How to Develop a Strategy to Manage Legacy Data and Improve Data Value

Every organization holds legacy data trapped in obsolete formats or systems. This introduces compatibility issues and security concerns. However, regulatory requirements often mandate retention of legacy data, and much of the information may still carry value. Data teams must develop a strategy to manage legacy data and thus keep it secure, compliant, and accessible.

Trapped in obsolete formats and archaic systems, legacy data presents a multifaceted challenge. Important information may become inaccessible, resulting in knowledge gaps and reduced efficiency. Also, maintaining legacy data can prove difficult and costly. Finally, lack of visibility and proper security opens the door for data breach and compliance concerns.

To meet these challenges, organizations must take a strategic approach to dealing with their legacy data. This will require meticulous planning, robust information governance, and the right technology.

Conduct a Thorough Assessment

Begin by conducting a comprehensive audit of legacy data. This will involve creating an inventory of what data exists, where it lives, its format, and its relevance to current operations. For instance, does the data need to remain available for eDiscovery or compliance reasons? Will the information deliver value for knowledge transfer or decision making?

Keep in mind that not all data holds the same value. Prioritize which data needs to remain readily accessible, as opposed to data that can live in an archive or data that can be discarded without repercussions.

Determine a Road Map for Legacy Data

Organizations have several options for dealing with legacy data, and most likely they will implement multiple strategies depending on the data. The most common strategies include the following:

- Migration – Moving data from legacy systems to modern platforms ensures it will remain accessible for active use. This will prove important for data such as health information on current patients, documents related to open projects, or necessary procedural information.

- Archiving – Less critical data can move to a secure, long-term archive for historical reference or to satisfy compliance requirements. This frees up resources on primary systems, reducing costs.

- Decommissioning – Truly obsolete data can be erased. However, triple check regulatory requirements before deleting data and use secure methods such as overwriting data to ensure no one can use it.

Robust Information Governance for Long-term Success

For ongoing success, organizations must implement effective information governance. This involves categorizing data and managing the data lifecycle, as well as keeping that data secure. And it includes the policies, procedures, and standards that govern data access and quality.

Because legacy data often includes numerous inaccuracies and duplicates, early steps of information governance will involve data cleansing. By removing redundancies and errors prior to migration, data teams ensure that legacy data remains reliable and delivers value.

Leverage Cloud Services to Develop a Strategy to Manage Legacy Data

Cloud services offer scalable and flexible options for legacy data management, whether that involves data migration or data archiving. Using tools specifically designed to handle the complexity of legacy data will help to ensure a smooth transition.

The data experts at Messaging Architects bring a wealth of experience migrating and archiving legacy data. With proven tools and methodologies, our engineers will guide you through the process of finding, preparing, and moving your data securely and efficiently. They can also help you implement effective information governance to drive compliance and improve data value.