

# Surmounting the 'Salesforce silo' in government agencies

How an innovative solution to integrate Salesforce data empowers agencies to take greater control of their data and unlock its full potential.

A Scoop News Group Report

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A seasoned chief data officer (CDO) at a large federal agency was recently tasked with integrating the agency's customer profile databases, maintained independently by nearly a dozen subagencies. Though massive in scale, the project appeared relatively feasible at first glance because all of the databases ran on Salesforce, the software-as-a-service platform now used by virtually every cabinet agency in the U.S. government and hundreds of federal customers.

However, as the CDO and the agency's IT leaders quickly discovered, that vision would prove far more complicated than expected. Each operating unit had developed different production instances of Salesforce, each with its own metadata, reporting tools, and user requirements. Attempting to harmonize and integrate the data across all those subagencies wasn't just a technical challenge; it would also mean overcoming years of intradepartmental data practices and inertia.

As federal agencies continue to invest billions of IT dollars annually to deliver services more efficiently and securely—and the pressure to innovate using AI mounts—the stakes in ensuring agencies improve their integration and harnessing of data are higher than ever.

Salesforce, of course, offers tools such as MuleSoft that are designed to help its customers integrate their data. A host of third-party tools and vendors also promise to help organizations manage their Salesforce data. However, the strengths inherent in Salesforce's unique system for labeling and managing data can make integrating data into different systems exceedingly difficult and expensive, according to Drew Niermann, Go-to-Market Leader at CapStorm.

## Surmounting the Salesforce Silo

The root of the challenge lies in the nature of Salesforce's architecture, explains Niermann. "Salesforce stores all kinds of structured and unstructured data. It has its own metadata

architecture. It has its own custom code language called Apex. It has its own querying language similar to the traditional SQL queries for the relational database, but it's slightly different. And it also requires that every record inside the system have a globally unique 18-character record ID."

While beneficial within the Salesforce ecosystem, this unique structure creates significant obstacles when attempting to migrate or integrate data with other platforms. One of the biggest hurdles agencies face is managing Salesforce's complex hierarchical data hierarchies and ever-changing schemas. According to Niermann, Salesforce organizes data in a highly relational way, with multiple layers of objects and relationships...and

every customer customizes their data model to meet the unique requirements of their business. Traditional data migration tools often struggle to fully replicate these complex structures accurately, leading to data loss, broken relationships, and compromised data integrity.

If it's just a matter of backing up or replicating Salesforce data on-premises or in another cloud, the process is relatively straightforward. However, agencies have come to rely on Salesforce for much more than a customer relationship management (CRM) database, using it as an enterprise resource platform for case management, human resources, and other purposes. Consequently, the integration of Salesforce data with other systems has



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- Drew Niermann, CapStorm

Salesforce-based organizations following an acquisition. When existing software solutions fell short of his integration needs, he developed his own.

Fast forward: CapStorm has evolved into a sophisticated Salesforce data management solution that empowers agencies to escape the Salesforce silo — and take greater control of their data. Instead of forcing agencies to rely on Salesforce's native tools or complex third-party integrations, CapStorm provides a self-hosted solution that runs within the agency's secure infrastructure to support data [backup and recovery](#), [import and export](#), [archiving](#), [integration and reporting](#), [permission management](#), and more.

**Here's how it works:**

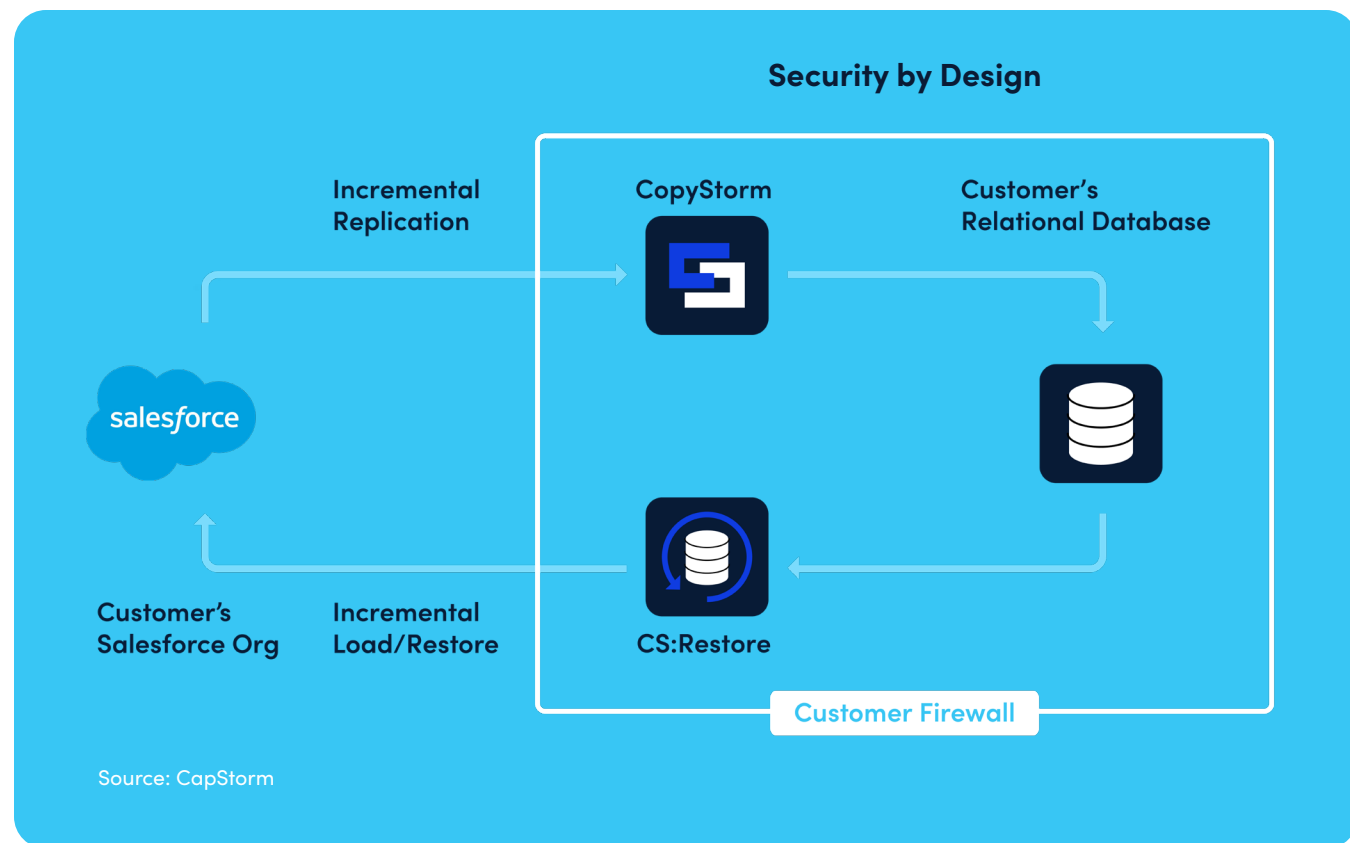
- Software installation:** Agencies install CapStorm's software on their own AWS, Snowflake, or on-prem environment, ensuring complete control over their data and security. CapStorm never accesses or stores customer data.
- Data replication:** CapStorm's software then replicates the agency's Salesforce data model into a local relational database, preserving all of Salesforce's relationship schemas to maintain data integrity.
- Data access and utilization:** Agencies can then access, analyze, and integrate their Salesforce data with other systems using standard SQL queries and their own tools.

become essential. But doing so has proven to be both challenging and expensive, according to Niermann, speaking from practical experience.

As a result, he says, agencies often find themselves trapped in a "Salesforce silo," unable to effectively share and analyze their data across the enterprise without going to great expense. "If the integration solution does not support this sort of hierarchical data movement," says Niermann, "the client is often forced to rebuild records and relationships from scratch manually. It's a nightmare."

**There has to be a better way**

CapStorm was founded in 2011 after co-founder Greg Smith faced the challenge of merging



Source: CapStorm

## Added value for government agencies:

CapStorm's solution offers several key benefits for government agencies:

- **Enhanced Security:** By keeping data within their secure environment, agencies maintain complete control over who has access to the data and what gets done with it. It also ensures compliance with regulations like FISMA, HIPAA, FINRA, and GDPR. CapStorm offers end-to-end encryption to secure Salesforce data both at rest and in transit while allowing agencies to maintain full control over granular data classification and user access through their internal staff.
- **Improved data integrity:** By accurately preserving and replicating Salesforce's hierarchical data schemas, CapStorm ensures data integrity and usability, helping agencies avoid costly manual rework.
- **Increased speed and efficiency:** By staging data in-house rather than in a multitenant environment, agencies can replicate data in near real-time, enabling faster analysis, reporting, and decision-making.
- **Data independence:** By maintaining autonomous control over Salesforce data within their own infrastructure, agencies gain greater flexibility and control over their data while also enabling them to choose the best tools and strategies for their specific needs.
- **Reduced Costs:** By avoiding costly data storage overages within Salesforce and utilizing their own existing infrastructure,



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agencies can significantly reduce their overall data migration and management expenses. CapStorm, for example, is licensed per unique Salesforce production organization, eliminating unanticipated cost increases based on volume or user-based pricing.

### Worldwide user base

CapStorm's features make it ideally suited to meet the needs of governments, regulated industries, and the [financial services sector](#), which depend on Salesforce to maintain large volumes of customer, employee, and other data. CapStorm now supports customers in 49 countries, according to company reports. Among other [case studies](#):

- **A top five global HCLS** (healthcare and life sciences) organization leveraged CapStorm to analyze clinical trial data without revealing the personally identifiable information of individuals selected from a Salesforce database. According to Niermann, the type of reporting and analytics clinicians wanted to do wasn't available inside Salesforce but was possible using CapStorm. This allowed the organization to use its own reporting tools and segment, classify and encrypt the sensitive data.
- **A FinServ group** that regularly acquires other companies used CapStorm to seamlessly migrate and merge an acquired company's Salesforce data into the group's master system. According to Niermann, the client commented, "I shudder to think about what the project would have looked like if we didn't have CapStorm because we could lift and migrate massive hierarchies of data in a single process instead of one spreadsheet at a time."
- **A top five global NGO** (non-governmental organization) that recently switched to CapStorm from a competing solution reported seeing "a 10x improvement" in the time it took to replicate Salesforce data in their enterprise data warehouse, Niermann recounted. The organization stages events all over the globe and needed to analyze and react to data from these events much more quickly. "They are now out in front of the data that's coming in instead of constantly behind the eight ball," he said.

CapStorm's ability to support large-scale Salesforce users has enabled it to help a growing number of federal agencies tackle the recurring challenge of integrating their data. "We help them think differently about how they could solve problems with their Salesforce data," says Niermann.

"I believe many of them are preconditioned to think they must operate within Salesforce's environment. People are not often thinking about what if I could integrate this [Salesforce] data with my own databases, managed by my own staff, behind my own firewalls. That's where we help people have an 'A-ha' moment," he says. "This opens up an entirely new world of possibilities for what we could do with our data and our Salesforce implementation."

[Learn more](#) about how CapStorm can help your agency integrate its Salesforce data.



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