, lodging, tuition and any equipment required during training.

The training week was planned entirely by Tribal subject matter experts keeping Tribal Nations resilience response and planning at the forefront. There will be a feast and Opening Ceremonies Sunday to welcome visitors from across Indian Country.

The Training Week theme is "Protecting Traditions by Building Capabilities Through Partnerships".

Ten training tracks for the week will provide the Tribal Nation attendees the skills needed for Tribal emergency management, planning, response, and recovery. Training from medical to explosives awareness; instructor training to managing public information, there is training available for all levels of Tribal government, planning and response.

Upon successful completion, participants will be able to build more resiliency into Tribes across the country and receive training certifications.

There will be additional evening events including sessions with FEMA Regional Tribal Liaisons and FEMA Integrated Team Members, Strategic National Stockpile Team information session, an evening for networking to create a disaster compact for Tribal Nations CDP Alumni, and an evening reserved for Tribal attendees to showcase their creativity and network.

Ten Training Tracks for the week include:

- EXECUTIVE: Executive Training Track (EXECUTIVE25TNTW)
- CYBER: Cyber Preparedness Training (CYBER25TNTW)
- EXERCISE: Exercise Training and Development (HSEEP25TNTW)
- HCL: Healthcare Leadership and Integrated Capstone Event (HCL25TNTW)
- HERT: Hospital Emergency Response Training for Mass Casualty Incidents, Train-the-Trainer, and Integrated Capstone Event (HERT25TNTW)
- ITC: Instructor Training Course (ITC25TNTW)
- MPI: Managing Public Information (MPI25TNTW)
- CURRICULUM: Emergency Management Framework for Tribal Governments: L-580 (TRIBAL25TNTW)
- FLAME: Flammables & Explosives Track (FLAME25TNTW)
- EMERGE: Emergency Response Guidelines & Engagement (EMERGE25TNTW)

Registration Instructions: Visit the CDP website at https://cdp.dhs.gov/training, and enter one of the tracks promo codes from above.

26TH ANNUAL
TRIBALNET
CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW
BY TRIBALHUB

SEPTEMBER 14–18, 2025
Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, NV

Are You Sending Your Team?

Attending TribalNet helps YOU uncover cost-saving strategies, strengthen cybersecurity, and explore technology solutions designed specifically for tribal organizations. One connection or solution at TribalNet could save your tribe thousands.

7 Unique Tracks
Nearly 40+ sessions across these tracks:
- General Technology
- Cybersecurity
- AI's Revolution
- Leadership/Executive
- Tribal Gaming & Hospitality Technology
- Tribal Government Technology
- Tribal Health Information Management

5 Networking Events
- Sunday Morning Annual Tribal-ISAC Golf Outing
- Sunday Evening Lake Tahoe Boat Cruise
- Monday Night Meet & Greet Event
- Tuesday Night Cocktail Hour
- Wednesday Night Cocktail Hour

2 Day Tradeshow Floor
Featuring 200+ technology vendors who vendors who support and understand working with tribal governments, health facilities, casinos, and enterprises.

Members ALWAYS get more at TribalNet! Not a member yet? Reach out to Tiffany for info!

REGISTER NOW – TRIBALHUB.COM/EVENTS

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MEET
Ink & Toner Alternative

ITA
INK & TONER ALTERNATIVE

OUR MESSAGE TO TRIBES/ENTERPRISES
ITA is more than a printer supply company; we are a trusted partner to tribal communities and enterprises. For decades, we've delivered reliable, affordable printing solutions backed by personal service and a deep commitment to the people we serve.

Whether you need a new printer, ongoing supplies, or fast, local repairs, we're here to keep your operations running smoothly. We proudly offer free printer repairs (with toner purchase) for tribal members and organizations in Michigan, northern Indiana, and northern Ohio — because your success is our priority.

When you think of Ink & Toner Alternative, think of a partner who understands your needs, values your time, and shows up with solutions you can count on.

PRODUCTS/SERVICES
At ITA, we offer a full range of printing solutions designed to support the daily operations of tribal communities, enterprises, schools, and health centers. Our goal is to provide cost-effective, dependable service that helps you focus on what matters most.

Our offerings include:

- **Desktop Printers** – We supply high-quality, reliable printers that are easy to use and maintain, perfect for offices, classrooms, and community spaces.

- **Ink & Toner Supplies** – Michigan-made, affordable, top-performing cartridges for all major brands. We help you save money without sacrificing quality.

- **Preventative Maintenance & Free Printer Repairs (with toner purchase)** – Available to tribal members and organizations in Michigan, northern Indiana, and northern Ohio. We help reduce downtime and unexpected costs.

- **Consultation & Support** – We work closely with your team to recommend the best equipment and supplies for your needs and budget.

Our services are built around trust, efficiency, and long-term partnerships. We're here to help you stay productive and prepared, every step of the way.

BY
CHRISTOPHER FARRIS
IT SENIOR DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION MANAGEMENT
CHOCTAW NATION

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher Farris is the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma IT Senior Director of Transformation Management. He has worked in Transformation, Sales Engineering and Operations for three decades. He served in the US Air Force, retired from the Army National Guard, and lives in Northwest Arkansas. He is not a hillbilly, yet.

THEY PROMISED THREE DAYS:
A Cautionary Tale for IT Professionals

This spring, Mother Nature dropped a tree limb on my wife's shiny, sparkling, "mostly perfect," red truck. It slammed onto the driver-side rear door, denting the roof line and marring the chrome. It could have been worse. No one died. The truck runs fine. It's just that, while still shiny and still red, it's no longer "mostly perfect." And if you're me, that's annoying.

So, here we go. I have a phone. There are repair shops down the road, and my insurance company claims to be my friend. I'm sure they'll be happy to hear from me. Plus, I've got whole minutes of time available. And money? I have some I haven't spent yet.

I make some calls.

I get my estimate: three days, I'm told, and not too costly. I schedule my drop-off, talk to my insurance friends, confirm all is good, and drop off the now-ugly truck for an early Monday morning start. Pickup date: Wednesday. That was six days ago.

Here's how the conversation went:

Them: "Your part isn't available."

Me: "Okay."

Them: "I mean, it's available but there's only one of them."

Me: "Okay?"

Them: "It's in Oklahoma."

Me: "Okay!"

Them: "They can't ship it."

Me: "Okay?"

Them: "I don't have a guy that can pick it up."

Me: "Okay."

Them: "We have to ship it ourselves."

Me: "Okaaay?"

Them: "Our shipping company is mad at us."

Me: Sigh. "Okay."

Them: "Also, it's going to be expensive…"

Me: "Oooookay."

In summary: It's going to be another two weeks, and more expensive than hoped.

I see this often in IT organizations. Our customers need help. They reach out, and we, eager to be of assistance, jump into the conversation. We float completion dates, possible costs, and a raft of potential benefits. We make promises. We rush into action. We engage the vendor, or write the code, or whatever it is we're excited to do. And then, predictably, those early promises — that rush to begin — lead to a mess. We find the technology doesn't do what we hoped, or we realize we didn't understand the customer's true needs. We didn't document anything, or we didn't develop a plan. Somehow, the dates slip, then the budgets overrun. We work harder. We muddle through. We perform, working heroically long hours, and, finally, deliver a working solution.

And, after all that, our customers, who we tried so hard to please, are unhappy. So are we.

Here are three ways we might have solved that:

1. Don't be an Order-Taker

Customers will tell you exactly what they want. It may not be what they need. Even the most technically savvy customer doesn't fully understand your organization's IT infrastructure, existing tools available for their use, or the full consequences of their desires. Take the time to advise, rather than react.

2. Scope it. Document it. Engage those who know.

Decide the full scope of the project. Involve your customer(s), your technical support teams, and your vendors in the discussion. Bring them all together. Collaboration, transparency, and documentation up-front will save you confusion, missed due dates, and budget overruns on the backside.

3. Don't promise a due date.

It's too early. You have requirements to gather, vendors to wrangle, and resources to align. Definitely listen, and note the customer's requested due date, but don't commit until you know you can. You only get one chance to keep a promise. Broken trust is hard to repair.

Here's my final thought.

Sometimes…slow is fast. Don't rush through the early discussions. Understanding takes time. Gather what you need, the consensus, the tools, dollars, plans, executive buy-in, etc… before you launch the project. Your customers, even the impatient ones, will thank you later.

This brings me back to my wife's truck. I can live without the truck for another fourteen days. The insurance company will cover the cost overrun (probably). I don't like being cranky, so I force myself to visualize a time and place when my wife's vehicle will once again be shiny, sparkling, "mostly perfect," and still red. I can see them handing the keys back to her while I thank them for doing beautiful work. I can see it. I hold onto that moment with both hands. I'm looking for peace. But I'm not finding it. Why?

They told me three days!

If only the estimator had involved the parts guy or asked the vendor. If only they hadn't rushed to make promises. If only they'd slowed down at the beginning.

Unfortunately, they didn't. Now they have frustrated a customer.

Let's take the time to avoid frustrating ours.

AGENCY UPDATE

FBI: It is Never Too Late to Solve a Cold Case

BY: JULIA MICKEY LUCAS AND KIMBERLY FAULKNER

namus.nij.ojp.gov

It is never too late to solve a cold case. The FBI assists local and tribal agencies with deceased and missing persons cases. Each year in the United States, more than 4,400 unidentified persons die and approximately 100,000 people go missing. There are also 11,000 sets of unidentified human remains held by local agencies. Identification is critical to resolving these investigations.

The FBI's Deceased Persons Identification (DPI) Services provides fingerprint-based deceased identification services. Identification of the deceased preserves the individual's dignity, enables them to be buried and memorialized with their name, and provides resolution for family and friends. The FBI's Next Generation Identification (NGI) Missing Persons Services provides fingerprint enrollment in the NGI System for missing persons. Enrollment reduces the possibility that their fingerprints are already in the FBI's database, also called the NGI System, as an unknown decedent. The service helps resolve missing persons cases when fingerprints are submitted to the NGI System and a match is found to a civil, criminal, or deceased fingerprint. A missing person may be endangered, homeless, ill, or even deceased. The NGI Missing Persons Services provides an opportunity to bring them home.

The services helped Gallup Police Department's (GPD) Lieutenant Anthony Seciwa in New Mexico resolve two 33-year-old cases involving one individual. In 2024, a state submitted an unidentified decedent's fingerprints to the DPI Services from a 1991 train pedestrian accident involving an unknown Native American decedent. Later in 2024, DPI Services staff identified him using fingerprints submitted from an unidentified person cold case and then searched the name in the National Crime Information Center Missing Person File, finding the 1991 GPD missing person entry. FBI staff notified GPD of the match. The victim was an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation living in Gallup, New Mexico when he disappeared.

Lieutenant Seciwa explained that GPD's approach, "Make[s] missing persons a priority. They can easily wind up being dead. Treat those with importance." Many cases are closed without resolution or never reported to systems. Lieutenant Seciwa states, "They are somebody's mom, dad, kid, son, brother, sister. They have people who love them and expect us to look for them."

He suggests asking the right questions:

- Where is the person reported missing (agencies, systems, etc.)?

- What agencies are collaborating, sharing flyers, and circulating information to patrols?

- What information is available and where was it searched?

Lieutenant Seciwa suggests taking outside agency reports and forwarding them to the right agencies, using available state resources, and prioritizing training for report writing. Collect relevant data for flyers, including location, physical description, and circumstances of the case. Safeguard the missing person's personally identifiable information like date of birth (use age instead), address, and family contact information for outreach. Above all, communicate with dignity and look for them with empathy.

Lieutenant Anthony Seciwa has 36 years of law enforcement experience, serving GPD since May 2006, with prior experience in the U.S. Army and the Zuni Police Department.

The collaboration between DPI Services and the GPD highlights the importance of information sharing and the value of fostering relationships among agencies. For assistance with deceased identification and missing person cases, contact staff at DPIServices@fbi.gov. To submit deceased identification requests, email SPC_Team@fbi.gov.