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Compliance expert: Data scientists play important role in e-discovery

Data specialists need love too

January 7, 2016 | By Lisa Hoover McGreevy

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Kon Leong, CEO of compliance firm ZL Technologies, said data scientists get short shrifted in the workplace. They have great job descriptions and the pay grade to go with them, but are consistently hamstrung by workflows that require data experts to spend far more time managing data than actually analyzing it.

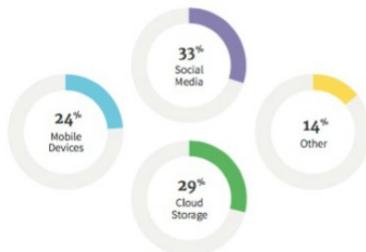
Leong isn't suggesting that problem is intentional, or even overlooked. He does say, however, it's systemic. "Data is duplicated, disconnected and disjointed. There is no single portal or platform for search. When data scientists are forced to gather content from IT systems that are sprawled across innumerable platforms and departments, they are left grasping at straws and with little more than a flawed convenience sample. Garbage in, garbage out."

Segmented and disordered data plagues workplace teams from content management to customer engagement and beyond. It's particularly troublesome, however, when the disorganized or inaccessible data interfere with an organization's compliance, regulatory and e-discovery needs – not to mention their impact on a company's bottom line.

"The management of unstructured content has gone from being a security and legal concern to being a business-wide profitability concern," explained Leong. "Data that is generated in the daily course of business is not simply a byproduct of human activity, but rather a massive trove of insight into workflow patterns, social connections, bottlenecks and hubs of communication. In theory, this content should be massively valuable to a data scientist, yet lack of centralized management makes the data difficult to aggregate and manipulate. In order to execute their role correctly, data scientists need help with their data."

For some perspective into just how disparate data sources and repositories can be, take a look at the results of a survey of 22 U.S. federal judges conducted by Exterro in April, 2015. When researchers asked what technology trend will impact e-discovery in the next two years, there was a fairly equitable division between mobile devices, social media, cloud storage and "other."

Which technology trend will have the biggest effect on e-discovery over the next two years?



Source: Exterro

Cloud, mobile and social media content often aren't stored in the same central repository, to say nothing of documents, contracts, digital assets and myriad other data. It's no wonder data scientists are scrambling.

"Your data scientist – no matter how brilliant – cannot squeeze blood from a stone," said Leong. "The outcome of data analysis depends almost entirely on the underlying infrastructure of enterprise information governance, and 2016 will only further bring difficulty for organizations that have not invested time and effort into their data management practices. The more scattered and overlapping systems are, the less valuable the data becomes for large-scale analysis."

"It's time to give data scientists a hand and make a New Year's resolution to start the governance discussion with all stakeholders at the table. Analytics insight won't be the only thing to improve – the entire health and profitability of the business will."

For more:

- read [Leong's article](#)

- download [Exterro's survey](#) [reg. req.]

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