

A hand holding a key in front of a row of metal mailboxes. The mailboxes are numbered, and the hand is positioned as if about to unlock one of them. The scene is dimly lit, with the hand and key being the primary focus.

Data Access is (Almost) More Important Than Data Itself



Data is a vital business asset, but most businesses lock it away in storage for only a few eyes to see. And no wonder—security breaches and leaked information cost companies millions each year. When talking about data as a differentiator for business success, it's a little more complicated than just how much data a company can gather.

Access is almost as important as the data itself. Without motion that enables it to be consumed and utilized, data remains nothing but a static liability to a company. The more time data spends locked up, the more money organizations leave on the table. Companies must make strategic decisions to unlock their data for real-time use to everyone—yes, everyone—in the company that needs it. Here's what to know.

Data Access requires a governance overhaul

Freeing data for all users requires a new way of thinking about governance. Traditionally, users had to pursue permission to use certain columns and rows of data and were manually granted precisely that access. This is a process that could take months to complete and only offered limited views of out-of-date data since each time an update to the access permissions was needed, the whole process had to repeat.

An attribute-based system that allows any user to access the data they need through a version appropriate for their profile is a must. Administration can set these tag-based permissions across the board, no matter where the data is or its original location. By setting role-based and user-based rules, it is a quick point-and-click to allow new access instead of a burdensome, error-prone, manual process.

Governance also ensures that business users can understand the data they're working with. There's nothing worse than a meeting in the boardroom or a team huddle where different users ended up with different numbers to inform decisions. By ensuring that all the users are accessing the same data, strong governance improves usage and understanding across the enterprise without putting so much labor on IT.

Governed, strategic data access improves productivity for everyone

When team members have limited access to data, it puts a strain on the entire operation. IT must handle all requests from small to large, handle all data cleaning, and be available to answer questions or explain potential results discrepancies like those mentioned in the previous section.

Not only is IT swamped with requests from other departments, but all other operations must wait for data



insights from an increasingly long laundry list of IT tasks. This bottleneck makes it extremely difficult to pivot when necessary or notice trends before they happen. IT is too busy fulfilling tactical requests to have time to manage the bigger picture.

Data access frees up IT because they don't have to worry about building everyone's data pipelines. They have more time to manage higher-order tasks and work on machine learning deployment or productization. On the other side, departments now using data can move forward with more agile initiatives because they have the opportunity to self-serve their data needs.

Data access isn't an automatic regulatory risk

Organizations might be wary of increasing data access just as regulations become stricter. Data breaches cost millions each year, and the long-term consequences of those breaches also play out in lost customer trust and even data loss.

When companies deploy tag-based governance controls enterprise-wide through their operational data layer, compliance becomes much easier. Not only do leaders have access to better reporting, but IT doesn't have to put out fires unnecessarily. Everything is connected, and fewer loopholes exist.

A data operating system also provides transparency through a bird's eye view of data. Leaders can see exactly where and how data is being used, making audits of data usage more straightforward.

A tool does exist that can knit everything together

A data operating system provides the governance controls and comprehensive strategy for making data access a real thing. It provides a connective tissue for all cloud and on-premise systems and tools. This is the only way true data access can happen.

It also can help overcome fears that unlocking data could lead to terrible consequences. Through comprehensive governance strategies that ensure no loopholes no matter the data source, and a transparent view of the usage of the data that makes compliance reporting much more manageable, all stakeholders can transition to open data access without fear.

DataOS provides just such a comprehensive solution. It adapts to the organization—not the other way around—connecting to each and every tool and data source just as it is with no vendor lock-in. Companies don't have to move their data and risk security loopholes or risk losing control of their data altogether. It's one solution to ensure that data becomes an asset rather than a liability and shortens the curve from ingestion to insight.

Curious to know more about how DataOS fits into your tech stack to free data safely and effectively?

BY E. WALLACE

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The Modern Data Company
306 Cambridge Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94306

[TheModernDataCompany.com](https://www.TheModernDataCompany.com)
info@TMDC.io