



# DATA GOVERNANCE

HOW TO DESIGN, DEPLOY, AND SUSTAIN AN  
EFFECTIVE DATA GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

**MK**  
MORGAN KAUFMANN

JOHN LADLEY

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**John Ladley**



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# Dedication

To Pam

.....more today than yesterday, but not as much as tomorrow

Tum tee tum tum, tum tee tummmmmm .....

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# Foreword

It takes a special kind of person to really LIKE data governance. After all, this discipline exists at the epicenter of data-related conflict. Day after day, we see how seemingly small actions and decisions create data-related problems that ripple out through an organization, creating bigger problems in reports and other information products, which create even bigger problems in the form of bad decisions, inefficiencies, ineffective practices, noncompliance with laws and regulations, and even security breaches. We stand our ground, watching these problems as they are created, as they grow, and as they impact our organizations' abilities to meet their missions. We engage the people around us, trying to educate them about how to avoid creating those problems, how to find them, and how to fix them. We work with C-suite executives, individual data workers, and everyone in between, preaching the same message over and over: *"You don't have to live with the consequences of bad data. Let us show you a different way."*

But, frankly, most people don't want to hear it.

Most don't love data for its own sake, just for what it does for them. Most people hear the word "governance" and have a negative—even visceral—reaction. Their rational mind might be promoting the idea that "Big G" governance mechanisms (policies, mandates, standards, control objectives, and other types of rules) are necessary. They might rationally agree that "little g" governance mechanisms (controls) are essential. Still, their nonrational, emotional, primal brains will be reacting predictably to any constraints, calling for the listener to fight, flee, or play opossum.

So imagine how delighted I was to meet John Ladley, someone who addresses the human aspects of governance adoption from an anthropologist's perspective, its strategic aspects from an executive's perspective, and its operational aspects from a practitioner's perspective.

I think I heard John laugh before I ever heard him speak. It was at a conference, and someone had just said, "No, they don't want the responsibility [of data governance], but they don't want anyone else to have it either!" John's laugh was contagious, and his face lit up at this example of human nature. He followed up with some words of wisdom regarding organizational change management, and we got into an extended discussion about details concerning some information management strategy that I don't remember now. Later, I discovered that his thought leadership came from a vendor-neutral perspective and a strong sense of intellectual integrity. John has been a part of my personal "Kitchen Cabinet"—as well as a personal friend—ever since.

The funny thing about data governance is that it is both old and new. When I was working in publishing in the 1980s, we didn't have automated workflows. We had hundreds of chunks of information that had to go through multiple iterations and alterations before finally being compiled into a magazine with a specific number of pages. If our content chunks weren't well governed, we couldn't deliver our product. Our mailing lists and other structured data had to be well governed, or we couldn't operate. Oh yes—ask anyone who was working in publishing (or working with mainframes) 30 years ago, and they'll tell you: Data governance was just a part of doing your job back then.

It was the rapid explosion of IT that changed things. In the rush to move to client-server, web-based, and other game-changing technologies, many organizations lost both "Big G" and "little g" capabilities. The focus of IT became the "T" (technology). In rapidly evolving organizations, it seemed like no one group was responsible for the "I" (information). Things got messy, and then they got messier. Somehow, the problem got labeled as poor collaboration between "Business" and "IT." It took

the Sarbanes–Oxley Act of 2002 and an ever-increasing number of data breaches to direct attention back to data and the need to properly govern it.

While John and I (and others on the same conference circuit) had many enjoyable discussions about this “new emerging field” of data governance, I have to confess that I really didn’t get why John was also devoting his time to writing his previous book on EIM (enterprise information management). After all, I said, the fields of data management and document/content management are pretty well defined. Do we really need this new acronym? Do we need a new book on the topic?

As it turns out, we did. John brought to that book an important new perspective. This work was not merely instruction for data geeks who loved their little slice of data heaven and were happy to learn about other slices. No, his book also looked at this broad field from the perspective of someone who is used to managing large and important resources for the betterment of an enterprise. This was “Business meets Information Management,” with a lot of detail. Yes, it needed to be written. And I was glad John did.

The visits to the Data Governance Institute’s website told the story of the ever-growing number of people who were getting engaged in governance. And even though more and more of my consulting time turned to helping organizations with strategies, I wanted to talk about data governance practices. Selfishly, I was glad when John wasn’t working on his EIM book any more so we could have DG discussions. In a world where governance has so many focus points, and so many different “flavors,” I would ask him, what is universal? What is situational? What is need-to-have, and what is nice-to-have?

John is a man of action, so he often countered my topics with ones about specific activities and action plans: the HOW of data governance.

In the past several years, much has been written about why organizations need data governance, and who should do what, and how to sell the concept to those with the budget to fund projects and programs. Much has also been written from tool vendors’ perspectives, and much has been written from a motivational perspective. But not much has been written about the details of WHAT to do, and WHEN, and HOW. The world needed a big detailed instruction manual—one that would be relevant in many situations, for the many “flavors” of data governance.

I’m glad John Ladley has written it.

**Gwen Thomas**  
*Founder and President*  
*The Data Governance Institute*  
*[www.datagovernance.com](http://www.datagovernance.com)*

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# Preface

There are two reasons I wrote this book. First, when my previous book came out I realized that data governance as a topic had taken a back seat. This was due to limitations on the size of the book. The data governance chapter was comprehensive enough to get a sense of what was needed in the context of enterprise information management, but it was not enough to really help someone launch their own governance program. Close, but not quite. My firm is very fortunate to have done data governance deployment many times, so we have plenty of material to share.

Second, the blind rage that motivated me to write book one—*Making EIM Work for Business*—continues unabated. This is a bit tongue in cheek, but only to a point. My company is doing a significant amount of EIM and data governance work. Companies are beginning to see that data and information require more than just tools to move and cast data about the company. However, realizing you need to do something, and then sucking it up and actually doing it are two different things. I find many organizations are very good at saying, “We are going to do better with data,” and they present myriad reasons and justifications for this. But their follow-through is abysmal. Then they go out and buy front-end tools for delivering and presenting the information. At the time this was being written, vendors were spending gobs of marketing dollars on the value of analytics and “big data.” Companies are drinking the Kool-Aid™ deeply, but very few reap the anticipated benefits.

There is also a huge wave of master data management projects underway. CIOs identify the need to create the “single source of truth” and buy tools and collect data, and then ask the business to change over. About 20% of them show some success at this time.

To be candid, the disappointing results from both of these types of projects are entirely due to the lack of management of the data going into these products. It is unsuited for its purpose (in other words, it’s junk).

The aforementioned lack of follow-through is the root cause. We know that the vendors are doing what they do—selling stuff and moving on. We see IT shops buy tools before having any business connection or alignment. We know CIOs have to work in environments where they are not permitted to communicate with their business peers, do not get any support when business habits need to change to be successful, and are incented by delivering on time regardless of quality. Yet they are also told to get the data in shape anyway.

The required follow-through sounds simple—start to treat information as an asset. But when we look into the details of information asset management, we see that organizations need to do data governance. Period.

Even a modicum of discipline will reap benefits. When you examine successful master data efforts, you see business alignment and data quality in place, all sustained by data governance. When you examine an almost identical effort where data governance was not applied or was implemented poorly, you see the failures. So deploying data governance is a no-brainer, right?

Sadly, no. As you will discover in the pages ahead, data governance is not setting up some processes and policies and enforcing some rules. These are certainly critical components of data governance, and you can enjoy some success by doing the mechanics of data governance, but data governance will not stick unless you take a much more personal and intimate approach.



This book is for those who need to “do data governance.” It is not for IT, it is not for business. It is for anyone who has to make sure information management is happening. To be clear, this is a “how to” book. I tried very hard to eliminate the bromides you can easily hear from a tool vendor or big-name consultant. If you are reading this book, you have heard the platitudes, embraced them, and now want to do something about it instead of talking.

Pundits of all types will talk about the twenty-first century being the era of information and the use of data, and cite its huge dependence on analytics. However, if we continue to treat data as the ugly lubricant of departmental business processes instead of the precious asset it is, we will come nowhere near to fulfilling these forecasts. None of it is possible without this significant change in mindset where day-to-day habits in the treatment of data and information change. Here are some real scenarios you should consider:

- Running a business on 40,000 Access™ databases and consolidated statements from spreadsheets is not considered acceptable by Wall Street. (This is true. A leading financial services company had us do an assessment and we stopped counting at 40,000 Access databases.)
- Expediting a business process or completing a departmental project is no longer measured by completion time or cycle time. They are also measured by data quality metrics and adherence to asset management policy.
- Rather than throw up your hands and start building departmental databases in Access or Excel due to perceived delays, business leaders work with IT and information managers to get the data right. In other words, take the time to be right the first time versus doing it over—again and again and again.
- Application developers are no longer rewarded for the on-time completion of projects if they do not meet data control and quality standards at the same time.
- Business users are flat out not allowed to produce a report that leaves the enterprise unless it has gone through an approved process for creation and verification.

The term *maturity* is often tossed about in the context of managing information. This book was written with that in mind, but also with another scale—that of learning maturity. My weekend hobby is aviation. I also teach other people how to fly, and I learned a great definition for learning when I became a flight instructor:

*Learning occurs when you see a change in behavior as a result of experience.*

In other words, just hearing about something is not going to create learning. You need to do it, develop experience, and then look and measure for the change. Frankly, most companies I deal with want a two-week assessment, a four-week road map, and then they somehow think these artifacts and a few hearty commands from management will work miracles. Data governance will require some work and some significant behavior changes. So this book is written with an eye toward changing behavior, and assimilating and managing the work to be done.

The following pages present the steps, artifacts, techniques, and insights developed by my companies over the past 20 years or so. Some of this material can be incredibly dry, so if I sprinkle in a story or amusing metaphor, it is not because I am overly glib. It is because I really want you to pay attention. *This stuff really matters.* Your organization is going to live or die based on how it deals with data. You can do ERP, buy business intelligence tools, or attempt sophisticated analytics. But unless you manage what is going into the infrastructure and control what comes out, you will never be sure you are doing anything correctly.

The following chapters present a comprehensive view of the work and behaviors required to implement data governance. The longer you delay the adoption of some or all of the elements and components, the harder and harder your information management challenges will become. Does your organization want to do advanced predictive analytics? You had better know that the data used by the analytics tools is accurate. Do you want to create single sources of truth for reporting, business intelligence, or just getting your customer list nailed down? Then you need to start data governance *now*. The longer you wait, the harder the decisions will be as the data explosion continues. This is not a trivial request from someone who likes working with data. This is a business imperative.

You will see that data governance can be accomplished by executing a series of steps along with consideration of certain success factors. There are plenty of “nuts-and-bolts” activities to be performed. But there are also cultural, personal, and philosophical changes required to truly treat information as an asset. Data governance is the discipline that encapsulates these changes—but it is also a *long-term commitment to doing business differently*.

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# Acknowledgments

In the preface, the pronoun “I” is used, but you will notice that in the rest of the book I use “we.” This is because I was not the only person doing all of this work over the last 20 years! A lot of battlefield experience is contained in this book—and the people in the trenches with me contributed immensely.

My co-workers and partners in information management and data governance are, or were, Val Torstenson, Ellen Levin, Larry Michael, Richard Lee, John Lee, Donn Vucovich, and Jim Hankemeyer. I must also thank Pam Thomas for educating me as to the finer points of organizational change management as a critical piece of successful information management work. Those behavior changes I referenced in the preface do not happen by themselves. Plus, the topic has become popular on the conference circuit since she and I embedded change management in our classes.

It takes a lot of air cover to do a book while the dragons of commerce are circling. I would like to thank James Kern, Amit Baghat, Michael Demos, and Martin Davies for covering my back on the administrative and client service side of things.

Many thanks to the group who participated in the editing and finishing: Danette McGilvray, Michelle Koch, and Marilyn Thompson for their review and feedback; and Sheila Hultgren and Pam Thomas for their editing. Usually I get to take a span of time to go hide and finish my books. This one required a lot of hotel room and airline time, so I really appreciate the contributions of my reviewers and editors.

I also appreciate and extend thanks to Gwen Thomas for taking the time to write the foreword. Gwen has the rare ability to explain abstract concepts in a clear and relevant fashion and also deliver solutions. Gwen took a sub-discipline of information management and started to give it the attention it required as a stand-alone subject.

I also have to thank my customers who trusted my companies enough to do data governance and information management for them. In particular, the fine people at Erie Insurance, Wal-Mart, and Salt River Project come to mind. Three very different data governance scenarios and very different challenges not only made our work fun, but also really stretched our creativity. In particular, John Collier, Steve Pettinger, Audrey Wiggins, Alan Jamison, Terry Mooney, Greg Whicker, Jim Viveralli, and Felix Orzechowski shared some significant challenges over the past few years.

Many thanks to the various people I get to hang with that share the label of guru or thought leader. They create the forums and intellectual basis for the evolution of data governance as an embedded business function. Tony Shaw has gone above and beyond the call to create conferences and forums that genuinely add value and present great content. Rob Seiner and his newsletter have been the “go to” site for thousands of information management practitioners. Rob and I have also proved that Pittsburgh can turn out very smart and clever people as well as incredible football teams. Dr. Tom Redman is another great guru to work with who is maybe more candid than I am. And thanks goes to Davida Berger for creating the data governance conferences.

Most importantly, if it weren't for Pam Thomas—my business partner, colleague, significant other, and total Sweetie—this would not have happened. Even when I felt the book needed to be delayed or even stopped due to external forces, she would not let me quit. Pam wrote big chunks of Chapters 12 and 13, but declined to be mentioned on the cover. A lot of men would run screaming from the room if they had to work with their wife or partner. I am blessed to live with *and* be able to work with the Love of My Life.

*Our opinions do not really blossom into fruition until we have expressed them to someone else.*

—Mark Twain

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## INTRODUCTION

While the main purpose of this book is to give the reader a solid head start on the deployment, implementation, or “standing up” of a data (or information) governance program, it is also intended to supplement all other literature written about data governance. If you have a data governance program in place, but it is faltering, there is still plenty of advice in the following pages. In the following chapters, every attempt was made to keep the positions and processes disclosed as neutral as possible. In addition to a large amount of background, definitions, and preferred practices, this book will present a generic version of the steps and activities required to deploy data governance. Some case study examples and a few artifacts will help tie the process together. There are templates included in the appendices as well that serve as starting points for the various deliverables and artifacts that you may need to create, or as supplements for existing programs that may not have addressed all of the necessary factors required for success.

The content in this book represents what we have been doing in our practice over the years. That is why the pronoun “we” is used by the author.<sup>1</sup> A lot of experience and refinement has gone into the material you are about to read. These processes are not the ramblings of one person as to what should be done. This material is battle-tested. Some of the material may vary from other published methods. Where this is the case, we try and point it out.

For example, Gwen Thomas of the Data Governance Institute has a defined data governance life cycle. It is focused on the entire life cycle, from learning about DG to selling the concept to implementing. We focus on implementation.

There are two intended audiences, and for this reason the book is assembled into two layers. The next three chapters (2 through 4) can be considered an executive overview, suitable for CIOs and other organizational leadership. The remainder of the book provides the details to move forward. In this way, a project manager can read the book from start to finish, but a senior leader will also find value by reading Chapters 1–4.

There is a secondary purpose to this book, which is to absolutely convince you, the reader, that data governance (DG or IG) is *not* a new kind of IT or technology project. In addition, DG is not an accumulative program—that is, if done correctly, you do not need to add an eternally funded requirement for manpower and capital. In fact, the perfect deployment of DG will result in nearly or absolutely no visible separate DG area. Therefore, while this book may seem to be a simple “how to,” it

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<sup>1</sup>An early reviewer remarked that we were “channeling Gollum.” What a precious comment!

is also unabashedly a treatise to convince organizations to think differently about how to manage their information and data universe. To be clear, real data governance requires that organizations act differently in regard to their use and management of content, meaning data, information, documents, media, et al. You implement data governance by overseeing the management of these instances of content, as well as projects and processes that create, use, and dispose of content.

This book does not distinguish between *data governance* and *information governance*, although some authors do. From a practical viewpoint, there is no real difference. We could conjure up some philosophical argument that there is a difference, but experience has shown these discussions only serve to confuse and reduce the effectiveness of the program.

Data governance is absolutely a mandatory requirement for success if an organization wants to achieve master data management,<sup>2</sup> build business intelligence, improve data quality, or manage documents. However, DG is not an eternally lasting add-on process. This may seem contrary to much of the literature flying about the information industry at the time of this book's writing. There are many articles, for example, on how to design the DG "department," when you are really designing a framework to govern.

At the end of the day, we are modifying people's behaviors and business processes to think more clearly about the care and feeding of data. If we do this correctly, there is no need for large incremental groups of people implementing something brand new. Organizations love to jump on bandwagons and then bang on the "next big thing" until it surrenders. Frankly, this book is determined to prevent that. When it comes to data governance, the devil is in the mindset (as well as in the details).

As stated earlier, the next three chapters form an executive-oriented section. The purpose is to provide background, value proposition, and business relevance.

Chapter 2 will first establish a common vocabulary. The author's practice in this area has determined that the slightest variations in semantics can become huge obstacles. Therefore, we will present a set of terms and definitions as well as context. We will always provide the context of the term as well as refer to the definition. That way, if you read another version of a term like "policy," you at least have a frame of reference.

We will also stick to business terminology. If there is a technical aspect of a topic, it will be presented in business terms. If there is a business metaphor to lock in a point, it will be used in place of a technology metaphor.

Once we establish the terminology, we will cover the basic elements of the DG or IG program. We will present the core managerial and business concepts required for building and operating a DG program. Since DG is a business program, you may feel quite at home reviewing the various pieces and intersections of people, processes, and information technology.

Please thoughtfully read the text that addresses the *scope* of DG. One of the most critical errors that can be made while designing a DG program occurs when an organization has the initial conversation on scope and priorities. This examination also segues into a discussion on the business role of DG. The value proposition of DG needs to be clearly understood by executives if DG is to be successful. Finally, this part of the book is important because if data governance is misunderstood, it leads to a tendency to jam it into another box on the organization chart of the IT department, and this is often a fatal mistake.

The *elements*, *scope*, and *business* role sections are part of an overall segment that provides an overview of the entire DG program. It continues with a detailed examination of who should do the

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<sup>2</sup>If you are unfamiliar with the terms master data, data quality, and so on, relax—we will define them in the next chapter.

governing, what activities they need to perform, what is actually governed, and how DG looks when it occurs.

The first three chapters present an effective executive-level overview of deploying data governance so a CEO would have enough confidence to hand the book to a subordinate with instructions to develop a plan of attack. In essence, the first section of the book covers the higher levels of business thinking. If we were to view the realm of an enterprise's information architecture as a matrix representing the conceptual view through the physical, we might say the first few chapters address the top two levels of the matrix, or framework.<sup>3</sup> In other words, we cover DG deployment from a conceptual and logical view. Figure 1-1 shows this.

The next few chapters address the middle layers from a level of orientation and understanding. Layer two starts with two chapters suitable for management as well. Chapter 4 talks about the value proposition of DG and Chapter 5 presents an overview of the process to deploy the DG program.

The start of the second layer (Chapter 4) starts with a topic that merits its own chapter, and that is the *business case for DG*. Very often clients will ask for assistance in developing a return on investment (ROI) for a DG program. In most organizations, the largest obstacle to starting DG is the selling—or a business case. This chapter will cover tangible and intangible business drivers for DG. Frankly, developing an ROI for a program like data governance is usually done to accommodate a lack of understanding, political posturing, or plain old resistance to anything perceived as “new.” DG is not a “project” that will grant a traditional return. DG does add value, and stating this as part of a business case is about the best way there is to frame its value proposition. We will also leverage the chapter on the business case to learn how to identify the metrics we will use to sustain the DG program.

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### KEY CONCEPT

As you read, you will occasionally come across a highlighted section (like this). These will be labeled “Key Concept,” “Helpful Hint,” or “Success Factor.” They are there to reinforce the author's point, either through highlighting a point or by presenting an anecdote. For example, the reason that the business case for DG is not traditional lies in its nature. Justifying DG with an ROI-type calculation is like asking your accounting department or even your governing board of directors to justify its existence every year with a stated rate of return tied to a cash flow. You are attempting to justify something in a way that is inconsistent with how it operates. Then again, there is an appeal to the idea of a board of directors justifying itself with an ROI from time to time!

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It is important to understand Chapter 5 and the context of the concepts from Chapter 2. If you want to dive into the list of tasks to get you from point A to point B (Chapters 6–13) go right ahead, but you will end up returning to Chapters 2 and 5 to figure out why you are being asked to do certain things at certain times.

Chapters 6–13 review the details of each phase of the process we use to deploy data governance. The activities, tasks, work products, and artifacts are reviewed. To the extent space permits, we present examples and ideas for how to actually execute the activities. Please understand at this point that

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<sup>3</sup>Figure 1-1 presents a modified view of a common framework us information geeks use to keep track of where it is we are working. It is called the Zachman framework (after the guy who thought it up) and many thanks to John for allowing us to use it. It is an effective presentation to explain how an enterprise needs to link conceptual thinking to physical implementation, which is why we included it.



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