Why having an enterprise-wide data archiving strategy is crucial

By Matthias Meiert   8 Jun 2017

As more and more South African firms continue with their cloud migration programmes, the importance of having an enterprise-wide data archiving strategy comes sharply into focus.

Matthias Meiert

If you are in the process of embracing the benefits of new cloud and software-as-a-service tools, to what extent have you considered the digital archiving requirements – to ensure that important company information is secure, audit-ready, and easily searchable?

We could compare this to the analogy of moving house. Every time we move, we have a great opportunity to re-organise all our belongings and throw away everything that we don't need. In a similar way, moving to the cloud gives us the perfect opportunity to declutter our data – archiving that which we'll need in the future, de-duplicating, cleaning up, and even discarding unnecessary data.

The foundation

As we embark on exciting cloud migration paths, getting inspired by all the new opportunities they bring, data archiving is often relegated to the bottom of our thinking. In fact, archiving becomes the data foundation on which the organisation operates – empowering CIOs with a host of benefits:

- **Cost-efficiency:** information that is not required on a day-to-day basis can be stored in the most cost-efficient way
- **Enhanced governance and compliance:** as governance, risk and compliance (GRC) regulations become more stringent, organisations are required to hold information for longer periods, with their methods closely monitored by regulators.
- More control over data: organisations with a first-rate archiving approach and well-defined permissions policies, enjoy far easier access to key data while ensuring data security.
- **Business continuity:** archiving enables greater continuity as the organisation's combined intellectual capital is packaged, formalised, and used to drive business growth.
- **Better customer experience:** with customer records extending back many years or decades, organisations can

build up highly detailed profiles of their customers – enabling the most personalised customer experiences.

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What's holding you back?

So, what is stopping most organisations from seeing data archiving as an asset that unleashes these many business benefits?

Based on our immersive sessions with our clients, it seems that perhaps the biggest problems relate to vendor lock-in, as intellectual capital sits in various proprietary databases throughout the organisation. With a vendor-agnostic, open-standards approach, your archiving solution acts as a neutral platform that interacts with various databases.

Another common pitfall is to see data archiving as something isolated and independent from your broader transformation strategy. This approach fails to properly consider the various ways that the organisation may need to use its data in the future – for example, 'what may the legal teams need?', or 'What data will be helpful in better understanding our customers' needs?' Only by understanding the broader digital transformation strategy can you start answering these kinds of questions.

Capitalising on technological advances of automation

Many firms also fail to capitalise on the technological advances of automation and intelligent classification tools, which help to take much of the manual drudgery away from tech teams, by using advanced artificial intelligence to sort and archive information. We refer to automation in the context of our 'zero-touch' philosophy – of creating the systems that can handle vast volumes and a high degree of data complexity, with minimal manual intervention.

For most firms, getting it right means joining forces with a partner that has the deep skills and experience to pull off a complex data archiving programme, that's able to design an archiving strategy, leveraging the latest innovations, within the context of your broader digital transformation ambitions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthias Meiert, Systems Integration - Consultant for Information Management at T-Systems.