CivicActions
Government services that build public trust
About CivicActions

- Small business, founded in 2004
- Former US Digital Service leaders
- Founding member of Digital Services Coalition
- Founder of Technologists for the Public Good
- Founder of Distributed Gov
- Chief maintainer of DKAN
The Subject

Authority to Operate (ATO) is the security approval process to launch an Information Technology system in the Federal Government.

Every federal information system must go through National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST)’s Risk Management Framework before it can be used to process federal information.
Current FISMA ATO Process

- Slow and expensive ($100k-$1M over 6-12 months)
- Human-managed assessment process
- Slow to incorporate changes
- Closed process
The Problem

ATOs are crafted through manual effort resulting in:

- Human error
- Increased security risk
- Lack of standardization
- Lengthy work cycles resulting in outdated content
RapidATO: A pilot program integrating Intelligent Automation (IA) into the ATO process, providing continuous value throughout the acquisition lifecycle
The Benefit

The average ATO takes 52 weeks and costs $1M.

**RapidATO takes 6 weeks and costs just $0.1M.**
**The Solution**

RapidATO is created by using Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to convert manually created System Security Plans (SSP) into **machine-readable components**.

RapidATO is a mechanism for **ongoing authorization** to properly manage risk, ease stakeholder burden, and shift security to the left, infusing it as early as possible in the Software Development Lifecycle.

As an **open-source solution**, RapidATO is a flexible model applicable across contracts, vendors, and agencies.
The Pilot

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) realized their average ATO took **540+ hours** and could **cost up to $700,000**.
- CMS has over **200 systems** requiring ATOs **every 3 years**.
- CivicActions brought them RapidATO as a solution.
- There are thousands of Federal systems requiring ATOs
RapidATO Streamlines Acquisition

- Time to production includes time to achieve security compliance
- Shifting the security compliance process left will enable mitigation of vulnerabilities and misconfigurations early in the development pipeline
- Integrating RPA, IA, and NLP into the system security plan (SSP) creation will remove human burden and error
- RapidATO uses Natural Language Processing (NLP) for new component discovery and refactoring existing vetted components of SSPs.
The Strategy

RapidATO includes a **Federal Compliance Library** to enable:

- Reusable components
- Trusted, pre-existing sets of technology stacks used across multiple agencies
- Governance of descriptive text
The End State

RapidATO provides a suite of open-source tools for:

- Creating, selecting, configuring, and maintaining components (RPA)
- Refactoring existing SSPs into known, vetted components (NLP)
- Creating new SSPs from scratch with the help of a library of components (RPA)
- Supporting control verification, evidence collection, and system assessment (IA)
- A user-friendly interface for ease of navigating and viewing ATOs
The Values to the Acquisition Lifecycle

Contract Planning

● Easy viewing of best practices, standardized definitions

Solicitation

● Resource of reusable, standardized language to draft requirements
● Applicable to a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP)
● Sets new standard for performance
● Supports knowledge transfer (transition plans)
The Values to the Acquisition Lifecycle

Evaluation

- Standardized measurements for awarding points
- Applicable to past performance
  - Provides measurements for CPARS

Post Award

- Visible, standardized, and measurable metrics for CPARS ratings
- Visible, standardized, and measurable metrics for QASP delivery/execution
- Informs next contract iteration
Playbooks Used

- Intelligent Automation Playbook
  - Volume One: Robotic Process Automation
- Intelligent Automation Primer
Questions?
- Small Business
- GSA MAS Schedule: GS-35F-337BA
- CMAS
- UK G Cloud 10
- California Agile Vendor Pool
- Colorado Agile Vendor Pool

Contact Us

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