



NCAIR 2025

Anchored in Data:  
UNCW's Journey through Data Governance

# Introductions



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**Zerek Olson**

Governance, Risk, and  
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Data Governance Program  
Officer



# Setting Sail

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## Why Data Governance?



# Background



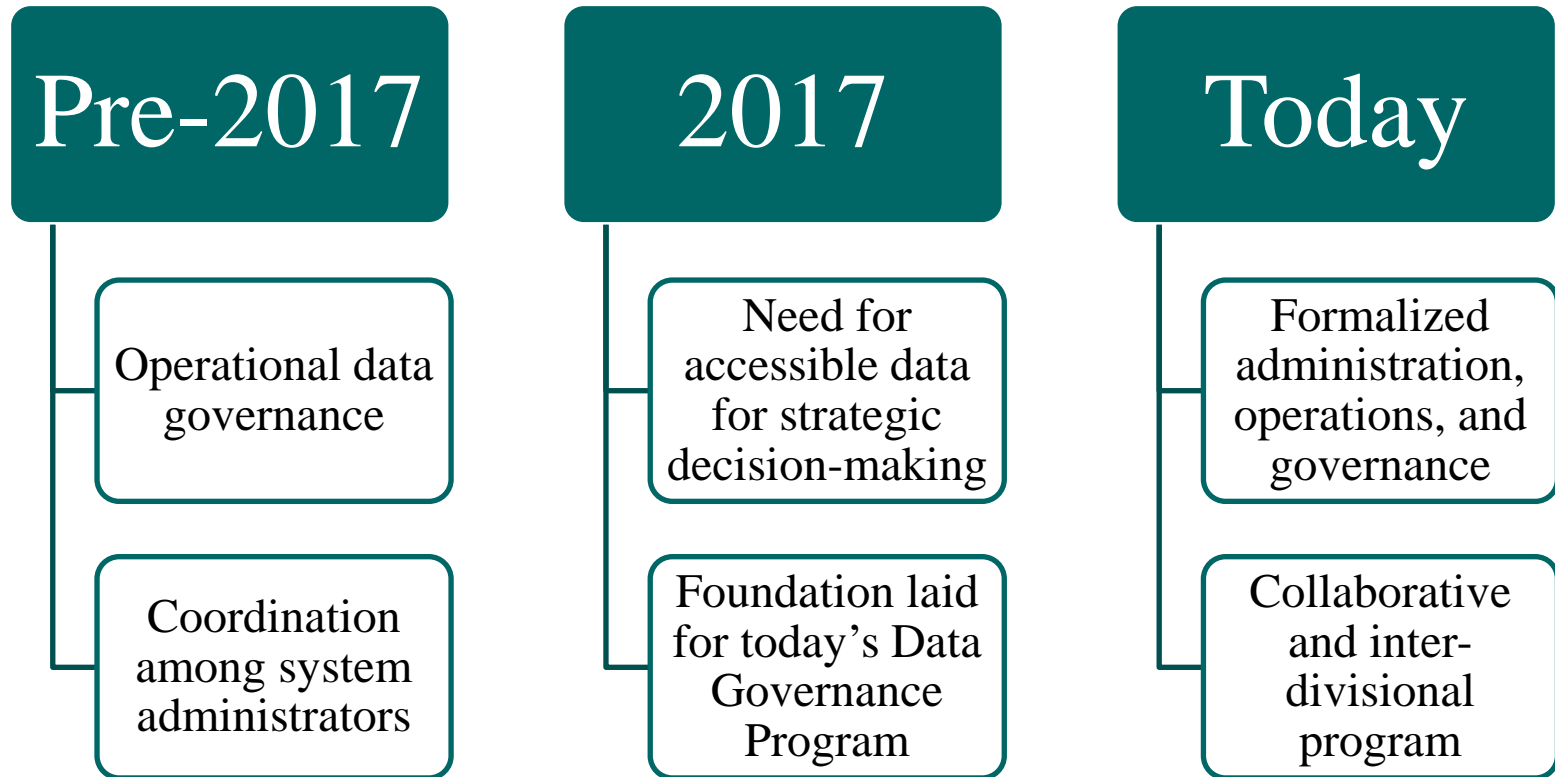


## Navigating the Currents

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How did we get here?

# Journey Milestones



# Bridging the Gap

## What are other organizations doing?

- Data Governance programs
- Dashboards and data management
- National best practices

## Consulting Engagement

- Third-party support to assess UNCW's environment and identify best practices



# Key Developments



Data Governance Program Charter



Data Governance and Management Policy



Data Governance Committee Charter



Data Classification Matrix



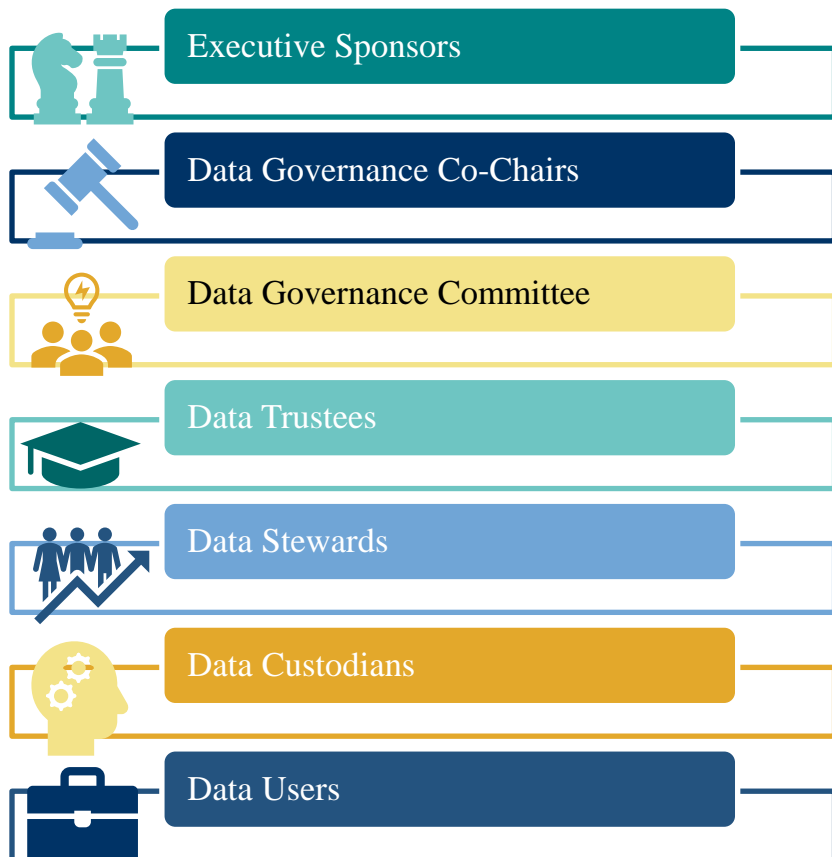
Data Handling Procedures



## Operational Practices



# Data Governance Roles



## Understanding the Role of the Data Trustee

## Understanding the Role of the Data Steward

## Understanding the Role of the Data Custodian

**Data Trustees**

- Oversight responsibility for institutional data related to each Trustee's function, unit, and personnel. (Leadership role)

**Data Stewards**

- Primary responsibility for the use, accuracy, privacy, and security of a designated set of institutional data, as well as defining institutional data handling practices. (Governance role)

**Data Custodians**

- Responsible for implementing the controls identified by Data Stewards. (Managerial role)

**Data Users**

- Staff members who use and handle data as part of daily operations of the university. (Operational role)

**Data Custodians** are university employees who are assigned specific data management and information security responsibilities for university data. Data Custodians are responsible for understanding business needs, operationally ensuring procedures are consistent with university policy, and approving user access for data maintenance roles.

The primary responsibilities of a **Data Custodian** include:

- Ensure operating procedures are consistent with institutional policy and campus data needs.
- Work with other Data Custodians and Data Stewards to implement, update, and monitor operational standards and procedures.
- Document operational standards, procedures, and changes in data set elements and processes.
- Manage Data User access and modification requests as authorized by appropriate Data Stewards.

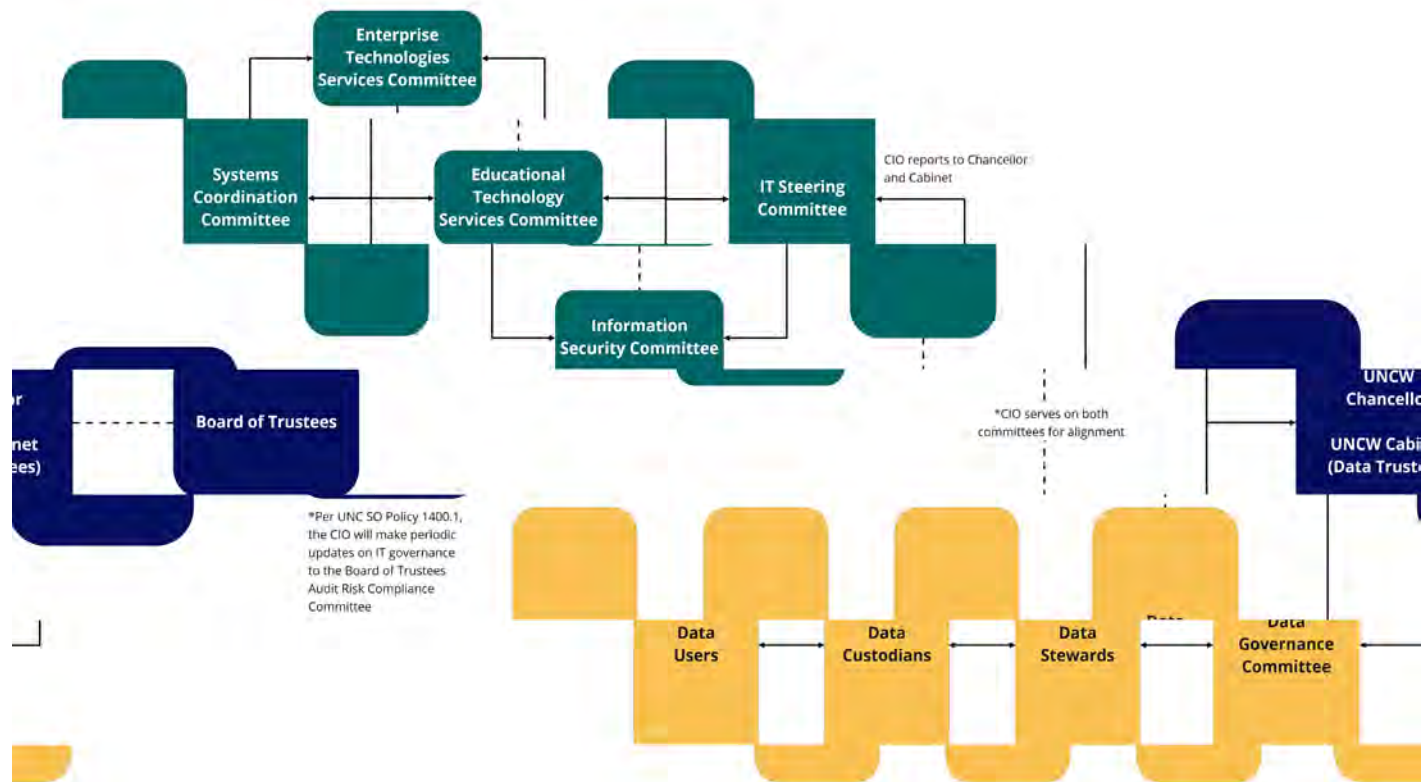
The primary role of a **Data Custodian** is one of management, to implement technical controls required by university policy and information security best practices.

### How to talk about data governance when you are a **Data Custodian**:

- Explain that data governance is a framework for decision-making regarding policies, processes, and priorities for institutional data. The Data Governance Program ensures that data are used wisely to inform campus-wide decisions, and that data are used in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, university policy, and relevant contractual obligations.
- As a Data Custodian, you are responsible for implementing technical solutions and performing functions related to data security, physical security, backup, and recovery in compliance with university policy, information security best practices, and guidance created by the Data Governance Program.
- Remind all unit personnel, no matter their role, that everyone has a role to play in managing and protecting institutional data throughout its lifecycle. Encourage personnel within your unit to come to you if they have questions about university technology solutions or the transmittal or storage of university data.
- Encourage all unit personnel to learn more about their roles and responsibilities under the university Data Governance Program.



# Program Organization

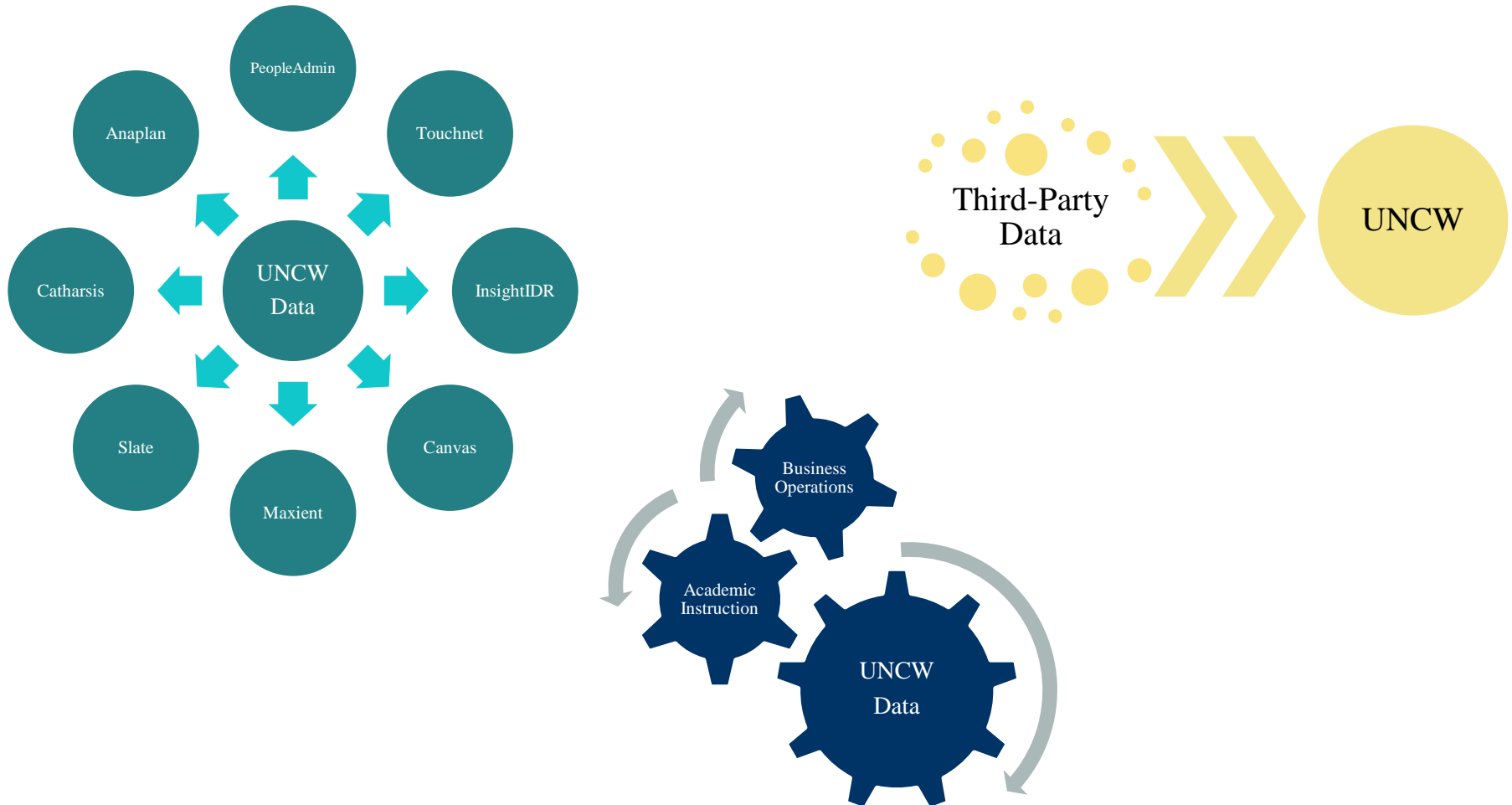


s. They are

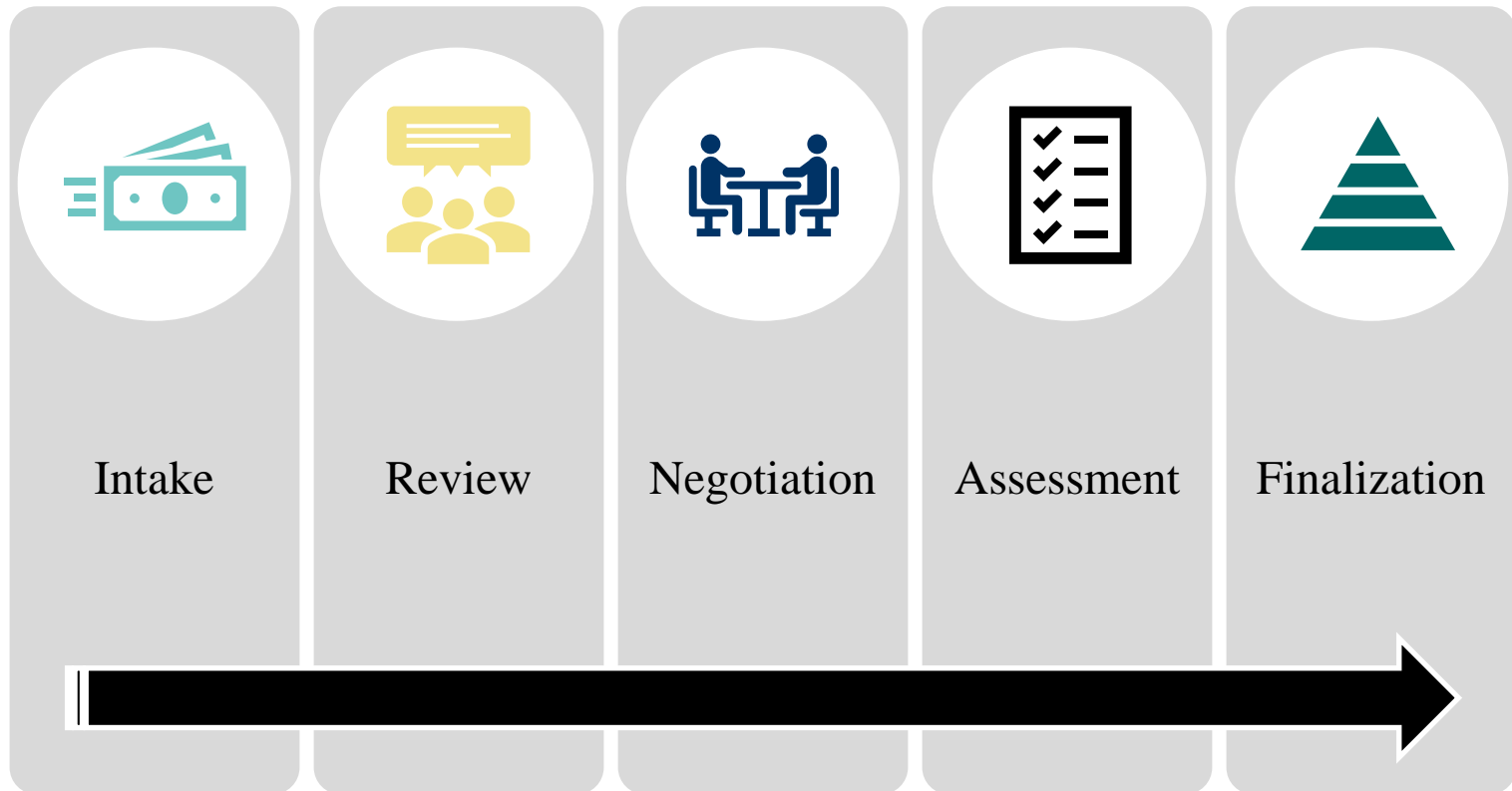
The IT Governance and Data Governance program models are not reporting structure, frameworks for decision-making on institution-wide IT and data concerns.



# Data Use at UNCW



# Managing Risk – Third-parties



# Managing Risks – Research Data



# Managing Risks – Campus Use of Data



Banner (SIS)



Enterprise Data Warehouse



University Dashboards



# Campus Engagements



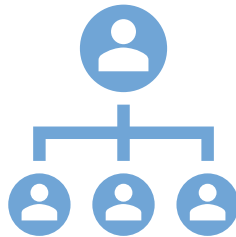
Roadshows



Committee  
Representatives



Major Projects



Subcommittees



Campus Data  
Inventory



# Raising the Sails

## Strengths & Opportunities

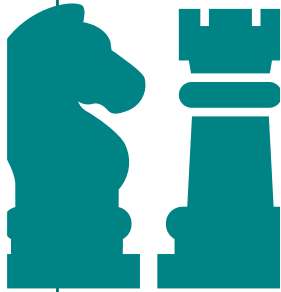
# Strengths



Collaborative by  
Design



# Strengths



## Enables Strategic Engagement

- Senior leadership involvement in operations, major projects, and risk management
- Data modernization included in the UNCW strategic plan
- Promotion of data-informed decision making at the institutional level



## Enhances Compliance Efforts

- Federal and state laws
- Regulatory requirements
- Organizational and third-party policies on data utilization

# Opportunities

## Formalized Training

- FERPA
- Responsible Use of Data
- Data Literacy

## Staff Development

- Vendor Risk Management team
- Data Governance exposure

## Enhancing Strategic Analytics

- Enterprise Data Warehouse
  - Assessment
  - Program planning and development
  - Program review and evaluation

## Broad Horizons

- Incremental milestones throughout the journey
- Key stakeholders are adjusting to changes and embracing new opportunities



# Embracing the Storm

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## Lessons Learned



# Lessons Learned



## Process Management

- Continuous process review
- Documentation updates
- External feedback



## Change Management

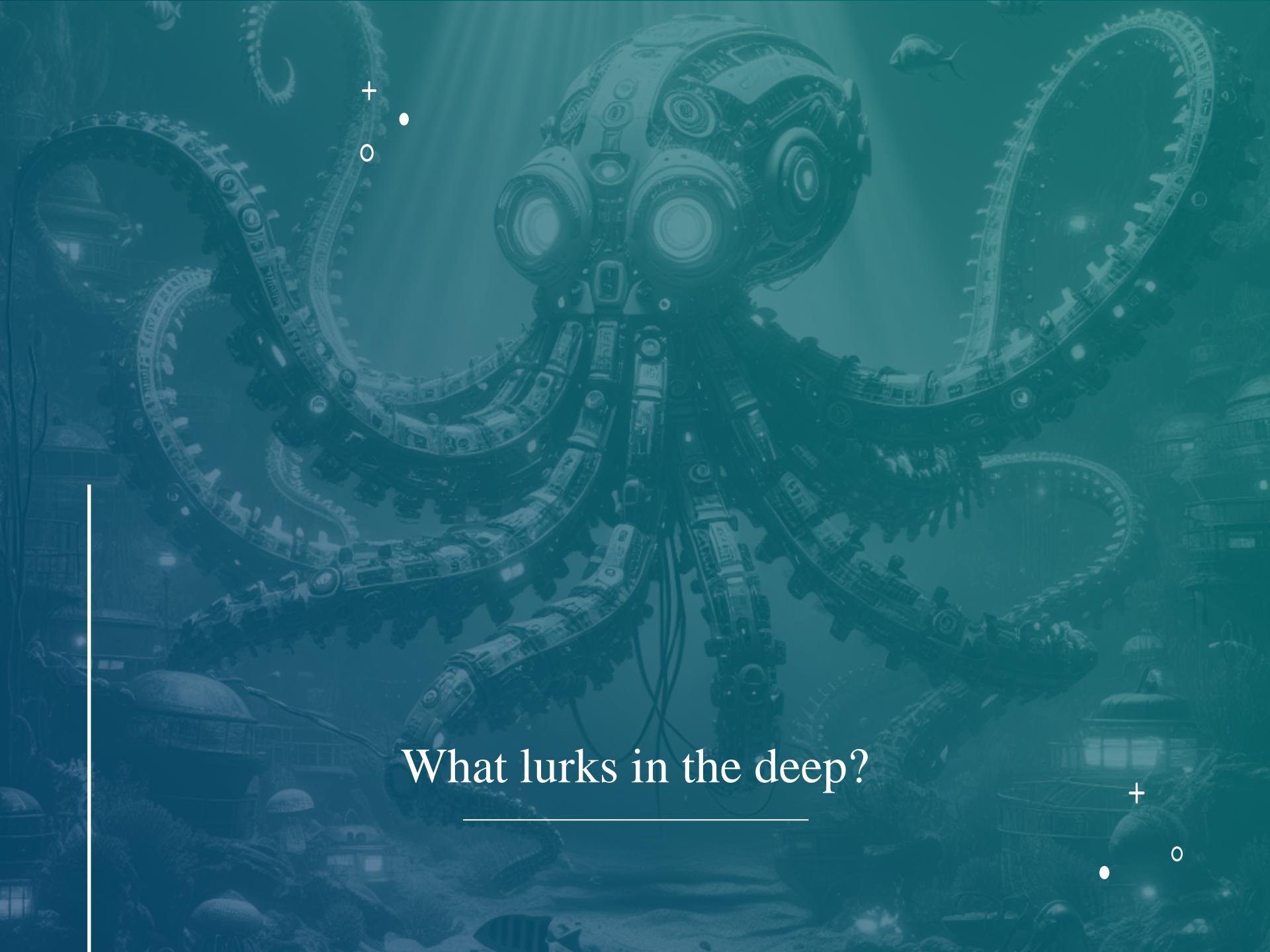
- Remain flexible
- Do what makes sense for the organization
- Understand data governance parameters and compliance requirements



## Expectation Management

- Need for analysis
- Need for data protection





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What lurks in the deep?

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Thank you

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Questions?