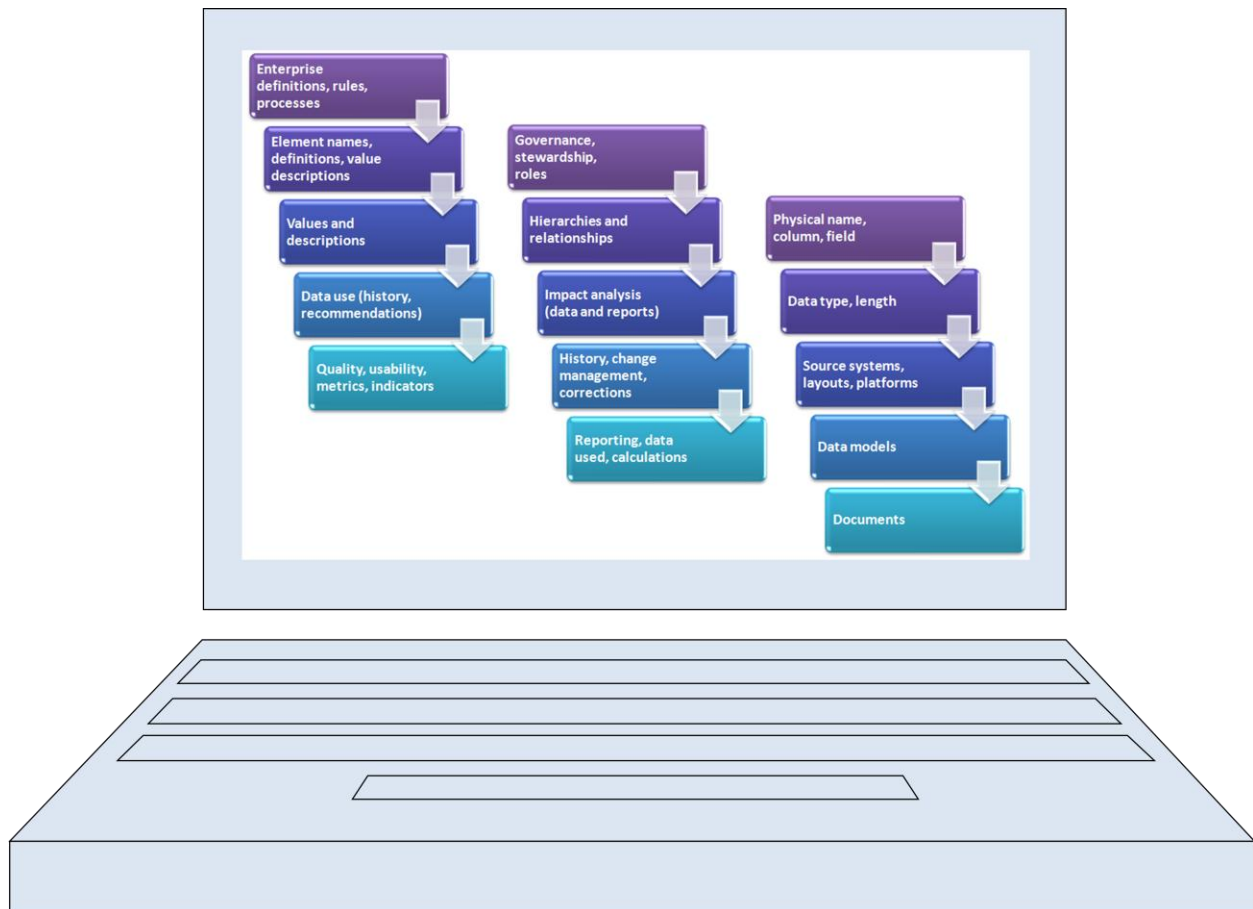




# MetaData Management

Although the importance of data to an organization is well understood, best practices for managing the data is sometimes not. Data is a key corporate asset and should be managed as such. A significant part of managing the data is capturing and maintaining Metadata. Metadata can be defined a number of different ways, as “data about data”, “information about data” and even “information about information”. It is all of these and more. Metadata is essential to accurately and efficiently utilizing enterprise data. The desire for comprehensive metadata is growing in parallel with the increasing expectation for a self-service environment.

Historically metadata has had more of a technical focus, e.g., data types, field names, physical structure. However, there is a comparable and equally important metadata component from a business perspective, e.g., element names, definitions, business rules. A mature metadata management program encompasses both technical and business metadata. Significant value comes from the connection of the two, providing an organizational “map” tracing information from the initial business concept to the storage of the resulting data and vice versa.



A well-designed metadata management program empowers an organization to more easily and efficiently:

- Respond and react to changing business needs
- Migrate data from legacy systems into new systems
- Integrate and synchronize data from different systems
- Reconcile inconsistent or redundant naming, definitions and properties
- Report and analyze data in standard formats and with standard interpretations
- Create a corporate “single source of truth”

Ideally, metadata is captured as an essential task within a project. Unfortunately, it is often times delayed until after the project is complete or never done at all. A significant portion of business metadata is available during the business requirements gathering stage. This provides an opportunity to capture definitions, business rules, quality expectations, uses (reports) and other valuable pieces of information. By incorporating business metadata gathering directly into a project plan, it is automatically documented and connected to subsequent technical metadata.

It is equally important to maintain and continually expand metadata. This should occur as a standard step in the data management workflow, thereby simplifying the effort to keep it current and assuring greater accuracy.

Because of the manner in which many data environments have evolved, it is common to have multiple metadata repositories in an organization. For purposes of accuracy, consistency and accessibility, the number of repositories should be kept to a minimum although having more than one is often times unavoidable. Multiple repositories or data dictionaries can be managed by creating a central “go to” location, i.e., repository that links them all. There are many good repositories available to purchase but they frequently do not include the functionality needed to capture business metadata. As a result, repositories are often developed “in house” using existing or available tools. The value in this approach is not only to reduce expenses, but also to allow the organization to discover and capture metadata, positioning them to better understand requirements for a future repository.

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Deliverables customized to suit your needs and environment:

- **Assessment and roadmap**
- **Repository requirements**
- **Policies and procedures**
- **Metadata management framework**
- **Roles and responsibilities**
- **Metadata**

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