Seventy-two Percent of Federal IT Leaders Say Their Workforce Lacks Necessary Skillset for Effective AI Use

Less than half (45 percent) have a formal strategy for upskilling, unveiling a critical workforce skills gap for Federal AI readiness

Alexandria, Va., June 27, 2024 – Ninety-one percent of Federal IT leaders say their agency is currently utilizing or testing artificial intelligence (AI), but the number one obstacle holding government workforces back from fully learning and adopting the technology is the limited opportunities to apply knowledge, according to new research from MeriTalk, government IT's top digital platform, and Pluralsight, the leading technology workforce development company.

The study – which surveyed 150 Federal IT decision-makers – examines what steps agencies are taking to assess their staff's AI preparedness and proficiency gaps, and how they can create effective workforce development strategies to empower employees on the journey ahead. Ninety-one percent of Federal IT decision-makers say their agency is currently utilizing or testing AI, yet 72 percent say their workforce lacks the necessary skillsets to use it effectively. Almost half of agencies (45 percent) had an AI pilot or program fail in the past year because they didn't have the in-house expertise to support it.

When it comes to upskilling opportunities, all Federal IT leaders say they will need to upskill or reskill at least a portion of their workforce to effectively utilize AI, with 59 percent saying they need to upskill over half of employees. On average, agencies say their biggest weaknesses are AI fundamentals and ethics.

"To fully embrace AI, Federal agencies must champion workforce transformation through upskilling and reskilling. This empowers employees to not just adapt but thrive in AI-driven operations," said Tony Holmes, practice lead for solutions architects at Pluralsight. "We recommend starting with a skills audit and then prioritizing a combination of traditional training methods and

hands-on learning where individuals can safely experience with technology. By democratizing AI literacy, agencies will increase operational efficiency, improve decision-making, and drive meaningful change throughout government."

Over the next two years, Federal IT decision-makers would like to see their agencies use AI in IT operations and automation (71 percent), cybersecurity enhancements (61 percent), data management and analytics (58 percent), software development and testing (56 percent), and cloud management and optimization (51 percent).

To optimize a modern AI workforce, the report recommends agencies:

➢ Start with a comprehensive workforce skills audit

➢ Prioritize development in high-impact areas

➢ Champion learning by doing

➢ Improve knowledge sharing across the agency

The *Future-proofing Federal IT: A blueprint for AI workforce readiness* report is underwritten by Pluralsight. The report has a margin of error of ±6.93 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. To review the full findings, visit: https://www.meritalk.com/study/blueprint-for-ai-workforce-readiness/

About MeriTalk

The voice of tomorrow's government today, MeriTalk is government IT's top digital platform. Our award-winning editorial team and world-class events and research staff produces unmatched news, analysis, and insight. The goal: more efficient, responsive, and citizen-centric government. MeriTalk connects with an audience of 160,000 Federal community contacts. For more information, visit www.meritalk.com or follow us on X, @MeriTalk. MeriTalk is a 300Brand organization.

About Pluralsight

Pluralsight provides the only learning platform dedicated to accelerating the technology skills, and capabilities of today's tech workforce. Thousands of companies, government organizations, and individuals around the world rely on Pluralsight Skills to support critical

technology skill development areas that are crucial to innovation including artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity, software development, and machine learning. Pluralsight Skills provides highly curated content developed by vetted technology experts, industry leading skill assessments, and hands on, immersive learning experiences designed to help individuals skill-up faster. The company is headquartered in Draper, Utah with worldwide offices in India, Ireland, and Australia. For more information, visit pluralsight.com.