

Data Warehouse - Metadata Strategy Checklist

Checklist

1. Provide a Definition of Metadata

Metadata is “data about data”. It is the collection of information about the data acquired by, or reported from the warehouse. Examples include:

- Data element definitions
- Data element business names
- Data element abbreviations/acronyms
- Data element types and sizes
- Data element sources
- Data quality observations

Outline the Objectives of the Metadata Strategy

The data warehouse metadata strategy has the following objectives:

To express the meaning of the data in a language that is unambiguous, and meaningful to business users within the organisation.

To ensure consistent usage and interchange of data. It is recognised that metadata is used across functional and organisational lines.

To foster an improved understanding of the information sources available to users within the organisation, and to recognise any limitations placed on the quality, reliability and reusability of the data.

Define the Scope of the Metadata Strategy

Does it cover the whole enterprise or just the data warehouse?

Define Ownership

Who in the organisation will have ultimate ownership of the metadata?
Who will have authority to secure cross-functional agreement on common business terminology, definitions and rules?

Define Stewardship

Who in the organisation will own the metadata processes and standards.
If there is a separate custodian for the metadata repository this should also be documented?

Master Repository

A best-practice strategy is to adopt the concept of a master repository of metadata. This approach should be documented as well as the location and tool used to store the metadata. If the repository is to be replicated then the extent of this should also be noted.

Metadata Maintenance Process

Explain how the maintenance of metadata is achieved. You could also comment on the extent to which the maintenance of metadata is integrated in the warehouse development lifecycle, versioning of metadata, who maintains the metadata (eg can users maintain it? can users record comments or data quality observations?).

User Access to Metadata

How will users interact and use the metadata? Nowadays, users expect to interact with a read-only version of the live metadata repository. Usually, this is via a customised web interface. Also, it is common to provide search features, and to link metadata to related process documentation

Purpose

The purpose of the document is to act as a checklist for creating your own metadata strategy. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please contact me at:

email: rhys@te-ao.co.nz

web: www.te-ao.co.nz