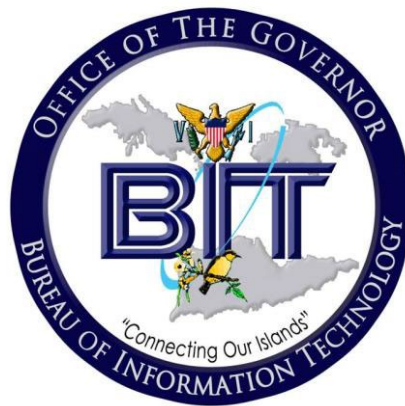


**The 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands**  
**Committee on Government Operations &**  
**Consumer Protection**

Bureau of Information Technology  
Testimony on Bill No. 35-0236



Presented by:

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Director/Chief Information Officer

Bureau of Information Technology

Office of the Governor

## 1 Testimony

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3 Honorable Chairperson Carla J. Joseph, esteemed members of the Committee on Government  
4 Operations and Consumer Protection, distinguished members of the 35th Legislature,  
5 esteemed guests, and viewers, I am Rupert Ross, the Director of the Bureau of Information  
6 Technology. I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on Bill 35-0236; An Act  
7 amending Title 3 Virgin Islands Code by introducing a new chapter, Chapter 33A, to enact the  
8 “21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (IDEA)” aimed at enhancing governmental  
9 agency digital services and other related purposes.

10 Bill 35-0236 is designed to facilitate the transition of government agencies from analog or  
11 paper-based transactions to digital platforms, ensuring accessibility to individuals with  
12 disabilities. The bill mandates that agencies develop transition plans within 180 days or no  
13 later than one year. Additionally, it underscores the significance of mobile services, user-  
14 centric websites, and anticipates cost reduction through improved efficiency and  
15 effectiveness. The bill assigns the Bureau of Information Technology (BIT) the responsibility  
16 of establishing standards to guide agencies towards consolidating into shared services,  
17 providing direction to agency heads for report creation, and assisting agencies in their digital  
18 transformation.

19 As we look ahead to navigating the implementation of this legislation, BIT recognizes several  
20 key action items that demand immediate attention. These include providing comprehensive  
21 guidance and support to agencies in formulating and executing their digital transition plans.  
22 This entails assisting agencies in meeting the requirements for website modernization, service  
23 digitization, and ensuring compliance with accessibility standards.

24 Furthermore, BIT must advocate for adequate resource allocation to support the bill's  
25 implementation, identifying funding needs for modernization initiatives, personnel  
26 acquisition and training, agency engagement initiatives, and universal support of digital  
27 services.

28 Establishing robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms is also imperative to track  
29 progress, identify bottlenecks, and ensure accountability in implementing the legislation.  
30 Regular updates and transparent communication will be crucial in keeping stakeholders  
31 informed and engaged throughout the process.

32 While the bill is comprehensive and aligns with Governor Bryan's vision for a digital and  
33 accessible government, there are areas that require further attention, particularly funding and  
34 governance mechanisms. These aspects, if not clearly outlined, will likely pose challenges  
35 during implementation. As the agency leading technology innovation, BIT is well-positioned  
36 to spearhead efforts in implementing the "21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act."  
37 However, it's essential to acknowledge the challenges BIT may face in reallocating resources  
38 to address the bill's new priorities. Meeting the bill's requirements may prove challenging  
39 without additional resources and support.

40 The significance of setting standards for the digitization of government information cannot be  
41 overstated. Standardization not only ensures a more efficient and seamless transition to  
42 digital platforms but also plays a crucial role in enhancing accessibility for segments of our  
43 population that struggle with both access to knowledge and resources to utilize digitized  
44 information. Moreover, standardization allows for better interoperability between different  
45 systems and applications, facilitating improved data exchange. This aligns with our enterprise  
46 vision for a more secure and resilient government, as standardized processes and systems  
47 enhance cybersecurity measures and overall operational integrity.

48 For further insights into the importance and benefits of digital transformation in government  
49 services, I encourage you to visit the following websites:

50 1. [Delivering a Digital-First Public Experience - White House Office of Management](#)  
51 [and Budget](#)

52 2. [Fact Sheet: Building Digital Experiences for the American People - White House](#)  
53 [Office of Management and Budget](#)

54 Given the complexity and scale of operations within agencies, conducting a thorough  
55 assessment, and cataloging of existing processes may necessitate extensive collaboration  
56 among various departments and stakeholders. Therefore, I propose expanding the timeline to  
57 allow agencies the necessary period to conduct comprehensive assessments, engage  
58 stakeholders, and ensure a smooth transition to digital services.

59 The success of the "21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act" hinges on our ability to  
60 address these challenges and ensure successful implementation. With strategic planning,  
61 resource allocation, and collaboration among government agencies and stakeholders, we can  
62 overcome these hurdles and realize the full potential of digital transformation in our territory.

63 Thank you for your attention, and I am available to address any questions you may have.