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Together makes progress

The role of the Deputy Minister in tomorrow's generative AI world

Government & Public Services

Deloitte Canada

This paper is a work of fiction and the product of the authors' imaginations.

It presents a dramatic scenario designed to provoke thoughtful conversations and spur difficult questions about the kind of AI-enabled future today's government leaders might envision for their organizations.

At Deloitte, we believe in cognitive collaboration: where AI augments the human workforce to become more efficient and productive.

The role of the Deputy Minister in tomorrow's Generative AI world

As recurring waves of technology disruption occur, Deputy Ministers have been called to deliver on increasingly innovative visions for the governments they serve. With rising economic, social, and political pressures, Deputies are being faced with rising and unsustainable work volumes – unless something changes.

Generative AI presents significant opportunity to the future of the public service — and to the role of Deputy Minister itself.

Our recent research shows that AI can free up to [30% of the government workforce's time](#)[1] in the next 5-7 years. This presents significant opportunity to re-design work to fulfill current and future skills demands – including at the leadership level. For Deputy Ministers, Generative AI presents opportunities to more effectively manage higher volumes, greater complexity, and increasingly dynamic decision making. Imagine creating 30% capacity for a Deputy Minister to renew focus, allow for greater intention, and drive accelerated results.

Below, we present a day-in-the-life of an imaginary Deputy Minister (DM) today, along with the same day re-imagined with GenAI. Scroll through and watch how GenAI creates value that trickles down to a more productive output from government, and better value for citizens.
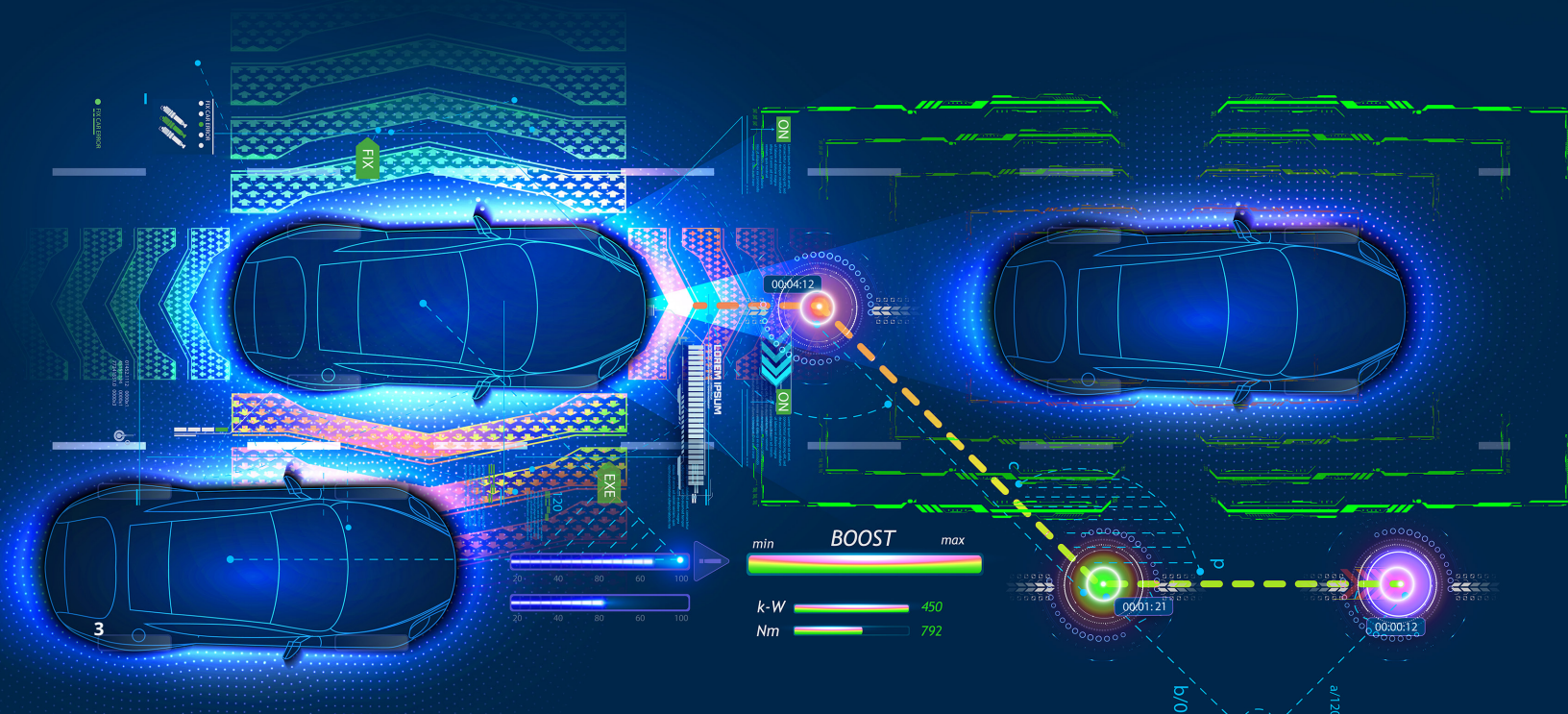
5:45 am

Rita's iPhone alarm clock blares in the dark, and she darts out of bed to turn it off. "Wow," her husband Amir mutters, groggy. "That was loud."

"I turned up the volume to make sure I woke up," Rita says, rubbing her eyes.

"Nothing like a morning heart attack to get you going," Amir mocks, as he goes back to bed.

Rita's mind is already jogging: thoughts of the afternoon's executive council meeting, and a thousand other things on her to do-list. She signs up for a 6 AM Peloton session with an old university friend. They text each other during the water breaks to catch up, and her friend raves about the latest season of White Lotus.

"You can afford to try something that's not a business podcast for once," her MBA section mate jokes.

5:37 am

A soft alarm tone rings and gradually gets louder, nudging Rita awake at the most optimal time in her REM cycle. Progressive sounds support an easier transition from Rita's sleeping to wakeful state. She shuts off the alarm so her husband can sleep a bit longer.

Rita's mind is already jogging: thoughts of the afternoon's executive council meeting, and the thousand other things on her to do-list.

The phone display reads 5:37 AM. She settles into her seat a minute early for the 6 AM Peloton session with an old university friend. Her friend won't stop raving about the latest VR game her kids are playing. Rita realizes her kids have the same game at home, and she's been meaning to play it with them.

2025

University buddy suggests watching a series called White Lotus

DM wakes up at 5:45 to a loud alarm tone

2030

University buddy recommends a virtual reality game

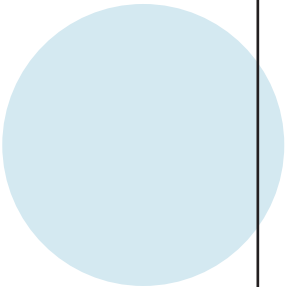DM wakes up at 5:37 to a science-backed alarm tone that syncs to her sleep biometrics and calendar

7:00 am

Rita takes a shower, then glances at her packed calendar. She quickly whips up an egg on an English muffin, alongside Amir and their two sons, Bradley and Arjun.

After kissing her family goodbye for the day, Rita drives to work. Traffic is jam-packed today. She arrives at the office and rushes to her desk, with just a few minutes before her first meeting. Rita uses the time to skim a roundup of priorities from her Executive Assistant, Mary. She also sends her family a reminder of upcoming sports and extracurricular activities this week in their group chat.

7:00 am

Rita's health AI app recommends a protein shake and fruit for her first meal based on her macronutrient goals. She sits and eats breakfast alongside Amir and their two sons, Bradley and Arjun. Bradley studies for an exam using his smart glasses, and an intermittent buzz on his wrist keeps him concentrated.

After kissing her family goodbye for the day, Rita gets into her autonomous car to head to work. On the way there, she listens to a customized daily download of article summaries from her favorite newspapers, and reviews a series of priorities sent by her Executive Assistant, Mary. Mary used an AI agent to compile the priorities, which gives her more time in her day. Ever since they introduced the software, Mary has been more engaged at work, with extra time in the morning to drive her children to school.

Speaking into her earpiece, Rita confirms a change to her schedule that has her flying to Thunder Bay for a charity event.

By the time she arrives at the office, she feels prepared for the day.

2025

DM drives to the office and reviews daily email from her Executive Assistant

DM randomly selects an English muffin and fried egg for breakfast

2030

Health AI recommends a protein shake and fruit

Rita drives an autonomous car; executive assistant briefs DM on a variety of topics supported by an AI agent, and DM confirms a work travel itinerary with voice activation

8:00 am

Mary greets Rita at their favorite coffee shop below the office. They walk, talk, and review Rita's calendar. Mary breaks the news that the Clerk needs Rita to attend a charity event in his place. The two of them discuss which appointments to move around to accommodate an evening flight to Thunder Bay.

At the office, they begin reviewing the weekly report about program updates and strategic priorities, but as usual, they're not finished by the half-hour mark.

8:00 am

Rita arrives at work and grabs a hot coffee, prepared by an automated machine just outside her office. She approaches her smart desk, raises the height, and turns on her computer.

On the screen, she sees a neat, AI-generated summary of priority items to review, including:

- Redlines back from the Premier's office

- Media clippings

- A report from a special interest group

- Social media chatter highlighting citizen dissatisfaction with a recent Ministry program

The AI highlights the last bullet as the most urgent, and provides a theory about program outliers. Rita reviews the AI recommendation, but reaches out to the program's ADM for a more detailed briefing and consultation on next steps.

Time is short; unfinished work

2025

Mary, the DM's Executive Assistant, meets Rita to resolve scheduling issues over coffee

2030

The AI assistant flags citizen dissatisfaction on social media as urgent, while DM is seated at the smart desk

Clear communication made possible with AI assistance, saving time

6

8:30 am

Rita attends an ADM meeting with Mary at 8:30 AM. Nick, one of the ADMs, appears on edge and confesses concerns about a recent benefits communication that has confused some employees. "I'm going to send a follow-up clarification," he declares.

Another ADM, Marcus, pipes up: "Shouldn't HR review it first?"

Rita makes the final call and decides to consult with the office's Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) for their advice on a follow-up email. But the HRBP is away, resulting in a two-day delay before the issue is resolved.

8:30 am

Rita attends an ADM meeting with her EA at 8:30 AM. Nick, one of the ADMs, appears on edge and confesses concerns about a recent benefits communication that has irked some employees. "I'm going to send a follow-up clarification. My AI agent already generated a draft email" he declares.

Rita checks the draft email. While the wording is professional and acknowledges the poor communication, it doesn't seem to have any nuance or understanding of the Ministry's HR practices. She decides to consult with the HRBP to gain more insight.

Although the HRBP is away that day, a junior HR consultant develops an AI-generated summary of precedents for previous incidents like this one. She uses workforce analytics to assess the history of key concerns from staff, and uses those insights to inform prompts to an AI writing agent. She shares the email copy with Rita within a few hours.

2025

ADM warns of poor employee reception to a recent communication

The DM makes a judgment call and seeks expert advice from the HRBP

2030

Workforce analytics recommends context for a follow-up email draft to employees

Specialized HR AI agent keeps HR recommendation and processes on schedule despite senior staff absence
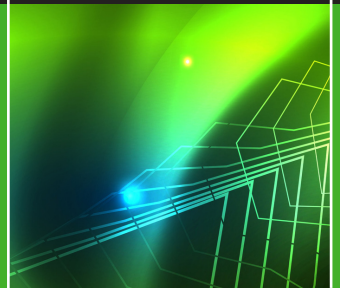
9:00 am

At 9:00 AM, Rita makes it back to her office for a meeting with her policy director, Ted. She listens to the progress of their recently launched health program across Southeastern Canada, and advises on next steps for their location strategy.

She can't help but wonder if she really needed to be present for this meeting.

Once Ted leaves, Mary pops her head in to complete their calendar review. But Rita stops her and says she needs a moment. She takes a minute to do a couple of breathing exercises.

Mary gently reminds Rita of her next engagement: "Meeting with the union in 45 minutes. You've got media prep with the communications team in five."

2025

DM meets with policy director on location strategy for next health program locations, but feels others could have made those decisions

DM is feeling rushed to union meeting

9:00 am

Mary reminds Rita of her meeting with Ted, the policy director, on a location strategy for the province's new health program. Rita pauses and wonders if she could delegate the meeting to her ADM or have the program's AI agent recommend next steps.

But she quickly remembers the weight of the investment, and takes the meeting because these key decisions require her approval. Luckily, Ted is prepared with AI-generated program analytics and projections for multiple locations. This makes Rita's meeting go quickly, but even with AI assistance, she still must deliver her final approval.

After her meeting, Rita feels optimistic about the trajectory of the new health program. She has a whole 15 minutes to herself to meditate in her office and take a breather. She regroups and reviews notes for an upcoming union meeting. The communications team had already sent her recommended speaking notes yesterday, informed by workforce analytics, as well as identified challenges and opportunities.

Mary pops in: "Meeting with the union in 45 minutes. You've got media prep with communications in 5."

Rita smiles. "I'm ready!"

2030

Director only brings key decisions to DM, who still must make them

Time freed up with help of AI efficiencies in analytics and communications

9:30 am

Rita meets with the Ministry's Communications Lead, Jacqueline, prior to the union meeting. They go over Rita's speaking notes together, but Rita has concerns about contentious questions that the union leader may ask. Jacqueline doesn't have much time to dive into the details, but assures Rita that she'll take any questions Rita feels uncomfortable answering.

The union leader peppers Rita with questions about minimal salary increases for staff, and the resulting employee stress, turnover, and lower service quality. Rita wasn't fully prepared for the questions, and turns to Jacqueline for support.

She wished Jacqueline could handle the meeting solo, but she knows her presence supports better relationships with key stakeholders like the unions.

9:30 am

Rita meets with her internal communications lead, Jacqueline, prior to the union meeting.

An internal AI analytics software highlights and analyzes quotes and findings from social media chatter, separating key insights from hearsay. This, paired with workforce benchmarks, informed the PR consultant's notes and analysis for Rita. Although Rita already received the AI highlights, she feels more comfortable consulting with her communications lead prior to the meeting.

The union leader peppers Rita with questions about minimal salary increases for staff, and the resulting employee stress, turnover, and lower service quality. Rita already knows about these sentiments based on social media chatter analysis that she reviewed prior. She empathizes with the union leader and reinforces her minister's commitment to better compensation for staff.

Jacqueline turns on an AI recording device to record and generate notes from the meeting. She doesn't inform the attendees, but the union leader notices and protests.

"I don't recall you asking my permission to be recorded," he says.

Jacqueline quickly apologizes and shares that AI recording devices support better decision-making, providing a record and analysis of conversations.

The union leader obliges, but he's noticeably less vocal. Rita is frustrated that the AI device stifled the conversation and prevented more meaningful collaboration.

2025

DM is peppered with questions from union leader

DM isn't fully confident about the questions and relies on her communications lead to fill in the gaps

2030

DM feels more prepared for the union meeting with AI-generated analytics, but in-person prep is still valuable

Unexpected AI recording makes the union leader uncomfortable

12:00 pm

At noon, Rita walks into Earl's for lunch with a DM from another ministry, Irene. It's busy, and they wait a while for their food to come. The two catch up over a few appetizers and discuss collaborations for upcoming events.

"I wish I could stay longer, but I need to prepare for the Future of Government panel this afternoon," says Rita.

"It's OK, I have a hard stop at 12:45 as well for an executive council meeting," Irene replies.

Rita wonders if she could have saved more time with a virtual catch up in the office. But she knows the in-person interaction always feels more healthy and meaningful. The two say goodbye and Jacqueline, the communications lead, meets Rita outside Earl's to head to the panel together.

"Shoot, my Uber cancelled on me," said Jacqueline. "We're still on track but I wish we could have arrived a touch earlier."

The Uber eventually arrives, and they depart for the Future of Government panel, where Rita is scheduled to speak and answer a few questions from the audience. She had planned to review Jacqueline's notes to prepare answers, but they lost some time waiting for the Uber driver.

At the panel, Rita doesn't exactly strike gold, meandering through answers about how topics like AI and resiliency will impact future skills. People approach her after the panel to network, but Rita cuts the conversations short and walks outside to clear her head, taking in the crisp air and the smell of the river.

2025

DM has a quick lunch with a colleague

DM rushes to panel and doesn't deliver her best answers

12:00 pm

At noon, Rita walks into Earl's for lunch with a DM from another ministry, Irene.

When she made the reservation a week earlier, the restaurant's AI agent recommended personalized, pre-ordered appetizers based on her previous visits. Rita picked her favourites: the Yuzu Calamari, and Yam Fries.

The two arrive and after just a few minutes, the server brings the appetizers to their table.

"That was fast," said Irene, relieved that they didn't have to rush. The two of them chit chat and discuss upcoming ministerial events.

Rita sees Jacqueline parked outside in an autonomous car.

"Right on time," says Rita. She leaves lunch feeling refreshed and ready for her next calendar event.

Rita meets Jacqueline and the two of them head over to the Future of Government panel, where Rita is scheduled to speak and answer a few questions from the audience. In the car, Jacqueline and Rita go over her remarks. They even arrive early enough to network with key stakeholders before the panel discussion. Rita strikes gold at the panel, and confidently shares key highlights from her ministry's latest program achievements.

2030

DM has a successful panel discussion

DM enjoys a personalized lunch with a colleague without long wait times

10

3:00 pm

Rita gets back to the office just in time for the weekly executive council meeting. These meetings are part of her routine, but she sometimes feels they drag on and wishes she didn't have to attend the full two hours. Rita provides her executive report. Then, the independent committees share their updates—Audit and Governance and the others. Finally, they begin more strategic discussions; though they waste about 20 minutes opening various documents and visual aids.

Still, they manage to have the much-awaited discussion about progress on key priorities. Rita relies on Ted's notes to speak about the progress on AI adoption in the ministry.

Cumbersome visual aids consume more time

DM relies on her policy director's notes

2025

3:00 pm

Rita gets back to the office just in time for the weekly executive council meeting. Mary had sent an AI-generated summary of Rita's report updates three days before the meeting, intending to give Rita some time back in her schedule.

At the meeting, Rita shares her report summary. But mid-sentence, she realizes a glaring factual error and one missing, crucial detail in the summary. She asks for a few minutes to collect her thoughts and correct her notes. The discussion moves to another colleague, before the Minister, Michel, comes back to Rita for her updates. By now, Rita has identified the missing pieces and shares them with everyone.

"The AI summary looked efficient when Mary submitted it a few days ago, but honestly, I only skimmed it," says Michel.

"Me too," said Rita. "I should have reviewed it more closely before sharing it; I apologize."

"That's an AI lesson for all of us," Michel voices to the group. "You still need the human element."

The group moves on to discussing key priority updates. An AI agent takes notes and populates the updates and results on the projected screen.

"Compare today's priority progress with last year's," the Minister commands the AI agent.

The AI agent digests the requests and takes a minute to change the screen. The group watches as a comparison chart appears of the two priority items with key differences, sparking more discussion.

DM tries to use AI to summarize updates, but human element is required

AI saves time in analyzing and comparing progress over two years, with voice-activation and quick content generation

2030

6:00 pm

When Rita returns to her office at 6 PM, her phone rings with a call from the Minister. His tone is frantic as he interrogates Rita about the Future of Government panel. The audience interpreted some of her comments as negative, the Minister said, and he wanted assurance that she would work with communications staff to draft a follow-up statement.

Rita shares the Minister's comments with Jacqueline in an email.

Right after she hit "send," she receives another call from the Clerk, who wanted a debrief on the priority updates from the executive council meeting.

"Never enough time," Rita sighs. She finishes up the call and starts to head home.

6:00 pm

Rita manages to finish the council meeting early, and carves out 15 minutes to read through her emails.

She hears three loud, consecutive alarms from her phone. Her AI agent flagged an email that outlined poor perception of some of her comments from the panel. Jacqueline gets the same alert, and sends an email to both Rita and the Minister outlining next steps.

DM and PR consultant address the issue promptly and assure the Minister

DM faced with calls and delays departure from the office

2025

DM caught off guard by poor audience reception

2030

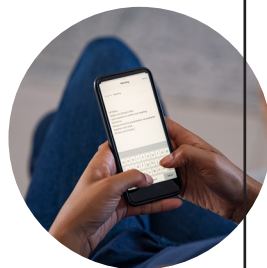Virtual assistant flags contentious email
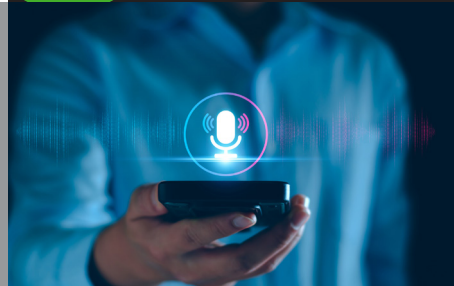
7:00 pm

Before heading home, Rita stops for a coffee meeting with one of her mentees, Khadijah. She's climbing up the ranks of another ministry's policy division, and wants her advice on a decision Rita has faced before: stay and rise within, or leave for other opportunities.

"I've been in the public service for ten years," says Khadijah. "It feels rewarding to see my achievements in my portfolio's programs, but I also crave something different."

Rita asks: "Have you thought about working for a different ministry?" Khadijah's face lights up. "I've considered it, but I haven't noticed any postings." Rita orders hot matcha teas for the two of them and they start brainstorming ideas, including which people to reach out to, and tips to make Khadijah's LinkedIn profile shine.

It's the most fun she has all day.

In the car on the way home, Rita stares at her unread emails, including a lengthy number of redlines from the Premier. She gives herself five minutes to enjoy the Beatles playlist she downloaded on Spotify, and mentally schedules time in the evening to address the email.

7:00 pm

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Rita orders hot matcha teas and they start brainstorming ideas, including how to best document Khadijah's skills development in data, AI, and overall resiliency. Rita aligns her advice to her own experience, but also with her learnings from the Future of Government panel earlier that day. She also shares a few network connections for Khadijah to meet with.

On the way home, Rita has her AI agent process through the e-mails in her inbox again, and an urgent one from the Premier's office comes up. Rita puts her car into automatic mode to avoid distracted driving. She dictates a nuanced reply and promises to meet with the Premier's Chief of Staff tomorrow. She resumes driving in manual mode, and enjoys the diverse playlist Spotify recommended based on her listening history.

2025

The DM and her mentee brainstorm for career development ideas

DM sees the day isn't over with late night emails

2030

The DM and her mentee brainstormwith focused ideas to highlight current skills

AI makes it easier for Rita to address an urgent issue promptly

9:30 pm

Rita makes it home just in time to enjoy dinner with her family. Amir lays out a feast on the table: takeout, from the new Italian restaurant in the neighbourhood.

"I couldn't figure out what to cook tonight," says Amir. "I need to go grocery shopping."

The kids share the latest news from school and their sports teams, and Amir reminds the family to think about where they want to go on their next vacation. Rita is distracted, as her phone continues to buzz with emails and alerts.

She campaigns for the family to watch a movie together, but within the first fifteen minutes, she's scrolling through emails again. The kids follow suit and pull out their phones as well.

In bed, Rita still sees new e-mails coming in and feels her eyes straining. At midnight, she's halfway through her inbox and decides to declare victory. There will be time tomorrow, she reminds himself.

9:30 pm

Rita makes it home just in time to enjoy dinner with her family. Amir lays out a feast on the table: roasted maple sweet potatoes, tzatziki sauce, and kofta kebabs.

"I used an AI platform to find recipes based on what we had in our fridge and pantry," said Amir. "Turns out we had all the spices for kofta!"

The kids campaign for the whole family to play that new VR game Rita heard about the same morning from her university friend. They have a blast fighting their way through an imaginative world of zombies, each of them discovering a special skill within the team. Rita's phone is silent as the AI agent sorts through emails and messages for anything worth buzzing: none justify interrupting Rita's family time. After spending a little too long sucked into the game, the family parts ways to their bedrooms.

Rita thinks to put her phone down, but out of habit, she checks to see if the Premier responded to her email. Nothing.

"I guess he's enjoying family time, too."

She assures herself that there will be plenty of time tomorrow to address all her work tasks, as she drifts off to white noise.

2025

DM uses phone in bed to answer emails

Frequent emails leave the DM distracted from quality time with family

2030

After time with the family, DM checks her phone quickly but doesn't spend the night scrolling

Virtual assistant filters incoming messages for urgency, allowing for quality time with family

14

The role of the DM in tomorrow's generative AI world

Governments might not have the tools to scale AI right away, but **the key is to start small with automation at the individual level.** We used workforce analyzer technology [2] like Periscope to identify specific tasks that AI can automate, as well as the ones that still require human intervention.

Technology will change the way DMs and their teams work, and will unlock profound value in these areas:

- Accelerated policy analysis and summary

- Job classification and description development

- Workforce analytics

- Email and document creation

- Research and historical analysis

- Data collection and analysis on policy impact

- Generating summaries and highlighting points of urgency

- Summarizing legal documents

- Minimizing administrative burden in meetings

However, enduring capabilities (the human element) will always be critical to develop and strengthen AI-enhanced processes, including in:

- Advising on policy or legal process

- Reviewing research or recommendations to ensure accuracy and alignment with government priorities

- Nurturing in-person relationships over lunch and coffee

- Making final decisions on hiring ADMs and other staff

- Identifying potential threats to reputation and public perception based on current events

In these cases, **cognitive collaboration[3] (human + AI) is still essential.** DMs and their teams must still review all AI outputs to address potential errors, infuse more context to reflect public interest, or avoid algorithmic biases. This is especially true for applicant screenings, policy decisions, and any response or action with special interest groups.

Continue the conversation

GenAI can enhance DMs' commitment to public values with data-backed decision-making, operational efficiencies, and time savings that allow for more strategic work.

Ready to explore the power of GenAI in your ministry? Get in touch.

Bronwyn Burke
Partner,
Government and
Public Sector
broburke@deloitte.ca

James Gordon
Managing Partner,
Government and
Public Services
jamesgordon@deloitte.ca

End notes:

[1] Deloitte, "How much time and money can AI save government?" Published April 2017.

[2] Deloitte, "Workforce Solutions," Published 2025.

[3] Deloitte, "Cognitive Collaboration" Published 2017.

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