

Improve data literacy across your organisation using a digital management system

Data is only as useful as your ability to understand it correctly, a team that has access to up-to-date and accurate data makes better data-driven decisions.

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Data science, data analytics, real-time data, big data, little data, any kind of data! It can feel like no matter what we're doing we're being bombarded with data. But what is data and how can we use it to our advantage?

Without realising it we are constantly producing and consuming data. Even right this second, reading this article - your consuming data, or the simple act of watching a YouTube video, provides YouTube with data on what to recommend to you in the future.

Everyday we're observing, collecting, and measuring information, we have to think critically about all of the data presented to us. Some of it is helping to explain the world around us, and some of it is helping us to determine test data results. All data has a story to tell, but how do we understand it?

Take the planning required to conduct a straightforward thermographic inspection. Ideally, we would think about environmental conditions that could impact the survey – like the temperature at the exact time on the day of inspection, will it be sunny or overcast and so on. But all that information put together, like the temperature range throughout the day of the inspection, is data or specific information we collect to make decisions and provide our client an accurate inspection report. Our ability to read, analyse, create, and talk about data is our data literacy.

So, if data literacy is so important, how do we make sure data is accurate, legible, and viable to our organisation's?

The simplest way is to implement a robust data management system for staff, contractors and clients

to utilise and follow our organisations process and procedures. This system should allow every user to gain viewable access to important data, the system should give non-technical people the ability to extract information that's most important to them and the role they play for our organisation. If it's not self-service enough, it won't be used.

It's also important that the digital management system you have in place, has access level requirements that only allow appropriate or approved people to edit and manipulate information, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of data at any given point.

An ideal data management system should provide quick and accurate reports for audit/compliance purposes and become the single source of truth across the organisation. It should already have structures and tools in place that, produce accurate data reports, reduce human error or typos, have predefined data, store important current and historical documentation, analyse, collect and store master data. This system will have policies, practices and procedures that facilitate the effective and efficient use of information, users will be able to select data from a predefined list, e.g. A list of countries or temperature ranges rather than manually entering these details in every time.

Implementing a digital management system to manage our data, while providing access to users to view important information, will improve your organisations data literacy. We can use data to our advantage, simplifying audit processes, giving insight into business performance and trends and supplying accurate and authentic information to our staff, contractors and clients.

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