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CONTACT: Randy West
202-681-7787

Former Federal CIO: Independent Verification & Validation is the Antidote to the Government's Enduring IT Woes

Largely Neglected Strategy Could Save Millions of Dollars and Dramatically Improve Project Outcomes

While the Project Management Book of Knowledge provides a detailed and robust methodology and tools to manage business projects, it does not address a key project component that can literally make or break a project, particularly a large IT initiative: [Independent Verification and Validation \(IV&V\)](#).

In Fiscal Year 2021, the federal government's IT spend was nearly [\\$91 billion](#). And while estimates vary by source and year, it is widely acknowledged that only a fraction of large IT projects in both the federal and private sectors are completed on time, on budget, and/or adequately meet desired end user needs. [Some estimates](#) have put the partial or complete failure rate at nearly 85 percent.

The [U.S. General Services Administration's Technology Transformation Services](#) stated recently that "only 13% of large government software projects are successful." In any case, there can be no doubt that the federal government continues to waste billions of dollars annually due to failed systems implementations and other IT projects.

"Too often, project management and IV&V are mistaken as the same discipline, but it is important to understand the distinction," explains Danny Harris, Ph.D., PMP, and former CIO of the U.S. Department of Education.

"IV&V is an independent assessment of the real-time and ongoing health of a systems implementation effort or other critical information systems project," Dr Harris stated. "Beyond merely monitoring project schedules, costs, and risks, IV&V professionals evaluate the quality and efficacy of the various deliverables generated during each phase of the project."

For more information on how IV&V can help protect government IT investments, see Dr. Harris' [recent blog](#).

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