

# COLLABORATIVE DATA GOVERNANCE: PEELING THE RED TAPE OFF DATA DISCOVERY

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## Report Highlights

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**Organizations that take a collaborative approach to data governance meet the dual demands of users and IT**

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**Collaborative data governance helps IT deliver better information, faster**

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**A collaborative assembly line forms to rollout new ideas around data**

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**72% of organizations with collaborative data governance employ data management and data quality tools**

This Research Report will examine the analytical performance of organizations with data discovery tools, established data governance, and regular collaboration between users and IT.

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### Definitions

This report is based on findings gathered from Aberdeen's 2014 Business Analytics survey. Of the 676 total respondents, **136 companies** could be identified as having collaborative data governance by meeting three criteria:

- Data discovery tools
- Established data governance policies
- A "collaborator" rating from the [Analytical Mind Map](#)

These 136 companies form the basis for understanding the benefits of collaborative data governance for data discovery and IT resource management.

### Meeting Dual Demands with Collaboration

IT bureaucracy may be a necessary evil, but enlightened organizations can work to lessen its degree of maleficence. In the context of data discovery, the goals of users and IT can sometimes appear to be at odds. IT must ensure that enterprise data is accurate, complete, and secure. Users want to quickly and freely explore data and engage comprehensive datasets to achieve new levels of insight. [Aberdeen's research](#) validates the general consensus that data creation and storage requirements are growing at exponential rates with no signs of decelerating. Users see this flood of data as an exciting new resource to be mined for competitive advantage. As such, they quickly become frustrated when their access to new data sources is unnecessarily restricted or hampered by mouthfuls of IT jargon and endless ticket requests. However, as data volumes grow, so too does the burden placed on IT – both in terms of required manpower and the costs of storing, managing, and protecting data. IT must maintain high standards for data while satisfying the clamoring masses of users.

From the Business Analytics 2014 survey respondent pool, Aberdeen isolated organizations that have both data discovery tools and established data governance policies, as well as a collaborative relationship between users and IT. Organizations that take a collaborative approach to data governance meet the dual demands of users and IT to achieve powerful data discovery tools that recognize the realities of enterprise IT.

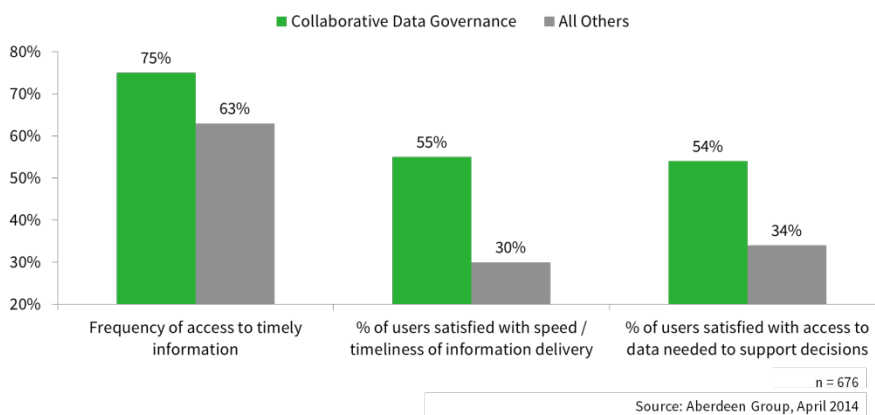
### It Pays to Collaborate

What are the tangible benefits of collaborative data governance? While respecting the realities of large-scale IT, how can we measure the difference when users are able to explore data and uncover insight? Aberdeen observed markedly superior

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performance by organizations with collaborative data governance in several key measures of successful data discovery (Figure 1). Organizations with collaborative data governance were able to obtain pertinent information within the decision window (see sidebar) 75% of the time. Data governance establishes clear channels for users leveraging data discovery tools to find critical information on a deadline. Users that do not regularly collaborate with IT are forced to cut through layers of red tape and arrive at data too late. Another way to look at this data is that those without collaborative data governance are forced to base 48% more decisions on incomplete information or gut instincts.

**Figure 1: Superior Data Discovery**



Delivering pertinent information on time sustains a happier user base. Users collaborating with IT around data governance are 83% more likely to be satisfied with the speed and timeliness of information delivery. When IT truly understands users' data needs and has governance policies in place, users are able to quickly find information without digging through multiple systems or double checking that data is updated. Every data-driven task, from customer prospecting to budgeting, benefits from faster information delivery. While collaborators are outpacing all other organizations, there is still plenty of work IT

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Aberdeen defines the **decision window** as the period of time when information is valuable for a choice at hand.

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**Information Governance** refers to the combination of people, processes, and technology that ensures business data is trusted, secure, and able to be leveraged as an enterprise asset. Technology elements include data integration, data quality, master data management, data lifecycle management, and data security.

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**Open lines of communication with IT help users understand the reasons behind controlling data access, such as security concerns or regulatory requirements.**

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and users can do together to make decision makers even happier with their ability to obtain data when it matters.

Collaborators also have room for improvement in overall data access, but are still significantly outperforming All Others. Collaborators are 59% more likely to have users that are satisfied with their access to the data needed to support decisions. IT personnel with their ear to the ground know what data users will need to access. Open lines of communication with IT help users understand the reasons behind data access controls, such as security concerns or regulatory requirements. When users performing data discovery hit a brick wall, they can quickly be told they lack the proper authorization. These users will take their exploration in a new direction instead of becoming frustrated and dissatisfied with their lack of access. Or they can further collaborate with IT to try and obtain pertinent information while complying with policies and regulations.

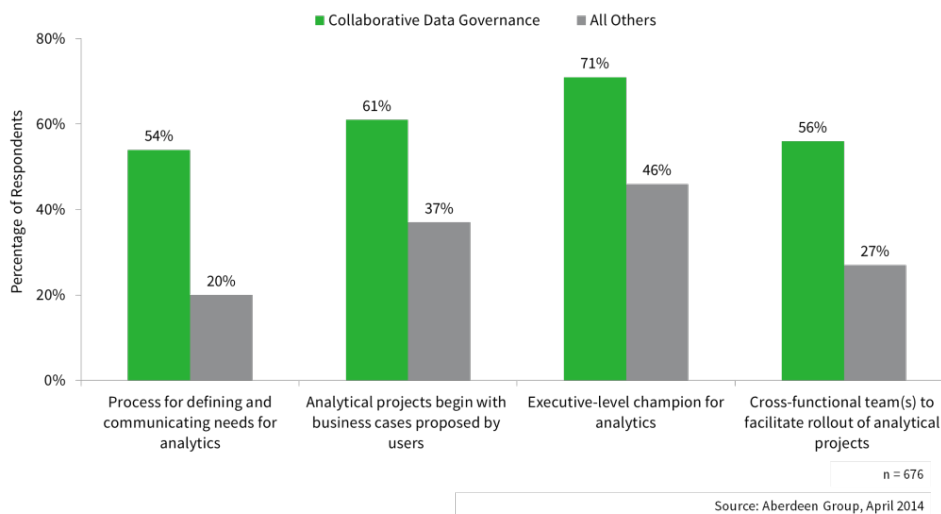
### Building Successful Analytical Initiatives

What does successful collaboration between users and IT look like? How can IT personnel ensure that they understand user pressures and desires, and vice versa? Looking at the processes for creating new analytical initiatives, it is clear that the benefits of collaboration are not restricted to data discovery (Figure 2). A collaborative assembly line forms to roll out new ideas around data. Organizations with collaborative data governance are over twice as likely to have a process in place for defining and communicating needs for analytics. This process gives IT visibility into the "needs of users" and lets IT decision makers know which applications and data sources are accessed most frequently and should be given the highest priority. It also helps users break through roadblocks in their data discovery. For example, if marketing decision makers need access to siloed customer data, they have an established procedure for working

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with IT to gain exploratory privileges. A clear process also gives IT the opportunity to give feedback to users and opens a dialogue about the potential burdens or pitfalls of new initiatives. Standardized communication ensures that IT is never blindsided and always has enough time to make the proper preparations for data demands, such as deploying data management resources or testing security and compliance.

**Figure 2: Data Discovery Assembly Line**



A collaborative culture and established analytical roadmaps encourage a proactive user base. Collaborators are 65% more likely to have their analytical projects begin with business cases proposed by users. Users work with IT to optimize their data discovery experience and open up new avenues for information exploration. In turn, IT personnel know that the functionality they are supporting is directly serving business needs and contributing to a better user experience. [Past Aberdeen research](#) has shown the benefits of a grassroots effort where new BI functionality is kicked off by the people who will ultimately use it.

**A collaborative culture and established analytical roadmaps encourage a proactive user base.**

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→ [Read the full report: Big Data Perspectives: Users vs. IT](#)

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**The support provided by cross-functional teams is the final step in the collaborative analytical assembly line.**

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Seventy-one percent (71%) of organizations with collaborative data governance have an executive-level champion for analytics, compared to less than half of All Others. These champions foster continued collaboration between users and IT. Vocal supporters at the executive level can move stalled initiatives forward while ensuring that both user and IT concerns are heard and respected. Finally, executives have the power to wield uncompromising scissors to cut through the most obstinate red tape. Data discovery red tape can be avoided altogether by employing cross-functional teams of IT personnel and business users to facilitate the rollout of analytical projects. Organizations with collaborative data governance are 107% more likely to have these teams in place. Again, a mix of users and IT personnel working together ensures that the concerns of both parties are heard and understood. Aberdeen's report, [Big Data Perspectives: Users vs. IT](#), highlights the differences and bureaucratic realities cross-functional teams should work to overcome. The onus falls on executives to establish these teams and formalize existing collaborative relationships between users and IT. The support provided by cross-functional teams is the final step in the collaborative analytical assembly line.

#### The Collaborator's Toolkit

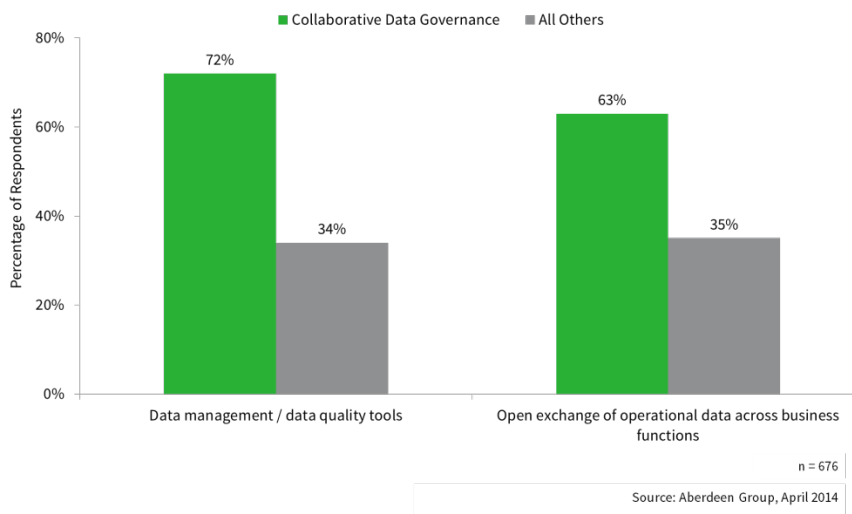
There are several tools and capabilities for managing and distributing data that organizations with collaborative data governance are more likely to adopt (Figure 3). Seventy-two percent (72%) of organizations with collaborative data governance employ data management and data quality tools. Data management tools, such as master data management, ensure that all users in every line of business can find and leverage the same data. This creates a single version of the truth that all users can work from. IT and users can collaborate on data lifecycle management to identify information that is no

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longer highly valuable for current analysis. That data can then be moved to inexpensive storage media. This enables IT to reduce costs and eliminate some of the statistical noise drowning out insight for users. Aberdeen's report, [\*The Big Data Imperative: Why Information Governance Must be Addressed Now\*](#), details multiple cost benefits from implementing data management and data quality tools.

→ [Read the full report: The Big Data Imperative: Why Information Governance Must be Addressed Now](#)

**Figure 3: Data Management and Distribution Technologies**



Sixty-three percent (63%) of organizations with collaborative data governance have an open exchange of operational data across business functions. Maintaining such an exchange prevents departmental data silos from forming. Data discovery is improved when users can find valuable information that resides outside of their immediate purview. For example, a sales rep could access customer satisfaction data to determine which product features to emphasize (or downplay). Data governance ensures that data exchanges only proliferate quality data. Most importantly, IT can ensure proper security protocols for data to ensure sensitive information doesn't end up in the wrong hands, internally or externally.

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## Key Takeaways

Collaborative data governance allows both users and IT to perform their analytical duties to the fullest. Users get the flexible, self-driven data discovery capabilities that enable them to efficiently find and analyze relevant information. IT supports users while keeping data secure, accurate, and updated. Organizations looking to improve data discovery and IT bureaucracy should consider the following:

- **When users and IT work together, both parties benefit.** Organizations with collaborative data governance are able to offer users more rapid and robust access to quality, secure data. Users collaborating with IT around data governance are 83% more likely to be satisfied with the speed and timeliness of information delivery. They are also 59% more likely to be satisfied with their access to the data needed to support decisions
- **Collaborators assemble successful analytical projects.** Collaborative data governance encourages an assembly line for the creation of new analytical initiatives. Collaborators are 65% more likely than All Others to have their analytical projects begin with business cases proposed by users and 107% more likely to use cross-functional teams to facilitate rollouts. As new BI projects develop, IT personnel gain visibility into the needs and desires of users and users gain a better understanding of the IT support required for successful data discovery.
- **Make sure IT and users work with the right tools.** Organizations with collaborative data governance employ technologies and capabilities to facilitate data discovery while maintaining IT standards. Seventy-two percent (72%) of organizations with collaborative data



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governance employ data management and data quality tools. These organizations are also 80% more likely than All Others to have an open exchange of operational data to prevent siloing and cross-departmental data discovery.

Remember, bureaucracy is only a bad word when it hinders data exploration instead of enabling insight backed by strong governance. Collaborative data governance allows IT to fulfill all of its duties around business data while continuously improving users' data discovery experience.

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit [www.aberdeen.com](http://www.aberdeen.com).

#### Related Research

*[Big Data Perspectives: Users vs. IT](#)*; April 2014

*[Analytical Collaboration: The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its Parts](#)*; July 2013

*[It All Begins with Data Quality: Building the Foundation for Business Intelligence](#)*; June 2013

*[Analytics Trends 2013: The IT Perspective](#)*; March 2013

*[Data Management for BI: Getting Accurate Decisions from Big Data](#)*; January 2013

*[The Big Data Imperative: Why Information Governance Must be Addressed Now](#)*; December 2012

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## About Aberdeen Group

Aberdeen Group conducts research focused on helping business leaders across sixteen different B2B technology disciplines improve their performance.

Our process is simple – we conduct thousands of surveys every year to identify top performing organizations and uncover what makes them different. We share these insights back with the market in the form of in-depth research reports and content assets to help our readers build business plans capable of driving better results with the right set of tools to help them get there.

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