

How to Fall in Love With Data Governance

(and never worry about compliance again)



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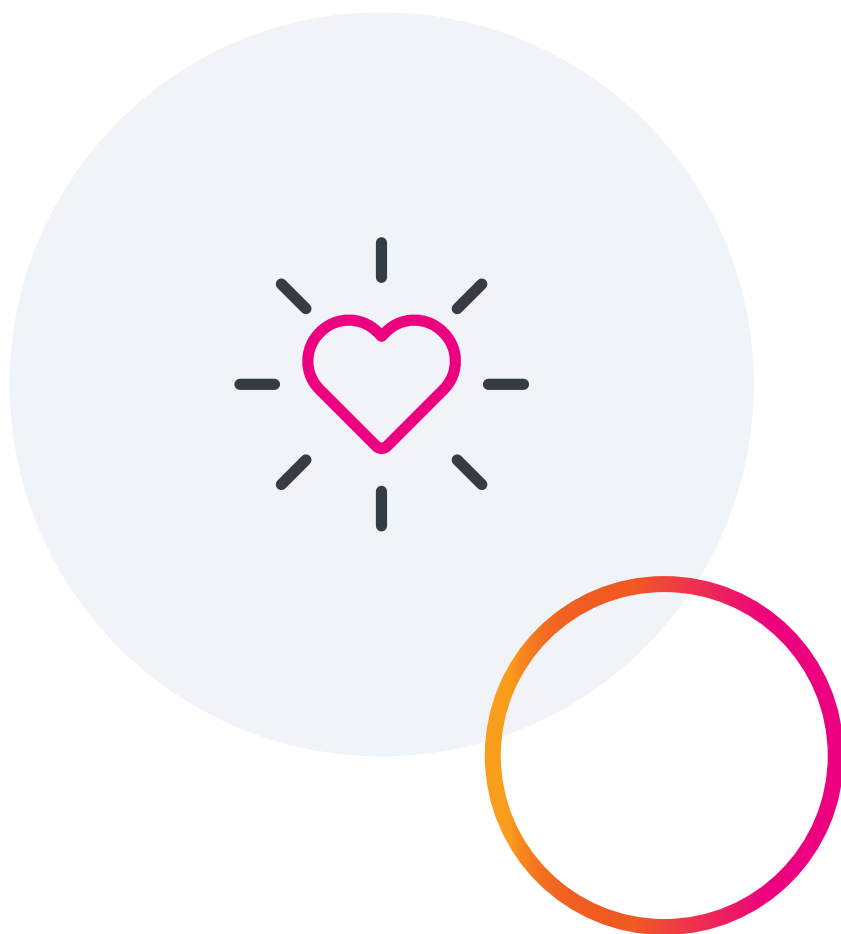


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Please stop yawning

Reasons to be interested in data governance

If just hearing “data governance” fills you with dread, confusion or boredom — **then you’re doing it wrong**. It’s probably your business’ most undervalued area. And, with the right mindset, a good data governance programme can transform your organisational approach to data and unlock its value. Stop looking at data governance as a compliance burden. Reimagine this obligation as a catalyst for change instead. Stop snoozing, start falling in love with data governance and read on to find out about the latest in European compliance.



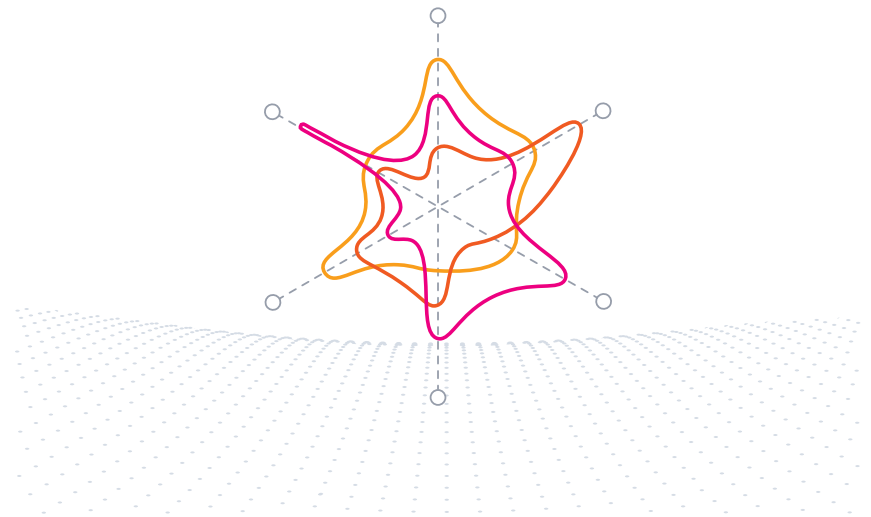
You need data governance more than it needs you

Recency and relevance — why is now the time to look at data governance with fresh eyes?

It's never a bad time to change your attitude towards data governance, but right now the top three reasons are:

1. An expanding data-management challenge creating highly complex environments.
2. Getting left behind by competitors, who are already unlocking endless opportunities through harnessing the ever-growing value of using good data properly.
3. The introduction of new regional regulations, adding a compliance burden to the already unmanageable pile of requirements.

Regulation might be making data governance urgent now, but it's always been important. If you can make data governance a “**want to**” rather than a “**have to**,” your programme will be built on strong foundations that ultimately lead to competitive advantage.



Data governance needs a makeover

What data governance really means

Gartner defines data governance as “the specification of decision rights and an accountability framework to ensure appropriate behaviour in the assessment, creation, use and control of data and analytics.” Yawn, right? There’s a lot of boring words in that definition.

So let’s start the makeover, and look at data governance like this instead:

- Ensuring data quality.
- Optimising the location and geography of data.
- Managing data effectively as an asset.
- Eliminating data complexity and silos.
- Inspiring reuse and sharing of data.
- Improving your staff’s understanding of, and confidence with, data.
- Growing an organisational culture where data is important.

Much more attractive, isn’t it? And it’s still data governance. These are just some of the topics that fall under the term “data governance.” It’s not about a specific technology, tool, process or a rigid roadmap. Instead, data governance is a holistic way of thinking that includes everything related to flowing data. That means people, storage, processes, strategies and, most important, value.

Data governance has way more to offer than just data security, privacy, legal obligations and compliance frameworks. It’s not a time-sucking tick-box compliance exercise — it’s an enabler for the business. Yes, you heard it right: Compliance is an enabler. Compliance obligations help organisations to provision their resources, people and time. They also come with **finer from regulators** if not fulfilled, which is a quantifiable cost of a lacking approach.

Our motto: If regulation gives you a springboard to improve your data governance, use it.

These compliance teams often have a strong remit, so they gain visibility into many cross-cutting areas of the business. Given empowerment, this can be used to identify key weaknesses in your holistic data governance strategies, and ultimately improve business value. Found a bottleneck? Discovered inefficiencies? Great, you’ve already delivered value beyond merely “being compliant”. And tooling is one key component that can help not only with spotting these weaknesses, but ease this mindset shift and aid the process changes behind it.

A common misconception is that growing a data culture means more data and that means more work. But, with the right tooling and data governance, that’s simply not true — sometimes it even means less work. The right tooling means you’re able to gain better insights, get quicker analyses and make better decisions on your piles of data that are oftentimes siloed and unstructured. Data governance, supported by the right tooling, will let you:

- Decide how to harness your data.
- Maximise the quality of your data.
- Efficiently collect your data and leverage opportunities for automation.

In other words, data governance will let you work smarter —not harder! An orderly, secure approach to data opens up the opportunity to turn that data into action. It lets you prove compliance, identify needs, drive innovation, optimise performance, improve operations and minimise costs.

Data is dead, long live data!

Also known as data sovereignty: Does the location of your data storage and processing matter?

Data jurisdiction, localisation, sovereignty. You may have heard these terms, but they often refer to the same thing: keeping your data in its country of origin. It's a growing trend. But what does that mean for you? The answer could take a whole paper of its own, but there are some key questions to consider:

1. When systems remain geographically co-located or data stays in-region, how does that impact your organisation's resilience?
2. Does changing the geography of your data bring simplification and clarity or repetition and complexity?
3. Do you need multiple geographical regions (if not now, then in future)? And if you do, can you still monitor your data (quality, protection obligations) at a high, consistent level?

It's clear that some organisations are intrigued by the data sovereignty model, and (like with all data issues), their data governance approach needs to be bespoke and tailored, varying not only by region, but also by sector, size and operating model. However, non-uniform solutions can add complexity and create geographic silos without the right tooling and data governance underpinning them. It's a balancing act, but one that Splunk can help with — specifically in monitoring to ensure you stay compliant, while Splunk itself operates on premises or a preferred geographical cloud region.



Why does data governance have so few friends?

Common obstacles to good data governance

With all these fabulous qualities, you'd think someone was taking data governance out to dinner every night. Yet good data governance is hard to find — why is that? Data governance is organisation-specific, but we find there are four common obstacles to organisations adopting a good data governance practice. They are:

1. A perception that good data governance is a big resource and time investment for a low-value return.

The value of data governance needs to be made explicit (see above) and you need the right tools to help your organisation work smarter, not harder. Data governance is not just about compliance and security, but also about the data's quality, its effective use and reuse, sharing, jurisdiction, management, models, accountability and changing the culture to be more open and accessible. This allows teams to work better together, make more informed decisions and have more confidence in what underpins those assessments and removes duplicate efforts.

2. Sharing and culture — or a lack of it.

Data governance applies to all parts of an organisation, but data sharing between departments gets difficult for many reasons:

- There can be perceived differences in care when handling data.
- There are often disagreements or a lack of clarity on who owns the budget responsibility and liability.
- Sometimes, it's just a simple misunderstanding that goes unchecked.

However, data governance can help you fix these issues! Setting strategic direction while supporting the day-to-day with robust policies, processes and oversight, data governance lets you understand and meet the needs of your customers, provide unbiased accountability, enable reuse of data and improve the data culture.

3. Not knowing where to start.

Thankfully, we don't have to reinvent the wheel; there are plenty of great frameworks already out there. One great resource to start (or mature) your data governance is the [DGI Data Governance Framework](#). And good tooling always helps you on the journey, of course.

4. Focusing too much on the burden of compliance.

Unfortunately, compliance is rarely seen as an enabler. More often it's looked at as a time drain, in part because lots of it is still manual rather than automated. It falls into the category of "done once a year because it has to be" rather than "updated daily and ready at any time for anyone who asks." This might sound overwhelming at first but, a) it isn't (remember the [right tooling](#)) and, b) anyone looking at digital transformation, hoping to get more value from data or leading in those innovation areas should be thinking about data governance. It can unlock cross-departmental opportunities across different use cases, because some of the principles and practices are reusable.

Prevent the awkward silence...

Where to start and what to ask

When viewed as an enabler rather than a burden, compliance reviews allow you to uncover unseen data areas and points of weakness in your data journey (and we're not only talking about technical bottlenecks). If you can't answer some simple questions, all signs point to problems with either:

1. Your data governance, or
2. The visibility of your data.

In both cases, neither compliance nor regulation are the problem — they are just shining a light on the broader issue. But how can you find out which one it is?

Let's see how easy you find it to answer these questions:

- What data do we have?
- Where is it?
- Who accesses it?
- Who is responsible for it?

Then you can move into more complex questions, such as:

- What data is most critical to my business?
- What is the least-used data that we are still collecting?
- How much data do we collect every day?
- How do we handle different data sets differently?
- How would I describe our data culture?
- How easy is it to see all our data in one place?
- Do we properly manage data assets and allow for their reuse?

Companies accumulate large amounts of data across all departments and teams. When data is combined and processed with [powerful analysis tools](#), it becomes a treasure. Transparent data provides the answers an organisation needs — as long as it is collected, consolidated and analysed correctly. But it's also proven to be a real challenge for some. In 2019 in Germany, 84% of business leaders [surveyed by Splunk](#) agreed that more than half of their organisation's data was “dark data” — data that remains unanalysed, unorganised and unused. This is in line with another [representative study by the German Economic Institute](#), which found that only 2% of German companies are organised in such a way that data can be used specifically for the success of the company.

And now, the main question — Are these data questions hard to answer because of:

- a. A lack of clarity and appropriate tooling showing me what needs to be known, or
- b. An underinvestment in data governance, or
- c. Both?

Splunk and data governance complete each other

Four reasons why we're made for each other

Compliance is an enabler, but it has nothing on Splunk's matchmaking skills! We're not gonna lie: Data Governance can be incredibly difficult, and loving it day-in, day-out can be a challenge if you don't have the right visibility to know what's going on and what data you have. This is where Splunk can help.

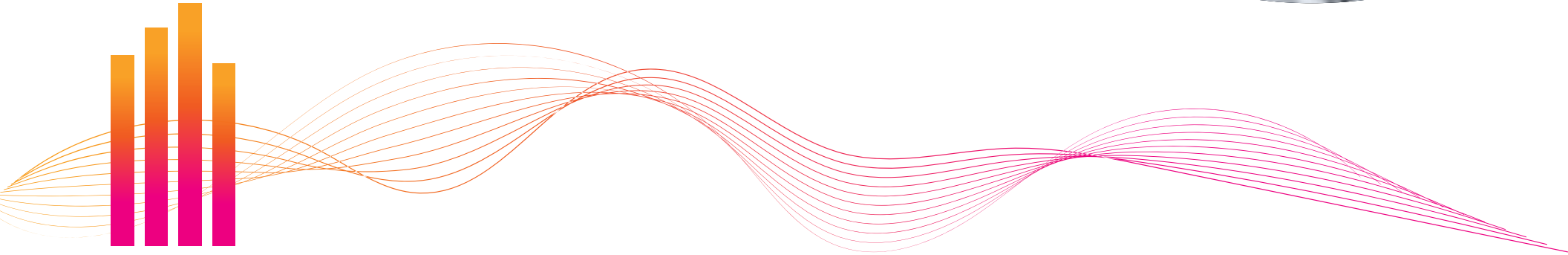
1. The right **data platform** can support data governance and strengthen compliance by eliminating the technological complexity of data governance. It helps with a lot of things, and ultimately increases enterprise value by:
 - Enabling data literacy and growing a data culture with your users. Elevating and facilitating data quality.
 - Effectively managing data and observing data sovereignty.
 - Identifying and prioritising issues with data and its reuse.
 - Eliminating data silos and complexity.
 - Benchmarking and informing business decisions.
2. A data platform also allows you to identify the **most important services** you have and to understand what to enhance. Data describes and informs your organisation's desired outcomes. Splunk lets you use, reuse and share this data to increase performance, improve KPIs and contribute to improved data governance processes.

3. Use **exercising** and **security audits** to provide regular benchmarks of your maturity level. And then move it forward. It's always good practice to treat your data like a proper asset — refresh yourself of its capability, exercise its usability, understand the gaps and bottlenecks, update it, invest in it! For this, a high-confidence and realistic view of your organisation's data flows are required. And guess what? **Splunk helps with that, too.**
4. There are Europe-wide and regional **regulations** to comply with ([read here for more](#)), but most of this starts with knowing what data and processes you have (and don't have), and then filling in the gaps, so compliance is never a worry.



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