



# Mapping the Exploding Data Terrain: Why Data Access Matters

For organizations trying to navigate the accelerating rate at which data is generated, appropriate data access capabilities are required to mitigate enterprise risks.

## What Is Data Access?

An organization's data access capabilities control access to its data via technologies, policies, standards, and procedures. These diverse tools are deployed to help ensure that data is accessed in ways that are compliant, well managed, privacy-focused, and limited by the nature of—and rules around—that data's access, handling, and use. Data-access capabilities may include:

- Identity and access management (IAM) programs
- Data access control technologies
- Discretionary access controls
- Access control lists
- Governed data sharing
- Mandatory access controls
- Data access compliance policies
- Enterprise data access policies
- Data access training
- Data access auditing
- Cybersecurity
- Zero Trust policies

Data protection and privacy are increasingly becoming the focus of government regulators and other stakeholders. At the same time, enterprises are learning how to navigate the radically new data landscape that has emerged from their exploding data assets. Organizations in all sectors are handling more data from new technologies and procedures that collect, use, or leverage data to streamline operations and improve business outcomes. This accelerating data proliferation opens organizations up to the risk of negative reputational, financial, regulatory, cybersecurity, business, or privacy incidents if any of that data is accessed improperly.

Organizations need to become more diligent in how they manage access to their data. Expansions of the threat surface are creating unprecedented risks—via things like data digitization, the implementation of cloud and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, or the additional data complexity caused by mergers and acquisitions. Companies must be diligent to ensure these advances don't open them up to cybersecurity, fraud, or privacy risks. In this new data terrain, a company can potentially overlook vulnerable data-access points or other issues that might compromise their data integrity, stakeholder privacy, intellectual property, or compliance. But that's not the only enterprise data-access concern. Organizations simultaneously need to improve their ability to easily provision access to data to those who require it. Easier data access can help organizations improve business outcomes by more effectively leveraging their data.

Good enterprise data strategy includes three core pillars: data governance, data access, and data usage capabilities. Data access encompasses the policies, procedures, standards, operating models, and technologies an organization uses to ensure that access to data is protected and managed in ways that allow only those with both need and authorization to have access to it. Data governance is focused on the capabilities necessary to handle data consistently and compliantly throughout an organization. Data usage entails making sure that data is used, stored, and disposed of correctly. In this paper, we will focus on the importance of data access and how to improve an organization's data access capabilities. This series also features papers that focus on how to improve an organization's approaches to data usage and data governance.

## What Can Data Access Capabilities Help With?

Effective data-access capabilities are critical for reducing organizational risks. They can help your organization:

- Compliantly manage data access.
- Automate data access with rules-based automation processes.
- Regularly audit data access.
- Better protect data against breaches.
- Improve cybersecurity across cloud and legacy networks.
- Measure data movement and improve data loss prevention.
- Streamline authorized data access provisioning.
- Reduce the IT burden of data-access management with technologies.
- Better manage data access throughout the data lifecycle.
- Protect against fraud.
- Protect against privacy violations.
- Reduce payouts from data access audits.

## The Importance of Data Access

With the accelerating digitization and storage of sensitive individual, government, and organizational information, it's critical that organizations evaluate and improve their data access capabilities. This is key to ensuring they have the abilities, policies, procedures, standards, technologies, and operating models necessary to effectively and efficiently allocate access to authorized individuals and organizations, while protecting data from being accessed by unauthorized individuals and organizations or threat actors.

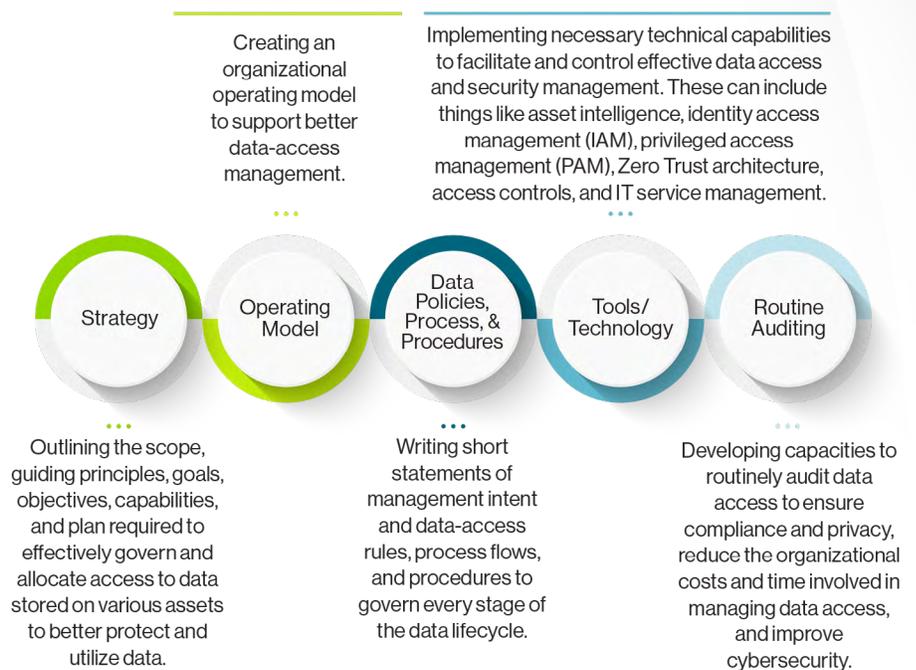
Effective data access programs may include things like identity and access management (IAM) processes and technologies, asset management guidelines and controls, data access audits, data sharing rules, data access training, and cybersecurity procedures, technologies, and controls. It is critical that organizations learn to navigate common data access challenges like compliance with emerging regulations and adoption of data access lifecycle management tools that can provision and revoke data access in a timely manner. Companies are also having to navigate complex data-access issues when dealing with overlapping or integrated systems from legacy systems, cloud applications, or mergers and acquisitions.

Creating an integrated data access strategy that includes the capabilities, technologies, and processes required to manage access to reduce risks while simultaneously ensuring that authorized data access is provisioned in a timely manner can be challenging to execute but has significant benefits when done right. To succeed, an organization must focus on creating a balance between protecting itself against increasing privacy and data protection risks and ensuring that the organization can effectively leverage data in a timely manner for innovation and critical business.

## Guidehouse's Data Access Strategy

Guidehouse has significant experience consulting with government and corporate organizations to support enterprises in the creation and implementation of effective data-access capabilities that can reduce risk and allow organizations to more efficiently evaluate and allocate data access to those who request it.

We follow a five-step data access process:



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## How Guidehouse Can Help

Guidehouse's capabilities and experience around data access have helped a significant number of organizations improve their access management to reduce the risk of unauthorized access, decrease the time necessary to provision authorized access, and ensure a high level of cybersecurity for enterprise data across the increasingly complex organizational data landscape.

By integrating our capabilities in access-management technologies with our understanding of the processes, policies, controls, and procedures necessary for an effective and efficient data-access program, Guidehouse helps organizations simultaneously streamline and improve their data-access approach. The resulting data access capabilities better protect organizations and data while ensuring that use and access are not held up for authorized users. This enables organizations to tackle their current data-access complexity and prepare themselves for an even more complex data-access future.

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## About Guidehouse

Guidehouse is a leading global provider of consulting services to the public sector and commercial markets, with broad capabilities in management, technology, and risk consulting. By combining our public and private sector expertise, we help clients address their most complex challenges and navigate significant regulatory pressures, focusing on transformational change, business resiliency, and technology-driven innovation. Across a range of advisory, consulting, outsourcing, and digital services, we create scalable, innovative solutions that help our clients outwit complexity and position them for future growth and success. The company has more than 13,000 professionals in over 50 locations globally. Guidehouse is a Veritas Capital portfolio company, led by seasoned professionals with proven and diverse expertise in traditional and emerging technologies, markets, and agenda-setting issues driving national and global economies. For more information, please visit: [www.guidehouse.com](http://www.guidehouse.com).