



Effective Information Governance Programs: The Foundation of Defensible Data Management

Effective information governance gives organizations a structured approach to managing information throughout their lifecycle. Clear ownership, defined policies, data visibility, retention requirements, and disposition practices help legal and business teams understand what information exists, where it resides, and how it should be managed when litigation, investigations, or regulatory obligations arise.

A proactive information governance program also reduces unnecessary data, strengthens privacy and security practices, and creates greater consistency across business functions and data environments.

The Business Value of Effective Information Governance



Improve eDiscovery Readiness

A reliable data map and defined ownership help legal teams identify relevant data sources and custodians when a matter begins. Established preservation and legal hold processes support consistent, defensible execution. With a clear understanding of where information lives and who manages it, legal teams move into preservation and collection with fewer unknowns.



Reduce Data Volume and Cost

Redundant, obsolete, and trivial information adds volume without adding value. Identifying and disposing of unnecessary data before a matter arises reduces the amount of information that needs to be preserved, collected, processed, and reviewed. Over time, disciplined data management also keeps storage and management costs under control.



Strengthen Privacy and Security

Knowing what data a business holds, where it resides, and who has access to it makes sensitive information easier to protect. Clear retention rules and appropriate access controls help limit unnecessary exposure. When businesses remove information they no longer need, there is also less data to secure and less information at risk during a security incident.

Building a Proactive Information Governance Program



Governance and Accountability

Effective information governance starts with clear ownership. Organizations need defined policies and standards, along with an allocated team responsible for putting those requirements into practice and addressing exceptions when they arise. Legal, IT, privacy, security, records, and business stakeholders should have clearly defined roles so decisions do not fall between functions.

- Establish policies, standards, and accountability
- Define ownership, roles, and responsibilities
- Align retention requirements with legal, regulatory, and business obligations
- Establish requirements for classification, access, protection, and policy exceptions
- Coordinate legal, IT, privacy, security, records, and business stakeholders



Information Visibility

Legal teams need a practical understanding of where information lives before a legal hold, investigation, or discovery request arrives. Maintaining current information about systems, repositories, data sources, and custodians makes it easier to locate relevant information and determine how that information should be handled.

- Identify data sources, systems, repositories, and custodians
- Understand where information resides and how it is used
- Classify information according to business, legal, privacy, and security requirements
- Maintain data maps that support legal holds, investigations, and eDiscovery



Retention and Disposition

Retention programs should reflect how a business creates, stores, and uses information. Consistent retention schedules help businesses keep information for as long as business or legal requirements call for it, while disposition practices help remove information that no longer needs to be retained. Legal holds and other preservation obligations must be incorporated into the process so information subject to preservation is not inadvertently deleted.

- Apply retention schedules consistently across relevant environments
- Identify and address redundant, obsolete, and trivial information
- Coordinate disposition with legal holds and other preservation obligations
- Document disposition practices and maintain appropriate oversight

From Data Management to Legal Readiness

Information governance establishes the foundation for managing legal data before a matter begins. Better visibility, defined accountability, disciplined retention, and controlled disposition reduce the effort required to identify, preserve, collect, and manage information when legal needs arise.