

The Seam Test

Defensible governance. Defend any definition on demand.

Run the checklist against your own environment, not against a vendor's feature list. Work through it with the two or three people who would actually have to answer, and time the answers where noted. The time it takes to answer is usually the finding.

Score at the end of each one. The score tells you whether the problem is a workflow annoyance or an architecture gap, and the two need different budgets.

Most enterprises run separate tools for lineage, catalog, governance, and semantics. None of them share a meta-model, so someone builds integration between them, and that integration becomes its own system to maintain.

Every seam is a place where two tools can disagree about the same object. The seams stay invisible until an audit or an AI project walks across them.

Section A: Map the seams

- ☐ List every tool in your metadata estate, including spreadsheets and wiki pages doing real work: [FILL IN]
- ☐ Of those, how many genuinely share a data model, with real table overlap rather than API calls between them? [FILL IN]
- ☐ How many custom integrations connect them? [FILL IN]
- ☐ Who maintains those integrations, by name? [FILL IN]
- ☐ When a source schema changes, which of these tools updates on its own? [FILL IN]
- ☐ Annual spend across all of them, licenses plus the engineering time to keep them synchronized: [FILL IN]

Section B: Time the answers

- ☐ Time to trace one metric from its glossary definition to the board deck, inside a single system: [FILL IN]
- ☐ Number of people required to answer one lineage question for a regulator: [FILL IN]
- ☐ Time since the last full synchronization pass across all these tools: [FILL IN]

Section C: Requirements to test on any vendor call

- ☐ Do data lineage, data catalog, data governance, and semantics read from and write to one metamodel, or are they separate products sharing a login? MetaKarta runs all four on a shared metadata foundation.
- ☐ Does a governance decision become visible in lineage without a synchronization job?
- ☐ Does a catalog update propagate into the semantic definitions automatically?
- ☐ How many connectors cover your actual estate, legacy systems included? Ask for the list filtered to your stack before the demo.
- ☐ What does the three-year total cost look like against your current tool spend plus the engineering time spent synchronizing?

Score

1 point each for: four or more tools in the estate, two or more custom integrations, no single owner named for them, over 15 minutes on the glossary-to-board-deck trace, three or more people needed for a regulator's lineage question.

0 to 1. Your estate is coherent. Retest after the next tool purchase.

2 to 3. You're paying a synchronization tax. It shows up as engineering time rather than as a line item, which is why it rarely gets counted.

4 to 5. Your team is managing plumbing instead of data. The next tool added to this estate will make the problem worse regardless of how good that tool is on its own.

Next step

Put the annual spend figure from Section A next to the seam count. The comparison worth running is your current spend plus the cost of your next data incident, measured against one platform that removes the seams.

Get in touch.

Request a demo to learn more about MetaKarta and how it helps you with consolidating metadata tools.

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