

INSIGHT PAPER

Better Together: Data and Analytics Governance

The ever-increasing importance of data for analytics is driving a revival of interest in establishing broader governance efforts. Yet, efforts to expand self-service, reporting, and analytics to more people across the enterprise inherently introduces increased risk. In this world of enabled, independent business users and self-service data analytics, the traditional approach to data governance is no longer fully sufficient to protect the enterprise while facilitating business intelligence and analytics with the speed and agility required for maintaining a modern competitive business.

Traditional data governance is not fully sufficient in today's world because its narrow security and compliance focus is designed to control a small, critical subset of data. However, in modern analytics environments where it is necessary to scale for more data, more reports, and more enabled users, the approach to governance must expand to facilitate the entire breadth of analytics needs and users.

Embracing modern analytics governance will benefit everyone in the organization, not only by reducing risk to the enterprise, but also by establishing a common foundation and understanding in working with data and analytics for everyone to make better decisions that are aligned with business objectives. When empowered employees are aware, responsible, and accountable for their use of analytics, the overall quality of governance improves and the analytics process is positioned to efficiently deliver valuable insights to the organization.

Where Data Governance Falls Short for Analytics Needs

It may seem natural to extend data governance to business intelligence. After all, it is through BI that data is exposed and explored. However, data governance is not designed to cover reporting and analytics workflows and activities. In Radiant Advisors' research and experience working directly with governance programs in Fortune 500 organizations, we found four common difficulties occur when traditional governance is applied to our modernized analytics world:

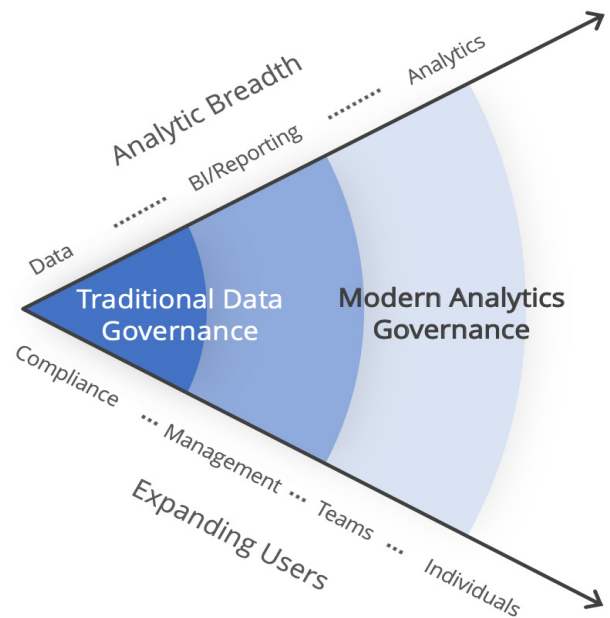


Figure 1: Expanding traditional data governance from data-specific compliance to enterprise use falls short when governance needs to be inclusive of reports and analytics as well as their increased producers and consumers across the enterprise.

- **Introduction of more enterprise risk from self-service users.** The risks regarding what data is being used and *how* it is being used increase as more people work independently with more data in various reports and workflows.
- **Increased demands of responsibility.** Data stewards and others responsible for monitoring, measuring, and enforcing governance practices easily become overwhelmed with many diverse users across a heterogeneous environment. This burden creates daily workload strain for the stewards and may introduce weaknesses in the quality of the governance programs.
- **The challenge of governance continuity across the technology environment.** As users and business groups are free to select reporting and analytics technologies that suit them, it is difficult to sustain a unified approach in the sprawling, complex landscape.

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- **Lack of collective accountability.** People who are empowered through data and analytics must be educated about governance for two reasons: 1) the burden of accountability and responsibility can be significant (as mentioned previously), and 2) data users exploring analytics without proper governance perspective do so with less confidence and more risk.

Analytics governance must pick up where data governance leaves off to cover the full analytics lifecycle as users turn data into reports, dashboards, and analytics processes to deliver business value without oversight. However, our research finds that efforts to evolve data governance programs to address modern BI and analytics scenarios often fall short because people shy away from the responsibility and accountability of increased data and analytics ownership; they are focused on delivering business value and avoiding personal risk. But if people are empowered and committed to a new mindset of modernizing governance – for data *and* analytics – for the benefit and protection of the organization, it is possible to overcome these shortcomings.

A Modern Mindset: Analytics Governance

It is now necessary to reimagine and redefine governance for enabled users in the age of modern data and analytics. Because of the new and diverse data and analytics needs across the enterprise, it is necessary to shift our mindset beyond narrowly controlling and enforcing the use of data. Generally speaking, governance is a process that we need to follow for *managing something*. A proper governance process will first define what is to be governed, then identify who can access it, and, finally, establish the proper way to use it. Data governance programs address needs specific to data. This new governance mindset establishes the goals of governance – not just for data, but also reporting and analytics – to ensure data is both available *and utilized properly* throughout the analytics lifecycle.

Our research finds that modern governance must undergo a fundamental shift from a focus on controlling data to a broader view that facilitates monitoring (to ensure appropriate use), encourages collaboration (to allow joint responsibility), and fosters trust (to enable freedom and reduce concerns) across analytics processes. This does not mean that traditional governance principles be thrown out entirely. Modern analytics governance is still driven by sound data management and stewardship principles, including a need for quality, consistency across reports and applications, and compliance.

The combination of these principles establishes the need to bring together different types of people for various governance needs. To implement analytics governance for enabled, independent users across the organization requires the involvement of analytics leaders, BI stewards, domain-specific data stewards, and collaborative peer reviews. Thus, it is not a top-down enforcement approach nor a bottom-up, grass-roots collaborative approach – both are necessary.

The mindset shift from controlling data to opening it up for users to work with *safely* throughout the analytics lifecycle is the key to modernizing governance. **Ultimately, accepting and supporting the way that people are empowered to work with reports and analytics will go farther than imposing traditional data governance controls.**

Shift to Modern Analytics Governance in Five Steps

There are five essential steps to modernize governance for analytics while empowering users:

1. **Redefine the new governance scope and communicate how everything can be managed – and why.** This includes balancing data, information, and analytics governance along with understanding the role of data and analytics catalogs. Clearly communicate the agreed-upon definitions and the

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purpose of governance in order to avoid confusion and muster support around the need for governing more than merely data. Centralize the message on empowering the users with these new capabilities while emphasizing freedom – and also the responsibility comes with it.

- 2. Accept that the landscape of technologies for conducting and delivering analytics is broad with low barriers to adoption.** Business users will select from a wide variety of tools based on their preferences and what is most effective for their work. Analytics governance must encompass as much of your environment as possible, including your incumbent tools, market-leading tools, and future tools for a sustainable program. An open platform approach enables IT to have a high degree of support for a complex ecosystem.
- 3. Look for insights in report utilization statistics in order to manage the environment based on usage metadata.** Monitoring the use of reports will show IT management areas for refinement as people collaborate on and ask questions about the reports and workflows. Additionally, monitoring the reporting environment will highlight which reports are infrequently used or may be used in inappropriate situations in order to optimize the environment and address potential gaps in the governance process.
- 4. Offer transparency and information to users about which reports and analytics others are frequently using and how they are using them.** Collaboration and crowdsourcing functionality will yield increased levels of information through transparency and visibility, which will act as a guide to improve accuracy and increase proper self-service use. Report usage metadata may show that a particular author develops reports that are frequently used. This also includes insights about significant creators and consumers of reports to reveal power users and “influencers” among the analysts, creating the foundation for a community of analytics-oriented people who understand the responsibility and accountability in the work the community is contributing to the business.

- 5. Assess how to grow the overall data culture and improve business data enablement in order to support individual needs and priorities.** Building upon the collaboration within the platform ecosystem, cultivate an environment that supports collaborative feedback and provide governance training for appropriate use of data and analytics through your Center of Excellence. The more support and knowledge users have, the more confidently and efficiently they'll be able to explore and analyze reports for insights. This establishes the opportunity for enterprise adoption of the governance processes and widespread analytics use across the organization.

Conclusion

The key to a successful analytics governance process is to have complete coverage of your environment and users. The ability to account for the data and reports and how they are being used serves as a basis to understand what's going on and then make the best decisions on the next steps for enabling users within the safety of the governance process.

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