

## 4 Key Information Governance Topics to Inform Business Leaders



Information governance (IG) encompasses the policies, processes, and technologies that enable organizations to [manage information effectively](#). Compliance and risk management aside, IG works best when maximizing the value and usability of information for business purposes. Below, we explore four key information governance topics and why business leaders should take note.

### Data Governance vs. Information Governance

One of the common questions in IG is how it relates to [data governance](#) (DG). DG is the discipline of ensuring the quality, availability, integrity, and security of data within an organization. DG focuses on the technical aspects of data management, such as data models, metadata, standards, and architectures.

*IG, on the other hand, covers a broader scope of information management, including data, documents, records, emails, images, videos, and any other form of content.*

IG also addresses the strategic, legal, ethical, and business aspects of information use, such as classification, retention, protection, sharing, lifecycle, disposition, eDiscovery, cybersecurity, and analytics. In this sense, DG is a subset of IG that supports the overall information strategy.



## Information Security and Privacy

Information security and privacy are essential for protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, or destruction. Information security and privacy not only become legal and ethical obligations, but also [business imperatives](#) in today's digital world.

*Information security and privacy involve implementing technical measures such as encryption, authentication, and authorization. Firewalls, antivirus software, and backups also serve to safeguard information from cyberattacks and disasters.*

[Security and privacy imperatives](#) also motivate business leaders to establish policies and procedures to define roles and responsibilities, access rights and controls, and incident response plans. Awareness and training programs also function to ensure compliance with laws and regulations such as GDPR, HIPAA, CCPA, and others.

## Information Lifecycle Management

A third topic for business leaders to master is information lifecycle management (ILM). ILM describes the process of managing information from its creation to its disposal according to its value and risk.

ILM helps organizations optimize the use of their information resources. It ensures that information is stored in the right location, made available at the right time, used for the right purpose, and kept for the proper duration.

**ILM involves four major components:**

- **Data classification:** The process of [categorizing information](#) based on its type, content, sensitivity, and business relevance.
- **Data retention:** The process of determining [how long information should be kept](#) based on legal requirements, business needs, and risk factors.
- **Data protection:** The process of [ensuring the security and privacy](#) of information throughout its lifecycle.
- **Data sharing:** The process of [enabling authorized access](#) to information for internal or external users or systems.

ILM also involves data disposition or secure removal. This includes the process of deleting or destroying information that is no longer needed or has reached its end-of-life date. Data disposition reduces storage costs, improves performance, and minimizes legal risks.



## Data Quality and Integrity

Data quality and integrity directly impact the [value of data](#) in any project or organization. Data quality denotes the degree to which data meets the expectations and requirements of its users and stakeholders. Data integrity refers to the preservation and protection of data from unauthorized modification, corruption, or loss.

To ensure that data is accurate, complete, consistent, and fit for its intended purpose, several steps can be taken throughout the data lifecycle, such as:

- Defining clear and measurable data quality and integrity goals and metrics.
- Establishing [data governance policies and procedures](#) to assign roles and responsibilities for data collection, processing, storage, and usage.
- Implementing data validation and verification techniques to check and correct data errors and anomalies.
- Applying data standardization and normalization methods to ensure data consistency and comparability.
- Performing data cleaning and enrichment processes to remove duplicates, fill in missing values, and enhance data with additional information or attributes.
- Conducting regular [data audits and reviews](#) to monitor and evaluate data quality and integrity performance and identify areas for improvement.

## Key Information Governance Topics Enhance Business Performance

Information governance stands as a vital discipline for any business leader who wants to leverage information assets for [competitive advantage](#). Complying with laws and regulations and mitigating risks also make the leader's list of desired outcomes.

By learning key information governance topics and implementing effective IG practices, chief executives and business managers improve operational efficiency, enhance customer satisfaction, increase innovation, and achieve strategic goals. With decades of IG experience, the [information governance experts](#) at Messaging Architects help business leaders get the most from their IG initiatives.