

55.7% of Governments Use AI. Only 42.9% Have a Policy for It.

A 12.8-point gap between deployment and governance — and it's widest exactly where oversight is needed most.

SWIPE →

Three things worth knowing

- 01** Adoption is outpacing governance in every function Granicus measured
- 02** The jurisdictions closing the gap fastest didn't draft policy from scratch
- 03** The lag is now checkable against real policy publication dates

12.8pp

**The gap between reported AI use (55.7%)
and formal AI policy (42.9%).**

Granicus's 2026 State of Digital Government survey, run with ath
Power Consulting across government organisations nationwide.

27pp

The gap widens to 27 points in broader public-engagement functions.

71% AI use against 44% policy coverage. The pattern holds everywhere Granicus measured: adoption leads governance, and it leads by more wherever AI use is informal.

700+

Local, county, and state governments now inside the GovAI Coalition's template network.

San José's guidelines anchor it. Birmingham, Miami-Dade, and others explicitly adapted from Boston, Seattle, or state-level policy rather than drafting bespoke language.



The jurisdictions that formalised governance earliest are not the ones that wrote policy from first principles. They are the ones that adapted an existing template.

POLICY DIFFUSION, NOT BESPOKE DRAFTING

Procurement used to force the policy question

LEGACY SOFTWARE

Capital procurement required

Budget, security, and legal review

Policy drafted as part of the process

GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

Free or low-cost, browser-based

No procurement, no departmental sign-off

Policy written after use is already routine

Eighteen Months to Three Years **After Use Began.**

ChatGPT went public in November 2022. The first formal municipal and state AI policies cluster between April 2025 and 2026 — verifiable against publication dates, not survey self-report.

Adapt a Template. Don't Draft From Zero.

Route an existing published policy, San José, Seattle, or a state-level example, through local legal review. That's a faster, more evidenced path than commissioning bespoke policy from scratch.

Full piece:

terencekok.com/blog/ai-governance-formalisation-local-government-adoption-gap

The Gap Is Closing — Just Not by Drafting Harder.

It's closing through jurisdictions borrowing from each other faster than any one of them could write policy alone.



Terence Kok · AI & Innovation Strategist

SAVE · COMMENT · FOLLOW