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*"Rummaging in the government's attic"*

Description of document: Office of Management and Budget (OMB) records on the use of the MAX.gov interagency portal from 2018-2020, and reasons for reduction of use

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

February 29, 2024

This letter responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) received on August 25, 2020, and assigned tracking number 2020-495. Your request seeks records related to the use of the MAX.gov portal from 2018 to 2020 as well as any records that discuss the reasons for the reduction of use of MAX.gov.

In response to your FOIA request, OMB conducted a search based on the parameters above and located a total of 12 responsive documents. OMB is producing 2 documents with redactions made pursuant to FOIA Exemption 5. Exemption 5 protects inter- and intra-agency pre-decisional and deliberative communications, the disclosure of which would inhibit the frank and candid exchange of views that is necessary for effective government decision making. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5).

With respect to the remaining 10 documents, these records are being withheld in full pursuant to Exemption 5 because they consist of deliberative communications and draft documents.

We have reviewed the information protected by the cited exemption under a presumption of openness, but have determined that it is reasonably foreseeable that the disclosure of the information would harm an interest protected by the applicable exemption.

Enclosed are the 2 documents, totaling 15 pages. Should you have any additional questions, you may contact OMB's FOIA Requester Service Center or OMB's FOIA Public Liaison at 202-395-FOIA. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769. You may also administratively appeal by writing to OMB. Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within 90 days of the date of this response.

Sincerely,

*Tim Musraty*

OMB's FOIA Officer



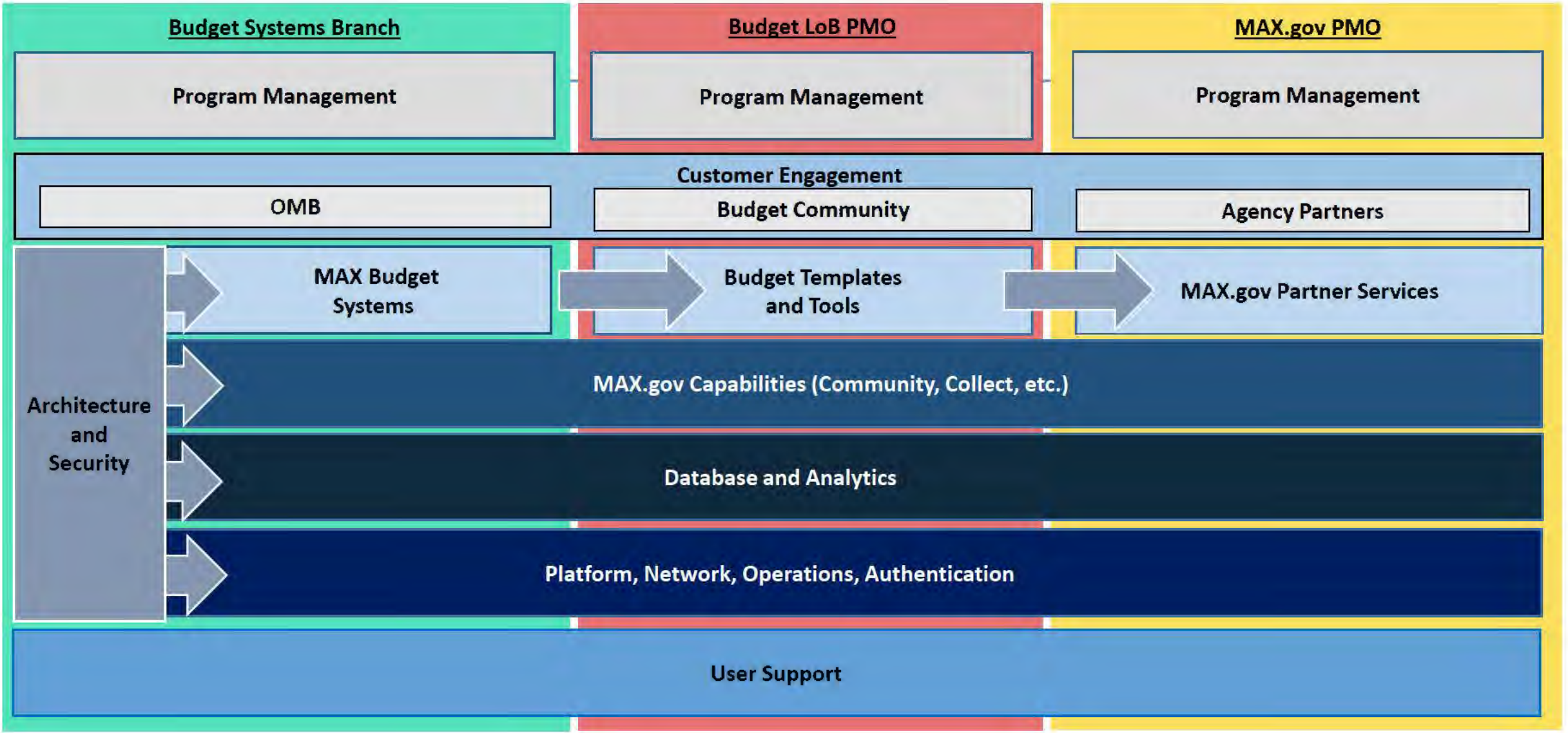
# MAX.gov Partnership

April 2019

# What is MAX.gov?

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- Integrated suite of tools and services for cross-agency activities, including partnerships with state, local, tribal and other trusted partners
- Authentication, collaboration, data collection and analytical capabilities that enable agencies to better accomplish their missions
- Created through the Budget Line of Business (Budget LoB) and managed by OMB's Budget Systems Branch
- MAX.gov was designed to scale beyond the budget community and now provides essential tools and services for the Federal Government, with over 235,000 users across 180+ agencies



# MAX.gov Program

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- Mature and healthy partnership between OMB Budget Systems Branch, Budget LoB PMO (Education), Region 5 Assisted Acquisition (GSA), the Budget Officer's Advisory Council (BOAC), and agency partners
- Funded by a mix of OMB contributions (~\$2M per year), Budget LoB member agencies (~\$2M), and Shared Services partners (~\$15M in 2018)
- Currently managing 65 active engagements, with \$7M for common tools and \$8M for custom services (primarily agile development and integration)
- Led by OMB/BSB, with a full time program manager (one-year rotational assignment) and contactor support
- MAX.gov capabilities are mission-critical for OMB and the Budget LoB, as well as many of our partners
- Current pricing structure is available for agencies at [go.max.gov/pricing](https://go.max.gov/pricing)

# MAX.gov Capabilities

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## MAX Authentication

### A Single ID for Government-wide Interoperability

- 235,000+ users in 180+ agencies, 300+ bureaus, 85,000 HSPD-12 PIV/CAC cards, 16 federated partner agencies with single sign-on into MAX

## MAX Federal Community

### Government-wide Collaboration and Content Management Functionality

- Secure inter-agency and intra-agency collaboration and information sharing
- Thousands of active collaborations; 2.5 million pages and attachments
- Unique online meeting and sharable virtual desktop

## MAX Data Collection

### Government-wide Data Collection, Tracking, and Publication

- 1,000+ data collections and exercises, millions of data rows
- 4,000+ surveys, FISMA and 508 compliant, options for anonymous, tokenized, or authenticated
- Can be hosted in other environments for handling PII, PHI, classified data

## MAX Analytics

### Tools to Analyze and Visualize Structured Data

- Integrated with MAX Collect, MAX Data Warehouse, MAX Survey other data sources
- Data Cubes, dashboards, charts, metrics reporting, real-time analytics, faceted search
- Camera-ready publications with integrated table of contents and index

# Why is OMB Looking for a Partner?

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- Though MAX.gov has been very successful in meeting critical OMB needs, managing a shared service is not core to OMB's mission
- OMB doesn't have access to a working capital fund or appropriate transfer authority
- MAX.gov needs a dedicated Program Management Office
  - OMB has been staffing this effort using contractors, students, rotational assignments, and "other duties as assigned"
- Growth of MAX.gov is constrained by OMB's organization structure and inability to actively market the services



# Why Does OMB Want to Partner with TTS?

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- Mission Alignment – both MAX and TTS are chartered to provide and share technology applications, platforms, processes, personnel, and software solutions to help federal agencies work effectively across organization boundaries
- TTS is strong in areas where BSB is not:
  - Broad organizational mission to bring transformation to Government using technology
  - Ability to hire staff and grow with a successful program
  - Existing organizational structure with staffing/support, infrastructure, etc., including access to legal, acquisitions and marketing staff
  - Ability to collect and distribute funding, including access to a Working Capital Fund
- Multiple Touchpoints between TTS and MAX, including:
  - FedRAMP – MAX is both a participant and platform provider
  - 18F and Cloud.gov – platform and agile application development teams
  - Login.gov – natural alignment with MAX Authentication

# Benefits to GSA/TTS

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- MAX.gov brings a large existing customer base with plenty of room to grow
- Current MAX.gov relationships offer new channels for TTS services
- Greatly expands TTS's Gov-to-Gov offerings:
  - MAX Authentication complements Login.gov
  - Largest gov't-owned cross-agency collaboration tool outside of DoD
- MAX.gov's award winning products and projects offer quick wins for GSA
- MAX.gov has a proven capability to operate a suite of collaboration products for Government-wide use
- We have a sustainable funding model that can be even better with TTS partnership
- Merging MAX.gov into TTS would be a strategic investment for TTS, furthering TTS's mission of transforming Government IT – we fit each other's strategic and tactical gaps, while strengthening both programs

# Next Steps

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- Create a cross-agency team to develop:
  - Business case and cost/pricing models
  - Transition plan with specific milestones and deliverables
  - Technology plan, including which functionalities of MAX will transition to TTS and when
- Begin immediately to plan for high-priority projects including:
  - Government-wide Authentication
  - Hosted JIRA applications, starting with the Interagency Suspension and Disbarment Committee (ISDC)

# PMO Timeline (Notional)

	<u>Preparation</u>	<u>Transition</u>	<u>Fully Successful</u>
Governance & Program Mgt.	<p>Prepare for PMO transition</p> <p>Develop Alternatives Analysis, ConOps and Governance Plan</p>	<p>Coordinate transition of Partner Engagement to PMO</p> <p>PMO begins engaging with partners and signing MOUs</p> <p>Complete Governance and Staffing Plans</p> <p>PMO and OMB jointly manage the Governance process</p>	<p>PMO manages all Partner Engagements and Partner Service Delivery</p> <p>PMO manages governance process with OMB and the Budget LoB as cornerstone partners</p>
Financial Stability	<p>Develop budget and rationalize splits between categories/products/teams</p> <p>Begin review of partner pricing model</p>	<p>PMO begins collecting and distributing funds (including reimbursement for staffing)</p> <p>Transfer responsibility for selected spending categories to PMO</p> <p>PMO and OMB jointly manage the budget</p>	<p>PMO manages budget and spending</p> <p>PMO is fully funded by Shared Services Partners</p>
Technology	<p>Review Architecture for MAX.gov Platform and Applications and develop draft roadmap</p> <p>Develop Target Architecture to enable platform independence</p> <p>Upgrade/replace/decommission applications with limited usefulness and/or high technical debt</p>	<p>Develop Technology Vision, Plan and Roadmap</p> <p>OMB continues to host most applications</p> <p>PMO begins to provision and authorize selected high-priority capabilities</p>	<p>Implement Technology Roadmap</p> <p>May include moving to separate segmented networks with increased portability and breadth and depth of offerings</p> <p>OMB continues to host MAX Budget Systems</p>
	<i>Fall 2018 – September 2019</i>	<i>Beginning October 2019</i>	<i>Timing TBD</i>

## MAX.gov Transition Communications

### Email to Current Partners

Dear [partner],

We're writing to let you know, OMB has begun discussions with GSA on transitioning the shared services components of MAX.gov to GSA. We will be entering more focused discussions and analysis on this in the coming months. We (OMB and GSA) want to enlist your partnership and input as part of this process.

MAX.gov grew out of OMB's need to securely collaborate with agency budget offices and manage budget data, and is currently managed by OMB and the Budget Line of Business. Over the past 10 years the capabilities and usage of MAX.gov have grown far beyond the budget community – MAX.gov now provides shared services including secure collaboration, data collection, analytics, and authentication services to over 250,000 people across the Federal Government.

This kind of growth is exciting, but managing it is not sustainable in its current form. We believe that GSA's mission and operational capabilities are well aligned with MAX.gov's mission and that GSA is better equipped to manage MAX.gov into the future and to provide it with the necessary room to grow.

OMB and GSA have kicked off an assessment to determine what it would take to move MAX.gov Shared Services from OMB to GSA. The assessment is expected to be complete by October 2020.

OMB and GSA agreed at the outset that the shared definition of success is identifying how to transition MAX.gov Shared Services to GSA in a manner that builds upon our existing foundation of enhancing agencies' delivery of mission, allows for continual improvement to technology solutions and customer experience, and minimizes service disruption.

A key component of this transition assessment will be working with you, our current partners, to fully understand how you are using the existing tools – which MAX capabilities you are using, how are they impacting your mission, what would you like to see improved, etc.

We will do our best to keep you informed throughout this project. There are several opportunities to learn more:

- Though it's early in the planning process and much is not yet known, the attached document provides the answers to some frequently asked questions.
- We can set up a meeting to talk through any questions or concerns that you might have.
- Beginning in June, the GSA assessment team would like to begin interviewing key partners to make sure that they fully understand your needs.
- We will schedule regular updates over the next few months to keep you informed as the assessment proceeds and as new information becomes available.

As always, please feel free to reach out to the MAX team if you have any questions or concerns.

Grateful for our continued partnership,  
Mark Dronfield  
MAX.gov Program Management Office  
Office of Management and Budget





## GSA/MAX.gov Transition Q&A

*This will be shared with existing MAX.gov partners.*

In early 2020, OMB and GSA began a Discovery and Planning project to determine what it would take to move MAX.gov Shared Services from OMB to GSA. The initial Discovery Phase has been completed, and the Planning Phase began in mid May.

The target is to transition MAX.gov Shared Services to GSA in a manner that builds upon our existing foundation of enhancing Agencies' delivery of mission, allows for continual improvement to technology solutions and customer experience, and minimizes service disruption.

This document is a compendium of talking points in the form of questions and their answers, related to this research and the coming transition. This initiative is still very much in the early stages and much is yet to be determined, but the need to move is clear and compelling.

Why is OMB transitioning MAX.gov to another agency?

- MAX services have grown in scope and usage far beyond the original vision of serving OMB and the budget community.
- Up to this point, OMB and the Budget LoB have been managing MAX.gov through a virtual Program Management Office at OMB, with no additional FTEs and no dedicated appropriations.
- MAX has grown about as far as it can where it's currently hosted, and to continue to grow its capabilities and to serve government users more broadly across the enterprise, it needs to be managed by an agency organized to support IT missions and shared services.
- *As stated in OMB's and GSA's 2020 budget justification, moving MAX.gov capabilities to GSA will increase the scalability and sustainability of these critical services, and will better align them with GSA's strategic objectives to expand Government-wide shared services and lead technology modernization initiatives.*

What are the benefits of moving to GSA?

- GSA's mission and operational capabilities are more closely aligned with MAX.gov's mission
- GSA has a deeper and more organic ability to grow and mature MAX.gov's Shared Service offerings, and doesn't have OMB's constraints on hosting personal information (for example)
- GSA is better equipped to align MAX.gov strategically with current and future Shared Services initiatives, so MAX.gov can stay in front of Shared Services trends
- Moving funding to GSA will be MUCH easier – no more three-way or four-way transactions
- Clear lines of authority and responsibility (not a three way agreement) - easier to explain to management and accounting
- GSA provides an opportunity for a more stable funding stream for core MAX.gov products through access to additional, flexible funding mechanisms

What will the impact be on us?

- It's too early to say, but there are some likely impacts on:
  - Pricing – potential for change/increase as we move to a fully funded model and more accurately align costs with capabilities
  - Funds transfer (much easier)
  - Level of service, response time, knowledge of support staff – will I have access to the same individual project managers and developers that I have now, etc? – it's too early to tell
  - Technology stability? (GSA is focused on finding and implementing newest technology)
- Phase 2 will address these issues, as well as which MAX technologies will migrate to GSA and which will be rebuilt or aligned with existing GSA offerings.
- The mechanisms of governance for MAX tools and services will change. Focus groups and interviews with MAX partners will be used to flesh out these processes.



Is anything remaining at OMB?

- MAX Budget Systems (A-11, Apportionment, etc.) will stay at OMB, and the Budget LoB will remain at Education.
- It's too early to tell which of the shared applications will transition, and when.
- We expect that all MAX.gov shared service capabilities will eventually move to GSA.

What is the timeline and what are the implementation plans?

- Over the next few months, we'll be reviewing information about your project(s) and consolidating it into a short report. We will likely reach out to you to validate our information in the late Spring/early Summer of 2020
- For at least the rest of this Fiscal Year (FY20) and likely well into FY21, MAX shared applications - such as Community, Survey, MAX Jira, and Collect - will continue to be hosted on OMB's MAX infrastructure
- For the remainder of FY20, partner agencies that have their unique applications hosted on MAX.gov will stay with MAX.gov. Understanding our Partners' need to budget and plan into the future, we will share any plans for changes that would take place in later years as soon as we can. Again, we do not have a full transition plan yet so some changes may not take place until FY22 or beyond.
- MAX.gov will start holding quarterly calls to provide updates as well as allow for questions in the fall. These calls will be open to all agency partners.

What do we need to do to get ready?

- Most importantly, work with the MAX.gov team to ensure that we have an accurate understanding of your needs and which tools and capabilities are important to you.
- None of the Shared Services will transition until FY21 at the earliest, and then, probably in stages through at least the end of FY21. Specific implementation plans are currently being developed.
- MAX Team will communicate as soon as we can about cost implications (understanding the need to establish budgets ahead of time).
- MAX.gov will help coordinate the move of data/collaboration/analytics capabilities to their new home.