

AI as a Public Sector Equalizer

Lucas Pizzutti

Artificial intelligence is often described in revolutionary terms, yet its most immediate impact in the public sector may be far more practical: empowering inexperienced or under-resourced public servants to navigate complex systems like public-private partnerships (P3's) with greater confidence and clarity. While agencies often lag in adopting new technologies due to rigid procurement processes and risk aversion, AI tools can help level the playing field.

While P3's are a great tool for public entities to leverage private sector financing and other benefits that they otherwise might not have access to, they do require a certain level of experience or familiarity with to properly utilize. In the past, this meant that P3's were, practically speaking, only options for well-funded and well-staffed (and typically larger) government entities. Other entities were relegated to a cycle where they didn't know about P3's, which made them unattractive partners to the private sector, resulting in no P3's (i.e. experience or exposure), leading these groups into a state of P3 ignorance.

Now, however, with AI's capacity to handle repetitive, high-volume administrative tasks and research assistance, smaller government entities can start to learn more about and engage with P3's. For newcomers, these tools offer an invaluable ability to understand key project dynamics without needing years of subject-matter expertise. As Dr. James Elliott Moore [notes](#), AI won't eliminate the need for human judgment, but it can help synthesize far more information than any individual could process alone—turning complex, technical documents into digestible insights that support smarter decisions.

Yet deploying AI effectively isn't just a matter of downloading new software. As Gordon Bitko of the Information Technology Industry Council [emphasizes](#), public-private collaboration is critical to ensuring that AI systems align with public values and real-world needs. In this vein, AI procurement is just as important as its implementation. "AI presents unique challenges for government customers. These include competition concerns, data access issues, and the imperative to protect citizens' rights and safety", says Bitko. Innovative procurement strategies require not just the most advanced cutting-edge AI for governments, but also responsibility in using them. Governments must ensure their AI use is transparent, ethical, and fit-for-purpose.

By combining smart procurement with the right tools and partnerships, smaller public sector entities can effectively bridge the knowledge gap in a way that, perhaps, won't make them experts, but enough to get them a seat at the table. And ultimately, we cannot forget the positive downstream effects for the public when

their governments successfully implement transformative projects, which is what it's all about. AI, then, isn't just about efficiency, it's about positive community change. When designed and deployed thoughtfully, it becomes a tool that allows even the most junior public servants to contribute meaningfully to complex, high-stakes initiatives. That's not just technological progress; it's institutional empowerment.



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