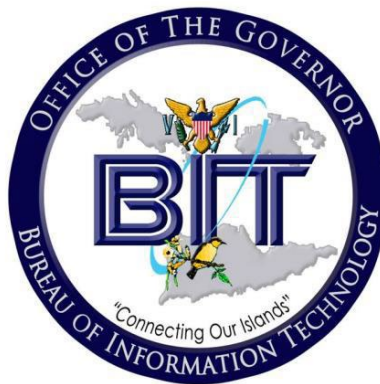


The 36th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands

Committee on Housing Transportation & Telecommunications

Bureau of Information Technology



May 14, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Blyden and members of the Committee. I am Rupert Ross, Director of the Bureau of Information Technology (BIT). Thank you for the opportunity to update you on our progress in improving interoperability, cybersecurity, and the management of government websites and digital portals used to serve and communicate with the public.

BIT leads the development and maintenance of the government's data centers, office automation systems, data communications networks, and application infrastructure. We also coordinate disaster recovery and ensure the security of government information systems.

We have made notable progress in improving interoperability across government systems. Our Government Network Operations and Security Center (GNOSC) serves as the hub for secure network operations and managed services, connecting agencies and enabling greater integration. We have also consolidated network infrastructure and standardized platforms to reduce fragmentation and improve operational efficiency.

Cybersecurity remains a top priority. We have adopted the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF 2.0) and a Risk Management Framework (RMF) to continuously assess and mitigate risks. Through the GNOSC, we provide real-time threat monitoring, incident triage, and response. We transitioned to centralized endpoint management using Microsoft Intune, and upgraded from Microsoft 365 E3 to E5 licensing to enhance threat protection, data loss prevention, and insider risk management.

We have issued government-wide cybersecurity policies, and work closely with agency IT leads to ensure consistent implementation. Our partnerships with MS-ISAC, CISA, and other federal entities enhance our threat intelligence and response coordination. We also prioritize workforce development by training our cybersecurity team and providing security awareness programs to government employees. Additionally, we recently completed a core

network infrastructure upgrade to increase system resiliency. As part of our continuous improvement, we have also identified the need to strengthen governance at both the strategic organizational level and in specialized areas such as data management and privacy. Establishing formal governance structures and policies in these areas is a current priority for BIT, and we are actively working with agency stakeholders and partners to define standards and frameworks that will further enhance accountability, data integrity, and citizen trust in government systems.

We continue to expand ServiceNow as a platform to digitize government processes. While early rollouts offered valuable lessons, we are restructuring the phased adoption to maximize its effectiveness across agencies. Our focus remains on centralizing service portals, automating workflows, and improving case management to increase accessibility, transparency, and efficiency.

We are actively standardizing and modernizing government websites to ensure a consistent, secure, and user-friendly experience. As part of our implementation of Act 8857, we have begun evaluating agency websites and digital services to assess compliance and identify modernization needs. BIT is also actively working to define the technology and design frameworks that will support standardization across all agency websites and services. This includes reviewing hosting environments, security configurations, content management systems, and design standards to create a common foundation for future development. Our goal is to streamline user experiences, reduce redundancy, and ensure a unified digital presence for the Government of the Virgin Islands, guided by Act 8857, the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (IDEA), enacted by the Virgin Islands Legislature. It provides a framework for uniform design, mobile responsiveness, accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and elimination of duplicative systems. We are improving

website accessibility, content management, and resilience to ensure continuity of operations. As we look to the future, we also recognize the emerging role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing government operations and service delivery. BIT is exploring opportunities to responsibly leverage AI to improve workflow automation, enhance cybersecurity threat detection, and provide more responsive and efficient digital services to our residents. We remain committed to evaluating these tools thoughtfully, with a focus on security, privacy, and equity.

In closing, I thank the Committee for its continued support. While challenges remain, with collaboration and sustained investment we are confident in our ability to strengthen interoperability, enhance cybersecurity, and deliver modern digital services for the people of the Virgin Islands. I also want to recognize the talented and dedicated team at the Bureau of Information Technology whose hard work and professionalism make these accomplishments possible. BIT remains committed to creating a secure, resilient, and accessible digital environment that empowers government operations and serves the people of the Virgin Islands.