

DATA SHARING TECHNOLOGY GUIDE

7 things to consider when
searching for a data
sharing solution



Know your ‘why’

Do we need a data sharing solution?

As businesses grapple with how to facilitate access to data, leaders are increasingly turning to data sharing solutions. [According to the Eckerson Group](#), a data sharing platform “fosters a culture of analytics by simplifying data access while governing critical data assets.”

As always, the first step is to define clear objectives. Identify the pain points that are negatively affecting your data and analytics efforts.

Having a specific goal in mind will not only help decide on a course of action, it will help you prioritize the steps you need to take in order to get some early wins. Understanding the priority user personas and workflows will also help you build a business case,

define key performance indicators (KPIs), and understand how to measure return on investment (ROI).

Data sharing platforms can help address a number of use cases for different user personas in your organization:

- **Platform operators** are responsible for running the data marketplace. They make decisions on operating model, governance, and access rules.
- **Data producers** create, publish, and control access to data products. Consumer interests, needs, and data flows can be tracked by data product managers.
- **Data consumers** can find, evaluate, subscribe, and use data products. This group includes business users who need to collaborate on analytics projects without necessarily needing technical skills.



Access vs. risk

Risk management is a critical area of concern when working on data sharing initiatives. Therefore, managing access to data — and maintaining governance and control over key data assets — is a critical consideration for your data sharing solution.

Look for a data sharing solution that provides robust access controls and permission settings. This ensures that only authorized individuals or groups can access specific datasets, maintaining data security and privacy.

One way to maintain access and control is for data products to be subscription-only. If a given user subscribes to a data product, the details of this subscription should be automatically enforced, adding an extra layer of risk management.



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Data synchronization

Version control is a key consideration when working collaboratively on data projects. It's of utmost importance that stakeholders trust that data is accurate and up-to-date. Therefore, your data sharing solution should be able to display key metadata, such as when data was last updated. You should also be able to specify when and how data updates occur.

Ideally, your data sharing solution should be able to push data updates into the various tables, dashboards, and visualizations that your users rely on.



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Data movement — yay or nay?

Data movement is where convenience can come into conflict with data governance. From an end user's perspective, it may seem easiest or most natural to copy a dataset onto a local machine. After all, if you just want to work with a table in Excel, this may feel like the obvious thing to do.

The thing is, there are risks whenever data moves from one system to another. Any number of issues can complicate guidelines around data movement:

- Security
- Privacy
- Licensing and permissions
- Availability of tools
- Syncing, updates, and version control
- Cost

There will be cases where moving data is expedient and low risk. But when any of the above issues are of concern, you'll want to be able to share or use data without having to move it.

Therefore, opt for a solution that allows data access at source. This means that data can be read remotely from where it is stored, rather than needing to be copied to a local machine or other system.



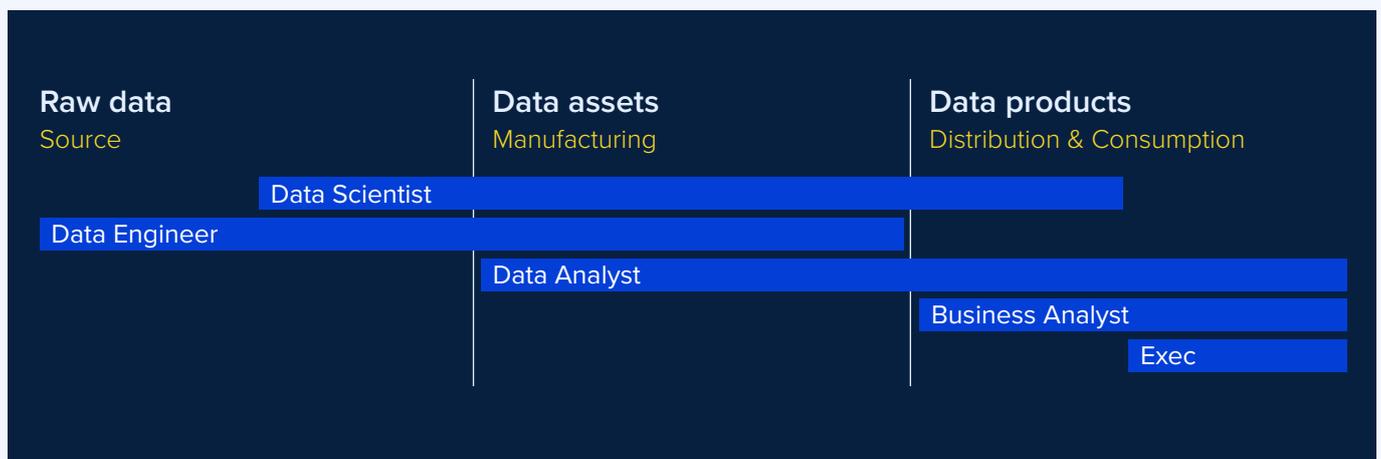
Flexibility matters

It's critical to understand how different users get value from data. Sometimes, a given stakeholder will need read-only access to data. In other cases, people will need to [collaborate on a data project](#), with updates synced between users and systems.

From a data product manager's perspective, it can help to think of data manufacturing and data distribution as two separate, competing goals. In the **data manufacturing** phase, the focus is on creating and maintaining data products that effectively meet a defined need.

In the **data distribution** phase, the challenge arises in effectively distributing data products, whether they are tables, notebooks, visualizations, etc. Unlike physical products, users cannot be aggregated or standardized; they exist in diverse tech stacks, possess different skills, and require tailored value propositions. Failing to meet users where they are can result in market limitations, unresolved objections, and a decrease in return on investment.

Look for a solution that services the spectrum of needs and use cases for data sharing.



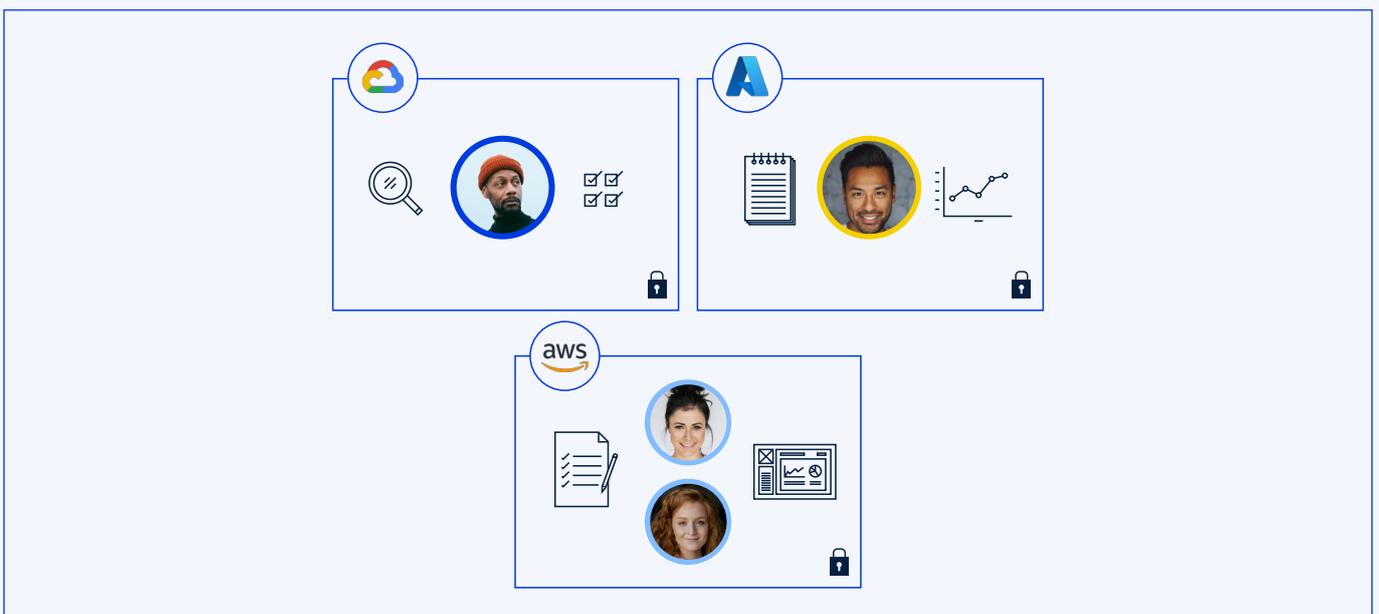
Users on the data value chain: Each role spans different parts of the data value chain.

Beware lock-in

The major cloud providers have built robust multi-billion dollar businesses on the convenience and power of their offerings. However, relying on any one technology solution or provider brings its own risks and costs.

Therefore, data teams often utilize a mix of storage and distribution providers. The downside of this is that data silos can emerge when these systems do not easily work well with each other. Attempts to eliminate these silos by migrating data to another provider's system will incur time and monetary costs.

Make sure to choose a platform that is cloud agnostic — in other words, one that works well across the different cloud storage providers, data lakes, and data warehouses. Fostering interoperability between these systems will aid to break down data silos.



Breaking down silos: *Your data sharing solution should support data storage, workflows, and users across a range of cloud technology providers.*



Get your bearings

When pursuing a data sharing initiative within your organization, it's important to align the chosen data sharing solution with your current reality. This will aid the process of integrating a solution to your organization's culture, technology, and processes.

Alignment with best practices: Ensure that the data sharing solution aligns with your company's existing best practices for data management and sharing.

Technology: Map out your tech stack, paying particular attention to where key datasets are stored and which systems will need access to this data. Think about the range of databases, source systems, file storage, cloud storage, data lakes, data warehouses, etc.

Compliance with legal frameworks: Verify that the solution complies with relevant legal frameworks and data protection regulations. Consider the territories and boundaries that data may need to transcend. If there are areas that may prove difficult, it can help to focus on enabling data exchange in jurisdictions with less complexity.

Cultural fit: Consider the cultural aspects of your organization — specifically the data culture. The ease and likelihood of adoption will be greatly influenced by the data culture. As such, leaders should aspire to transform the organization into one that prioritizes data sharing; practitioners should be open and willing to work with new systems that foster sharing and collaboration on data projects.

For more detail on understanding the impact of your tech stack, check out our CDO Survival Guide.

[Download guide](#) →





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Data sharing solutions are increasingly being deployed to provide scalable access to key data across the enterprise. The right approach for your organization will depend on many factors, several of which we've discussed here:

1. Know your 'why'
2. Access vs. risk
3. Data synchronization
4. Data movement — yay or nay?
5. Flexibility matters
6. Beware lock-in
7. Get your bearings

To learn more about data sharing solutions, read success stories, and gain a deeper understanding of what your business needs to transform its data capabilities, check out Harbr.

Our award-winning data sharing platform powers data access, usage, and distribution at scale for Moody's Analytics and many other global businesses.



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If you're ready to get started with a data sharing platform of your own, sign up for a free trial.

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