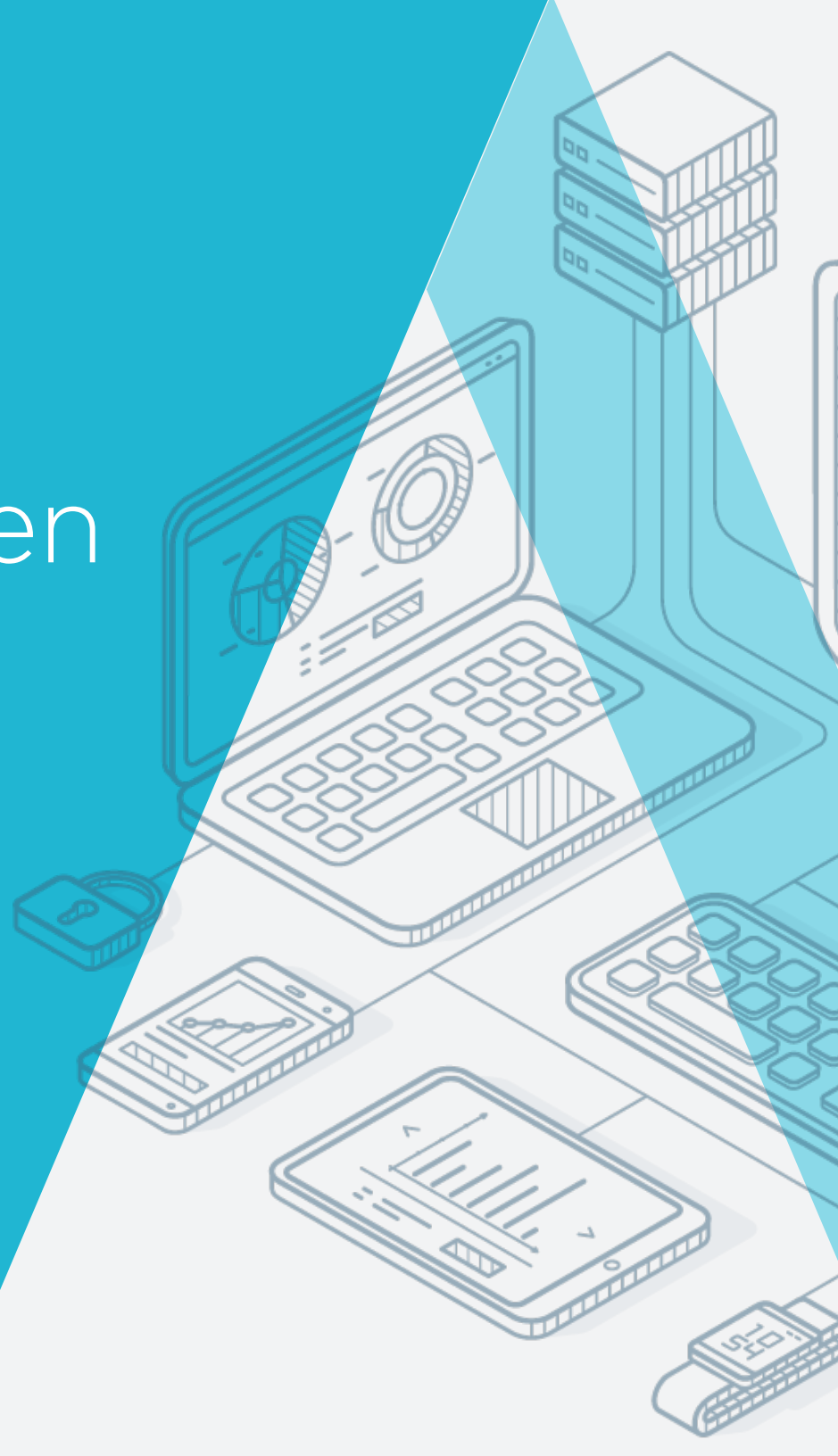# MITRATECH

A Guide to Citizen Development

How democratizing our platforms creates excitement, innovation, and solutions that work

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01   Why am I just now hearing about Citizen Development?

The background for this movement has been around for decades and is led by "Do-it-Yourself" (DIY) attitudes, in the United States that solidified in the 1950s, during the Second World War.

The United States emphasized and encouraged those who were at home to practice self-reliance in the face of their adversities with campaigns to "make do and mend" featuring the character "Mrs. Sew and Sew," and advice on tending one's "victory garden." When the war ended, the interest in self-reliance did not dissipate, but those who were interested had more resources available to take on larger DIY projects instead of using their creativity to simply maintain a life amidst difficult, wartime conditions.

The rise of DIY could be identified through literature produced and cultural changes to support it: magazines such as the popular "Do it Yourself" abounded and were part and parcel of the emerging DIY industry. As with any cultural phenomenon the DIY mindset adapted to the times.
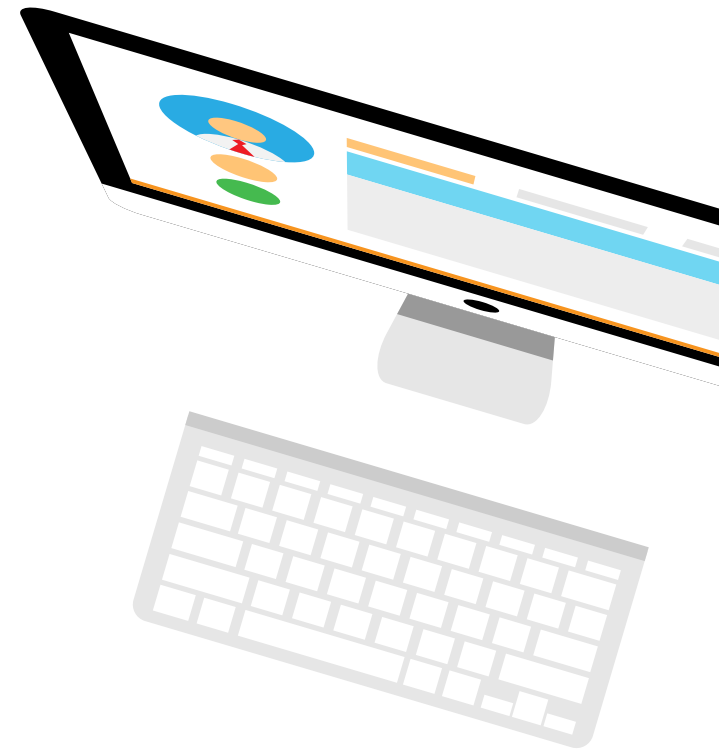
The term **Citizen Developer**, conceived by Gartner, follows the DIY trend in which **individuals empower themselves to take on issues that were previously outsourced and relegated to subject-matter experts**. Gartner describes the term as "a user who creates new business applications for consumption by others using development and runtime environments sanctioned by corporate IT."

This indicates the turn for regular employees to leverage systems that enable them to do work previously administered by IT professionals. With democratized technological platforms, employees outside of IT, HR and legal operations professionals for example, are able to make changes and direct their own technical projects.

Citizen development is still gaining speed with business leaders, but it has already caused major waves and is here to stay. A 2017 survey found that **24% of applications had a portion developed outside of the IT department, and citizen developers get their applications out the door in weeks or months**, not years, like some IT-driven solutions.[1]

App development and coding is no longer just for coders, opening up massive opportunities for traditionally non-IT employees to own their processes and determine their own applications and products.

Coding is no longer just for coders.

1. https://appdevelopermagazine.com/5741/2017/12/7/citizen-developers-are-on-the-rise/

02 What is Citizen Development?

The term "citizen developer" refers to business users with varied coding experience who build business-critical applications using no-code or low-code technologies.

Traditionally, creating these business applications fell under the responsibility of the IT department. As company tech footprints have become more full and with increasing products the needs from IT often stretch the team thin.

Citizen Development provides many advantages, including financial benefits, faster time-to-value, decreased resource dependencies, and increased collaboration between teams. Better still tools and software used for citizen development are typically sanctioned by IT staff.

Note that this is not "Shadow IT," which refers to digital asset creation, coding, or development which occurs without the knowledge or approval of the IT department. Citizen developers are generally employees who have a thorough understanding of their department's needs and address those concerns specifically knowing IT is supportive.

03 How Citizen Development disrupts process automation

Citizen development is more than an abstract concept. For hundreds of legal departments, citizen development is a mindset that brings proofs of concept to final deliverable in days rather than weeks. **Legal professionals who encourage citizen developers usually set out to gain self sufficiency with their tech stack**: gone are the days when they had to rely on IT for everything.

While IT often has some involvement (for example, they are always needed to set up single sign-on), legal professionals win when they have more ownership over their processes. More ownership means that when an NDA workflow needs to be updated to reflect new business needs, or a travel request form needs to include additional information around a burgeoning pandemic, the legal team can give any changes a quick turnaround with their low-code tools.

When business owners become business process owners, they receive psychological rewards as well. In a world where our processes are increasingly automized and then distributed for mass production and efficiency gains, employees who understand the full process and have the power to improve it tend to be happier. Because we all know the feeling when the IT team reminds us of their SLAs. **The idea of citizen development is not just a dream of self-sufficiency, but of wholeness**.

04 Benefits of Citizen Development

There are numerous advantages involved in utilizing citizen developers.

1. Cost-efficient solutions from multi-purpose platforms

From a cost perspective, organizations don't need to employ as many expensive developers with the expertise of building extensive enterprise programs. While the programmers may still provide support and focus on high-value work for the company, citizen development significantly broadens the number of people who can assist in the organization's digital transformation. This can also foster greater collaboration between different departments, as employees work with the IT groups to build new functionalities together.

2. In-house knowledge that is baked into the solution

Citizen developers are equipped with unique hands-on knowledge of specific work processes and business goals that are key to their individual departments. This knowledge means they are more aware of their own critical needs, which in turn helps them zero in on applications that can support and streamline crucial business processes for cost savings and higher productivity.

3. Speed and agility that reflects self reliance and DIY-savviness

In line with the idea of increasing productivity and eliminating resource bottlenecks, the fact that the low-code no-code platforms are visual processes using pre-built modules means that citizen developers can build applications very quickly and testing these applications is also a faster process.

Legal and other departmental operations teams leverage no-code solutions to optimize their teams capacity.

05 Benefits of Citizen Development

If an application relies on low-code/no-code skills, chances are that it's something your citizen developers could and should take on. But what if you are in the market to streamline a process or revamp a system from the ground up? Then who should be in charge? Well, it depends. If your implementation requires complex integrations and constant contact with your database, you're probably looking at an IT integration. But if you have a simple process that you could imagine describing in a flowchart, it may be a good opportunity for your citizen developers.

If you have a simple process that you could imagine describing in a flowchart, it may be a good opportunity for your citizen developers.

Check out the following examples for more insight:

| Delegate to Citizen Developers when:	Bring in IT when:
☆ You need a process that ensures all of your vendors are compliant with your regulations	⚙ You need to implement a vendor management system for your internal team up to date on vendor actions
☆ You want to build out e-Signature approval processes, such as Business Travel Request or NDAs	⚙ You need to consolidate the e-Signature system that your whole company uses
☆ You are ready to set up an automated chain of events for policy exception requests	⚙ You're ready to set up a platform that manages all of your companies policies
☆ You need to set up an approval process for independent contractor agreements	⚙ Your organization is ready to upgrade its human resources management system

06 Where does IT fit in?

IT professionals react in one of two ways to the emergence of citizen development: with anxiety or with relief—or more likely a combination of both. Anxiety comes from the perceived loss of control associated with democratizing skills that were previously siloed within the IT department. Relief stems from IT being able to drive strategy of enterprise solutions and not be seen as a bottleneck to implementations and requests.

IT professionals should now address the following questions with their departmental counterparts:

- How can we ensure that the product that is rolled out has undergone appropriate checks and testing?

- What hidden responsibilities will fall to IT to handle?

- What does support look like when these no-code solutions face challenges?
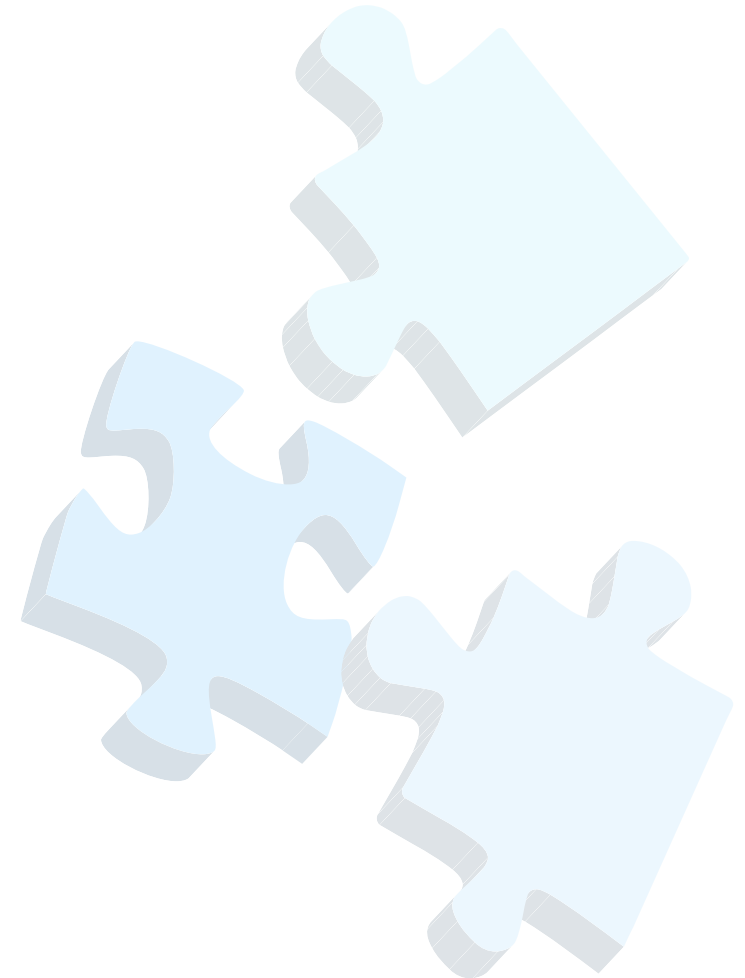
IT professionals will be heartened by the benefits they'll see from Citizen Development:

- They'll have more time to work on the more important projects they've prioritized.

- The democratization of solutions will lower their labor overhead.

- A team's self-reliance will keep them happier and allow IT to manage the systems, rather than the solutions.

These responses are well-founded, and likely go hand-in-hand. When looking for solutions that inspire citizen development, be sure to keep the perspective of the "anxious IT professional" in mind by asking your vendor questions around initial setup, support, and testing.

Keep in mind:

1. Democratizing platforms does not mean lowering standards. When your
    employees are empowered to build their own solutions quickly and easily
    with low-code, drag-and-drop tools, they must also be trained on the
    proper testing methodology. No matter how easy it might be to build
    something useful, testing is always crucial. Work with your vendor and
    check in with your IT department to identify "testing ownership."

2. A good low-code solution will not require any technical knowledge, just
    business knowledge and practical intuition. But check with your vendor
    to make sure this will be the case, and identify any one-time set-up
    issues that may well involve IT.

3. If you are familiar with the ticket system that your IT department uses
    to manage your internal requests, you have a good sense of what your
    support will look like from the platform that you are using. Make sure you
    review the SLAs carefully to determine if the support you will receive
    works for you.

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About Mitratech

Mitratech is a proven global technology partner for corporate legal, risk & compliance, and HR professionals seeking to maximize productivity, control expense, and mitigate risk by deepening operational alignment, increasing visibility, and spurring collaboration across their organization.

With Mitratech's proven portfolio of end-to-end solutions, organizations worldwide are able to implement best practices and standardize processes across all lines of business to manage risk and ensure business continuity.

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