

Research Brief:

Risk Management Framework & the Technical Security Process

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Project timeline: August 2022 - July 2023

About this project:

The federal government has created the [Risk Management Framework](#) (RMF) as the method by which technology and products are evaluated for technical security, approved for use, and granted an Authority to Operate. The RMF applies to nearly every organization, private or public, that endeavors to provide the government with technology solutions. Because there is a great deal of flexibility purposefully built into the framework, its real-world application has led to different interpretations and practices.

For this work, we gathered a team of experts in the field of government technology and security. The team includes specialists in system security, procurement, human centered design, engineering, federal regulation, and policy. Team members have more than 50 years of combined experience in government, including federal Digital Service Experts, Hill staff, and Information Security Officers.

We are conducting 60 minute interviews in April and May of 2023. Given the breadth of technologies covered within the RMF, our research is focused on the development and deployment of software products and services. Our research interviews will engage with practitioners from the public and private sectors to better understand how the RMF affects federal software development. This work highlights stories, examples, and current best practices from the field. We will also gauge interest in developing new methods for managing technical security, both within and beyond the current framework. Over the next two months we will share the research findings with government and industry experts to ensure multiple viewpoints are taken into account before a final report is made public.

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About Service Design Collective:

[Service Design Collective](#) is a public benefit corporation founded and run by alumni of the United States Digital Service. We use service design to help our partners look beyond a single feature, product, or organization and deliver better outcomes for governments and the people they serve. Our team has advised three U.S. presidents and dozens of federal government agencies, U.S. states, foreign governments, and international organizations on public service design.