

# INFORMATION GOVERNANCE IN THE DATA AGE

The true value of data becomes more evident when it is governed by comprehensive policies.



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**A**GENCIES AT EVERY level of government are struggling with how to manage, preserve, retain, and dispose of massive and growing amounts of both structured and unstructured data. These days, data resides almost anywhere—in a social media feed, on a server, a paper filing cabinet, a cloud-based repository, or a network log, just to name a few.

Effective information governance is critical. Without it, agencies can't respond to requests for information quickly and ensure all data sources have been identified and are included in responses.

State CIOs know this is a major issue and have made some progress, but not nearly enough. The [2016 State CIO Survey](#) found less than half have data governance policies in place, 25 percent have strategies for dealing with large amounts of data, and only 18 percent have strategies for dealing with unstructured and structured data.

Many agencies still rely on traditional Enterprise Content Management (ECM) systems. While ECM systems help manage unstructured content, they often can't handle new data types such as social media feeds and sensor data. Also ECM systems focus on workflow and how data moves across certain points, not data policies. Finally, ECM systems weren't designed to relate data from one application to another. That means if you have data in an SAP database and e-mails related to an SAP transaction in an ECM solution, they wouldn't connect. Without that integration, it's extremely difficult to conduct comprehensive data searches.

What agencies really need today is a way to find needles in a haystack. And the more accurate, more precise, and more curated your data, the easier it is to find the complete answers. Here are the pillars of effective information governance and the technology that will help agencies get there:

► **Integration:** Linking multiple applications, information silos, and ECM solutions helps agencies look broadly across all data sources.

► **Collect, search, classify, and access:** If you can gather structured and unstructured data from a multiple set of sources into a common repository, you're halfway there.

► **Content management beyond ECM:** The ability to find things quickly, but within specific permission boundaries is increasingly important for government agencies. A content management capability that goes beyond capture and search and can understand what's top secret and who has permission to access specific data can resolve this issue. Your content management system should comply with all applicable standards, such as relevant parts of ISO and DoD 5015.2.

► **Delete redundant, obsolete, and trivial data:** With data stores growing so rapidly, it's critical to delete unnecessary data in a way that ensures you aren't deleting anything that might be of value. This requires the ability to identify the actual source content, as well as copies of that data, and compare data with applicable retention policies.

► **Make informed decisions and protect against risk:** Everybody wants to use information to make better decisions, but it's important that Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data remains protected. The solution should be able to pinpoint and encrypt PII in any data set, and then make all information around the encrypted cells accessible.

Information governance will only get more complicated as data stores grow and new data types emerge. Agencies that make the effort to modernize their information government policies and technologies now will be better prepared for whatever the future brings.

*David Gould is WW director, secure content management solutions, Micro Focus Government Solutions, LLC.*



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