

DataAgility

Data Lifecycle Management

**Do you have the data you need...
and nothing more?**

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Talking about data

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Data Life

Managing your data, from acquisition to disposal.

It's a fact, good quality data allows for informed decision-making.

Quality data tells you how well your business is performing. It helps you understand your market, and identify opportunities.

Smart use of quality data means your organisation can thrive.

But the responsibility of managing data is real, and sometimes daunting. 'Data theft', 'data breach', 'data hack' are regular news headlines - headlines making organisations question the data they have been collecting and holding onto.

In this book we guide you through data lifecycle management.

The approach is simple - understand why you collect data, know the legal responsibilities regarding data handling, and ensure your organisation has data governance practices in place to implement ongoing best practice.

Collect what you need. Store data securely while you need it. Dispose of data when it is no longer needed.



Data Collection

Just because you can, doesn't mean you should

Data collection is easier than ever before. Everything from contact centres, finance processes and customer payment platforms, to the Internet of Things, can generate vast amounts of data for organisations. There is also a lot more publicly available data at our fingertips.

Just because you can collect data, doesn't mean you should.

Overcollection is the downfall of many organisations.

Excess data clutters the information pool. It creates 'noise' rather than valuable insights, and this noise may result in valuable data being overlooked.

Unrestrained data collection is likely to stretch your organisation's resources, leading to mistakes and oversights, resulting in poor data quality as well as wasted team hours.

Collecting surplus data also puts people and your organisation at unnecessary risk, especially if the data includes personal details that can be linked to that person.

Organisations that collect people's personal information are attractive targets for cyber criminals.

If you'd like to understand why data overcollection occurs in organisations, read our article - [Are You Collecting The Data You Need?](#)

Data is Valuable

So, what data should you collect?

1. Data that you need to conduct your business.

This is the data that you must collect in order to operate, deliver services, and process customer requests.

2. Data that will help you to make better business decisions.

This is the data that will allow you to improve, develop new offerings, diversify, expand your market, or be more profitable.

Know your legal responsibilities.

Regardless of how you collect data, you need to understand your organisation's legal responsibilities. All organisations must operate in line with The Privacy Act 1988, and statutory provisions affecting privacy. Some organisations are legally required to collect people's personal data such as businesses regulated by the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act. [Stay up-to-date](#) with Privacy Act amendments and industry regulations. As technology and cybercrime rapidly changes, reforms will be enacted to suit our digital world.



Data Retention

Are you a hoarder?

Some of the data that you need to conduct your business will be used immediately, for example to fulfil a customer order.

Some of the data that you have collected to help you make better business decisions will be used in analysis on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual basis.

And some of the data organisations collect is not always used, but must be retained for a set period to meet legal obligations.

How long should data be retained?

Only as long as you need it.

Organisations must plan how long they will retain data, and this should be based on how the information is used. Once the data has been used, dispose of the data.

Securely Store Your Data

Your clients expect nothing less

Whether you are retaining data for a short time in order to provide a product or one-off service, accumulating data over a period of time for market research, or storing data to adhere to legal requirements, you must securely store this data. Just as physical paper-records have been secured with locks, pest control, and fire prevention measures, data storage must be set up to securely store digital data.

Using reputable software which ensures data is encrypted and protected from unauthorised interference is a good place to start. Implementing data handling processes to prevent staff from inappropriate data sharing, and educating staff about data security, adds great value to the security of your data.

Storage should comply with relevant legislation. It should allow for the data to be stored and managed for the life of the data. And it should suit your organisation's needs with consideration of the intended use of the data, how often data will be accessed and by who, type and volume of data, and the characteristics of existing software systems and available technology.



The Optus Data Heist

What we can learn from the data breaches of 2022

In September 2022, the Optus data breach impacted nearly 10 million current and former customers of Australia's second-biggest telco, including a reported 2.8 million customers with at least one number from a current and valid form of identification.

It has been widely speculated that cyber criminals accessed Optus's data via an unsecured Application Processing Interface (API).

It has also been suggested that Optus stored customer records without unique identifiers, making it possible for an automated system to steal the records quickly.

Unfortunately, although forensic investigation of the Optus data breach has been undertaken, the reason for the data breach is not publicly known. [Optus has declared](#) that "the report is confidential and the subject of a legal professional privilege claim", as a class action has been lodged against Optus in the Federal Court.

And while the facts surrounding how Optus's data was stolen are not yet publicly known, there is plenty we can learn from this event with regards to collection, storage and disposal of data.

The Learnings

Australian organisations have taken notice

Audit your data.

Understand what data your organisation is holding, and if it is being securely stored.

The extent of the consequences of the Optus data breach are still to be realised. Personal details of millions of Australians are now probably on the digital black market. The stress of having personal information in criminal hands is difficult, leaving some people feeling violated and nervous about personal safety. Optus is enduring damages to reputation, brand, and financial position.

The upside is that Australian organisations are now questioning whether they are hoarding unnecessary data, cleaning up their data stores, and checking the security of retained data. And government regulators are realising that laws and regulations need to keep up with digital advancements, and be regularly questioned and reformed.



Data Disposal

Be like Elsa, let it go

By this stage of our eBook, it's right to surmise that data disposal should happen when you no longer need that data to conduct your business.

Data disposal is a key component of the data lifecycle, yet the action is often overlooked as staff rush onto the next operational task or new project.

Incorporating data disposal into your organisation's data governance and management processes and policies is best practice. Disposing of data reduces clutter, making it easier for your personnel to find data, and ensuring outdated data is not applied to analyses and decision making.

Data disposal is vital to risk management. The less data you retain, the less attractive you are to cyber criminals. And if thieves do gain access to your data store, there is less to steal. Showing that you have robust data governance that includes routine data disposal will be valuable if you need to build a case to prove that your organisation has taken all reasonable steps to protect people's personal data.

When to let go?

When you are no longer using the data, when it does not contribute to achieving organisation's goals and vision, and when your organisation has no legal obligation to retain the information. You need to let go.

How To Manage Data Disposal

Value all stages of the data lifecycle

Schedule disposal dates. Build disposal into action plans, standing operating procedures, and data management plans.

Ensure the people in your organisation who are responsible for data disposal know that they are responsible, are trained to dispose of the data, and understand how to extend data retention if required.

Strengthen data culture across your organisation. Ensure personnel understand how data is used, how it is managed, and how it is governed. If you develop a culture where data is valued, data handling processes are more likely to be adhered to throughout the whole data lifecycle.

Ensure your systems allow for safe data disposal, and maximise inbuilt functions such as automation. Choose systems supported by software updates, and ensure the systems suit Australian legal requirements e.g., financial transactions, and privacy laws.

Invest in data disposal. Storage is relatively cheap, but the risk in mass data hoarding is costly.

Managing Data Lifecycle

Maintaining the data focus

When looking for a solution to managing the data lifecycle, you'd be forgiven for thinking technology is the answer, especially with the current hype around AI, and digitisation streamlining data collection. Not so, even the most advanced technology cannot provide a 'set and forget' solution. It can not protect your organisation from human error or malicious disruption. And it cannot create organisational culture.

In managing the data lifecycle, you need suitable infrastructure, systems, people, processes, and policies in place.

Your organisation needs to uphold a culture where data is valued.

You need a data strategy, and routine data governance.

Data Governance

We always circle back to data governance

Data governance ensures the effective and efficient use of data to support your organisation in achieving its objectives. It is a collection of people, policies, frameworks, and procedures, implemented to help an organisation achieve a 'data thinking' approach to business.

Building out data governance requires you to have a complete view of your organisation's data. You need to identify what data exists in the organisation, where it lives, who owns it, and who has access rights to it. With a clear view of your data, you will get a picture of what data is crucial for your business, and see if you're hoarding redundant data. It may also help you recognise if you're storing people's personal data unnecessarily, putting your organisation and those people at risk.

To be purposeful, you should always ask why you need the data and how it will contribute to the organisation's goals and vision.

An important part of data governance is the creation of rules defining how the data should be collected, managed, stored, and handled. Your data governance rules should include standards around the minimum data quality requirements for collection, as well as how to comply with the [Privacy Act](#) and other relevant legal requirements. The goal of these rules is to ensure you have the right data lifecycle approach in place.



Rules are important, but an organisation's people are crucial. The structure of your data governance team will be shaped by your organisation's objectives. In general, a team will be comprised of people who know how to create and manage policy and processes within a business setting or organisation type, people who understand what data is needed for the business to excel e.g., commercial, marketing, operations, and people who understand and can keep on top of Australian laws.

The lifecycle benefits of data governance.

In establishing your data governance framework, policies and procedures, your data team will consider data privacy and data security, and establish data collection, storage, and disposal processes to suit regulations and your organisation's needs.

Data governance, once implemented, enables you to track who has access to your data consistently and efficiently, understand your data's compliance with privacy laws and other regulations, isolate the areas where data is most vulnerable, and know how you can ensure its security.

With robust data governance, you can apply data privacy and security controls effectively, and ensure that data privacy and data security remain top priorities as you collect more data.

Good data governance ensures you manage the unique risks and security challenges throughout the data lifecycle: collection, storage, access, usage, sharing, archiving, and disposal.

To find out more about [Data Governance](#) or how to write a [Data Strategy](#), download our eBooks or read the insights on our [website](#).



Data Agility. The Data People.

We hope you have been inspired to review your organisation's data lifecycle management.

Data Agility are specialists in Data Analytics and Information Management. We support our clients to improve performance and resolve business issues through the effective management and application of their data.

Headquartered in Melbourne, Australia, our clients are in Health, Government, Commercial and Infrastructure.

Our services include data analytics, information management, project delivery, systems integration, and managed services.

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Contact us today, if you'd like to know more about Data Agility and how we can help your organisation with data lifecycle management.



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