Variations of the data life cycle

You have learned that there are six stages to the data life cycle. Here's a recap:

1. **Plan:** Decide what kind of data is needed, how it will be managed, and who will be responsible for it.
2. **Capture:** Collect or bring in data from a variety of different sources.
3. **Manage:** Care for and maintain the data. This includes determining how and where it is stored and the tools used to do so.
4. **Analyze:** Use the data to solve problems, make decisions, and support business goals.
5. **Archive:** Keep relevant data stored for long-term and future reference.
6. **Destroy:** Remove data from storage and delete any shared copies of the data.

Note: Be careful not to confuse the six stages of the data life cycle (plan, capture, manage, analyze, archive, and destroy) with the six phases of the data analysis process (ask, prepare, process, analyze, share, and act). They are not interchangeable.

The data life cycle provides a generic or common framework for how data is managed. You may recall that variations of the data analysis life cycle were described in Origins of the data analysis process. The same can be done for the data life cycle. The rest of this reading provides a glimpse of how government, finance, and education institutions can view data life cycles a little differently.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service uses the following data life cycle:

1. Plan
2. Acquire
3. Maintain
4. Access
5. Evaluate
6. Archive