

Fortifying the Pillars of IT Governance for  
Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 Deployments



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As organizations continue to expand their operations, information technology (IT) infrastructure is increasingly being utilized in order to conduct mission-critical business processes. However, in the midst of trying to keep up with a quickly changing global economy – be it evolving regulations, legal exposure, or constant technological innovation – trying to tame the IT infrastructure used among disparate business units has become a vital challenge to address. Enter IT governance, a combination of practices and structures implemented to inform, direct, manage, and monitor activities toward the achievement of an organization's business objective.

Implementing IT governance to optimize performance, satisfy rapidly evolving regulations, and proactively reduce legal exposure, has become an intra-departmental initiative involving board-level executives, senior management, end-user groups, and other stakeholders whose success depends upon IT assets meeting aggressive performance and compliance obligations. Many organizations have adopted Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies and take advantage of its powerful capabilities to optimize their business processes, streamline intra-organizational communications, and centralize digital assets. With SharePoint's role in the organization becoming more critical, effective SharePoint governance has become an overriding concern among administrators and other key stakeholders today.

While it is a clear industry leader as a collaboration, web content management, and enterprise content management platform, many organizations deploy SharePoint without first appropriately defining governance policies. Because of SharePoint's ease of use and uniquely distributed architecture, stakeholders face unique challenges in the effective administration of the platform. Considering SharePoint provides tools and functionality that enables end-users to enter content, manage documents, and create collaborative solutions without significant IT involvement, the platform can quickly spiral out of control and force organizations to face regulatory and compliance challenges.

In the coming pages, we will shed light on what IT Governance truly entails, the business decisions that must be made prior to technology investment and implementation, the features in Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 that encourage end-user adoption yet reveal unique governance challenges, and solutions available for enhancing Microsoft's native governance functionality in SharePoint Server 2010.

## About AvePoint

AvePoint is a global technology company and proven software leader headquartered in the United States. Since its founding in 2001, AvePoint has become the world's largest provider of infrastructure management software solutions for Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies. Propelled by the world's largest SharePoint-exclusive research & development team, AvePoint is the premier provider for EPG, SMB, Mid-Market and Government organizations demanding the most powerful and flexible infrastructure management solutions for their SharePoint environments and assets. AvePoint's award-winning DocAve Software Platform is recognized as the industry standard for comprehensive, scalable, and truly integrated SharePoint backup and recovery, administration, replication, migration, archiving, deployment management, reporting, storage optimization, and content lifecycle management.

AvePoint is headquartered and maintains its principle engineering center in Jersey City, NJ, with wholly owned sales and engineering centers in the USA - San Jose, Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, Washington DC, Houston, Boston; Ontario, Canada; Melbourne, Australia; London, United Kingdom; Munich, Germany; Johannesburg, South Africa; Tokyo, Japan; Singapore; and China - Beijing, Changchun, Dalian. AvePoint's global team, fortified by an expansive network of certified partners, helps more than 6,000 enterprise customers – including many Fortune 500 companies and government agencies – to protect, manage, optimize, and integrate their mission-critical SharePoint environments. AvePoint is a Depth Managed Gold Certified Microsoft Partner and GSA provider.

# What is Governance?

Governance, at first glance, may seem like a broad term that can mean virtually anything. Definitions from different research firms and business consultants do little to resolve the issue. According to Gartner Research, IT Governance is “the set of processes that ensure the effective and efficient use of IT in enabling an organization to achieve its goals”. Microsoft TechNet explains that IT Governance is “the set of policies, roles, responsibilities, and processes that guide, direct, and control how an organization's business divisions and IT teams cooperate to achieve business goals”. Though these definitions help frame the issue, it is often difficult for the IT administrator to define actual “good governance” practices from such broad definitions.

So what can we elucidate from these general definitions? To begin our discussion, let's be perfectly clear: While IT plays an instrumental role in the performance of “good governance”, governance is not simply a software- or hardware-driven initiative. Governance is neither a technology nor a tool. First and foremost, governance is a *business decision*, one that cannot be made before the *business objective* of your technological deployment is clearly established. Why is a technology is being considered for deployment in the first place? Governance cannot begin until this vital question is answered – and agreed upon – by key stakeholders.

This business decision must be made – and led – by the C-Suite. Executive-level management must ensure that it is fully supporting the initiative in order to ensure it is truly effective. This executive-level sponsorship must cover the execution of the governance initiative, establishing the procedures necessary to steward governance, and purchasing the tools necessary to aid in that execution. Note that “purchasing tools to aid in execution” is identified last. A clear plan must be established first. Part of that plan must include getting all of the organization's key employees to the table to hammer out a successful governance strategy.

For essential organization players on the governance initiative roster, please refer to the table below.

Key Players	Governance Role
C-Level Executives	Define the overall goals of the governance committee, champion the strategy, and periodically evaluate the initiative's success.
Financial Stakeholders	Ensure that governance rules and processes lead to an increased return on investment for its SharePoint deployment.
IT Leaders	Develop their service offerings and determine how to achieve their IT initiatives while supporting the features required by business teams.
Business Division Leaders	Work with information architects to determine the enterprise's information architecture and organizational taxonomy standards as well as IT leaders to create service level agreements and other support policies.
Information Architects/Taxonomists	Craft plans that support organizational objectives as well as define site architecture and navigation.
Compliance Officers	Ensure that the governance initiative for the enterprise also meets its requisite regulatory and legal requirements.
Development Leaders	Help determine which customization tools are approved, how to verify code security, and other code-related best practices.
Knowledge Workers	Confirm that the SharePoint Server 2010 services and information architecture meet their needs.
Trainers	Develop a training plan and conduct all appropriate training and education.

Deploying a technology platform without first authoring an enterprise-wide governance initiative can expose organizations to legal- and compliance-related issues, much in the same vein as Enron and other companies that fell victim to litigation leading to their ultimate demise. When these companies did fall, and numerous compliance regulations – including Sarbanes Oxley – came out, many organizations reactively purchased technology platforms like SharePoint to centralize and standardize their businesses without proactively giving thought to IT governance. The end-result was often a collaboration environment and digital asset repository burdened with sprawl, decreased security, excessive administration costs, depressed user adoption, and, ironically, susceptibility to compliance-related issues – exactly what organizations were trying to avoid. Research from the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) finds that some organizations surveyed admitted SharePoint is actually *increasing* their exposure to compliance-related issues.

Judging by recent survey statistics, this reactive approach still rears its ugly head today:

- **Less than 50 percent** of SharePoint implementations were subject to a formal business case, and only half of those required a financial justification (AIIM)
- By the end of 2010, **less than 35 percent** of SharePoint deployments will have effective governance (Gartner).
- **Approximately 22 percent** of survey respondents did not have any governance policies set in place for their SharePoint deployments (AIIM)
- In **at least 50 percent** of all deployments, SharePoint has not been brought into existing compliance strategies, while **43 percent** have yet to bring SharePoint-stored content into existing retention and long-term archive policies (AIIM)

We will examine why SharePoint is an excellent platform upon which to centralize and streamline organizations shortly, but it is important – whether your organization is in the throes of taming an out-of-control technology environment or is considering a move to SharePoint Server 2010 – that the following factors are considered before commencing your IT Governance project:

<b>Establish initial principles and goals</b>	Identify tangible, measurable policies and standards in order to accurately quantify the initiative’s benefit to the organization.
<b>Classify the business information and content</b>	Ensure that your enterprise-wide information is organized and available in order to support your governance initiative.
<b>Develop and education strategy</b>	Give all end-users comprehensive training on the newly established governance policy as well as the tools and resources necessary to properly utilize the technology platform.
<b>Craft an ongoing plan</b>	Make sure the key governance stakeholders meet regularly to assess current progress and determine what, if any, actions should be taken to continue ensuring proper governance.

# The Pillars of SharePoint Server 2010 Governance

Microsoft SharePoint is the fastest growing server product in Microsoft history because organizations immediately recognize the platform's ability to serve as a centralized document repository, online collaboration workspace, development platform, and a gateway for other mission-critical initiatives including enterprise content management. SharePoint is truly unique, though, in that the platform's many virtues also serve as the fundamental reasons why it is challenging to effectively govern.

SharePoint was intentionally created to act as a decentralized platform whose end-users are the primary contributors of content and developers of processes. This peculiar quality helps deliver four distinct benefits to the organization, as well as four key SharePoint management challenges – or pillars:

Organizational Benefits	Management Challenges
Pervasive Collaboration	Site and Information Architecture
Delegated Administration	Securities and Policies
User Experience	Operational Procedures
Employee Self-service	Compliance

With the release of SharePoint Server 2010, even more features have been included to further decentralize the platform, particularly with regard to sharing information throughout the enterprise. While this will certainly lead to higher end-user adoption and more knowledge sharing, it will also bring about more challenges that organizations must address when crafting a scalable, iron-clad governance strategy. In order to enhance the native governance capabilities Microsoft offers in the prism of these four pillars, AvePoint offers the DocAve Software Platform, more than 25 independently deployable modules truly integrated via a browser-based interface to help organizations protect, manage, optimize, integrate, and govern their SharePoint deployments.

Now, we will examine the native SharePoint Server 2010 features that help support each of the distinct governance management challenges, as well as the DocAve solutions that enhance the platform's out-of-the-box functionality.

## Site and Information Architecture

SharePoint Sites can be set up by an end-user quickly without requiring any pre-qualification, adherence to business protocols, or information architecture. This is great for end-user adoption, but disastrous for streamlined administration, potentially leading to hundreds of non-business aligned, duplicate, and redundant sites.

Several new features in SharePoint Server 2010 empower organizations to more robustly promote site and information architecture governance:

- Document workspaces and meeting workspace templates will automatically be provided to end-users when they are collaborating on documents or projects, and can be created with Microsoft Office clients – including Word, Outlook, and Excel – with **Site Management**.
- Organizations can extend their outward-facing look, feel, and brand to its SharePoint sites by utilizing **Site Themes**.
- **SharePoint Designer 2010** provides end-users with additional capabilities to implement customizations to their sites, empowering them to build workflows and reuse them across entire site collections – which can then be activated and used on multiple lists and libraries.
- Solutions can be created with Visual Studio 2010 and deployed as **Sandboxed Solutions** without IT's direct involvement, and will only have functionality on a site collection level and deployed by

requisite site collection administrators – which can then be monitored by IT. This seeks to find the middle ground between SharePoint farm administrators and line-of-business users often obstructed in past iterations of the platform.

While Microsoft’s latest platform release did take great strides in enhancing governance tools for site and information architecture, some gaps still remain:

Challenge	Opportunity with DocAve
In MOSS 2007 and SharePoint Server 2010, administrators have to rely on creating custom commands or manually entering code for propagating customizations, SharePoint Solutions or SharePoint Designer elements throughout a deployment, or across various environments.	<b>DocAve Deployment Manager</b> automates the deployment of applications, customizations, solutions, and design elements across sites, and even farms. Administrators are enabled to control the process, limit project delays, and vastly lower the chance for human error since code is not being manually entered in various environments (testing, QA, etc.).
The hard work that administrators had put in to establish efficient and streamlined site collection and site hierarchies – with all requisite metadata – will not transfer when migrating from prior SharePoint releases to SharePoint Server 2010 using some of the natively available upgrade options.	<b>DocAve Administrator for SharePoint</b> gives organizations universal control over enterprise-wide SharePoint Server 2010 deployments – be it a single farm or hundreds. DocAve enables the management of all configurations, security settings, solutions, and features from a single console, from both user- and SharePoint-centric perspectives.
Administrators already satisfied with the securities and governance policies they had in place before will have to manually rebuild these architectures and hierarchies, which is both time and resource intensive, not to speak of the tremendous potential for human error and breaches in governance policies.	<b>DocAve Content Manager for SharePoint</b> allows organizations to quickly restructure these hierarchies – including documents, sites, and subsites – from a single web-based interface as business needs evolve.

## Securities and Policies

SharePoint’s decentralized nature also extends to security permissions and management. The goal is to ensure data access to only those so authorized, without over-burdening IT staff. Avoidance of a manual and labor-intensive policy and permissions management process demands that certain elements – like departmental Team Sites – are governed by Active Directory permissions, while others are efficiently managed via SharePoint permissions. In previous SharePoint releases, including MOSS 2007, native administration and governance tools did not allow for the performance of global – or bulk – changes to configurations or settings. It required an administrator to navigate to the particular element’s configuration page/interface and manually enact any settings, configuration, or securities changes.

New and enhanced features in SharePoint Server 2010 contribute to governance of securities and policies:

- SharePoint Server 2010 now allows site administrators to look at **intra-object policies and permissions** at once for a particular user or group, as well as to view lower level objects where inheritance has been broken. While this is an improvement over the object-by-object view in MOSS 2007, it still does not extend outside of the particular object.
- In MOSS 2007, metadata management was only possible on a site collection level natively – anything broader could only be accomplished utilizing third-party solutions. In SharePoint Server 2010, enterprise-level taxonomy is supported with the **Metadata Store**. Users can create their organization’s taxonomy structure – including hierarchy, product categories, and worldwide locations – and publish it to SharePoint. Additionally, they can now tag and browse page content with this managed metadata, as well as tag single content pieces with their own keywords.

- SharePoint Server 2010 gives organizations the opportunity to approve *and* schedule content for publishing via automated workflows if so desired with **Content Approval**. Appropriately designated site members can formalize and control the process of making content available to an audience. Document library owners can now approve content for a document library, web pages library, or associate a workflow with the library to run the approval process. This used to be a manual, case-by-case process in MOSS 2007.

While improvements in this area are clear, there are still points of concern – particularly for farm administrators and organizations utilizing SharePoint for complex, geo-distributed deployments:

Challenge	Opportunity with DocAve
Farm administrators still cannot view or enact SharePoint-wide changes to configurations, settings, or securities.	<p><b>DocAve Administrator</b>, in addition to granting administrators with the ability to schedule all administrative functions for the entire SharePoint deployment from a single interface, offers security-trimmed access, so site collection owners can view and manage only their specific SharePoint content.</p>
The Metadata Store, while fantastic for empowerment, could go awry if strict standards are not set in stone regarding which taxonomies are appropriate, who will manage them, and who will oversee all user requests to add terms to the Metadata Store.	
Content approval functionality only goes so far as a singular document library – not across multiple libraries, sites, or farms.	

## Operational Procedures

SharePoint administrators face a peculiar quandary with regard to SharePoint data protection and data accessibility: Administrators must ensure that user experience promotes collaboration and creativity, yet govern it in such a way that service level agreements (SLAs) are kept, scalability is accounted for, geo-distribution and business continuity plans are established, and information from legacy systems does not get lost in the shuffle.

Features in SharePoint Server 2010 have sought to advance the platform’s capabilities in this capacity, including:

- **Site collection level backup and restore capabilities**, which is more granular than the site collection-level restores available in MOSS 2007. There is granular restore functionality down to the list/library level via an unattached content database restore, as well as more fine-tuned control on platform-level backup to cover content and configurations separately.
- Synchronize with SharePoint sites and enable offline access to documents, lists, libraries, and line-of-business data with **SharePoint Workspace 2010**. This is a marked improvement over MOSS 2007 functionality, which only enabled users to synchronize SharePoint document libraries with Microsoft Outlook via Microsoft Office Groove.
- Present and edit line-of-business (LOB) data in SharePoint from outside CRM and ERP systems – such as SAP and Microsoft Dynamics CRM, respectively – with **Business Connectivity Services (BCS)**. This feature was formerly known as Business Data Connectivity in MOSS 2007, which only granted read-only capabilities for this data. BCS offers read-write functionality for this data.
- Build workflows that can be reused across the entire site collection which, along with its requisite initiation forms, are available for users to active and use on multiple lists and libraries with **SharePoint Designer 2010**, which was unavailable in MOSS 2007. As such, business users and analysts can also utilize SharePoint Designer 2010 to connect to this data and build BCS models to

expose through SharePoint external lists. Then, users can read and write from the LOB systems themselves.

- Check for potential configuration, performance, and usage problems by running predefined health rules against farm servers – and generate requisite server status and site usage reports – with **SharePoint Health Analyzer**.

There were definitely steps taken forward in operational procedures in SharePoint Server 2010, but these can be ever more enhanced with AvePoint’s DocAve Software Platform:

Challenge	Opportunity with DocAve
Utilize all your existing content and data residing on legacy file shares, platforms, and prior releases of SharePoint.	<b>DocAve Migrator</b> enables administrators to automate the process of consolidating multiple content sources into SharePoint while retaining all of its associated metadata.
Expose legacy content via SharePoint that you would prefer not to migrate directly into the platform’s SQL Server content database.	<b>DocAve Connector for SharePoint</b> presents and manages any documents, audio, or video files via SharePoint without the need for import.
Ensure that all geographically distributed end-users consistently have access to the most up-to-date data and content available on the SharePoint platform in real-time.	<b>DocAve Replicator for SharePoint</b> offers one-way, two-way, and one-to-many synchronizations of SharePoint data and content – either in real-time or according to pre-determined schedules.
Utilize SharePoint Server 2010’s Remote BLOB Storage APIs to best manage the growth of content residing in SharePoint’s SQL Server content databases.	<b>DocAve Extender for SharePoint</b> automatically routes any unstructured documents, or Binary Large Objects (BLOBs), to cheaper, file- or cloud-based storage without ever entering SQL.
Architect automated, intelligent end-of-life and content lifecycle management policies for all enterprise-wide content.	<b>DocAve Archiver for SharePoint</b> offers business-rule aware, item-level archiving capabilities with full content index and search support.
Have a clear view – from one central location – of the health and user activity for the entire SharePoint deployment.	<b>DocAve Report Center for SharePoint</b> offers intelligence – and customizable reports – on platform topology, usage, and performance trends from a singular interface.
Institute a comprehensive data protection strategy that addresses the entire SharePoint environment, yet can quickly restore individual items if necessary.	<b>DocAve Backup and Restore for SharePoint</b> backs up and restores all SharePoint items, farm-level components, and externalized content with full-fidelity, with flexible backup schedules in order to meet strict SLAs.
Have an up-to-date secondary SharePoint environment in case of a catastrophe or other major business disruption.	<b>DocAve High Availability for SharePoint</b> offers seamless access to a warm stand-by SharePoint environment with a flip of a DNS switch.

## Compliance

Administrators must manage the initiatives, technological controls, and procedural controls required to ensure that SharePoint’s infrastructure, its users, and the information it supports operate under applicable laws, standards, and policies. This requires that appropriate auditing, archiving, reporting, and data protection strategies are put in place and documented.

All of the new features noted in SharePoint Server 2010 – from the BCS to the Metadata Store and SharePoint Workspace – will undoubtedly be incorporated into any legitimate compliance strategy. As more users utilize the platform and work on projects involving enterprise-wide data – sensitive or otherwise – ensuring that it is available for any legal or regulatory obligations is of the utmost importance. Newly available features allow us to:

- More easily track and monitor declared records with the improved **Records Center**, as well as **Document Labels** and **Document Bar Codes** that assist in organizing documents for systematic storage and retrieval.
- Deftly apply record management features, such as expiration policies, with **Content Organizer**, so content can be routed to the appropriate SharePoint location based on metadata. In SharePoint Server 2010, locations – libraries – can automatically apply these policies.
- Allow SharePoint documents, blogs, wikis, web pages, and list items to be declared records in SharePoint Server 2010 with **In-Place Records Management**. The key here is that when declared a record, the content does not move to an archive. Rather, it stays where it is so the end-users can still find and interact with the content.
- Enable or disable holds – a set of documents produced as part of an eDiscovery request – on the individual site level with SharePoint Server 2010's out-of-the-box **eDiscovery** features. Enabled by default in a Records Center site, enables the creation and management of holds, addition of items to a hold, and search for the discovery of content in order to copy it to another location or lock it down so it cannot be modified or deleted.
- Enable **Auditing** at the site collection level, with new **Audit Log Trimming** and control for the amount of disk space used by logs and native compression

While utilizing these enhanced native features, administrators in charge of implementing IT governance policies can enhance what SharePoint Server 2010 offers by caring for the *availability, confidentiality, and integrity* of data with DocAve.

Availability:

- Instantly restore entire sites and site collections in the exact state they were prior to deletion, consequently reducing Recovery Point Objectives to zero, and Recovery Time Objectives to seconds with **DocAve SiteBin for SharePoint**
- Full-fidelity, schedulable backup and recovery, from an individual content item to an entire SharePoint environment, all of its farm-level components, and externalized content, maintaining all metadata, securities, and version histories with **DocAve Backup and Restore for SharePoint**
- Prevent malicious code from entering SharePoint, quarantine any questionable code for review, and periodically scan SharePoint upon updates to the database with **DocAve Antivirus for SharePoint**
- Manage holds at the farm scope versus each individual site, utilize SharePoint search, customize the hold behavior according to your specific regulatory requirements, and export to non-SharePoint locations for review with **DocAve eDiscovery for SharePoint**
- Set automated rules for data retention and expiration for all enterprise-wide content according to specific organizational objectives with **DocAve Archiver for SharePoint**
- Securely store all records and audit data, meet regulatory policies with confidence, and avoid unnecessary legal exposure with advanced and timeline-based searching across archived content for legal discovery, audit, and review with **DocAve Vault for SharePoint**

Confidentiality:

- Quickly ensure that users only have access to view/modify content for which they have the proper authority, assign new users their requisite rights quickly, and strip users of rights if necessary – across the entire SharePoint deployment from a single interface with **DocAve Administrator for SharePoint**
- Scan all content before it is uploaded to SharePoint Server 2010, verify it against customizable keyword dictionaries, phrases, numbers, and patterns, and quarantine any data that does not meet previously-set organizational compliance standards with **DocAve Content Shield for SharePoint**

Integrity:

- Deploy and manage enterprise-wide audit policies and parameterized reports for all content, including functionality for high granularity event and activity fetches, extracts data for optimal storage, and easily digestible reports to gain the most insight into your SharePoint environment from a single console with **DocAve Auditor for SharePoint**
- Track and report upon SharePoint infrastructure, platform health, and SharePoint usage and analyses from a single, customizable interface with **DocAve Report Center for SharePoint**

# Two Platforms, One Comprehensive Governance Solution

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True IT governance requires the leadership, organizational structures, and processes that ensure information technology systems like SharePoint sustain and extend the organization's strategies and objectives. Governance is not simply an internal administrative task, nor can it succeed without having executive sponsorship and clear business planning executed before deploying any technology. This ever-evolving puzzle includes site and information architecture, securities and policies, operational procedures, and compliance. To successfully satisfy all four of these pillars, key stakeholders must implement the appropriate tools. Anything short of this, and effective governance is simply unachievable.

SharePoint's distinctive capabilities and architecture provides unique governance challenges. In order to optimize platform performance, maximize efficiency, improve decision-making capacity, elevate accountability, and minimize potential business-productivity and end-user confidence loss, dedicated SharePoint governance tools are required. SharePoint Server 2010's native tools in this aim, from the Metadata Store to the Business Connectivity Services, have vastly improved. However, in order to complete today's governance story, additional third-party solutions are required.

With the DocAve Software Platform, organizations can unleash SharePoint's full potential and have all the tools necessary to successfully execute a robust governance strategy efficiently, meet evolving compliance objectives, and ensure optimal performance for their SharePoint deployments.

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