

Real-World Data Governance

Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Data Quality Across the Enterprise

Monthly Webinar Series Hosted by DATAVERSITY

Robert S. Seiner – KIK Consulting

May 15, 2025 – 11:00 a.m. PT / 2:00 p.m. ET



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Episode #160

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Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Introduction

Real-World Data Governance – Monthly Webinar Series

June 19, 2025: The Future of Data Stewardship – Trends and Innovations

Third Thursday each Month @ 2pm EST – Register at TDAN.com, KIKconsulting.com, DATAVERSITY.net

Dataversity Enterprise Data World (EDW) / Data Governance Information Quality (DGIQ)

May 5-9, 2025 – Tutorial – Data Governance Tools, Templates, and Techniques (5/5)

Non-Invasive Data Governance / Non-Invasive Data Governance Strikes Again Books

2014: ISBN 9781935504856 / TechnicsPub.com / Amazon.com (NIDG)

2023: ISBN 9781634623599 / TechnicsPub.com / Amazon.com (Strikes Again)

2025: ISBN 9781634625937 / TechnicsPub.com / Amazon.com (Unleashed)

Non-Invasive Data Governance / Metadata Governance Online Learning Plans

Most Recent: Business Glossaries, Data Dictionaries and Data Catalogs

DATAVERSITY Training Center – <https://training.dataversity.net>

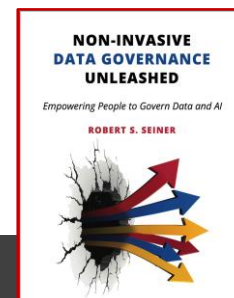
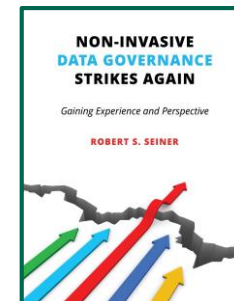
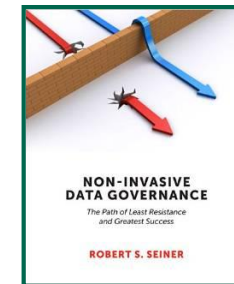
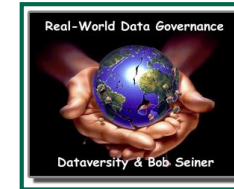
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The Home of Non-Invasive Data Governance®

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU)

Adjunct Faculty: Heinz College Executive Education
Chief Data and AI Officer (CDAIO) Certificate Program



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

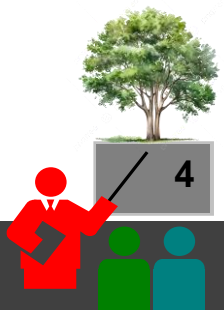
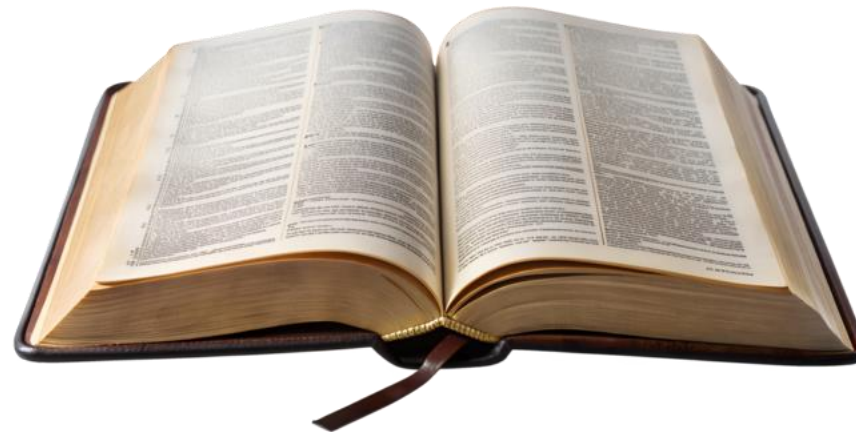
Abstract

- In this webinar, I will talk about ...
 - The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance
 - Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise
 - Improving Data Quality Through Standardization
 - Creating a Common Language for Data Management
 - Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance



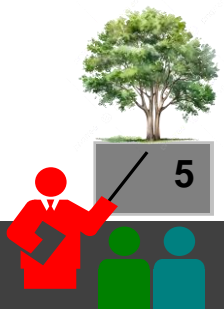
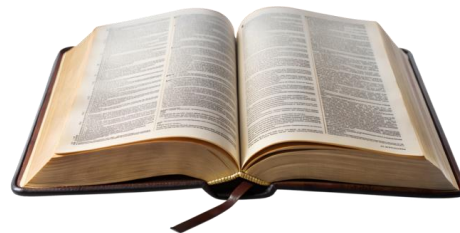
Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality Definitions

- Data Governance – The **execution and enforcement** of authority over data.
- Data Stewardship – **Formal accountability** for data.
- Data Steward – **A person held formally accountable** for their relationship to the data.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality Definitions

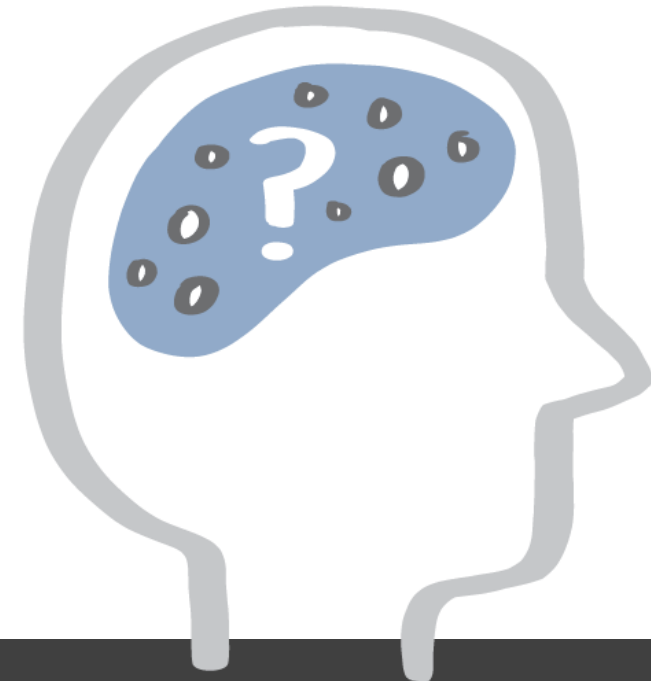
- Business Glossary – A **centralized list of business terms and definitions** that helps everyone in the organization speak the same language when it comes to data.
- Data Dictionary – A detailed reference that describes the **technical structure, business attributes, and formats of data stored in systems** like databases or applications.
- Data Catalog – A **searchable inventory** that helps people find, understand, and trust the data that exists across the organization's systems and tools.
- Data Quality – The **measure of how accurate, complete, consistent, and usable your data is** for making decisions and running operations smoothly.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance

- Aligning Language to Reduce Data Confusion
- Mapping Definitions to Technical Reality
- Cataloging as the Governance Connector
- Enabling Stewardship Through Metadata Visibility
- Supporting Policies and Standards with Structured Metadata



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance

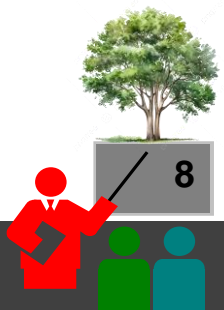
- Aligning Language to Reduce Data Confusion
 - Shared terminology **ensures everyone is speaking the same language** when interpreting and using data.
 - Glossaries help **eliminate ambiguity** by defining business terms in a clear and consistent way.
 - Alignment between business and technical language **reduces miscommunication and reporting errors**.
 - Standardizing terms builds trust in data because **people know exactly what the data means**.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance

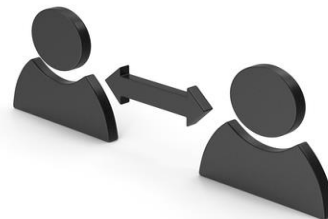
- Mapping Definitions to Technical Reality
 - Definitions become valuable when they are **connected to the actual systems**, fields, sources that use them.
 - Mapping **links glossary terms to technical metadata**, enabling true business-IT alignment.
 - This connection **supports auditability and makes it easier to trace** data back to its origin.
 - It **helps bridge the gap** between data consumers and data engineers by adding context to definitions.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance

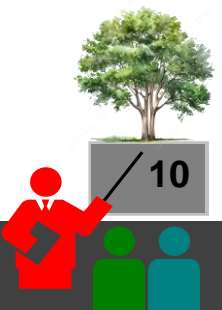
- Cataloging as the Governance Connector
 - A data catalog **acts as the central hub** where governance, technical metadata, and business context come together.
 - Catalogs make it easier for everyone to **find, understand, and use (FUU)** trusted data.
 - They **bring visibility** to stewardship, ownership, and usage across data assets.
 - A catalog **connects policies and practices to the actual data** assets being governed.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance

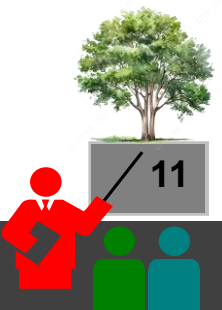
- Enabling Stewardship Through Metadata Visibility
 - When stewards have **access to rich metadata**, they can manage data more effectively and proactively.
 - Metadata gives stewards **the context they need** to resolve issues and support quality.
 - Visibility into who owns, defines, and uses data **promotes accountability** at every level.
 - Empowered stewards **become advocates for governance** when they have tools that support their roles.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance

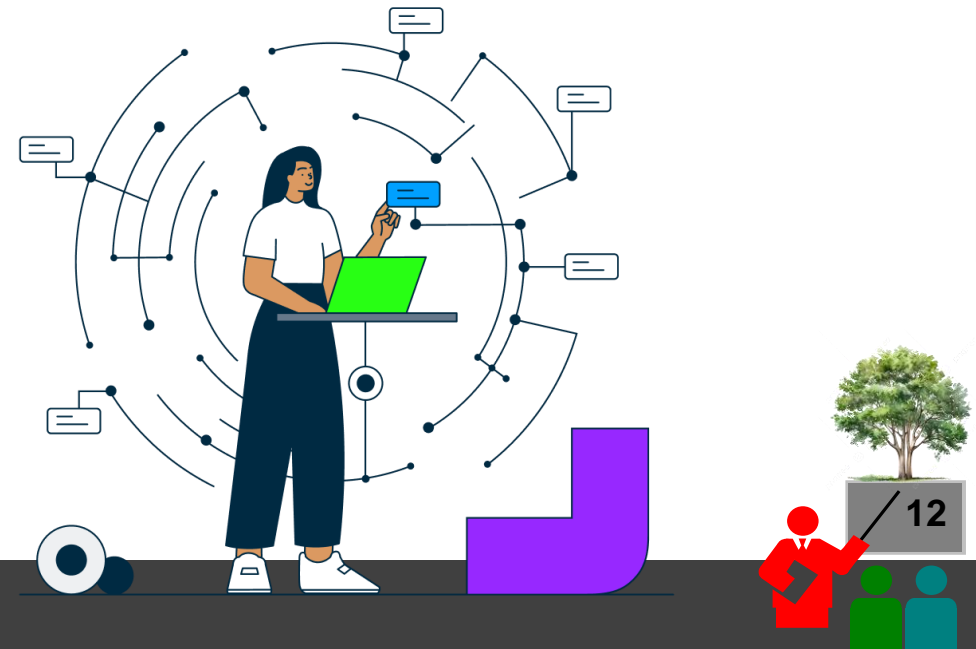
- Supporting Policies and Standards with Structured Metadata
 - Structured metadata provides the **framework needed to enforce governance policies** consistently.
 - It enables **automation of rules and validation processes** that support compliance.
 - Clear metadata helps **document and explain the standards** that apply to data.
 - Policies **become easier to implement** when they are tied to metadata people can understand and apply.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise

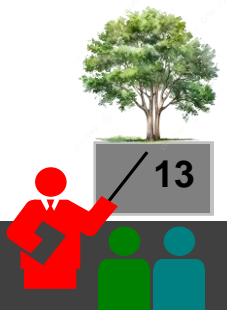
- Embed Glossary Access Into Business Applications
- Synchronize Dictionaries With Source Systems and ETL Processes
- Establish a Metadata Onboarding Workflow for New Projects
- Integrate Catalog Tags With Data Quality Rules and Scorecards
- Use Governance Roles to Maintain and Curate Metadata Content



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise

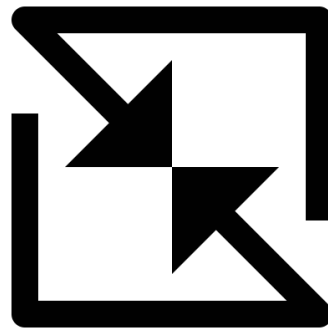
- Embed Glossary Access Into Business Applications
 - Putting glossary access **where people work** removes barriers to consistent terminology use.
 - When definitions are a click away inside applications, users are **more likely to trust and reuse them**.
 - Seamless glossary access encourages adoption by making data context **part of daily workflow**.
 - This integration **reinforces a shared language** across systems, teams, and decisions.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise

- Synchronize Dictionaries With Source Systems and ETL Processes
 - Data dictionaries are most powerful when they **reflect the current state** of the systems they describe.
 - Synchronizing with ETL ensures that **definitions stay aligned** with how data is moved and transformed.
 - It reduces confusion by helping technical and business teams **speak the same language** about data structure.
 - Automated syncs between metadata and source systems **support better impact analysis** and data lineage.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise

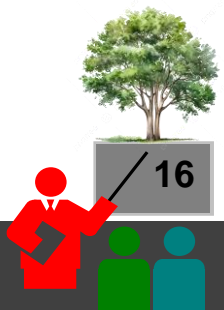
- Establish a Metadata Onboarding Workflow for New Projects
 - Every new data initiative should start with **defining and capturing key metadata**.
 - A structured onboarding workflow **ensures consistency and reduces technical debt** later.
 - Early metadata planning helps teams **recognize stewards, usage rules, and quality expectations** upfront.
 - Onboarding metadata at the start **connects project work to enterprise governance** practices.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise

- Integrate Catalog Tags With Data Quality Rules and Scorecards
 - Catalog tags **make it easier to trace which assets are governed** by which quality standards.
 - Linking data quality rules to catalog entries creates a **single source of truth** for enforcement.
 - This integration supports **automated monitoring and reporting** of data quality.
 - Tags help **track improvement over time** and spotlight gaps in policy coverage.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise

- Use Governance Roles to Maintain and Curate Metadata Content
 - Governance roles ensure that **someone is always accountable** for metadata accuracy and relevance.
 - Defined responsibilities help **prevent metadata from becoming outdated** or ignored.
 - Role-based stewardship **promotes ownership and collaboration** across business and IT.
 - Curated metadata **enables better searchability, trust, and reuse** across the enterprise.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Improving Data Quality Through Standardization

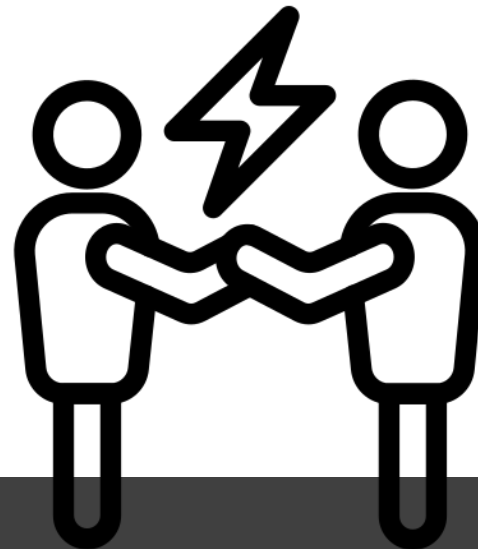
- Aligning Business Terms Across Departments to Eliminate Conflicting Definitions
- Using Standardized Data Definitions to Reduce Input Errors and Rework
- Implementing Reference Data and Allowable Values to Support Consistency
- Leveraging Catalog Metadata to Identify and Correct Redundant or Outdated Sources
- Driving Accountability Through Stewardship of Standardized Terms and Formats



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Improving Data Quality Through Standardization

- Aligning Business Terms Across Departments to Eliminate Conflicting Definitions
 - Misaligned terminology across departments leads to **conflicting metrics and reporting confusion**.
 - A unified business glossary **ensures consistent meaning**, regardless of department or role.
 - Cross-department alignment on terms supports **clearer collaboration** and more reliable analytics.
 - Eliminating term conflicts **strengthens trust in data** and the decisions built from it.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Improving Data Quality Through Standardization

- Using Standardized Data Definitions to Reduce Input Errors and Rework
 - Standard definitions guide users to **input accurate, complete, and consistent data** from the start.
 - Reducing ambiguity at data entry points **minimizes downstream rework** and correction.
 - **Users are more confident** in filling forms and reports when clear definitions are easily accessible.
 - Standardization turns data quality **from reactive cleanup into proactive prevention.**



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Improving Data Quality Through Standardization

- Implementing Reference Data and Allowable Values to Support Consistency
 - Reference data **restricts input** to approved values, minimizing variation and errors.
 - Allowable values **ensure consistency** in fields like status codes, departments, and geographic indicators.
 - Controlled vocabularies help **maintain integrity** across systems, reports, and integrations.
 - Managing reference data centrally **ensures that all users are selecting** from the same approved lists.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Improving Data Quality Through Standardization

- Leveraging Catalog Metadata to Identify and Correct Redundant or Outdated Sources
 - Catalog **metadata shines a light** on unused, duplicate, or outdated data assets.
 - Visibility into lineage and relationships helps teams **clean up and consolidate** overlapping sources.
 - System **integration efforts benefit** from knowing what data can be retired or repurposed.
 - **Data quality improves** when outdated sources are flagged and removed through catalog governance.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Improving Data Quality Through Standardization

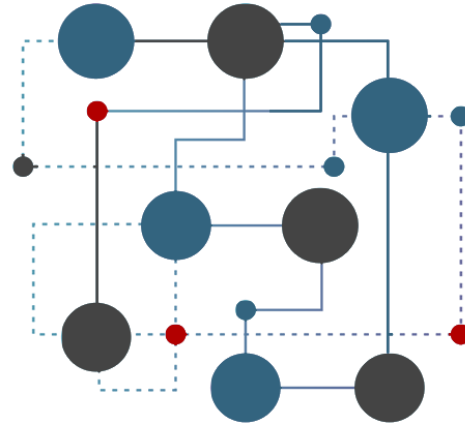
- Driving Accountability Through Stewardship of Standardized Terms and Formats
 - Recognizing ownership (sic) of specific terms and formats ensures they're **maintained and governed** over time.
 - Stewardship enforces **consistency and accuracy** across the data lifecycle.
 - When individuals are accountable, organizations **experience fewer ambiguities** and breakdowns.
 - Stewards act as quality guardians, **promoting trust** in shared data assets.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Creating a Common Language for Data Management

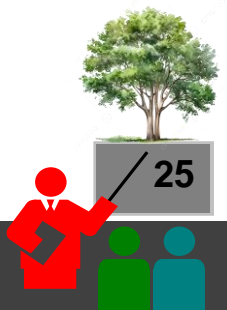
- Differentiating Between a Business Glossary, Data Dictionary, and Data Catalog
- Facilitating Collaboration by Standardizing Business Terminology Across Functions
- Eliminating Ambiguity in Reporting Through Agreed-Upon Data Definitions
- Establishing Data Naming Conventions That Bridge Technical and Business Contexts
- Engaging Stakeholders to Validate and Own Shared Language in Metadata Tools



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Creating a Common Language for Data Management

- Differentiating Between a Business Glossary, Data Dictionary, and Data Catalog
 - A business glossary defines **business terms for non-technical audiences**, focusing on meaning and context.
 - A data dictionary describes the **technical structure of data**, such as field names, data types, and formats.
 - A data catalog provides an **inventory of data assets** with ownership (sic), lineage, and usage metadata.
 - Understanding these differences ensures the **right tool is used for the right governance purpose**.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Creating a Common Language for Data Management

- Facilitating Collaboration by Standardizing Business Terminology Across Functions
 - Standardized language helps **eliminate confusion between departments** that use the same data differently.
 - A shared vocabulary **strengthens collaboration** by ensuring everyone interprets terms the same way.
 - Consistent terminology **prevents misunderstandings** and supports more aligned analytics and reporting.
 - Cross-functional **teams work better** when data conversations start with a common, agreed-upon language.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Creating a Common Language for Data Management

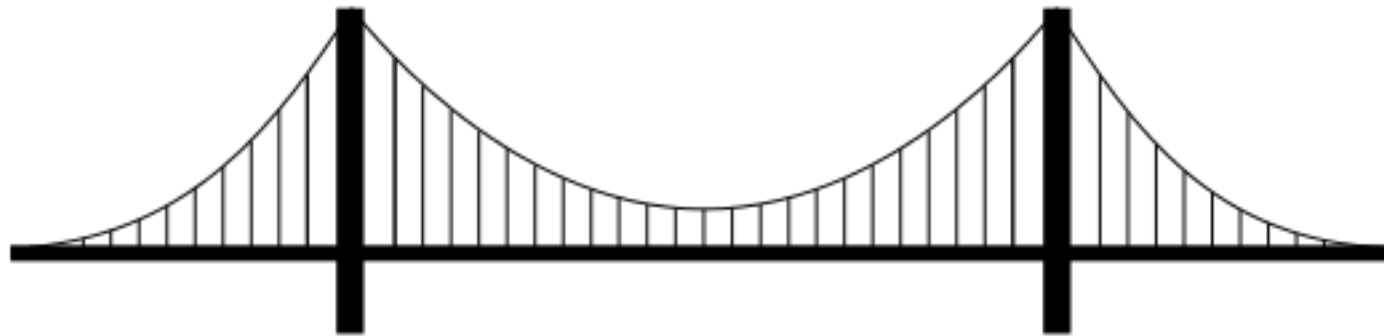
- Eliminating Ambiguity in Reporting Through Agreed-Upon Data Definitions
 - Agreed-upon definitions **prevent multiple interpretations** of the same metric or value.
 - Consistency in reporting **builds trust** in dashboards, KPIs, and strategic decisions.
 - Definitions documented in glossaries and dictionaries help **explain what data means** in business terms.
 - Governance succeeds when **everyone understands and uses data the same way** in reports.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Creating a Common Language for Data Management

- Establishing Data Naming Conventions That Bridge Technical and Business Contexts
 - Naming conventions help **connect what the business calls data to how it's stored technically**.
 - Consistent names across platforms **reduce friction between business users and data engineers**.
 - A bridge between business terms and system fields **supports data lineage and impact analysis**.
 - Standard names **improve searchability, discoverability, and reduce duplication** in systems.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Creating a Common Language for Data Management

- Engaging Stakeholders to Validate and Own Shared Language in Metadata Tools
 - Stakeholders are more likely to use metadata tools when **they help shape the language inside them.**
 - Collaborative validation processes **increase the accuracy and relevance** of shared definitions.
 - Ownership over definitions **fosters accountability** and keeps metadata content up to date.
 - When users contribute to common language, they feel **invested in data governance success.**



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance

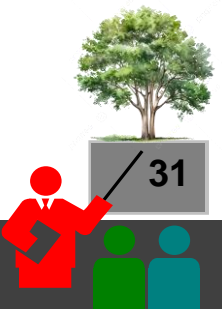
- How a Business Glossary Helped Standardize Metrics Across Business Units
- Using a Data Dictionary to Clarify Conflicting Definitions in Regulatory Reporting
- Leveraging a Data Catalog to Streamline System Integrations During a Merger
- Driving Steward Accountability Through Metadata Visibility and Ownership Assignments
- Improving Audit Readiness by Linking Policies and Data Elements in the Catalog



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance

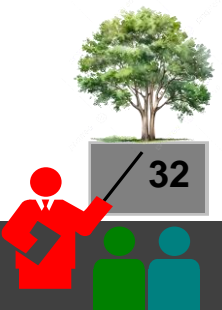
- How a Business Glossary Helped Standardize Metrics Across Business Units
 - A shared glossary **resolved metric discrepancies** that previously caused conflicting reports across departments.
 - Standardized definitions helped **unify KPIs** across finance, operations, and customer service.
 - Cross-functional alignment on terms **improved executive decision-making** with cleaner dashboards.
 - The glossary became a **trusted reference point**, reducing debate over numbers in meetings.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance

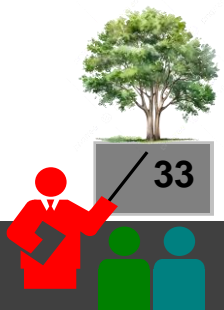
- Using a Data Dictionary to Clarify Conflicting Definitions in Regulatory Reporting
 - A regulated organization **avoided compliance risks** by aligning system-level definitions using a central dictionary.
 - Data dictionary entries clarified **which fields fed into required reports** and how they were calculated.
 - Having system-specific definitions side-by-side helped **reconcile discrepancies** and audit trails.
 - Regulators and auditors gained **confidence in the accuracy** of submitted reports.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance

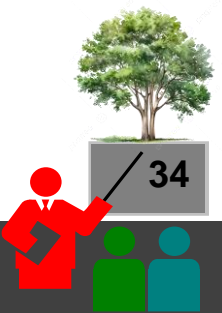
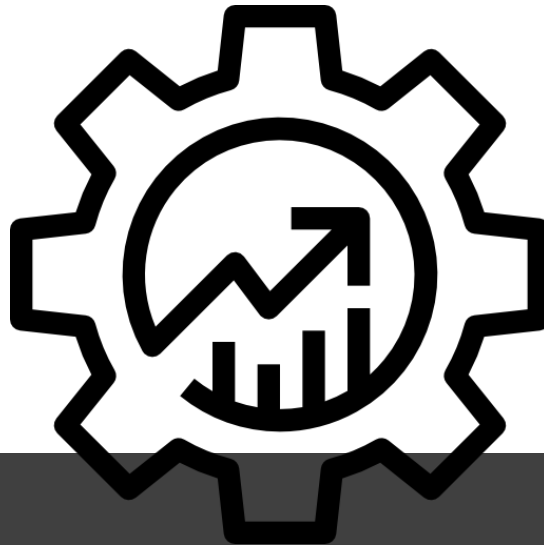
- Leveraging a Data Catalog to Streamline System Integrations During a Merger
 - During a merger, the catalog **identified overlapping data assets** and redundant sources early.
 - Data lineage in the catalog helped **map system dependencies** and reduced integration surprises.
 - Catalog metadata **supported quick decisions** about system retirement and migration.
 - The catalog gave both legacy teams a **shared, structured view of enterprise data**.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance

- Driving Steward Accountability Through Metadata Visibility and Stewardship Recognition
 - Recognizing stewardship directly in the metadata catalog made it clear **who was responsible for what**.
 - Visibility of steward recognition **ensured accountability** for resolving data quality issues.
 - Business and technical stewards **collaborated more effectively** with clearly defined roles.
 - Stewardship activity became **traceable, measurable, and part of day-to-day operations**.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance

- Improving Audit Readiness by Linking Policies and Data Elements in the Catalog
 - By tagging policies to data elements, auditors could instantly **trace how rules were enforced**.
 - Linking data to compliance controls **streamlined audit preparation** and reduced manual effort.
 - Catalog metadata helped show **evidence of governance** without creating new documentation.
 - The audit team praised the **transparency and organization** of the governance environment.



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Summary

- In this webinar, I talked about ...
 - The Role of Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs in Data Governance
 - Best Practices for Integrating These Tools Across the Enterprise
 - Improving Data Quality Through Standardization
 - Creating a Common Language for Data Management
 - Success Stories of Using These Tools for Governance



Using Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Catalogs to Drive Quality

Q & A - Contact Information



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thank you!

