Keeping What’s Yours: Environmental Data Preservation in Enviance

White Paper

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Companies have spent decades trying to master environmental data preservation within their organizations. Lost, unused or misused information is costly to recreate, and institutional knowledge can rarely be retained for future value within the business without an intentional data preservation process. But in the case of environmental data, the stakes can often be considerably higher. Preserving environmental data is critical to meeting compliance and reporting requirements, as well as avoiding the expense and public scrutiny of being out of compliance. This white paper describes the value of preserving foundational environmental data in a single enterprise-wide software system.

Life Without Data Preservation

Increasing performance expectations is a necessary function for most competitive business units or groups within a company, and environmental is no exception. If an EHS department can’t track these increased expectations, they might lose their decision rights. In addition, some of the public has lost trust in regulatory agencies, and it’s often up to individual corporations and industry sectors to proactively improve their environmental performance. While doing this, however, sophisticated businesses also expect a reasonable rate-of-return for their compliance investments.

Managing data in a large organization is a significant business challenge. It’s very expensive, for example, to bring data back and recreate it. In addition, data has a finite half-life without a long-term preservation system. Regulatory changes, process changes and increased expectations all place added pressure on an organization’s environmental department and their ability to increase performance, and without a system to manage environmental data, companies are at substantial risk. Its personnel changes, however, that can serve as the largest challenge and compliance risk. Staffing changes in an organization can occur as often as every 2 to 3 years, and some businesses often let institutional knowledge walk out the door with their personnel. Environmental systems and processes simply can’t be people dependent. It’s not enough for employees to keep information in their heads – if it isn’t documented, it didn’t happen.

Fortunately, the Internet can be leveraged to help organizations move up the “green curve” to transition their compliance
programs from reactive – or even chaotic – into providing long-term value. It takes time and money to get to the top of the “green curve”; however, once sustainable systems are implemented, costs and risks can go down.

**Plan-Do-Check-Adjust**

Successful data preservation processes and policies benefit from the creation of a plan-do-check-adjust management cycle. This means that specific risk management system activities are identified; associated activities such as requirements, or tasks are defined; and then an implementation plan is created. Adjustments can be made once the plan is applied.

In fact, about 80% of compliance work involves the planning, requirements and discovery work that needs to be done anyway. The remaining 20% is optimization and preservation. Organizations choosing to use flat files, spreadsheets, standalone or homegrown databases, and disparate silos of data are forced to rework data on a shorter, faster and more costly cycle, where businesses using a single, enterprise-wide relational database software system for data management can retain data for a longer, less frequent and more cost-efficient cycle. One company, for example, was investing 300 hours to recreate foundational data for a single Title V permit every three years.

Firefighting (i.e., failure to implement sustainable systems) doesn’t build long-term value in an organization, and while some people are compelled to this behavior because of so many competing priorities, it’s important that they are provided a disincentive for doing so. Continuing use of spreadsheets and flat files only perpetuates and increases the inefficient effort and large costs associated with compliance. Using a system like Enviance for data preservation and risk management typically extends the half-life of environmental data from 2 to 3 years to 4 to 5 years or longer and preserves it to substantially decrease effort and compliance costs in the long run. The lesson learned? Save your data to avoid rework and reduce compliance expenses.

**The Value Proposition**

Let’s face it: full compliance is the expectation. Using an enterprise-wide software system to identify risks and manage data helps businesses find more areas that are potentially out of compliance and quickly close any gaps. In addition, the system enables companies to efficiently and effectively mitigate risk, and use their resources more wisely, while providing various stakeholders access to resources. Benefits of using a management system include:

**Opportunity to Optimize and Preserve:**

- Better preserve and maintain documentation supporting proof of compliance
- Streamline or optimize processes for risk mitigation and strategy development and execution
Preserve and Manage Foundational Data:
There is a cost to create and validate applicability and foundational data, and re-evaluation generally occurs around every two or three years. People, process, business and regulatory changes mean that data can become inaccurate over time. The associated rework can result in elevated compliance costs – again and again.

For example, a confidential company using the Enviance System, was spending 80% of its environmental budget every three years to recreate foundational data. The Enviance System was a means to spend the budget more effectively, reducing its budget spend to 20% every three years. In fact, two-thirds of the environmental budget spent by the company in six years was on rework. If the company had implemented the Enviance System sooner, the business could have spent that money to make more money!

Consistent and Efficient Execution:
A company’s risk mitigation and strategies initially can be in different locations and different formats with different functionality. By pushing all data sources, including databases, emails and spreadsheets, into the same system, the company benefits from a single enterprise-wide system to standardize the structure and vetting of risk mitigation strategies to improve value creation and efficiency by uniform implementation. Businesses, for example, often need to be able to roll data back up across numerous facilities for the EPA’s Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Mandatory Reporting Rule requirements or to effectively manage water use.

Knowledge Sharing/Transparency:
Without a single enterprise-wide system, it can be difficult to oversee execution of strategies across multiple facilities. In addition, it can dramatically improve an organization’s ability to measure task completion and compliance status, while facilitating sharing of best practices among staff.

Company management can see which facilities are wasting money and energy, or compare facilities within the organization. Decision-making is also improved by understanding how close a facility is, for example, to a reporting threshold and whether it makes financial sense to curtail operations.

Single System Sustainability
Businesses face potential risk when they rely on internally developed and housed tools, such as Excel files or Access databases, which are often dependent on the local owner to maintain. “But IT can build it for free” is a refrain commonly heard in Corporate America. Unless your organization is a software company, your company needs to assess whether it’s a comparative advantage having the IT department reinventing software that already exists in the marketplace. There can be a substantial cost
if in-house IT has to maintain and upgrade homegrown systems.

A single enterprise-wide system can be a sustainable solution if it maintains strong software development and market contacts, keeps pace with technology and regulatory changes, and incorporates changes and upgrades into the system seamlessly.

In fact, the support obtained by a single enterprise-wide system can be considerable. In addition to knowledge sharing of best practices within a company, best practices can be learned and shared across companies and different industries, helping businesses see back into the environmental or compliance marketplace.

**Staff Training and Succession**

A single enterprise-wide system also brings personnel up the learning curve faster, enabling them to become more productive more quickly. New hires and new roles can more easily adapt to their job function, and avoid spending time tracking down necessary environmental data or reinventing the wheel – saving the company unneeded expense. Succession planning greatly benefits from a single enterprise-wide system, enabling personnel changes due to promotions, role changes or retirement to occur more successfully, and at lower expense and inconvenience to the organization.

**Data Preservation = More Benefits Company-Wide**

Preserving environmental data in a single enterprise-wide system also serves to benefit other departments and business units, as well as the company as a whole. The functionality in these systems can often be applied to other non-environmental business activities. These functions include calendaring, task management and workflow optimization.

The environmental management system, in essence, needs to be like a Swiss Army knife, providing comprehensive functionality and an open architecture that can grow with a company’s changing needs. Corporations can rarely predict the next big business or environmental challenge, so it’s imperative that they select a software system designed to expand with the organization’s evolving needs. In addition, the system needs to be able to meet the company’s comprehensive environmental management needs, such as GHG, Title V and water, and manage them effectively.

A single enterprise-wide system enables an organization to effectively manage everything from regulatory compliance, such as a Clean Air Act Title V permit, to risk management, such as key risks and controls and environmental excellence, to sustainability, including GHG, energy and water.

**Conclusion**

Optimizing workflow and preserving foundational data in a single enterprise-wide system like the Enviance System saves companies considerable time and expense, while improving an organization’s opportunity for successful compliance.
Preserving foundational data means that environmental data can be more effectively managed and used for decision-making throughout the business. It also enables consistency and efficiency of execution, knowledge sharing and information transparency.

Implementing a single environmental management system in an organization provides data sustainability and support, while facilitating improvements in environmental practices. As a result, businesses benefit from long-term risk reduction and mitigation – potentially saving millions in noncompliance penalties, improved environmental practices and personnel rework avoided.

**About Enviance**

Enviance is the leading provider of Environmental ERP software. With more than a decade of experience providing environmental data management and expertise, Enviance’s proven system is used by the world’s largest corporations and government agencies.

Enviance maintains deep domain expertise in EHS management and technology, and has more than 17,000 users in more than 49 countries, including American Electric Power, Arch Coal, Chevron, CH2M Hill, Dimension Data, DuPont, Freescale Semiconductor, Fujifilm, Georgia-Pacific, Los Angeles World Airports, Pfizer, Syngenta, and the U.S. Army. [Full customer list](#), Industry leaders have used Enviance to streamline GHG management since 2006.

For more information, visit: [www.enviance.com](http://www.enviance.com)