

Data, Data Everywhere, but Not a Byte to Eat

Thinking Intelligently About Data Management

An interview with Richard Breakiron, Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives for the Federal Sector, Commvault

Data drives decisions — both good and bad. The days of “static data” housed in filing cabinets or resources like encyclopedias are long over. As Richard Breakiron with Commvault points out, agency and mission readiness and success are driven by “data readiness,” and today data is a “flow variable” and the challenge is managing the volume, velocity and variety of data for actionable insight.

Agencies need automated and intelligent data management to manage “data in motion”: to see, to provide access, to interpret and safeguard the masses of data they possess, and to deliver context and analysis. Intelligent data management helps organizations enhance their public-facing services, while improving their backend operations, Breakiron said.

Find, Understand, Protect

The first element of intelligent data management is **visibility**: Where is agency data located? And directly associated, Breakiron said, is **accessibility**, knowing how the agency organizes and uses its information, and what the data’s condition is.

“We often find, especially in the government, in excess of 50% of the data hasn’t been touched for as much as five years,” he explained. “And we also find that about 20% of the data, you couldn’t talk to if you had to.” Commvault calls that “orphan data,” and it’s akin to having a VHS tape but no VHS player with which to view it.

An intelligent data management system creates a tiered storage approach that identifies long-ignored information, allowing an archival model for “pennies to the dollar vs. thousands of dollars in storage costs,” he said.

The third aspect, and one that has to be integrated from the outset, of an intelligent data system is **security**: That is, ensuring that the organization has access control, identity management and other protective elements in place to prevent accidental or targeted loss of data, along the lines of the Zero-Trust Architecture.

How Commvault Helps

Intelligent data management really can save the day. Colorado’s chief information officer (CIO) team relied on Commvault for its intelligent data management tools, in which Commvault’s automated features identified and quarantined several new, unknown user accounts. They originated outside the state and were created by an adversary staging a ransomware attack. The CIO team was alerted to the event by Commvault’s findings and was able to stop the attack.

“Commvault views itself as a data protection and critical mission readiness company, supporting cloud and emerging technologies,” Breakiron said. “Commvault looks beyond what’s currently possible, focusing on ways to enhance data management to improve ‘operational readiness.’”

Breakiron mused, “Wouldn’t it be nice if when I save a file, the system doesn’t automatically just know that it’s a PowerPoint, Excel or a Word doc ... but it actually starts tagging it and automatically knows” the context that I want associated with the data? Think of what’s possible and a world where we say, ‘Data, Data Everywhere and Always a Byte to Eat.’”