

“Flavors” of Data Governance

**A Whitepaper by
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“Flavors” of Data Governance

Here’s a short definition of Data Governance:

- ◆ Data Governance is the exercise of decision-making and authority for data-related matters.

Here’s a bit longer definition:

- ◆ Data Governance is a system of decision rights and accountabilities for information-related processes, executed according to agreed-upon models which describe who can take what actions with what information, and when, under what circumstances, using what methods.

Definition

Data Governance is the exercise of decision-making and authority for data-related matters.

What will Data Governance look like in your organization? Obviously, a program that focuses on Privacy / Compliance / Security may look different from one that exists to support Data Warehouses and Business Intelligence. And, a program concentrating on Architecture / Integration may involve different participants than one whose goals involve Data Quality.

It’s useful to think of different “flavors” of Data Governance, which we’ll describe in this paper. Regardless of your organization’s “flavor,” however, you should keep in mind that any effort an organization undertakes should tie to one of three universal executive drivers

- ◆ Increase revenue and value
- ◆ Manage cost and complexity
- ◆ Ensure survival through attention to risk and vulnerabilities: compliance, security, privacy, etc.

This is certainly true of Data Governance; all efforts should tie back to one or more of these universal value mandates. Maintaining a focus on value can be difficult, though, if participants are uncertain about goals and strategies. Delivering value is easier if you employ a formal framework.

Why? Frameworks help us organize how we think and communicate about complicated or ambiguous concepts. If your organization settles on a framework, your people can more easily achieve clarity of thought and purpose.

The DGI Data Governance Framework was designed to help achieve clarity; ensure value from your efforts; create a clear mission; maintain scope and focus; establish accountabilities; and define measurable successes. This discussion of “flavors” of Data Governance describes just one aspect of that framework: choosing the focus for your program.

What Do You Want Data Governance to Accomplish?

Following are descriptions of Data Governance programs in six common focus areas. A single framework can help organize efforts for all of these focus areas because of what all Data Governance programs have in common:

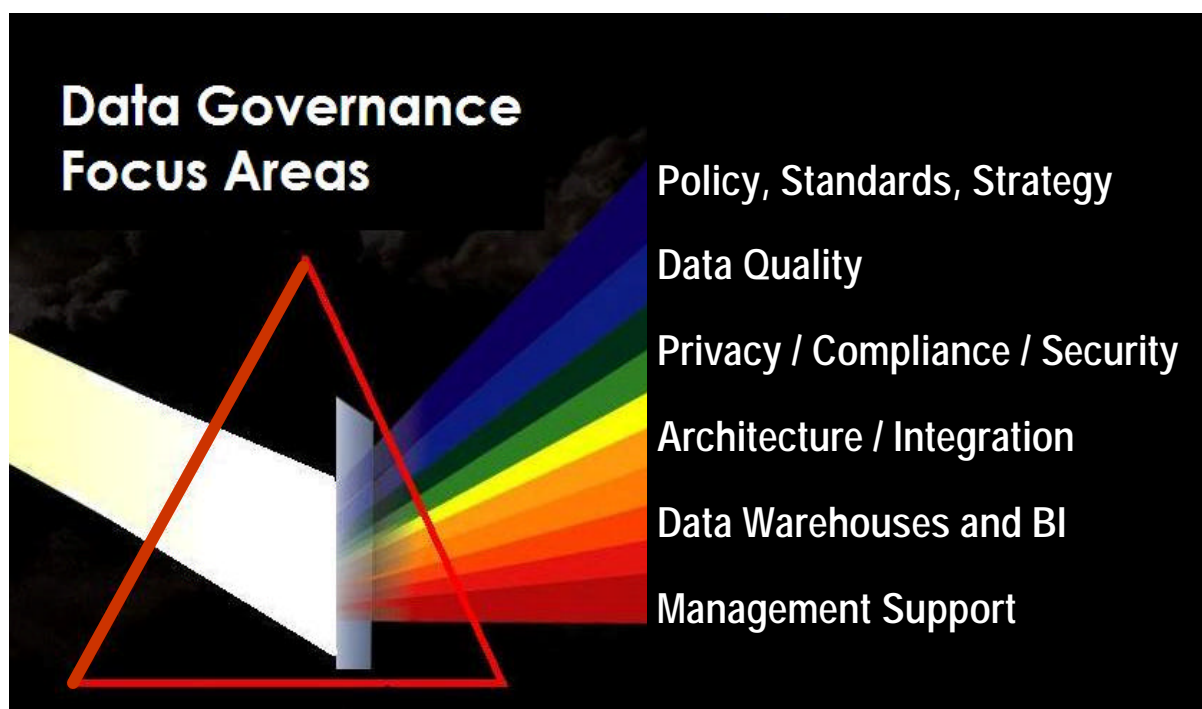


- ◆ They all have activities that address a three-part governance mission: to create rules, resolve conflicts, and provide ongoing services.
- ◆ They all employ most or all of the universal components of a Data Governance program.
- ◆ They all address universal governance processes and services, such as Issue Resolution and Stakeholder Care.

Data Governance programs with different focus areas will, however, differ in the type of rules and issues they'll address.

They'll differ in the emphasis they give to certain data-related decisions and actions.

And, they'll differ in the level of involvement required of types of data stakeholders.



Data Governance With a Focus on Policy, Standards, Strategy

This type of program typically comes into existence because some group within the organization needs support from a cross-functional leadership body. For example, companies moving from silo development to enterprise systems may find their application development teams resisting the guidance of Data Architects and Modelers. Formal Data Governance policies, backed by cross-functional Stewards, can give needed weight to architectural positions.

Soundbite

Formal Data Governance policies, backed by cross-functional Stewards, can give needed weight to architectural positions.



Enterprise initiatives such as Enterprise Data Management (EDM), Business Process Reengineering (BPR), standardization on platforms, and acquisition of data sets and systems can also benefit from such a program focus. Often these types of programs start by concentrating on sets of Master Data and/or Metadata.

A charter for this type of program may hold Data Governance and Stewardship participants accountable to:

- Review, approve, monitor policy
- Collect, choose, review, approve, monitor standards
- Align sets of policies and standards
- Contribute to Business Rules
- Contribute to Data Strategies
- Identify stakeholders and establish decision rights

Data Governance With a Focus on Data Quality

This type of program typically comes into existence because of issues around the quality, integrity, or usability of data. It may be sponsored by a Data Quality group or a business team that needs better quality data. (For example: Data Acquisition or Mergers & Acquisitions.) Often, quality efforts are initially applied to Master Data. These types of programs almost always involve Data Quality software. They may begin with an enterprise focus, or efforts may be local to a department or a project.

A charter for this type of program may hold Data Governance and Stewardship participants accountable to:

- Set direction for Data Quality
- Monitor Data Quality
- Report status for quality-focused initiatives
- Identify stakeholders, establish decision rights, clarify accountabilities

Data Governance With a Focus on Privacy / Compliance / Security

This type of program typically comes into existence because of concerns about Data Privacy, Access Management / Permissions, Information Security controls, or compliance with regulatory, contractual, or internal requirements. The program may be sponsored by Business or IT or be an outgrowth of a Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) program. Often, it results from a senior management mandate.

These programs generally begin with an enterprise scope, but often efforts are limited to specific types of data. They almost always include technologies to locate sensitive data, to protect data, and/or to manage policies or controls.

Soundbite

Data Governance often sets direction for Data Quality and then monitors the success of Data Quality efforts.

Soundbite

Programs that focus on Privacy / Compliance / Security often stem from a management mandate. Organization find that they need governance to be in compliance, but they want to do more than the minimal amount, so they can realize more gains.



A charter for a program with a focus on Privacy / Compliance / Security may hold Data Governance and Stewardship participants accountable to:

- Help protect sensitive data through support for Access Management and Security requirements
- Align frameworks and initiatives
- Help assess risk and define controls to manage risk
- Help enforce regulatory, contractual, architectural compliance requirements
- Identify stakeholders, establish decision rights, clarify accountabilities

Data Governance With a Focus on Architecture / Integration

This type of program typically comes into existence in conjunction with a major system acquisition, development effort, or update that requires new levels of cross-functional decision-making and accountabilities.

Another driver for such a program would be a move to Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), with its need for well-governed data or a new focus on Metadata, Master Data Management (MDM), or Enterprise Data Management (EDM)

A charter for this type of program may hold Data Governance and Stewardship participants accountable to:

- Ensure consistent data definitions
- Support architectural policies and standards
- Support Metadata Programs, SOA, Master Data Management, Enterprise Data Management (EDM)
- Bring cross-functional attention to integration challenges
- Identify stakeholders, establish decision rights, clarify accountabilities

Data Governance With a Focus on Data Warehouses and Business Intelligence (BI)

This type of program typically comes into existence in conjunction with a specific data warehouse, data mart, or BI tool. These types of efforts require tough data-related decisions, and organizations often implement governance to help make initial decisions, to support follow-on decisions, and to enforce standards and rules after the new system becomes operational.

The scope may be initially limited to rules, roles, and responsibilities for the new system, but sometimes this type of program serves as a prototype for an enterprise Data Governance / Stewardship program.

Soundbite

A move to Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA), with its need for well-governed data, could be a driver for a program with a focus on Architecture / Integration.

Soundbite

Data Governance programs with a focus on Data Warehouses / BI often start small, but may scale to other efforts

The idea is to "act locally but think globally."



A charter for this type of program may hold Data Governance and Stewardship participants accountable to:

- Establish rules for data usage and data definitions.
- Identify stakeholders, establish decision rights, clarify accountabilities
- Identify SDLC embedded governance steps and loop-outs for projects
- Clarify the value of data assets and data-related projects.

Data Governance With a Focus on Management Support

This type of program typically comes into existence when managers find it difficult to make “routine” data-related management decisions because of their potential effect on operations or compliance efforts. Managers realize they need to come together to make collaborative decisions but either don’t know all the stakeholders to involve or have an obstacle to assembling them. In such cases, a formal Data Governance program can help managers make decisions with confidence.

Sometimes such programs consist primarily of councils that come together to analyze interdependencies, make decisions, and issue policies. Other times, the Data Governance program will have multiple focuses, such as supporting management and also addressing Compliance.

A charter for this type of program may hold Data Governance and Stewardship participants accountable to:

- Measure the value of data and data-related efforts.
- Align frameworks and initiatives
- Identify stakeholders, establish decision rights, clarify accountabilities
- Identify SDLC embedded governance steps and loop-outs for projects
- Monitor and report on data-related projects
- Promote data-related messages and positions

Soundbite

Data Governance programs with a focus on Management Support typically come into existence when managers find it difficult to make “routine” data-related management decisions because of their potential effect on operations or compliance efforts.

Your Focus and Your Stakeholders

What will your Data Governance program focus on? This decision will determine which type of rules and concerns your participants will address. It will influence the mix of data stakeholders involved in your data-related decisions and actions, as well as the amount of effort required of your stakeholders.

Who is a data stakeholder? Any individual or group that could affect or be affected by the data under discussion. Some stakeholders are obvious – business groups, IT teams, Data Architects, and DBAs. Other stakeholders may not be so obvious for a given decision or situation. Knowing which stakeholder to bring to the table – and when – is the responsibility of the Data Governance team.



Getting Started

What type of Data Governance is right for your organization? How should you begin your efforts?

It's tempting to start right in designing your Data Governance and Data Stewardship organizational bodies, assigning roles and responsibilities, and developing policy. And it's true: this is important work.

But remember to begin by establishing your focus and value proposition. Be sure you understand how your efforts can contribute to your stakeholders' need to increase revenue and value, manage cost and complexity, and ensure survival through attention to risk, compliance, and vulnerabilities.

Not sure? That's understandable – as we said before, it's hard to see the forest when you're one of the trees! Consider asking someone else from within your organization (or from without) to help you understand your value statement and to develop a plan to clearly and unambiguously communicate that value.

When you can clearly describe your organization's data-related problems, how you're going to address them, and how success can be measured, then you'll be ready to reap the benefits of a value-based Data Governance program.



About the Data Governance Institute

The Data Governance Institute is the premier provider of in-depth, vendor-neutral information about – and assistance with – tools, techniques, models, and best practices for the governance of data and information.

The Institute provides a wealth of resources: the free DGI Data Governance Framework, information on data laws, regulations, and standards, whitepapers, case studies, best practices, data humor, and non-technical briefings on data-related issues and disciplines.

The Institute also directly assists clients through training, issue analysis, and program assistance as they roadmap, design, and implement governance programs.

The Data Governance Institute publishes www.DataGovernance.com, the web's largest source of free Data Governance information, and also publishes www.SOX-online.com, the web's largest source of vendor-neutral Sarbanes-Oxley information.

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