

Q&A: How the Feds Can Use GenAI Safely with CEO Nicolas Chaillan's Ask Sage AI Platform

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Nicolas Chaillan founded the platform [Ask Sage](#) to empower government teams to leverage Generative AI, or “GenAI” securely. The Ask Sage GenAI platform ensures sensitive data is protected and complies with government security standards. Although founded very recently in January 2023, the company has grown rapidly and now serves clients across various industries, including defense, healthcare, and finance. (This interview has been lightly edited for clarity.)

Data Catalyst Institute: GenAI has been an explosive innovation. What is the most important thing that lawmakers and government stakeholders should know?

Nicolas Chaillan: Generative AI (GenAI) is already transforming how we do business, so if your organization hasn't started to define a path for embracing it, you risk not only being left behind but becoming vulnerable to Shadow AI.

Shadow AI refers to employees seeking shortcuts and workarounds to gain access to new GenAI technologies that could potentially expose a company to cyber vulnerabilities and data loss. Ask Sage focuses on providing a secure, enterprise solution that gives teams access to GenAI technologies at a low entry cost (starting at just \$15/month/user).

The power of GenAI to catapult business has been demonstrated in several use cases, including increasing a team's productivity by up to 35X and the velocity of acquisition teams by 50X. Without GenAI, you can't compete in 2024 and beyond.



*Nicolas Chaillan
Ask Sage Founder and CEO*

DCI: Tools from big GenAI companies such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT and Anthropic’s Claude are becoming household names. But many smaller companies are also working in this space, creating tailored services for sectors including healthcare, finance, and retail. What is your view of the economic opportunities for entrepreneurs building new AI companies and products?

NC: GenAI has created a new kind of entrepreneur. I have founded 12 companies, but Ask Sage was unlike anything I have done before because GenAI was an accelerant in every part of the business. 90% of the Ask Sage platform code was written with GenAI.



The Ask Sage logo

The company’s logo and the vast majority of our marketing, including videos, were created with GenAI. Ask Sage was able to write its Authority to Operate (ATO) package for the Department of Defense (DoD) Impact Level 5 (IL5) and FedRAMP High compliance in 2 weeks for \$2,500 instead of the quoted 6 months and \$300,000 from service providers. For a company that is less than 2 years old, GenAI has been instrumental in Ask Sage receiving one of the highest security authorizations granted by the Federal government and supporting the work of more than 14,000 government teams, 27 government agencies, and 2,500 corporations.

DCI: The government is known for being slow to implement technology—but is that a mischaracterization? You already have several government clients, so could you describe some of the specific effects Ask Sage has had for your users since implementation?

NC: As the former Chief Software Officer for the Air Force and Space Force, I can attest that the government is very diligent, which can sometimes lead to more bottlenecks than pathways for progress. When I created Ask Sage, I wanted to create a tool specifically built for government security requirements, knowing it would also lead the way for commercial use. Ask Sage is a ready-made solution that brings both leading technology and robust security to a single solution. I have had the privilege of working with incredible warfighters and public servants, so I know there are champions for change within the government. With more than 30,000 users in the DoD, we have seen Ask Sage

implemented for various use cases, from code generation and repository scans to contract reviews and proposal writing, and many more applications.

DCI: You recently [made news](#) for your partnership with the U.S. Military to bring leaders GenAI that complies with Impact Level 5 (IL5) standards. What are the benefits to government agencies when they partner with private sector companies like Ask Sage, rather than building out the tech themselves?

NC: The government does not need to recreate something to prove it is safe. Government regulation states that software procurement should prioritize commercial off-the-shelf products rather than waste taxpayer money to reinvent the wheel. Ask Sage has deployed its capabilities across multiple DoD environments, including the Navy, Army, and Air Force/Space Force. We have also deployed Ask Sage as a SaaS, in an IL5 environment with access to Azure Gov OpenAI on a Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) fabric. Further, by adopting GenAI in an IL5 environment - which includes highly sensitive military and/or government information - the DoD can securely accelerate the velocity of its software, cybersecurity, and acquisition teams. Ask Sage brings leading large language models (LLMs), that are already approved for government use, with security, a suite of plugins, and agents to accelerate the utilization of GenAI. OpenAI has invested billions – yes that is a B, billions – in the creation of its LLMs. Ask Sage has received authorization that confirms it meets the security and cyber compliance requirements for utilization at IL5. Companies like Ask Sage meet the volume of government compliance requirements, providing assurance to users and demonstrating that commercial solutions can be built for government use.

DCI: There's been talk of workforce displacement and role shifts due to increased reliance on GenAI. How should human operators think about their role when using AI? How do training and familiarity with the technology contribute to risk reduction in a military setting?

NC: As we have shared, Ask Sage can automate a long list of tasks, including software development, cybersecurity testing, and even parts of the federal acquisition system, such as drafting and generating RFIs, RFPs, scope of work, defining requirements, down-selecting bidders and much more. While GenAI has the power to increase productivity and augment capabilities, the last defense in quality control and accuracy is human review. [Trust, but verify](#) is our motto when discussing how teams should

incorporate this new technology into their work. Ask Sage has built-in features, such as source references and hallucination detection, to help improve accuracy and transparency, but the individual user is ultimately responsible for verifying the responses.

Like with any new technology, there is a learning curve. The fancy term prompt engineering simply describes how you draft your question, taking into account the limitations and capabilities of LLMs. Just as we learned the art of a good Google search, the workforce will learn to draft a prompt and leverage the features on our platform to get even more done, professionally and personally.