On January 15, the ASP Government Community of Practice sponsored a webinar on strategic foresight presented by Jon Desenberg and John Dunn, both of the MITRE Corporation. The webinar, titled *The Practical Application of Strategic Foresight*, was introduced by Joe Coberly, the ASP Government Community of Practice Chair. The webinar highlighted the difficulty humans have navigating a path to the unknowable future, along with a structured and proven method for understanding and discussing the future.

Strategic foresight enables decision makers to understand and anticipate the impact of future trends. It is not prediction, but an approach for reasoning about multiple possibilities that the future might hold—about what *could* be, not what *will* be—for the purpose of developing resiliency around those possible futures. While the future foresight methodologies were developed in private industry, the Federal Government recently recommended its use for all agencies. Its popularity is expanding as organizations seek to build resiliency and improve the quality of planning processes and strategic management behaviors.

The speakers covered some of the history of strategic foresight, which emerged in the 1950s. They shared the fundamental aspects of a strategic foresight approach through a framework of framing, discovering, exploring, envisioning, and monitoring the future. Organizations that utilize strategic foresight become “future prepared” and are better able to understand and anticipate the impact of future trends. According to Desenberg and Dunn foresight organizations see 33% higher profitability and 200% market capitalization growth. Foresight emphasizes imagining the future with the detail required to lead to action and improved strategies. The presenters also shared a federal agency case study focused on risk and resilience and highlighted the need for civilian agencies to staff and focus on foresight in their planning. They highlighted the struggle organizations face in striving for operational excellence in today’s paradigms while positioning for what might be a very different future.

The webinar was well-attended. Attendees asked questions about planning for political changes, how to handle what may seem to be far-flung ideas, and integrating change management methods into strategy execution.

Jon Desenberg is a Principal in Government Strategy and Performance at MITRE. With more than 25 years of experience, he focuses on performance management, strategic foresight and planning, and evidence-based decision making. Jon received a B.A. from The University of Michigan and a J.D from American University’s Washington College of Law. He has authored articles in Washington Technology, Government Computer News, and the Washington Post. He is co-author of the textbook, Knowledge Management: A Foundation for E-Government.

John Dunn is a Principal Business Strategist in Government Strategy and Performance at MITRE. John has led the development of MITRE’s strategic foresight capability and served as a trusted advisor for many MITRE sponsors within the Intelligence Community, Department of Defense and Civilian departments.
and agencies. John holds an MBA from University of Maryland, and a B.S. in Systems Engineering from the US Naval Academy.