

Experience: How is Non-Invasive Data Governance Different?

No one needs to tell you that data and information are a big part of your life. From the personal data you meticulously manage to the data you have about your customers, products, and suppliers. From the services you provide to the data you protect, analyze, and report personally or through your business. From the proper, moral, and legal responsibility for the formal accountability of every person in your organization to appropriately managing that data. These things define “data governance.”

Data can 1) be of great value to the organization or 2) data can be the one thing that stands in the way of the viability and ability of your organization to best serve its customers or stay one step ahead of its competitors.

Businesses and organizations recognize that data is a valuable asset and potential liability at the highest levels of these entities. A way exists to formally govern your data without interfering with the present business plans, upsetting the culture, and threatening the people who already define, produce, and use data to perform their work functions.

As you know, I refer to this approach as *Non-Invasive Data Governance*. Data governance programs focus on the execution and enforcement of authority and accountability for managing data as a valued organizational asset. Data governance programs focus on managing risk and maximizing the organization’s data and information value. In this “big data” age, a real definition for data governance could include “formalizing people’s behavior through the application of proper accountability for their relationship with the data—leading to improvements in data risk management, increased quality and understanding of data, and improved analytical and decision-making capabilities.”

In other words, data governance exemplifies everything a business or organization needs to succeed and prosper. Data governance leads to the formal management of data as a strategic organizational asset, and the formal stewardship of and accountability for data across an organization. As a result, many organizations are considering data governance program implementations

if they have not already started down this path. The following table outlines the core difference between the Non-Invasive Data Governance approach and traditional methods of implementing data governance:

With Non-Invasive Data Governance:	With other approaches to data governance:
Data governance is communicated as something already taking place, albeit in an informal, inefficient, and often ineffective manner. Non-Invasive Data Governance focuses on formalizing existing levels of accountability, addressing lapses in formal accountability, and typically costs the time that is put into the effort.	Data governance is communicated as being expensive, complex, time-consuming and over-and-above the existing work culture of the organization.
Non-Invasive Data Governance is viewed as being designed to fit the organization's culture and to take advantage of existing levels of governance so as to not be viewed as encroachment.	Data governance is viewed as a discipline that will add unnecessary rigor and bureaucracy to business processes, thus slowing delivery cycles and making data more difficult to access and use.
Non-Invasive Data Governance expectations are set by assisting business areas to recognize and articulate what they cannot do because the organization's data will not support those activities.	Data governance expectations are set by the team of individuals responsible for designing and implementing the data governance program.
Individuals are identified and recognized into roles associated with their existing relationship to the data, as data definers, producers, users, subject matter experts, and decision-makers, to stress their importance and impact on data across the organization.	Individuals are assigned new roles as part of their involvement in the data governance program.
Individual job titles do not change, and there is an acknowledgment that the vast majority of their responsibilities will not change.	Individuals are given the title of data steward and their job responsibilities are adjusted accordingly.
More than one data steward (formally accountable person) is associated with each type of data. The organization recognizes numerous people with this association to data (i.e., multiple	Individuals are assigned as THE data steward for specific subject areas of data (i.e., a customer data

With Non-Invasive Data Governance:	With other approaches to data governance:
users of particular data that all must be held formally accountable for how they use the data).	steward, a product data steward, finance data steward).
Organizations apply Non-Invasive Data Governance principles to existing workflows and processes by formalizing discipline, accountability, and involvement in these processes.	Organizations refer to processes as “data governance processes“ giving the impression that the processes are being carried out because of or as a result of the data governance program.
Non-Invasive Data Governance can be managed out of a business unit or Information Technology unit as both the business areas and IT hold specific knowledge and formal accountability relative to governing data as a valued enterprise effort.	Data governance must reside in a business unit and be directed as a business effort with limited involvement from Information Technology.

With Non-Invasive Data Governance:

- Data steward responsibilities are identified, recognized, formalized, and engaged according to their existing responsibility rather than assigned or handed to people as more work. Everybody is a steward.
- Data governance is applied to existing policies, standard operating procedures, practices, and methodologies—rather than being introduced or emphasized as new processes or methods.
- The governance of data augments and supports all data integration, privacy, risk management, business intelligence, and master data management activities rather than imposing inconsistent rigor to these initiatives.
- Specific attention is paid to ensuring senior management’s understanding of a practical and non-threatening yet effective approach to governing data to mediate ownership and promote stewarding of data as a cross-organization asset, rather than the traditional method of “you will do this.”

*Communicate where you compare to best practice.
Then leverage your strengths and address your opportunities to improve.*

Key Messages

By merely including the term “governance,” data governance requires the administration of something. In this case, data governance refers to the administering of discipline around the management of data. Rather than making the discipline appear threatening and difficult, I suggest following a Non-Invasive Data Governance approach to formalize what already exists and address opportunities to improve.

Experience: Comparing Approaches to Data Governance

There are three approaches to implementing data governance. The approaches include the Command-and-Control approach, the Traditional approach, and the Non-Invasive Data Governance approach. This essay quickly summarizes each approach and compares how organizations apply them. The method to compare the approaches focuses on the six core components of a data governance program that I addressed in the Non-Invasive Data Governance Framework.

		DATA GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK COMPARISON		
		Governance Approaches		
		COMMAND and CONTROL	TRADITIONAL	NON-INVASIVE
Components	DATA	Data	Data Information	Data Information Records Knowledge
	ROLES	Assign Roles	Identify Roles	Recognize Formalize Roles
	PROCESS	New Process	Single Process	Apply to Process
	COMMUNICATIONS	You Will Do This	You Should Do This	You Already Do This
	METRICS	Measure Financial Value	Measure Data Quality	Measure Formality & Advancement
	TOOLS	Purchase First	Leverage Existing	Leverage Build Purchase

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Figure 1-4. Data Governance Framework Comparison

The Command-and-Control Approach

The Command-and-Control Data Governance Approach is primarily a top-down method that begins with the requirement for the governance of data coming as a mandate from leadership of the organization or as a response to an internal or external report from an examiner or auditor.

Characteristics of the Command-and-Control approach include:

- Data in databases, systems, and analytical data resources are the entire focus of the program.
- People are ASSIGNED new responsibilities that feel over-and-above existing responsibilities.
- People are told that governance is a NEW PROCESS that must be applied to solve issues and address opportunities.
- People are told that the governance activities WILL fit in among existing priorities.
- The program is measured on Return on Investment (ROI) and bottom-line impact.
- Governance tools, such as catalogs and repositories, are a primary focus of the program.

The Traditional Approach

The Traditional Governance Approach follows a refrain of “if you build it, they will come.” Programs traditionally build the necessary program components, like the roles and the tools, with the hopes and expectations that people will move toward participating in the roles and utilizing the tools. The success of traditional programs depends on program management’s ability to get people to participate and use the tools.

Characteristics of the Traditional approach include:

- All data is in scope, including structured and unstructured data, however, it cannot all be addressed at the same time.
- People are IDENTIFIED into governance roles based on existing responsibilities.
- People are told that governance is THE process that is applied across a variety of business needs.
- People are told that the governance activities SHOULD be fit in among existing priorities.
- The program is measured based on improvements in the dimensions of data quality.
- Governance tools are a primary focus of the program, with emphasis placed on building internal tools before buying them.

The Non-Invasive Approach

The Non-Invasive Data Governance Approach emphasizes that there are levels of governance already in place that can be leveraged toward the effective governance of data. People already define, produce, and use data as part of their jobs. In many organizations, people have informal accountability for the data they define, produce, and use – meaning that there are not consistent or formal guidelines for how these actions take place.

Characteristics of the Non-Invasive approach include:

- All data is in scope and the program recognizes pre-existing governance may already be taking place under different names (Information Governance, Records, Document, and Content Management).

- People are RECOGNIZED into governance roles based on existing responsibilities. Assistance, in the form of governance components, is provided to those with relationships to data.
- People are told that governance is something that is APPLIED TO processes rather than redefining a process that is being followed. Governance involves getting the “right” people involved at the “right” time.
- People are told that the governance activities ARE ALREADY PART of their existing priorities and that the program enables them to define, produce, and use quality data.
- The program is measured based on return on investment from all primary information and data technology activities of the organization rather than the program itself. Value is based on the business outcomes of focused data endeavors and projects that are being completed.
- Governance tools are an enabler of program success, with emphasis placed on aligning new tools and tools in your environment with well-defined business and technical metadata requirements.

In the balance of this essay, I will run through each of the components of the Non-Invasive Data Governance framework that was shared earlier in this book and provide a quick statement of how each component is typically viewed for each of the three approaches.

Data

In a *Command-and-Control* approach to data governance, data that resides in databases and structured (and modeled) data resources are at the core of all discussions. Organizations recognize data is important to people at all levels of the organization, and the emphasis is on delivering data from those databases and resources to the end-user community.

In a *Traditional* approach to data governance, the term “data” refers to structured and unstructured data. Organizations define the differences between “data” and “information” often providing separate functions for Data and Information Governance.

In a *Non-Invasive* approach to data governance, it is common for organizations to blend the functions of Data and Information Governance under the name of data governance while also including the governance of structured data (databases and data resources) and unstructured (content, document, records, and knowledge management).

Roles

In a *Command-and-Control* approach to data governance, management assigns employees new roles. Immediately, employees perceive data governance as something that is over and above their existing levels of responsibility, and thoughts turn to how much time it will take and how data governance competes with completing their job function.

In a *Traditional* approach to data governance, management identifies employee roles based on seniority and ownership of systems and data resources. Policy describes responsibilities requiring governance of formal charters and designation of people to play specific roles as part of the data governance program.

In a *Non-Invasive* approach to data governance, management recognizes employee roles based on their existing relationship to data. People who define data are guided through the data definition process when defining new data. People who produce data understand the impact of the data they produce. Data users are formally educated, made aware of, and expected to follow all rules associated with using data. Being recognized for something brings with it a positive connotation and positive expectations.