

Hey! What's New? 2025-82

All in the Data: Where Good Data Comes From

An article, written by Robert S. Seiner in the latest issue of the *Data Administration Newsletter*, says that we've spent decades pretending that data quality is a technical issue, when it's really a human one. Data, he adds, "is created by people, interpreted by people and (hopefully) acted upon by people. So, if the people aren't aligned, formally accountable, or even aware of the importance of their role in shaping data, you'll end up with something that looks like data, but acts more like sabotage. Good data isn't just about what's technically correct — it's about what's trustworthy for decision making. And that trust doesn't happen by accident. It happens through data governance — formal or informal, passive or proactive — and yes, ideally non-invasive."

Seiner believes that good data comes from everyday work — not from some mythical data factory operating in the clouds. "It's born in the processes of how we onboard customers, track inventory, manage finances and respond to emails. It's produced by sales reps, accountants, field techs, marketers, and yes, sometimes even IT. Every click, entry, or export has the potential to either enhance the quality of our data or introduce chaos. And too often, it's chaos. Why? Because there's no formal accountability for getting it right."

He adds that "governance — done the most effective way — recognizes that people already have responsibilities for data, whether they know it or not. It simply formalizes that reality in a way that supports the business rather than stifling it. Instead of launching a compliance crusade, Non-Invasive Data Governance (NIDG) works behind the scenes, connecting people to the data they touch and helping them do it better. Good data isn't something you install. It's something you nurture. And NIDG provides the framework for that nurturing without making people feel like they're being babysat. It's not about mandates. It's about maturity."

In a world where AI is being pitched as the answer to everything — from whom to hire to what products to launch — "good" data is just table stakes, Seiner continues. "AI models aren't magicians; they can't turn flawed, biased, or incomplete data into sound business decisions. What they *can* do is amplify every issue hiding in your dataset and present it back to you with a nice chart and a misplaced sense of confidence. That's why organizations need to aim beyond just good data — they need data that is curated, contextualized and consciously governed. Data that has lineage, ownership, and validation."

Taking your data from good to great isn't about more tools or bigger budgets. "It's about clarity. It's about giving people the support and structure they need to understand what their data means, how it's used, and what's at stake when it's wrong. It's about documenting definitions, reconciling sources and flagging exceptions — not with a red pen, but with a mindset that says, 'We can do better.' That's where NIDG steps in again — not as a hall monitor, but as a coach. A coach that helps people win the data game without having to memorize the whole playbook."

According to Seiner, "organizations that get to 'great' data aren't just lucky. They're intentional. They put in place the right frameworks, the right expectations and the right conversations. They stop pretending data will improve on its own and instead invest in making it better — every day, with every touchpoint. Great data doesn't have to be perfect, but it does have to be consistent,

trusted, and reusable. It has to be ready to serve analytics, operations, compliance, and yes — AI. Great data isn't born great — it's made great through structure, stewardship, and visibility.”

Non-Invasive Data Governance, he continues, “is the lever that helps you move from reactive to proactive. It brings formality without fear. It elevates what's already happening without creating more bureaucracy. And it works in the background, empowering people to make better decisions, faster. That's the path from good to great. Not louder. Not stricter. Smarter. If you want your AI to deliver value, your dashboards to drive action, and your teams to trust their data, then it's time to make governance part of the story — not the footnote. Great data isn't a luxury anymore — it's a requirement.”

Learn more from [All in the Data: Where Good Data Comes From – TDAN.com](#).