

MEMORANDUM

To: Social Security Advisory Board
Subject: Biography of Robert Klopp,
Deputy Commissioner, Chief Technology, SSA
Date: July 13, 2015



Following the launch of healthcare.gov, President Obama established the United States Digital Service (USDS) and brought leading experts from companies like Google, Apple, and Amazon to solve the challenge of how federal agencies can interact better with customers, and with each other, in cyberspace.

USDS has also put seasoned industry leaders in senior agency positions to promote this new vision of technology in government.

Enter Rob Klopp, Social Security's new Chief Technology Officer (CTO). In January, Klopp became the agency's first CTO, bringing decades of industry experience to the job, including filling technical and executive roles for a variety of organizations, including large software enterprises in Silicon Valley, start-ups in the United States and Switzerland, and his own boutique consultancy.

Klopp said he and his team want to build the systems that will make data quickly available to decision makers. He hopes to have the first part of that system in place in the next three months. And, it will be built in the cloud.

The current, non-cloud system works like this: An IT department wants to add several users to a system and needs more servers to handle the load. The technicians order new servers, wait for them to arrive, install them, and then load the software. This deployment might take up to three months.

Using the cloud, the same team could go to a remote service offered by a company, such as Amazon, and tell it how many servers, with what capacity and software they need. The service can make the extra servers available online for the technicians to tap into in about five minutes.

"Secure data and capacity can be instantly available and can go away when they're no longer needed," Klopp said. "We call that type of system 'elastic'—and it's the modern way."

"For the lines of business and the regions, cloud computing is powerful," Klopp said. "Today, a business user has to come to us at headquarters or use their own funds to buy and build the computer infrastructure they need. Once cloud-based infrastructure-as-a-service is in place, a

region will be able to spin up servers whenever they need them. This will allow all our techs, whether at headquarters or in the field, to do more and to be more creative.”

Klopp is enjoying working with Social Security staff. “People here are smart, engaged, and switched on,” he said. “Change isn’t going to be difficult; it’s going to happen fast. People here are ready for it.”