ACTIVENAV

Enhancing Data Governance with ActiveNav Cloud

Black Gold School Division Case Study

Background

Black Gold School Division (BGSD) manages the sensitive personal data of approximately 13,000 students and over 1,300 staff members across eight communities in Alberta, Canada. Over time, the division accumulated over 70 terabytes of data spread across multiple platforms, including file shares, SharePoint Online, and Google Workspace Drive. With increasing regulatory requirements and the complexity of managing such vast amounts of data, BGSD recognized the need to adopt a more proactive approach to data governance and compliance.

As staff transitioned or retired, a significant volume of data remained unaddressed, contributing to operational inefficiencies and posing a risk to compliance with data privacy regulations. BGSD needed to ensure that data was appropriately stored, managed, and disposed of in alignment with provincial data privacy laws.

The Challenge

BGSD faced a multifaceted challenge in managing and protecting its extensive data landscape. The division's data environment included sensitive personal data of students and staff, much of which was duplicated across the network. Over time, the lack of proper management led to the accumulation of redundant and obsolete information, creating operational inefficiencies and exposing the division to compliance risks.

Data privacy became a growing concern, as teachers occasionally stored student records in personal drives rather than the designated provincial database, heightening the risk of a data breach. Complying with stringent provincial data privacy laws was critical, but BGSD needed a more robust system to manage these issues effectively.

At a Glance

- **Organization:** Black Gold School Division (BGSD)
- **Location:** Alberta, Canada
- **Sector:** Education
- **Students:** Approximately 13,000
- **Staff:** More than 1,300

Challenge

- Compliance with data privacy regulations
- Managing a large data footprint
- Ensuring data protection and confidentiality

Benefits

- Improved data governance
- Proactive risk management
- Assurance for community stakeholders

Solution

- ActiveNav Cloud with file share, SharePoint Online, and Google Workspace Drive collectors

The challenge extended beyond mere compliance—it was also about optimizing data management processes to reduce costs, free up storage, and improve the efficiency of staff in handling data. BGSD needed a solution to eliminate redundant, obsolete, and trivial (ROT) data, ensure sensitive information was flagged and managed properly, and seamlessly integrate with its existing systems and workflows.

The Solution

BGSD deployed ActiveNav Cloud to meet these challenges. This cloud-based solution integrated seamlessly with Google Workspace, SharePoint Online, and file share environments. ActiveNav's ability to analyze and provide deep insights into unstructured data made it the ideal tool for the division's complex data management needs. By leveraging ActiveNav Cloud, the BGSD Electronic Records Advisor gained a comprehensive view of the division's data estate, identifying sensitive and ROT data across all platforms.

The solution allowed BGSD to develop a clear plan for addressing its data issues. ActiveNav's classification and risk analysis capabilities helped identify unauthorized data stored in personal drives, assess data exposure risks, and prioritize disposing of non-compliant data. In addition, the solution's continuous monitoring feature ensured that any future risks could be flagged and addressed before they escalated. ActiveNav's adaptability to BGSD's needs, particularly around Google Workspace, was a critical factor in its success, allowing the team to create customized workflows for the ongoing governance of their data.

Furthermore, the partnership between ActiveNav and BGSD fostered continuous improvement. ActiveNav's team actively responded to requests for specific functionalities, helping BGSD fine-tune its data management processes. This proactive collaboration not only improved the immediate data governance issues but also laid the foundation for future enhancements to BGSD's data policies and procedures.

Implementation and Benefits

With ActiveNav Cloud, BGSD's Electronic Records Advisor was empowered to tackle data challenges in real-time. The solution continuously monitored data risk across BGSD's file shares, SharePoint Online, and Google Workspace Drive repositories. This proactive approach enabled the school division to address ROT data, improve overall data governance, and ensure compliance with data privacy regulations.

Key benefits included:

Providing Assurance to the Community

The data-driven approach enabled BGSD to reinforce its commitment to data security and compliance, instilling confidence in the community.

Proactive Risk Management

Continuous monitoring allowed BGSD to detect risks early and take action to prevent potential data breaches.

Optimizing Data Resources

BGSD identified and eliminated over 1.5 million files of ROT data, freeing up valuable storage and making data management more efficient.

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Looking Forward

BGSD's partnership with ActiveNav has positioned the division as a leader in data governance within the Canadian education sector. Looking ahead, BGSD plans to build on its successes by expanding its data management strategies to other departments and exploring additional ways to integrate automated data retention and deletion policies. The project's success has encouraged the division to invest in further training and professional development for staff, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle evolving data privacy regulations and internal data management procedures.

Moreover, as BGSD continues to utilize ActiveNav's insights, the division plans to refine its data retention and deletion processes, aiming for a fully streamlined approach that minimizes manual oversight. With ActiveNav Cloud providing continuous monitoring, BGSD can confidently maintain its proactive stance on data governance, enabling it to mitigate risks as they arise. The division will focus on refining its existing records and information management (RIM) policies and incorporating new technologies to safeguard its data further.

Looking Forward

BGSD's innovative data governance and protection approach sets a benchmark for the Canadian education system. Their use of ActiveNav Cloud exemplifies their commitment to maintaining the highest standards for information governance, ultimately supporting their core value of providing a 'Safe Supportive Environment' for students, teachers, and staff.

Testimonial

"One of the major things for me, working in documents and records, is knowing the 'one source of truth.' Before ActiveNav, we were constantly battling with duplication and confusion over which versions of documents were the most current. ActiveNav helped us identify duplicate data and ensure that sensitive information was properly flagged. It has streamlined our processes and made my role more visible within the organization. Now, people reach out to me with the right questions about data retention and management, which shows that we're making a real difference.

- **Ruvilyn Gatchalian, Electronic Records Advisor, Black Gold School Division**

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Conclusion

Black Gold School Division's collaboration with ActiveNav Cloud has transformed its data governance, establishing a new benchmark for educational institutions in Canada. Through deploying ActiveNav's powerful solution, BGSD gained critical insights into its data estate, significantly improving data management efficiency, regulatory compliance, and overall data governance.

The enhanced ability to manage and eliminate ROT data and a proactive approach to mitigating data risks have enabled BGSD to optimize its storage resources and boost operational efficiency. The partnership has also reinforced BGSD's commitment to data security and compliance, further strengthening the community's trust in the division's ability to protect sensitive information. BGSD has positioned itself for continued success in an ever-evolving digital landscape by creating a sustainable and robust data governance framework. With the support of ActiveNav, BGSD can confidently look ahead, knowing it has the tools and strategies needed to maintain its leadership in data governance.

About Us

We're data experts, and our North Star is Zero Dark Data. We believe that all organizations should be aiming for a state of Zero Dark Data so that they can act as good stewards of that data to minimize their cyber risk surface area, protect the interests of their customers, their staff and their other stakeholders. We've been working continuously with unstructured data in the wild for well over a decade and we think the market deserves data discovery products that just work. As a result we are trusted by leading companies and government agencies to help them understand and control their data assets to drive regulatory compliance, reduce the cost of data ownership and improve data quality.

- 15 Years of Experience
- 6 Continents and 28 Countries
- 15+ Billion Files Discovered
- 30K+ hrs Customer Deployments
- 300+ Customers and Counting

Aside from our fascination with Dark Data, we're engineers, designers, runners, gardeners, chefs, photographers, bikers, parents, skiers, cosplayers, hikers, gamers, travelers, mountain climbers, friends, race car drivers, readers, volunteers, and car enthusiasts. We value loyalty, accountability, and communication and care deeply about creating a sustainable future, supporting charitable causes as proud members of Pledge 1%.

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