

Civilian Review and
Complaints Commission
For the RCMP



Commission civile d'examen
et de traitement des plaintes
relatives à la GRC

DATA STRATEGY 2021

Information from Innovation

Canada

Introduction

“Once we know something, we find it hard to imagine what it was like not to know it.”

Chip & Dan Heath, Authors

Globally, the volume of data and data analytics technologies is growing exponentially, and is driving innovation and public expectations in regard to decision-making, service delivery and knowledge.

Data has become a critical asset to not only private institutions, but more than ever, to public institutions as well.

With the growing expectation from citizens for governments to be digital, open and accessible, the Government of Canada (GC) has developed directives and strategic plans to facilitate a digital transformation and growth of data capabilities. Old technology and weak data collection, governance and stewardship—or in other words, the status quo—are no longer acceptable.

Digital transformation is key to meeting the rising expectations of Canadians. However, it takes significant structural and cultural reforms, requiring a clear vision, direction and plan.

Organizational data strategies underpin the strategic use of data, support the transition to a digital government and ensure the public service is empowered and equipped to harness the power of data to make better decisions and create better outcomes for Canadians¹

To this end, the Privy Council Office created a roadmap that provides concrete next steps to move the Government of Canada in the right direction on data issues and *set a requirement for all departments, agencies or portfolios to have a data strategy appropriate to their line of business, in place by **September 2019.***

Why do we need a data strategy?

“Without data, you’re just another person with an opinion.”

Edwards Deming

Beyond the mandated requirement, there are several other drivers behind the Commission’s need for a data strategy.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/corporate/clerk/publications/data-strategy.html>

Data is abundant and plays a role in every business process. However, simply collecting this data is not sufficient. The challenge the Commission (and most other government departments) faces is identifying what data it has and how to extract value from it, for the purposes of:

- effectively using data to enable evidence-based decisions and policy;
- better program design;
- better services; and
- increased credibility, transparency and accountability.

To achieve that, data must be:

- accurate;
- timely;
- relevant;
- accessible;
- understandable;
- collected with purpose and consistency; and
- managed effectively.

However, the most important reason to establish a data strategy is that the credibility of the institution relies, in large part, on accurate data.

Data are used to:

- publicly report on how the Commission performs in fulfilling its mandate;
- inform investigators of the facts surrounding a complaint;
- enable reviewers to assess a complaint investigation;
- inform outreach requirements;
- inform decisions and policies;
- plan work and business activities; and
- demonstrate effective use of the limited resources provided by the government.

Every response, recommendation, and statement needs to be founded on reliable data.

Data will contribute to the Commission objective of being the national leader for independent review of law enforcement activities in Canada.

Drivers

This strategy impacts the Commission across all business lines and at all levels—Commission data is much more than complaints data. Data is provided, collected, accessed, leveraged or reported by Commission staff daily.

In addition to the mandated and institutional requirements for a strategy, other driving factors include:

- **Accessing and Reporting on Data:** Currently, the Commission struggles to easily access its data during the normal course of business (i.e. annual reports, recommendations tracking, at the request of Parliament, ATIP requests, providing responses to interdepartmental working groups, etc.). Data held by the Commission is fragmented, in multiple databases, differing formats, can

be incomplete, there are inconsistencies in the way it is collected, etc. More importantly, this lack of quality data means the Commission is reporting information that may be inaccurate.

- **Open Government and Public Expectations:** The public has increased expectations of access to federal data. Given the current climate and spotlight on policing issues, the public is particularly interested in data from policing oversight bodies. The Treasury Board *Directive on Open Government* aims to make information resources and data easily discoverable and reusable. As a result, the Commission should increase its data reporting for public examination and research purposes. Not only will this enhance RCMP accountability, it will increase Commission transparency. However, public reporting requires quality data that is accurate, effectively anonymized, and interoperable with other government agencies.
- **Commitment to the Collection of Disaggregated Data:** The Commission has committed to the collection of disaggregated data such as race/ethnicity and gender identity data. Collection of sensitive data such as this requires strong policies and governance, proper outreach and engagement, and thoughtful utilization.
- **Create Internal Efficiencies:** The Commission has an abundant amount of not only complaint and investigative data, but also corporate data that lies within the individual business lines, unable to be fully leveraged and therefore remains underutilized. Identifying the available data and how it can be leveraged will enable informed strategic planning and decision making in all Commission activities.
- **Talent Attraction and Retention:** To foster a data culture and enable digital transformation, the Commission must be able to attract and retain the talent and capacity it needs to collect, manage, analyze and interpret data. A significant part of attracting and retaining that talent is providing current and effective technological tools to enable their work.

Data Strategy: Vision, Mission and Goals

“Data will talk if you’re willing to listen.”

Jim Bergeson, CEO Bridgz Marking Group, a BI Worldwide Company

Data holds value. It is an important asset for all staff and Commission business.

Vision

The CRCC will leverage the power of data to become the national leader for independent review of law enforcement activities, through the provision of a relevant, timely and transparent review and complaint process.

Mission

To provide the Commission and its employees with the tools, skills, and capacity needed to collect, access and meaningfully utilize data for evidence-based planning and decision-making in support of its mandate.

Goals

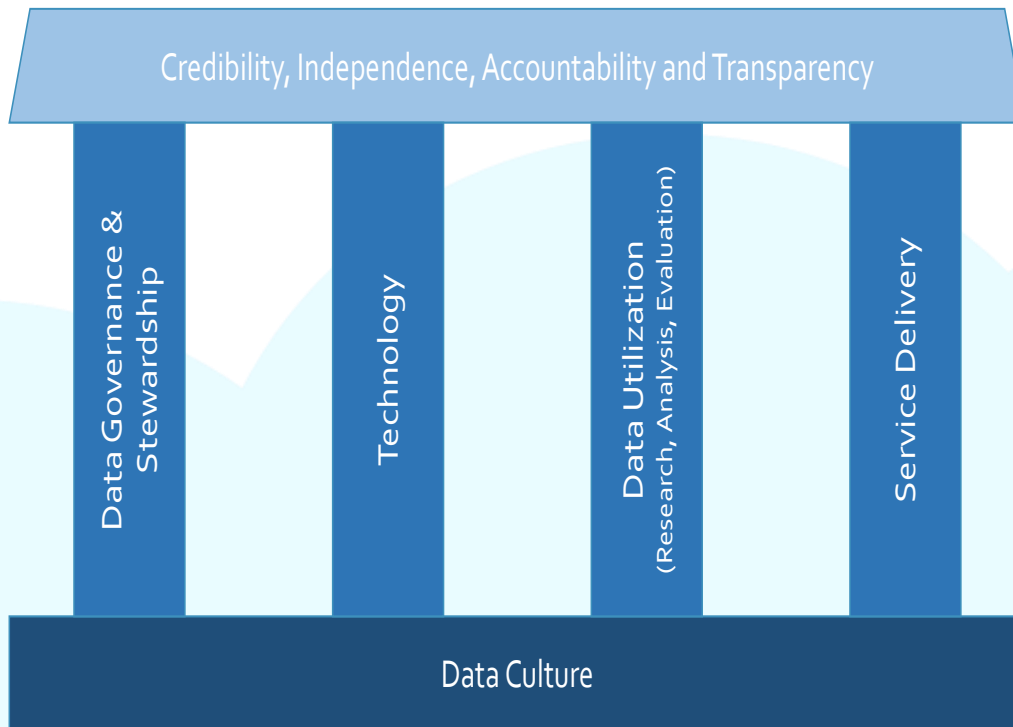
- Provide direction and guidance to the Commission as it adopts data-driven approaches to decision-making;
- Develop strong policies that result in effective data collection and build public trust by ensuring that data is managed ethically and securely;
- Contribute to the delivery of a more accessible, timely and efficient complaint process;
- Enable a transition to digital approaches, aligned with GC direction and policy, to foster innovation;
- Recognize that change is required to structures, practices and culture in order to become a data-driven organization where data is a strategic asset;
- Encourage a data culture across the Commission where data is discoverable, accessible, secure and of high quality; and
- Encourage a proactive rather than reactive approach to data analysis and reporting and contribute more to the GC open data initiative.

Guiding Principles: Foundational Elements of the Strategy

“Data! Data! Data! I can’t make bricks without clay!”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Author

While Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, could not form any theories or draw any conclusions until he had sufficient data, the Commission cannot build this strategy without a structure, and that structure rests on a foundation of data culture.



Foundation: Data Culture

The foundation of this strategy is built on the idea that digital transformation, the strategic use of data and evidence-based decision-making rely on everyone having the knowledge and tools to access, use, share and understand data.

In other words, all employees at all levels play a role in the collection, quality, governance and stewardship of data, and need to have the appropriate level of data literacy to assist in achieving the Commission’s desired outcome of credibility, independence, accountability and transparency.

The foundation focuses on creating a culture where not only are Commission staff encouraged and expected to use data, but also excited about its potential. In the desired future state:

- The time and resources required to manage data are considered part of doing business, and are planned and tracked accordingly;
- Staff are data literate—they not only understand data in all its forms and at all points in its lifecycle, but also have the skills to use data;
- Data governance is put in place in the form of people, processes and technologies needed to manage and protect our data assets in order to ensure generally understandable, correct, complete, trustworthy, secure and discoverable data;
- Data are leveraged in decision-making, and Commission staff are accountable for presenting data-based recommendations;
- Staff are unafraid to present data-based reports, even if the results and conclusions are negative or run counter to known preferences; and
- Staff trust that the Commission has managed data appropriately, and therefore that the data are reliable, and is confident in the information that it provides publicly.

From this foundation are four pillars of activities that will lead to a data-driven Commission.

Four Pillars

Data Governance and Stewardship

The Commission requires clear policies, guidelines and directives regarding the collection, access, storage/security and use of data. Robust data governance is integral to developing a data culture that treats data as a strategic asset. Data governance will ensure that the people, processes, and technologies are in place to manage and protect data.

Data-related leadership (e.g. a Chief Data Officer, “CDO”) is needed, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and decision-making authority to govern data.

With a focus on leveraging the Commission’s data, the new Data Research Unit will develop and implement governance for data-related processes and initiatives to ensure the management and ethical use of data. The unit will also help guide data stewardship within the Commission.

Organizationally, a data governance structure needs strong stewardship. Data stewardship is the implementation of governance and requires everyone to recognize that they play a role in the collection, quality and protection of data. Most importantly, it requires full cooperation from the senior management team, as all business processes and structures throughout the Commission need to embed data-related guidelines and quality assurance.

Technology

Although its own pillar, technology is a major factor in the success of all other pillars. To be data-led, the Commission needs to be technology-enabled. The proper tools to collect, manage, store and analyze data must be present. This includes:

- leveraging cloud technology to ensure data is accessible, current and secure;
- updating our website to allow for the ability to present data in an accessible, timely and easily digestible format, such as through the use of dashboards; and
- implementing an effective case and investigative management system led by business requirements, to enable the consistent collection of complaint, review and investigations data.

Any technology utilized by the Commission should enable the FAIR principle of data: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable.

Having the proper tools will enable the Commission to meet its obligations to Canadians for independent law enforcement review and reporting on its activities and performance. Today’s public has an increasing demand for enhanced transparency in government in an easily understood format. Finally, having current (or cutting-edge) technology will additionally enable and encourage innovation and thus retain and attract talent.

Data Utilization

Given a foundation of data culture and the strategic use of data, the Commission will identify new opportunities to utilize data and new ways to create value using this data.

The Commission will be confident in the quality and reliability of the data and subsequent reporting. Further, data will be leveraged to inform decision-making. For example, the Commission should be confident in using data to:

- Direct strategic planning and priority setting (topic selection for the next SAR, corporate resource planning, including budgeting and HR priorities).
- Report findings to Parliament and the public both proactively and reactively (more robust reporting of complaint trends, ATIP trends, increased data visualization).
- Monitor internal and external performance such as the application of policies, resource expenditures, service standards and tracking and reporting on recommendation implementation, which will in turn inform resource requirements.

Service Delivery

Receiving complaints from the public is an important part of the Commission’s mandate. According to the GC Service Strategy,² service delivery requires modernized IT infrastructure, the ability and empowerment to innovate, improved information sharing, ongoing engagement with clients, and the increased capacity to manage and leverage data.

Data and research are central to achieving these requirements for a user-focused service design. Utilizing data as a tool for decision-making and processing will allow for consistent, repeatable decision-making providing a more fair and equitable service to our clients.

Additionally, utilizing data to direct outreach and public education activities, examine key performance indicators and identify barriers to access, will allow for continuous service improvements.

Data Strategy Roadmap

“People hear statistics, but they feel stories.”

Brent Dykes, Director of Data Strategy, Domo

Careful planning is required to support the successful implementation of this strategy. The development of a data strategy roadmap is essential.

The roadmap indicates whether the activity supports the foundation of data culture—ensuring that every member of the Commission is aware and understands their important role in the Commission’s ability to collect and leverage data, or if the activity falls within a supporting pillar—delivering a data-driven Commission that supports our ability to remain independent, accountable, and transparent.

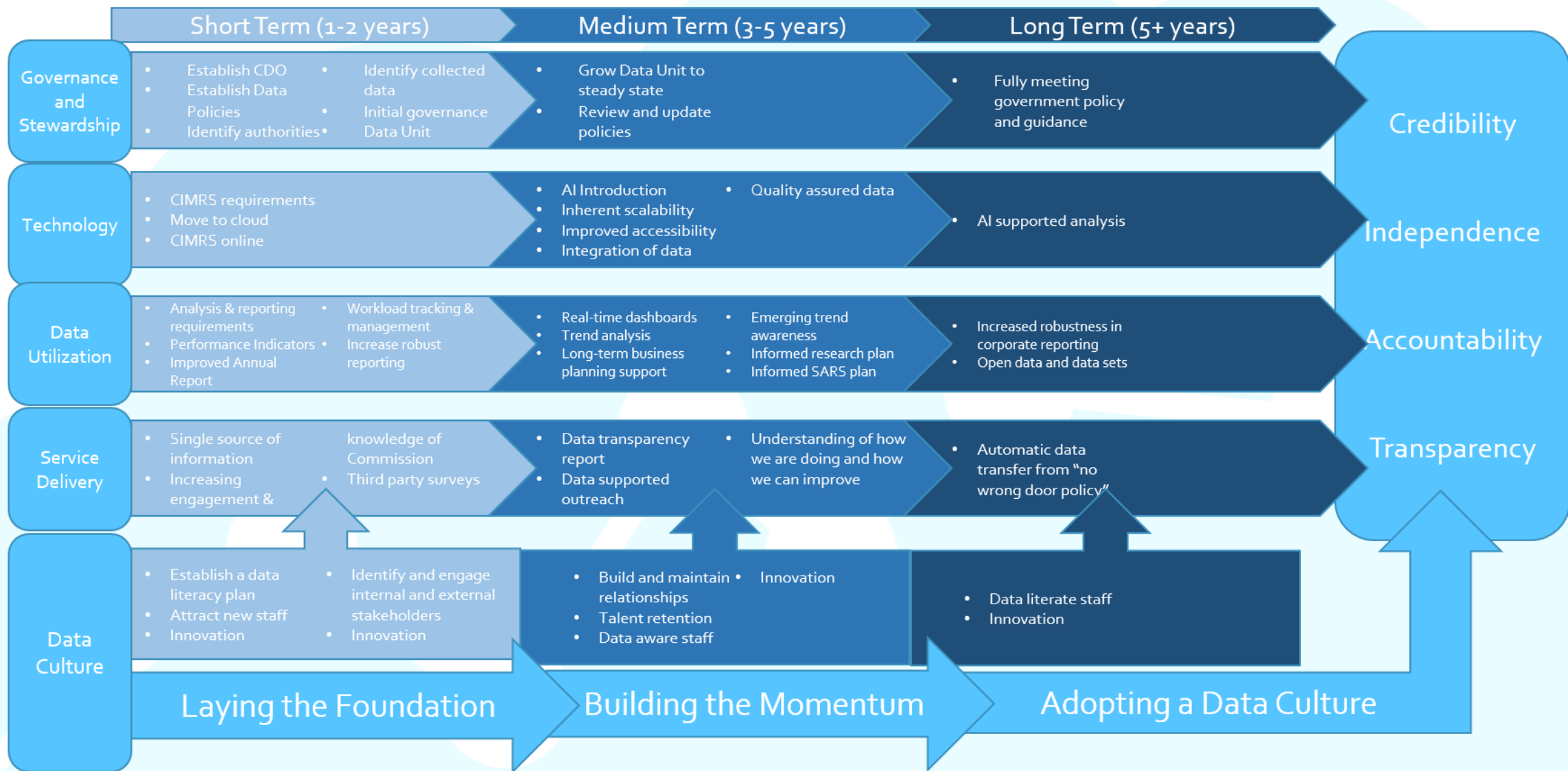
In an effort to predict resource requirements, feasibility and pre-requisite activities, the activities are placed in the roadmap in their supported pillar, and along a timeline divided into three terms: short term, medium term and long term. This will allow the Commission to develop implementation plans.

² <https://open.canada.ca/en/content/service-strategy-overview>

The short-term activities will realign and organize the Commission in response to the rapidly evolving data requirements; this includes aligning Commission policies with GC direction; redefining key management responsibilities, including the role of CDO and supporting organizational units; and the initial steps to ensure IM/IT alignment toward digital solutions.

The medium-term activities will formalize data capabilities for the Commission in the form of people and systems; increase and normalize data use and supported reporting to meet both internal and external Commission deliverables.

The long-term activities will see the Commission living up to the GC digital government goals with well-established roles and responsibilities relating to enterprise-wide data governance and stewardship and the effective use of technology. This will allow the public to receive services from the Commission in a manner that reflects their needs, and not the confines of government policies, procedures and infrastructure.



Next Steps

The roadmap provides a description of what needs to be delivered, but does not address how these initiatives will be delivered. A plan that identifies the scope, approach, sequencing, dependencies, and high-level estimates of the resources required for these initiatives will be developed to support this roadmap; however, the timelines will be dependent on the funding and allocated resources. The implementation plan will also identify the expectations of staff participation in the initiatives.

At this time, the highest priority activities in the roadmap are:

- Establishing a Chief Data Officer and empowering the Data Research Unit to develop and implement data governance;
- Increasing data literacy for everyone and improving current data quality;
- Making a renewed effort by all to ensure effective data error reduction;
- Moving to centralize our data use until we improve our governance to enable a more decentralized approach;
- Establishing baseline reports and reporting methods using quality data;
- Making a renewed effort for all cases regardless of type to be entered and documented in CMS;
- Pursuing a replacement for CMS that fully supports all lines of operation and improves data quality and accessibility; and
- Developing and implementing data policies and performance indicators to track the results and benefits of this strategy.

Conclusion

“The goal is to turn data into information, and information into insight.”

Carly Fiorina, Former CEO of HP

The potential benefits of better managing data within the Commission are significant. Given the volume of data that is already being used to generate insight, if data can be managed such that it is accessible and trusted, then the Commission can leverage it further. At the same time, there are new data-driven technologies that open up possibilities for the use of data to change the way the Commission serves the public.

The data strategy sets out ambitious targets for the management of data, and for a change in culture and mindset that views and treats data as an asset. These targets set expectations for the entire Commission, and require the support of all staff to achieve the objectives.

Glossary

Data: Data is raw, unorganized facts that need to be processed. Data can be something simple and seemingly random and useless until it is organized. For example, the test score of a student is a piece of data.

Information: When data is processed, organized, structured or presented in a given context to make it useful, it is called information. For example, the average score of a class or of the entire school is information that can be derived from the data.

Data Governance: Data governance is a collection of processes, roles, policies, standards, and metrics that ensure the effective and efficient use of information in enabling an organization to achieve its goals. It establishes the processes and responsibilities that ensure the quality and security of the data used across a business or organization. Data governance defines who can take what action, upon what data, in what situations, using what methods.

Data Literacy: Data literacy is the ability to ask and answer real-world questions from large and small data sets through an inquiry process, with consideration of ethical use of data. It is based on core practical and creative skills, with the ability to extend knowledge of data handling skills according to goals. These include the abilities to select, clean, analyse, visualise, critique and interpret data, as well as to communicate stories from data and to use data as part of a design process.

Data Stewardship: Data stewardship is the management and oversight of an organization's data assets to help provide business users with high-quality data that is easily accessible in a consistent manner. While data governance generally focuses on high-level policies and procedures, data stewardship focuses on tactical coordination and implementation. A data steward is responsible for carrying out data usage and security policies as determined through data governance initiatives.