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2021: Embracing Proactive Analytics for Unstructured Data

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While technological advancements will be numerous in 2021, our prediction for revolutionary transformations is twofold: (I) industries will begin to mass-adopt internal, unstructured analytics, and (II) enterprises will prioritize bridging governance with analytics via in-place solutions.

Nineteenth century English novelist Mary Ann Evans, pen name George Eliot, wrote, "It will never rain roses: when we want to have more roses, we must plant more roses." Taking this goal-driven approach to decision-making requires organizations to take proactive steps for their future: companies cannot wait for insights to rain, rather they must plant the solutions for insights to flourish. Accordingly, companies require a full handle on their data so that they can learn from their past, instead of vacillating to meet the needs of their present.

There is a Wealth of Untapped and Underutilized Unstructured Data

Companies are already harvesting troves of unstructured data, or in layman's terms, information derived from emails, files, and messages created by humans, for humans. However, most enterprises have yet to leverage this data for insight. There are exceptions in highly regulated industries, like the financial sector, who have had a head start in applying governance to their data as necessitated by e-Discovery requirements and privacy regulations like the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

While increased regulation was burdensome in the short-term, controlling unstructured data has resulted in organizations being able to proactively handle their information. Notably, these companies have tapped into the left-hand side of e-Discovery, establishing governance policies to ease in the identification, preservation, and collection of data, which thereby dramatically reduces litigation review times. Using these same left-hand rules for analytics , these organizations can start addressing previously unanswerable, yet deceivingly simple, questions that strike to the heart of corporate efficiency—regardless of industry:

- What sales messaging receives the most traction?
- Who are key employees: most cooperative, competitive, leaders, etc.?
- Which employees know which client representatives?
- Who are the experts and decision-makers in specific situations and subjects?
- How is the workforce performing while remote?

In-Place Analytics is the Most Defensible and Efficient Approach to Finding Enterprise Insights

Building on unstructured data, it is also predicted that companies will adopt more efficient, proactive analytics models instead of continuing the cumbersome method of copying and exporting data to outside platforms. The primary benefit of in-place analytics is that they operate in accordance with a governance-first framework that does not require copying data.

By removing the significant burden of scrubbing, copying, and exporting data, companies are capable of gleaning analytic insights anywhere from 10 to 100 times quicker than their existing processes. This is because in-place analytics intercepts the traditional analytics process on the left-hand side, indexing at the source and extracting content and metadata for analysis on the same platform. Thereby saving companies the time, resources, and bandwidth that would have gone into culling (searching), cleansing, applying structure, and exporting data to third-parties when attempting to perform analytics.

By harnessing unstructured data with active governance across all stages of analytics, finding crucial insights to guide company decision making has never been simpler. Accordingly, it is only a matter of time before enterprise leaders embrace unstructured, in-place analytics.