



January 24, 2020

Ms. Julia Douglas
Clerk
Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Queen's Park, Whitney Block, Room B-304
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A2
comm-financeaffairs@ola.org

RE: 2020 Pre-Budget Consultations

Dear Ms. Douglas:

FSET Inc. is pleased to have the opportunity to provide input and recommendations for Ontario's 2020 Budget.

Information Technology (IT) Presents Budgetary Opportunities

As the Ontario government continues its quest to make government work better and smarter for Ontarians, FSET believes a promising area to explore is the way the government procures and uses IT. *Managing Transformation: A Modernization Action Plan for Ontario* highlighted opportunities to use IT to improve program delivery, which has been championed in initiatives like the "Digital First" strategy and Ontario's first Data Strategy.

In this submission, though, FSET will focus on the opportunity for the Ontario government itself to work better and smarter through more strategic and innovative deployment of IT solutions, which can improve the government's fiscal situation, as well as de-risk government IT purchasing.

Background on FSET Inc.

FSET Inc. is a Kenora-based Information Technology and Services company, with 20 years' experience in IT security management for Public Safety, Indigenous communities and private enterprise. FSET offers a variety of Managed (Security) services and other IT solutions, primarily aimed at small-to-medium-sized businesses. FSET specializes in progressive, technology-based solutions servicing clients within a number of verticals. These include law enforcement, healthcare and insurance as well as local, provincial, and federal government. FSET offers IT-based solutions that will be of value to Ontario and its municipal entities, such as its Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS) offering, #MobilityFirst. Through its partnerships with Citrix, Entrust, and Samsung, FSET is able to offer clients secure, Server Based Computing solutions that not only improve the security posture and reduce potential attack vectors, but are also more agile and cost effective producing a higher Return on Investment (ROI) and lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for both public and private sector.

Government's Own Use of IT Could Be Upgraded

Traditionally, IT purchased by the government for the government's own uses has been undertaken with a view to the necessary current (at the time of purchase) hardware and software, complemented with additional devices such as tablets and mobile phones. These have generally been large, long-term contracts to supply particular Ministries for a number of years, with an upgrade of equipment after a negotiated period of time written in to the contract.

In this scenario, government IT procurement is expensive, equipment-heavy and not flexible. Employees usually have at least two, and often many more, digital devices (each with its own purchase cost and product life cycle before it is rendered out-of-date). Purchasing is done based on the total number of employees that need to have a computer, without consideration of how frequently or extensive this usage is. With regularly updated software and continually advancing IT capabilities, the IT solutions purchased in this way are unlikely to be innovative. At the same time, by the nature of the way this IT is purchased, there is inherently a fair amount of risk associated with the purchase- that too much or too little equipment will be purchased; the software will be rendered out-of-date or obsolete; IT already in use may not work well with newly purchased hardware or software; and so forth. Additionally, when software and hardware becomes out of date, this makes these ends point more susceptible to cybersecurity attacks.

FSET understands the above scenario is not the complete picture for IT services in the Ontario government today. For example, we understand the Ontario government is working with companies like Citrix to offer employees remote access to their work. FSET encourages Server Based Computing to be deployed throughout the government to achieve greater value from the vast sums the government spends on IT each year and help mitigate risk and cybersecurity attacks.

As more and more IT functions are moving to cloud-based operations, there are significant new opportunities for the Ontario government to gain greater value in its deployment of IT. As one example, utilizing the cloud infrastructure, instead of purchasing large amounts of equipment (with licensed software purchased and installed on each machine) the Ontario government could move toward more of a subscription-based model, with the number of subscriptions easily increased or decreased on a regular basis as needed. In this scenario, government could achieve a 1:1 cost ratio, whereby expensive IT isn't being underutilized and costs are being better managed. With software services delivered through the cloud, these can be regularly and centrally updated, so that government employees are regularly using the most up-to-date version of relevant software, rather than legacy versions which is often the case today.

Similarly, governments around the world (including a number of Ontario municipalities) are being targeted for cyberattacks. Utilizing cloud infrastructure provides opportunities to enhance the government's digital security. (See Appendix 1 & 2)

The Example of FSET's #MobilityFirst

Undoubtedly, there are numerous vendors - Ontario-based and international - that can provide the government with this upgraded IT service. FSET is proud to be among this group. Using the example of our #MobilityFirst solution, we will highlight the benefits that can be realized from changing the way the Ontario government purchases IT.

FSET's #MobilityFirst solution is an innovative, award-winning, Made-in-Ontario solution. As indicated earlier, FSET offers Desktop-as-a-Service - leveraging Samsung's Desktop experience or DeX and Citrix workspace this allows workers access to a secure desktop while using a Samsung Galaxy smartphone. Once a user has the Samsung handheld device and Citrix Workspace only additional hardware required is a display, mouse, and keyboard. Ultimately, using #MobilityFirst, the employee is able to do everything they can do with a desktop and desktop applications (including accessing server files) through a single employee issued mobile device.

At present, an average employee will be issued a desktop and/or laptop, a monitor (possibly more than one), a smartphone and possibly a tablet. Each of these devices will have software loaded on

to them and move through their relevant product life cycle. In #MobilityFirst, an employee can be issued a smartphone, a monitor and input devices and have seamless connectivity and flexibility comparable or superior to the initial employee with the multiple devices. In addition, in the #MobilityFirst scenario, the programs and software being used are cloud-based, so the age and capabilities of the device used to access these programs is not an issue.

#MobilityFirst is being deployed within Law Enforcement agencies within Ontario. #MobilityFirst has been successful in “bringing the office to the officer.” (See Appendix 3, 4 & 5). Policing numerous communities spread over a large geographic region with broadband limitations, Treaty Three officers often spent long hours going back and forth to the detachment to access data and files, as the cruisers weren’t equipped to securely access these. Using #MobilityFirst, Treaty Three Police officers are now connected in the cruiser, on the street and in the station.

Beyond the increased level of cybersecurity and enhanced mobility, agencies are able to achieve cost savings of up to 25% by deploying a #MobilityFirst strategy. Since, #MobilityFirst is scalable, even if the size of the unit and needs of the agency change. It is a pay per use model and the agency is only invoiced monthly for officers and employees that are subscribing/utilizing the service, realizing a 1:1 cost ratio.

Conclusion

Above, we have highlighted the experience of what Law Enforcement agencies are deploying within Ontario with #MobilityFirst to provide an example of the benefits the Ontario government can achieve by changing the way it purchases IT. Pursuing cloud- and subscription-based IT services can ensure risk is mitigated on IT purchases, cost certainty for such projects is realised, unused hardware and software is eliminated, lower total operating costs are achieved and employees experience full mobile functionality. Pursuing these IT options would be in line with the recommendations from EY, could yield significant budgetary savings (and, at worst, ensure better value for the existing funds spent on IT and would improve program delivery by improving government employees’ workflow.

A Northern Ontario innovator, FSET recommends pursuing this opportunity. We would be pleased to further highlight our technology and how #MobilityFirst can dramatically improve the experience for any government employee who does at least part of their work ‘in the field.’ Thank you for considering this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Brown". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

David Brown
CEO, FSET Inc.

Appendix:

1. <https://www.stratfordbeaconherald.com/news/local-news/stratford-paid-more-than-75000-in-bitcoin-following-cyber-attack>
2. <https://www.woodstocksentinelreview.com/news/local-news/city-of-woodstock-experiencing-cyber-attack>
3. <https://youtu.be/TNFPp8oPusY>
4. <https://youtu.be/4L4Qlyq9zG4>
5. <https://youtu.be/3eHykZA5z2s>