

What we can learn from DOGE

From Jan 20 until March 28, 2025, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) looked into various federal agencies to detect what President Trump had called “waste, fraud and abuse”. Here is a compilation of tweets from x.com that I found interesting from an Operational Excellence point-of-view and with application potential in every enterprise.

Celebrate success



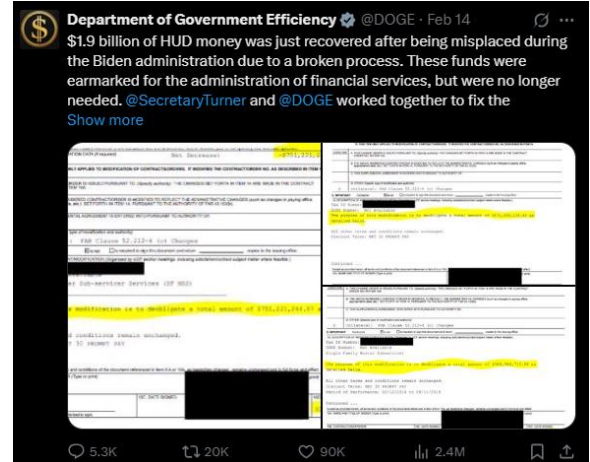
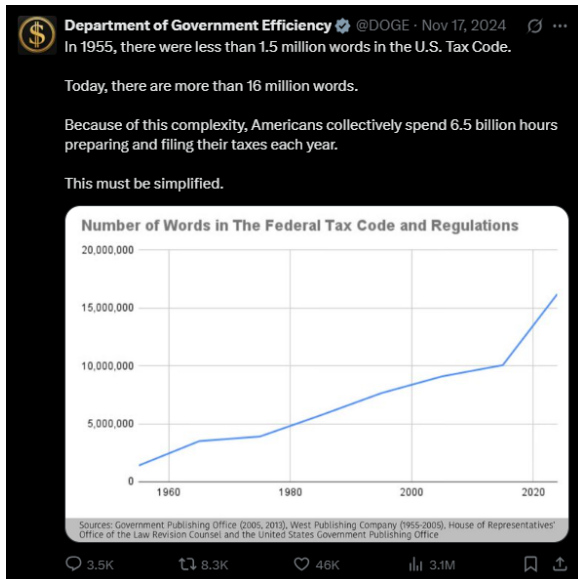
Manage plannable events such as expiries and renewals (e.g. security certificates for websites)



Ensure accountability: Strive to explain the gaps, fix breaks between ledgers



Count words and important documents over the years: Has a lot been added over the years without any consideration of deletion? Can we simplify?





Schweizer Project Management

Check office space usage: What is the occupancy rate? Can people be moved and leases cancelled? Can unused buildings be sold?

Department of Government Efficiency @DOGE · Feb 26

Today, the Federal Government exceeded \$100M in annual rent savings through cancellations of 250+ vacant/underutilized leases totaling 3M+ square feet. With ~7,250 current leases, there is plenty of available office space for the current workforce.

2.2K 9K 56K 3.2M

Analyze cost of and need for external consultants

Department of Government Efficiency @DOGE · Feb 3

This morning, 20 consulting contracts, mostly focused on "strategic communication" and "executive coaching," were terminated for immediate savings of \$26mm.

3.2K 12K 107K 37M

Is the organization wasteful? Where do they spend more than they earn? Is it ok to cross-subsidize?

Department of Government Efficiency @DOGE · Nov 23, 2024

In FY2023, the U.S. Government spent \$6.16 trillion while only bringing in \$4.47 trillion.

The last budget surplus was in 2001.

This trend must be reversed, and we must balance the budget.

Sources: USAFacts aggregation of data from Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Census Bureau, Department of the Treasury, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

3.5K 9K 34K 29M

Do we allocate the enough people to the relevant tasks?

Department of Government Efficiency @DOGE · Dec 19, 2024

This is the split of administrators vs. teaching staff at the top 25 endowed universities.

We are investing in bureaucracy over actual education.

Source: nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacent...

898 2.6K 11K 1.2M

Benchmarking expenses: Are we spending more or less than our peers?

Department of Government Efficiency @DOGE · Dec 7, 2024

The United States gives more in aid to foreign countries than the next 9 countries combined.

Where exactly is that money going and how is it being spent?

Country	Aid (in million U.S. dollars)
United States	9,469.04
European Commission	2,114.21
Germany	2,087.96
United Kingdom	754.33
Central Emergency Response Fund	699.96
Japan	665.36
Norway	641.11
Canada	577.84
France	549.37
Sweden	434.88

6.7K 9.4K 33K 50M

Being aware of the true cost of things, e.g. how much does the average complaint cost you?

Department of Government Efficiency @DOGE · Jan 22

The penny costs over 3 cents to make and cost US taxpayers over \$179 million in FY2023.

The Mint produced over 4.5 billion pennies in FY2023, around 40% of the 11.4 billion coins for circulation produced.

Penny (or 3 cents!) for your thoughts.

Sources: jmbullion.com/investing-guid...

7.3K 7K 47K 4.6M



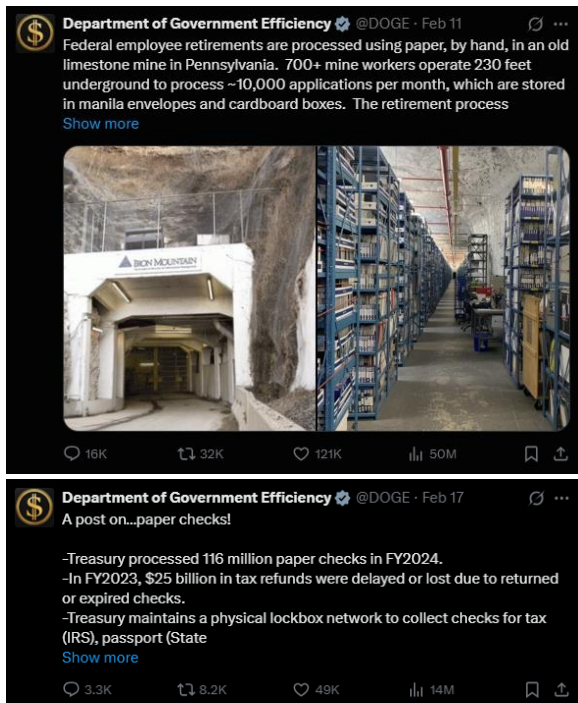
Finding out a reasonable cost of things. Do benchmark comparisons with peers and competitors.



Create unified contract partner view across silos (agencies): e.g. single supplier view for global organizations.



Look for loads of paper and digitize



Fix data quality issues, like empty mandatory fields



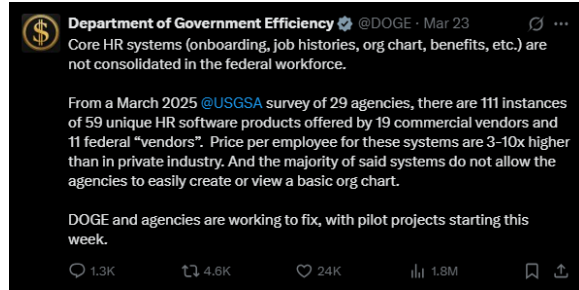
Sanity checks for logical data errors, like people with age >100 years receiving Social Security and not being marked as deceased.



Check software licenses against needs and check for idleness, e.g. Bloomberg terminals are one of the costliest licenses in banking



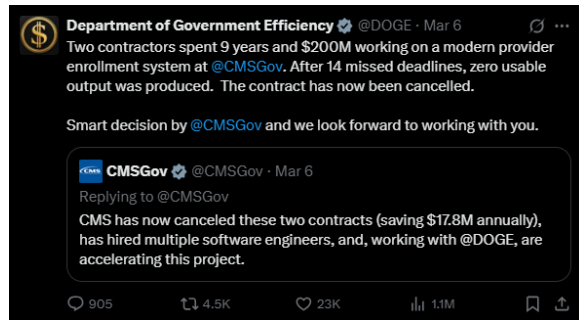
Consolidate tools across the organization



Check Credit cards against needs and cancel surplus



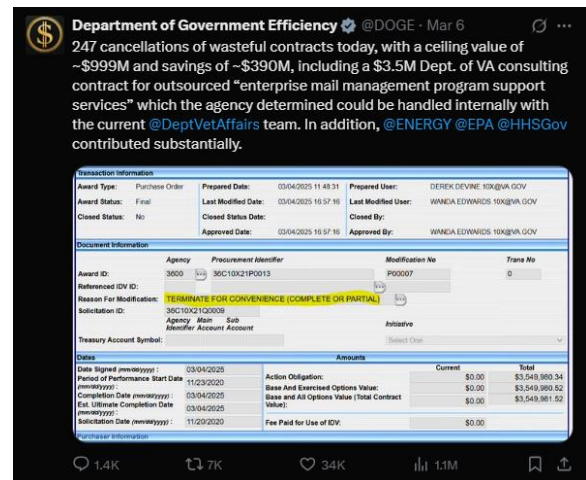
Have the guts to terminate dead projects.



Mainstream processes to better protect citizens or provide a better user experience

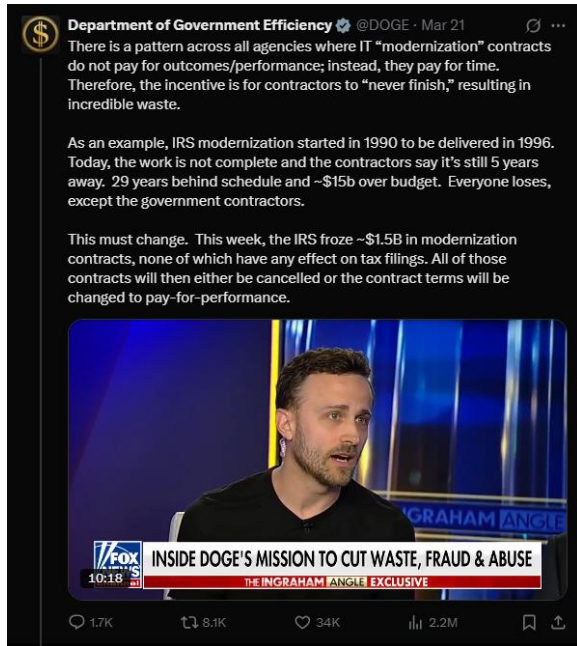


Check continued need for outsourced services





Align interests of external IT consultants with organization's needs



Assign ownership to agencies to sort out their own waste



Get relevant information bottom up: ask clients and staff involved in the processes



Are you a federal worker? We want to hear from you.

The Times would like to hear about your experience as a federal worker under the second Trump administration. We may reach out about your submission, but we will not publish any part of your response without contacting you first.

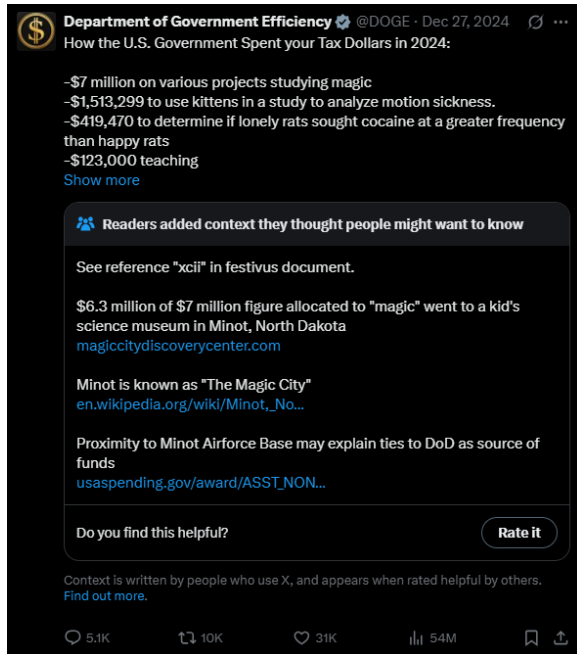
Further suggestions of Dos

- Cancel unused credit lines
- Organize an independent review of agencies' efforts to cut waste and save costs – they might have blind spots or might be unwilling to do the hard things
- For governments, create a logical connection of laws and decisions with tasks and headcount. Tackle decisions taken by executive politicians as they are easier to reverse than laws decided by parliament or the people
- Align investments with organization's goals: Are there appropriate project/investment portfolio management activities in place?

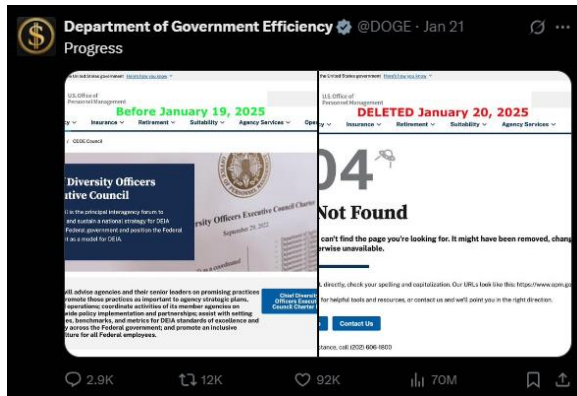
Where DOGE went wrong

Not every intervention made sense and in the rush of the moment, mistakes may have been made.

Don't act on keywords like "magic": not every mention of it signifies a "woke" agenda



Don't take websites offline: it cancels history and fosters intransparency



Don't implement change without a deep understanding: released water from dam might put farmers at risk of drought later this year



Don't spend time and energy to address pet peeves





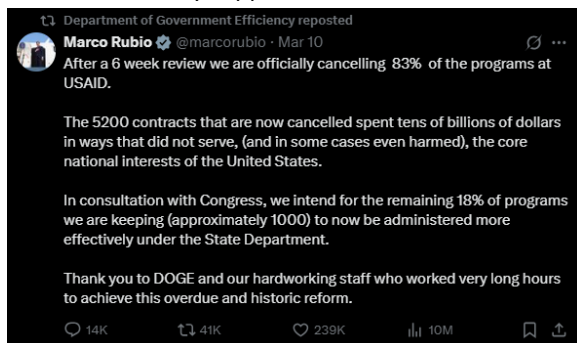
Don't let staff commit data breaches



Don't use incendiary language implying everyone was a crook or incompetent: "waste, fraud and abuse"



Don't cancel contracts without warning: staff lose their livelihood and some people might even die without necessary support



Further suggestions of Don'ts

- Don't take credit for cost savings that have been initiated before your time
- Don't take credit for canceling contracts that have not yet been signed
- Don't double- or triple-count savings
- Don't move fast and break things, as large organizations are not startups: don't cause irreversible damage
- Don't step outside the law. Terminating contracts follows rules and going against them will lead to litigations and unplanned costs.
- Don't accept the permanent deviation of manpower: if hired for task A then working on task B is not acceptable in the long run.