

Obama names first US Chief Technology Officer

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This image obtained from the Virginia Secretary of Technology website, shows Aneesh Chopra. US President Barack Obama on Saturday named Chopra, a Harvard-educated Indian-American, to the newly created post of Chief Technology Officer in an appointment much-awaited by Silicon Valley.

US President Barack Obama on Saturday named a Harvard-educated Indian-American to the newly created post of Chief Technology Officer in an appointment much-awaited by Silicon Valley.

As the country's first [Chief Technology Officer](#), Aneesh Chopra, 36, will use technology to "improve security, ensure transparency, and lower

costs," Obama said in his weekly address to the nation.

"In this role, Aneesh will promote [technological innovation](#) to help achieve our most urgent priorities -- from creating jobs and reducing health care costs to keeping our nation secure," the president added.

Chopra, whose background is in health policy, has served as secretary of technology for the state of Virginia and as an executive in a company which advises hospitals.

Obama said Chopra would work closely with Chief Information Officer Vivek Kundra, who is responsible for setting technology policy and federal technology spending, which amounts to more than 70 billion dollars a year.

The appointment of the relatively unknown Chopra came as somewhat of a surprise in technology circles, where speculation over the past three months had focused on more high-profile candidates.

Chopra's name was not even listed among the choices in an online poll of readers by the technology blog TechCrunch which asked who should be appointed to the job.

Microsoft's [Bill Gates](#), Google's Eric Schmidt and Amazon's Jeff Bezos were among the top vote-getters in the poll.

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 political campaign in US history, leveraging social networks, email, text messages and other media to build a vast fundraising and political operation.

But hopes that the president can unleash a technology revolution and create a new e-White House in government have come up against antiquated government technology and privacy and security restrictions.

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 Governor Tim Kaine.

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.

Chopra earned his undergraduate degree from John Hopkins University and a masters in public policy from Harvard University.

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