Trusted contract data:

from repository to system of record

In collaboration with

SIRION

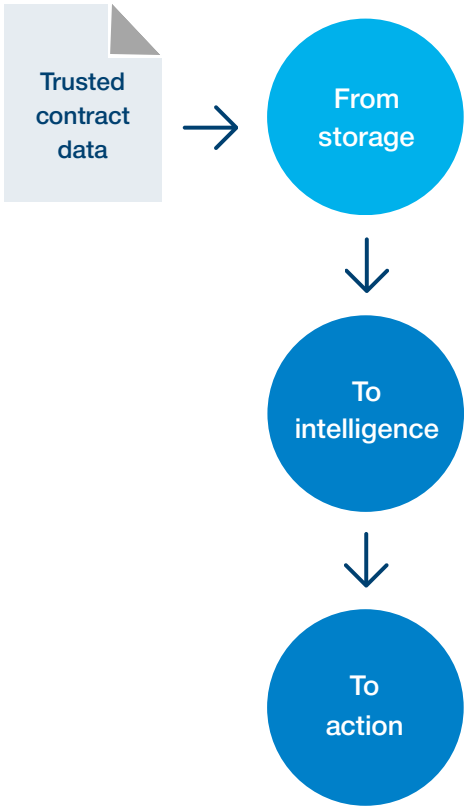
World Commerce & Contracting

Contents

Why trusted contract data is becoming the foundation for better decisions, better execution, and better AI

Most organizations have a contract repository. Few have a true Contract System of Record. As AI raises expectations for speed, insight, and automation, the difference between storing contracts and trusting contract data has become critical. The regulatory environment adds to the urgency, with requirements around AI readiness, traceability, governed data use rapidly shifting to 'must have' capabilities.

This report examines why contract data remains fragmented and underused in many organizations, and what it takes to make it authoritative, connected and actionable across the enterprise.



Introduction: Stored is not the same as trusted

Most organizations now have a place to store contracts. Far fewer have contract data they can trust.

In today's fast-moving markets, that distinction matters more than ever. It impacts speed, revenue, costs and decision-making. It contributes to claims, disputes and fractured relationships. As AI moves into the contracting lifecycle, storing agreements and using them to generate reliable business data has become a source of competitive advantage for some organizations and a source of operational drag for many others.

Figure 1: Distribution of contract storage locations across regions

Is your CLM repository the primary location where executed contracts are stored?	North America	Asia	Europe	Oceania
All executed contracts are stored only in CLM	32%	43%	19%	24%
Most contracts are in CLM, but some remain outside	32%	43%	31%	33%
Contracts are split across multiple repositories	26%	14%	38%	38%
There is no single primary repository	10%	0%	12%	5%

Figure 2: CLM maturity by region

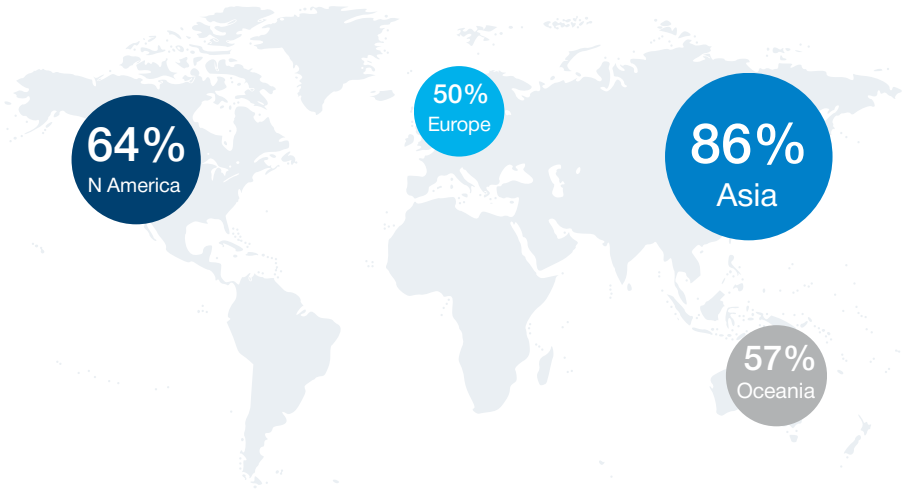


Figure 3: Primary contract storage locations outside a central repository
Note: Multiple responses permitted. Percentages may not total 100% due to the multi-select nature of the question.

Primary contract storage	North America	Asia	Europe	Oceania
Shared drives	71%	29%	78%	71%
Local legal repositories	19%	0%	31%	24%
Business unit repositories	26%	43%	53%	29%
Another CLM	3%	0%	22%	29%
Other (please describe)	19%	43%	6%	29%

Introduction: Stored is not the same as trusted *(continued)*

A contract repository answers one question: where is the document? A Contract System of Record answers a much more important one: what was agreed, where does it apply, what obligations or entitlements follow from it, and can the business act on that information with confidence? In many organizations, the answer is still no. Contracts remain fragmented across shared drives, local repositories, business unit systems, and partially adopted CLM platforms. The result is that contract data exists, but too often remains dormant because it is difficult to access, hard to connect, and not trusted enough to drive decisions.

"When I started, one-time management concessions lived in the President's head - maybe the PM knew, or there was an email thread somewhere. We now have a documented record of negotiation by contract. At least that's a start"

Contracts Manager at a major technology firm in the semiconductor industry

The issue here is structural. Many organizations have invested in repositories, but not yet in the data quality, hierarchy, version control, integration, and governance needed to make those repositories authoritative. WorldCC research shows that AI has strong momentum, with 42% of organizations now adopting or implementing it in the contracting process, yet concerns about data output quality, integration, and trust remain among the biggest barriers to progress. In parallel, the WorldCC 2025 Benchmark Report shows that the next stage of maturity will not be defined by how many features are deployed, but by how coherently capabilities connect into a reliable decision layer. When the contracting lifecycle is fragmented and lacking any clear point of ownership, technology implementations reflect that same weakness.

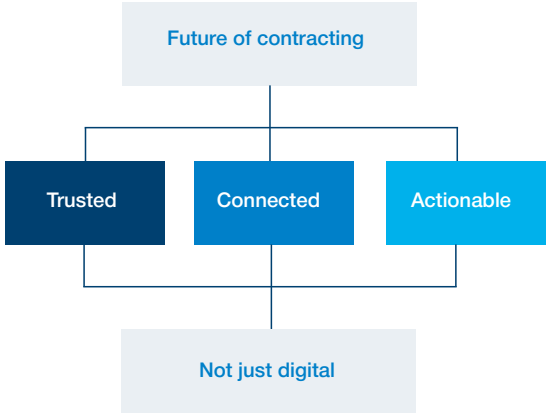
"The system is not just storing contracts - it is identifying which hotels did not accept a clause and triggering a strategy to insert it at amendment points. That is what contract data driving operational action looks like."

Legal Digital Project Manager at a global leader in hospitality and hotel services

This is why the idea of a Contract System of Record matters now. The challenge is no longer whether contracts are digitized or stored somewhere in the business. The challenge is whether contract data is structured, connected, and current enough to support real-time insight, operational execution, and responsible AI use. A repository can hold documents. A system of record must support decisions.

This report explores that gap. It looks at why contract data remains fragmented and underused, why AI raises the urgency, and what capabilities organizations need to move from passive storage to trusted contract intelligence. The organizations that get this right will not simply manage contracts more efficiently. They will build a stronger commercial operating model, one where contract data informs action, supports performance, and helps the business move with greater speed and confidence.

In short, the future of contracting is about becoming trusted, connected and actionable.



The business cost of dormant contract data

Contract data is often present, but not useful. It sits in repositories, shared drives, local systems, and manual workarounds.

That means the business can store contracts, but it cannot easily use them to answer questions, manage obligations, or support decisions. The result is inefficiency and more importantly, a structural loss of commercial control.

The evidence shows that this is not a niche problem. Many organizations still rely on fragmented storage, limited access, and manual interpretation. In practice, that means contract data remains dormant. While available in theory, it is not trusted enough to drive action in the business. WorldCC's benchmarking work shows that organizations continue to struggle with visibility, integration, and post-signature control, which is why contract performance often falls short of business expectations.

The commercial cost is easy to underestimate because it follows this fragmented pattern, a missed obligation here, a delayed payment there, a renewal that slips through, a pricing issue that is discovered too late. Each one looks manageable on its own, but together they create value leakage, slower decisions, and weaker control over risk and performance. That is why contract data should be treated as an operating asset, not a filing exercise.

Even in leading industries like Banking and Technology, repository fragmentation remains a structural constraint, while sectors like Oil & Gas lag further behind, highlighting that CLM maturity is not yet keeping pace with enterprise complexity or AI readiness.

Banking / Financial Services

Shows a polarized maturity: while 33% have fully centralized CLM storage, a higher 50% still operate with fragmented, multi-repository environments, indicating strong investment but inconsistent enterprise-wide adoption.

Energy / Oil & Gas

Demonstrates weaker centralization and higher structural gaps, with only 25% fully centralized, and a combined 50% split or with no single repository, reflecting operational complexity and legacy system dependence.

IT Services (Technology – Software)

Appears more balanced but still immature, with 33% fully centralized and 33% partially centralized, yet 33% still fragmented, showing progress but not yet achieving true system-of-record maturity.

Why repositories fail as systems of record

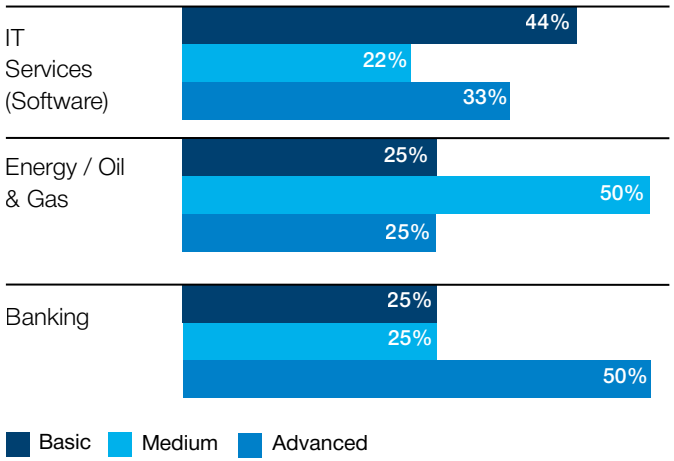
A repository is a filing system. A system of record is an operating asset.

That distinction matters. A true system of record needs authoritative data, clear version control, structured hierarchy, and consistent ownership. Without those basics, the repository becomes a place to keep documents rather than a source of truth for the enterprise.

The findings show that many organizations are still managing contracts at the document level, with limited aggregation by supplier, customer, or business object. That makes it difficult to see the full relationship, understand exposure, or connect contract terms to downstream activity. **In other words, the system may hold the paper, but it does not yet hold the business logic.**

WorldCC's research on contract maturity consistently shows that organizations with stronger structure and governance are better able to use contract data for performance, compliance, and decision support.

Figure 4: Contract hierarchy maturity



There are clear differences in how sectors structure their contracts:

Banking stands out as the most advanced, with 50% organizing contracts in a hierarchical way, showing stronger foundations for traceability and better use of data. Energy / Oil & Gas sits in the middle, with half still using folder-based structures and only 25% fully hierarchical, limiting their ability to manage more complex contract relationships. Even in IT Services, maturity is uneven: only a third are advanced, while most still rely on basic or partially structured models. Overall, while some sectors are making progress, most organizations still lack the structured contract data needed to fully support enterprise visibility and AI use.

This is where many transformation efforts go wrong. They focus on digitizing the archive, when the real challenge is creating a trusted commercial record. If the data is incomplete, duplicated, inconsistently labeled, or trapped in separate systems, then the repository cannot serve the business. It can only store evidence of agreements. It cannot become the living source of truth that modern contracting now requires.

The trust gap: what keeps contract data static, fragmented, and underused

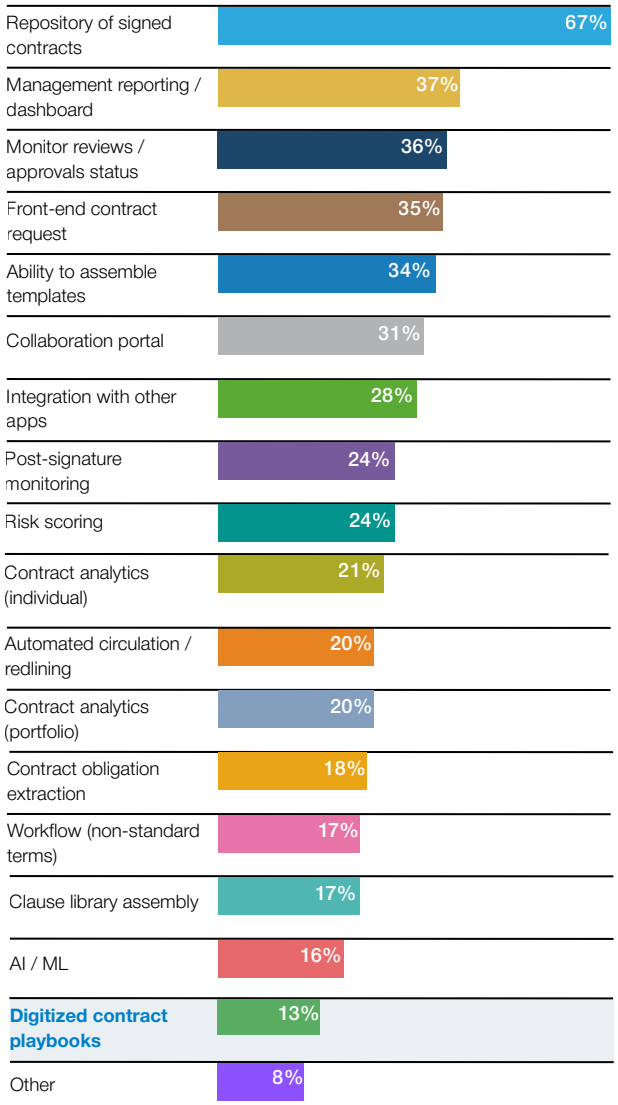
The real issue is not that organizations lack contract data. It is that too much of that data is still static, fragmented, and hard to trust.

Many teams have invested in CLM platforms, but the underlying information is still incomplete, inconsistently structured, or trapped at document level. That means the system may look modern on the surface while still behaving like a filing cabinet underneath.

The findings show this clearly. In many organizations, contract content is only partially digitized, with key metadata captured for some fields but not others.

Contract documents are often stored in flat lists or folder structures rather than being organized hierarchically by business object. Version control is also uneven, which means teams may not know whether they are looking at the authoritative record or an outdated copy. These are not minor technical flaws. They are trust defects. And trust defects stop data from being used.

Figure 5: Extent of software tool deployment across organizations



There is also a human dimension. Even where the data exists, access is often concentrated in a small group of specialists. Business users may need to ask legal, procurement, or contract management teams to interpret what the system says. That slows decisions and reinforces dependence on manual work. In effect, the organization has data, but not broad enough confidence in that data to let it shape everyday decisions. That is why contract information remains dormant. It is present, but not yet operational.

The pattern that emerges from practitioner experience is consistent: where system search is unreliable, where coverage is partial, or where the interface is hard to use, people revert to the fastest path - a colleague who knows. This is a structural problem, not a personal one. If the system cannot reliably answer the question “what did we agree?”, operational teams will build shadow repositories and personal networks. That behaviour is rational. It is also exactly what prevents a system of record from ever being achieved.

“Score 3 - below average confidence. We rely on a high level of legal engagement, which comes with personal bias when assessing contract risk. We do not have a clause library, metadata at a clause level - or a contracting policy.”

Head of ITT (Info Tech and Telecoms) at a major financial services group

AI changes the stakes: why connected contract data now matters more

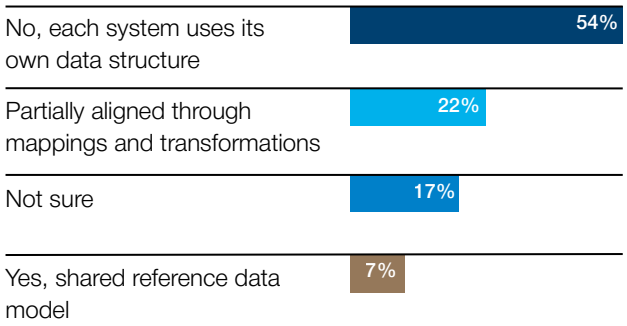
Generative AI changes the question from “Can we store contracts?” to “Can we trust contract data enough to let AI use it?” That is a much harder test.

AI simply exposes weak data foundations. If the underlying contract record is fragmented, incomplete, or inconsistent, AI will produce outputs that are fast but unreliable. The barrier is no longer access to technology. It is readiness of the commercial environment around it. Leandro Doca, VP Head of CCM for Americas at Capgemini, acknowledged that change management remains the most under-considered element in contracting transformations, yet it's often the determining factor between success and failure.

WorldCC research shows that AI adoption is rising, but concerns about data quality, integration, and trust remain significant. That is exactly what you would expect in a field where the underlying records are often incomplete and disconnected. The 2025 Benchmark Report reinforces the same point: organizations gain most when technology is integrated, explainable, and connected across the lifecycle, not when it is bolted onto isolated tasks. In other words, AI is not the starting point. It is the stress test.

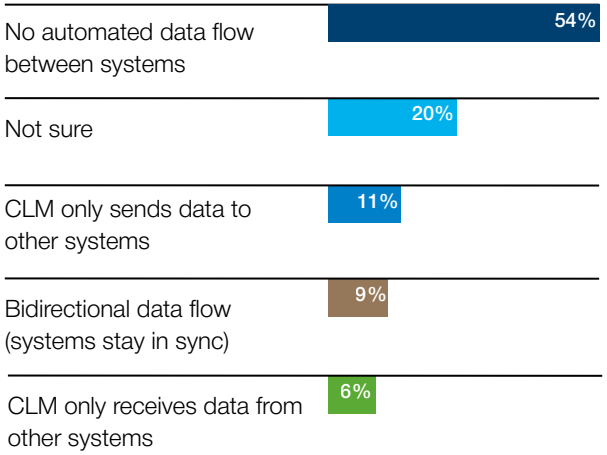
More than 54% of organizations report that each system uses its own data structure, with only 7% having a shared reference data model across systems. This means that contract data is not standardized.

Figure 6: Lack of standardization in contract data structures



Most importantly, data is not flowing. 54% report no automated data flow between systems and only 9% have bidirectional data flow where systems stay in sync. This is critical because without real-time, two-way data, contracts remain isolated and AI cannot deliver full value.

Figure 7: Lack of data flow across contract systems

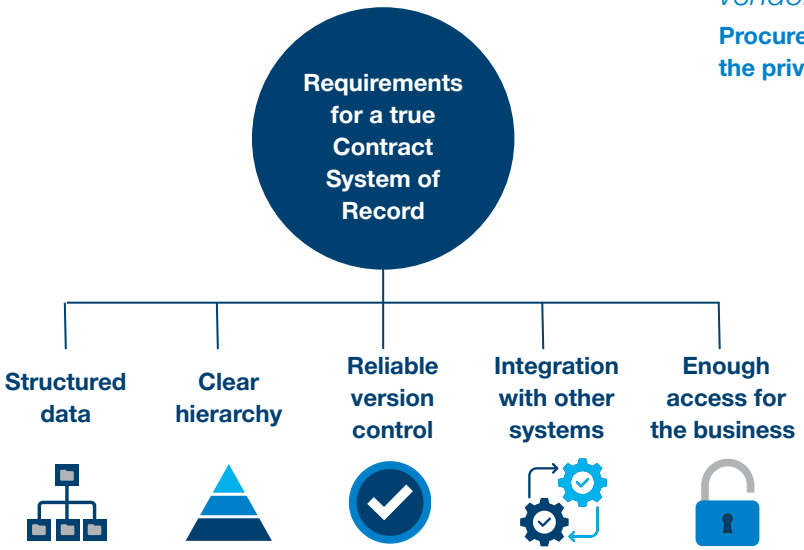


That is why the move toward a Contract System of Record matters now. If contract data is structured, connected, and current, AI can help surface risks, identify opportunities, and support decisions at scale. If it is not, AI will simply accelerate confusion and be dismissed as unreliable or useless. The organizations that succeed will be the ones that treat contract data as a trusted commercial asset, supporting human judgment with reliable machine assistance.

Building a true Contract System of Record

A true Contract System of Record may start with a repository, but that is simply the underpin for an enterprise capability.

It gives the business a trusted view of what was agreed, where it applies, what has changed, and what should happen next. That requires more than storage. It requires structured data, clear hierarchy, reliable version control, integration with other systems, and enough access for the business to use it without constant manual intervention.



"You put in a keyword to search and most times no results come up - or something not relevant to the search. If the technology was more intuitive, key stakeholders would have more confidence in the tool and use it to view previous agreements rather than going to new vendors."

Procurement Specialist at a leading software provider for the private health insurance sector

The findings show that most organizations are still partway through that journey. Some have made progress on digitization and organization. Others still rely on document-level storage, manual aggregation, and disconnected tools. That means the system may support administration but not yet enterprise decision-making. A true system of record is not defined by how many contracts it holds. It is defined by how reliably it can support action across the business.

This is where maturity matters. Organizations do not need to leap straight to autonomy. They need to move step by step from storage, to structure, to connection, to trust, and then to action. That progression is what turns contract data from a passive record into a commercial asset. And once that happens, the system can begin to support better forecasting, stronger governance, and more confident use of AI.

The maturity journey: from document storage to decision support

The shift from repository to system of record is not a single event. It is a maturity journey.

Most organizations begin with storage. Some move on to digitization. Fewer achieve structure. Fewer still connect contract data across systems or make it available in a way that supports real-time decisions. The final stage is in part about visibility, but that is primarily to enable the shift to decision support, where contract data helps the business act faster, with more confidence, and with less manual effort.

That journey is important because it changes the role of contract management itself. The function is no longer just about keeping records or managing risk after signature. It becomes part of the enterprise's operating model. It helps the business understand obligations, manage performance, reduce leakage, and respond more quickly to change. In that sense, the Contract System of Record is not a technology destination. It is a commercial one.

The organizations that get this right will not simply have better contract administration. They will have better business control. They will be able to connect contract data to finance, procurement, sales, risk, and operations. They will be able to use AI with more confidence because the underlying data is cleaner and more trusted. And they will move from asking 'where the contract is' to asking 'what the contract is telling them'. That is the real shift.

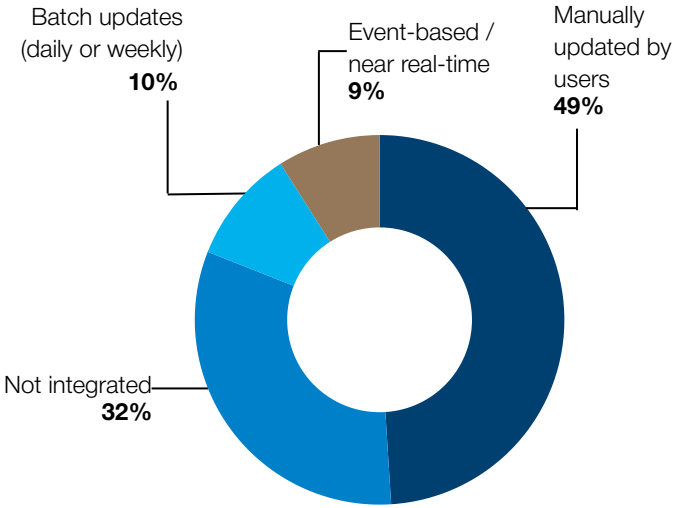
Areas that can be connected to contract data:

What gets in the way: fragmentation, weak governance, and limited integration

The barriers we are observing are structural. Most organizations are still dealing with fragmented systems, inconsistent data standards, and weak post-signature governance.

That means contract information may be captured once, but it is not always refreshed, connected, or used consistently across the enterprise. The result is a system that stores contracts well enough, but does not yet manage them as living commercial assets.

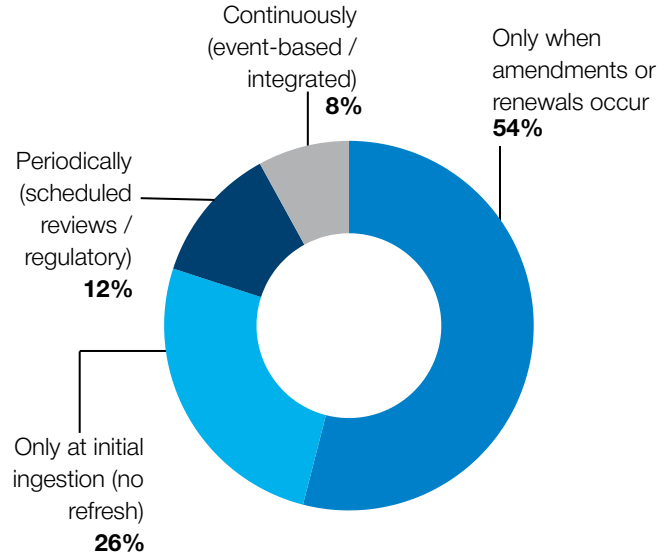
Figure 8: Speed of contract data updates across systems



The findings show that many organizations still update contract data only when amendments or renewals occur, or not at all after initial ingestion. That is a serious limitation. If the data does not reflect what is happening in the business, it cannot support timely decisions.

This means that 80% of organizations are working with data that is not regularly refreshed, limiting its reliability for real-time decisions and AI use.

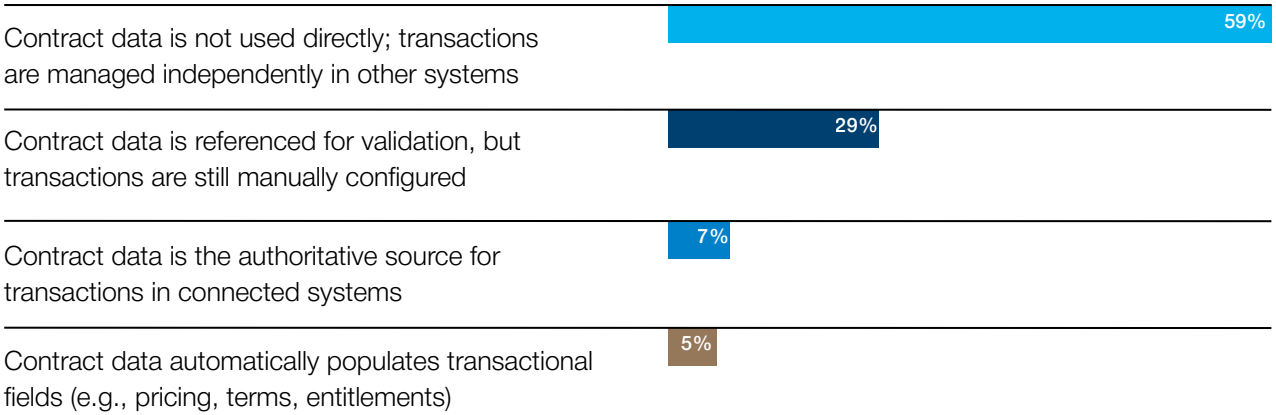
Figure 9: Frequency of contract data updates



Integration is also uneven, which means changes in one system do not reliably flow to others. In practice, that leaves teams working with stale information and manual workarounds.

What gets in the way: fragmentation, weak governance, and limited integration *(continued)*

Figure 10: Extent to which CLM repository data drives transactions in connected systems



From the research interviews, fragmentation of systems and data emerges as the most frequently cited barrier to a CLM becoming a true system of record, followed closely by data quality issues and organizational behaviour challenges. Cost considerations, extent of adoption, and management understanding of value are also significant factors. Many organizations struggle with integrating multiple systems and ensuring consistent data input across all contract-related activities. Practitioner responses reveal three distinct root causes beneath the surface symptoms.

The first is an architecture problem: fragmented systems, disconnected repositories, and incomplete integration between CLM, CRM, ERP, and procure-to-pay. Until contract data flows reliably between systems, the CLM remains a place to file rather than a place to run the business.

The second is an operating model problem: data quality and metadata discipline. Poor search results, inconsistent field use, and the absence of automated extraction all point to the same issue - you cannot get decision-grade insight from document-grade data.

The third is a confidence problem: belief and leadership narrative. When management assumes that CLM tools will be made obsolete by AI in the near term, adoption suffers before the platform has had a chance to prove its value.

"The real question is not whether AI-centric solutions emerge - it is whether the organization has the discipline, taxonomy, and governance to make any solution trustworthy. AI does not remove the need for a system of record. It raises the stakes for having one."

Legal Digital Project Manager at a global leader in hospitality and hotel services

There is also a governance gap. Even where systems exist, ownership is often unclear and access remains concentrated in a small group of specialists. That slows adoption and limits trust. A Contract System of Record cannot succeed if the business treats it as a legal archive. It has to be seen as a shared commercial capability, one that depends on discipline, connectivity, and accountability.

Conclusion: From insight to action

The shift is about much more than whether contracts are adequately stored. It is about whether contract data is trusted enough to drive decisions, support execution, and enable AI at scale. That is the real commercial test.

Organizations that continue to treat contracts as static records will keep losing time, visibility, and value. Those that build a true Contract System of Record will gain a stronger foundation for performance, control, and growth.

The evidence points in one direction. The organizations that move forward will be the ones that clean up their data, connect their systems, widen access, and define clear ownership. They will not rely on AI to fix weak foundations. They will use AI to amplify strong ones. That is the difference between experimentation and real advantage.

The interview insights reinforce a clear message:

Organizations invest in contract technology and expertise when they can see real business value. The main drivers are cost savings, faster cycle times, and better risk control, with cost savings standing out the most. Reducing value leakage and improving execution also play a key role. While there is strong interest in AI, there is also caution if it is not well managed.

Interviewees also stressed that change management is critical, without proper adoption and alignment, the technology will not deliver full value. In the end, investment depends on linking contract technology to clear financial impact and performance at scale. What practitioner experience makes clear is that this is not primarily a technology problem. It is a reliability problem - search, coverage, integration, and data discipline - because reliability is what creates trust, and trust is what changes behaviour. That is the path from storage to system of record to decision advantage.

Policy enforcement follows the same logic: it is less about training people to comply, and more about designing the process so that compliance becomes the easiest path. Where enforcement is stronger there is typically a forcing function - a workflow gate tied to a downstream process. Where it is weaker there is usually no clause library, no contracting policy, and heavy reliance on individual legal judgment.

"Overall, the barriers come down to behaviour and understanding of value. Resolving those would, in my opinion, pave the road for taking informed action to improve everything else."

Director of Contract Management at a 'Big Four' accounting and advisory firm

This is why the future of contracting is not just digital. It is trusted, connected, and actionable. The next standard will not be measured by how many contracts are stored, but by how well contract data helps the enterprise think, decide, and act.

World Commerce & Contracting

World Commerce & Contracting is a not-for-profit association dedicated to helping its global members achieve high performing and trusted trading relationships. With 75,000 members from over 20,000 companies across 180 countries worldwide, the association welcomes everyone with an interest in better contracting: business leaders, practitioners, experts and newcomers. It is independent, provocative and disciplined existing for its members, the contracting community and society at large.

Tim Cummins, President
tcummins@worldcc.com

Sally Guyer, Global CEO
sguyer@worldcc.com

General or media enquiries
info@worldcc.com

www.worldcc.com

World Commerce & Contracting

About Sirion

Sirion is the world's leading AI-native CLM platform, pioneering the application of agentic AI to help enterprises transform the way they store, create, and manage contracts. The platform's extraction, conversational experience, and AI-enhanced negotiation capabilities have revolutionized contracting across enterprise teams – from legal and procurement to sales and finance.

The world's most valuable brands trust Sirion to manage 7M+ contracts worth nearly $800B and relationships with 1M+ suppliers and customers in 100+ languages. Leading analysts such as Gartner, IDC, and Spend Matters have consistently recognized Sirion as a leader in CLM for its focus on category-leading innovation. For more information, visit www.sirion.ai

Business enquiries
marketing@sirionlabs.com

www.sirion.ai

sirion