

First US chief technology officer stepping down

January 27 2012



Chief Technology Officer of the United States Aneesh Chopra smiles during a round-table discussion at the International CTIA Wireless 2010 convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. Chopra, who was tasked with bringing a dose of Silicon Valley to the US government as the first chief technology officer, is stepping down.

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"Aneesh Chopra did groundbreaking work to bring our government into the 21st century," President [Barack Obama](#) said in a statement on Friday announcing his departure.

"Aneesh found countless ways to engage the American people using technology, from [electronic health records](#) for veterans, to expanding access to broadband for rural communities, to modernizing government records," Obama said.

"His legacy of leadership and innovation will benefit Americans for years to come, and I thank him for his outstanding service," he said.

Chopra, a Harvard-educated Indian-American with a background in health policy, was named [chief technology officer](#) in April 2009.

Chopra had previously served as secretary of technology for the state of Virginia and as an executive in a company which advises hospitals.

The announcement of Chopra's departure earned a rare burst of praise from one of the White House's top Republican critics.

"Just heard the news that CTO @AneeshChopra is stepping down; his work, both in Virginia and Federal, have helped advance [open government](#)," said House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, a Republican from Virginia.

As chief technology officer, Chopra worked closely with [Chief Information Officer](#) Vivek Kundra to set technology policy and federal technology spending, which amounts to more than 70 billion dollars a year.

Kundra left his post in August for a fellowship at Harvard University.

Obama pledged during his presidential campaign to create the position of chief technology officer, and there had been some speculation it would be a cabinet-level position but that turned out not to be the case.

Obama ran the most technology savvy US [political campaign](#) in history, leveraging social networks, email, text messages and other media to build a vast fundraising and political operation.

As Virginia's secretary of technology, Chopra was responsible for applying technology to government reform, innovation and economic development and served as an advisor to the governor.

Before taking the state government position, Chopra was managing director of the Advisory Board Company, a publicly-traded health care think tank serving nearly 2,500 hospitals and health systems.

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Citation: First US chief technology officer stepping down (2012, January 27) retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-01-chief-technology-officer.html>

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