# Market Guide for Digital Communications Governance

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> The quantity and scope of communication tools, such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom and WhatsApp, makes it more complex for organizations to enforce corporate governance and regulatory compliance use policies. This guide helps I&O leaders navigate the market for digital communications governance solutions.

## Overview

### Key Findings

- Enterprise organizations face a growing number of regulatory mandates (e.g., FINRA, FCA, HIPAA, GDPR)  and corporate governance guidelines, such as proper employee conduct and handling of sensitive data, in the use of digital communications tools. To meet these requirements, they need to ensure that employee use of these tools aligns with their communication policies.

- The expanding quantity of digital communications channels, driven by both employee and their customer's demands to use the latest messaging tools, makes it challenging for organizations to implement a comprehensive digital communications governance (DCG) strategy.

- Mobile communications and messaging applications are under heavy scrutiny by regulators and more broadly, by general corporate communication governance. Recent examples include the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC's) increased enforcement on employee use of messaging applications and the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ's) recent guidance that elevates expectations for demonstrating compliance program effectiveness. This has increased demand for capture solutions to more proactively monitor their use.

- Clients remain split on the continued use of lexicon-based supervision versus the adoption of more advanced, AI- and ML-based surveillance solutions to perform compliance initiatives.

Recommendations

- Enforce acceptable usage policies for employee digital communication, in both regulated and nonregulated organizations, by implementing DCG solutions that align to the requirements of employer communication governance practices.

- Select the most appropriate DCG solution by choosing those that best integrate with employees' commonly used tools and that are adept at including new data sources. A complete solution may rely on native messaging life cycle management capabilities, along with multiple connector, archiving and supervision offerings.

- Establish mobile communications and messaging applications governance by capturing these communications in real time, to reduce efforts related to monitoring, audit and investigation processes.

- Improve supervisory compliance efficiency and accuracy by selecting DCG solutions that provide a combination of lexicon and AI/ML enablement, which automate flagging, reduce false positives and provide the most accurate results for the compliance team.

## Strategic Planning Assumptions

By 2027, 40% of enterprise customers will proactively assess workstream collaboration and meeting solution content for corporate policy and general business insights, up from less than 5% in 2023.

By 2027, 65% of enterprise customers will combine supervision of text- and audio/video-based content to monitor communication governance, up from less than 15% in 2023.

## Market Definition

*This document was revised on 17 November 2023. The document you are viewing is the corrected version. For more information, see the* Corrections *page on gartner.com.*

Digital communications governance solutions are designed to enforce corporate governance and regulatory compliance, across a growing number of communications tools available to employees. For the various communication tools in use across the enterprise, DCG solutions enable consistent policy management, enforcement and reporting capabilities.

Must-have capabilities of a DCG solution include:

- Supporting primary communication sources including email and workstream collaboration tools, such as Microsoft Teams and Slack.

- Capturing, processing and storing employee communications within vendor-native or third-party archive solutions.

- Administering basic life cycle, export, reporting, search and access activities of supported communications.

Standard capabilities of a DCG solution include:

- Deployment options, including SaaS and PaaS.

- Supporting additional communications sources, such as text, chat and instant messaging (IM). These include SMS, MMS, meeting solutions and industry-specific tools (e.g., financial services).

- Classifying and categorizing captured content based on content metadata and aligning to appropriate data retention schedules.

- Organizing search activity into saved searches, assignment to investigations/cases, and data export management.

- Proactively monitoring communications against predefined lexicons.

Optional capabilities of a DCG solution include:

- Integration with mobile devices, including corporate-owned and bring-your-own devices (BYODs), to capture messaging applications, calls and voice recording content.

- Capturing messaging application sources, such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Signal and iMessage.

- Capturing audio, video, call recordings and other screen-sharing content. This would also include services to transcribe to text.

- Capturing and rendering advanced characteristics of communications, such as reactions and emojis.

- Support for multiple languages.

- A complete reconciliation and auditing of captured communications, from source to storage.

- Classifying and categorizing captured content, based on the complete communication content and context, then aligning it to the appropriate data retention schedule.

- Automating proactive monitoring, alerting and tagging to create efficiencies and improve accuracy.

- Integration of data models, including large language models (LLMs), and natural language processing to expand proactive monitoring beyond lexicon-based rules.

- Assessing communications for sentiment, tone and other behavioral analytics, typically using AI/ML.

- Real-time interaction with communication tools to provide immediate feedback and remediation of employee actions.

- Implementation of techniques to reduce false positive and false negative outcomes, such as ML.

- Consolidating multiple communication sources into single-search, timeline and proactive-monitoring views.

## Market Description

The DCG market aligns to vendors that develop archive- and platform-integrated solutions, which capture and analyze communication channels, and those that also or solely develop communication connectors to a variety of communications tools used by enterprises. Table 1 provides a general overview of capabilities for these two primary alignments:

**Table 1: DCG Solution Capabilities**

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

| Archive/Integrated |
|---|
| Integrates with multiple communication channel(s) to access content. |
| Collects data from communication platform logs or captures communication as they are sent/received via available application hooks or API. |
| Offers customer- or vendor-deployed archive platform to store communications. |
| Enriches communications by content index and analytics. |
| Classifies data to customer-defined categories. |
| Assigns and manages access privileges for multiple use cases, including end-user search, e-discovery and proactive monitoring. |
| Enforces data retention policies to manage employee communications life cycle. |
| Applies supervision or surveillance process to proactively monitor communications. |

| Connectors ↓ |
|---|
| Specializes in integrations with distinct communication channel(s) to access content. |
| Collects data from communication platform logs or captures communications as they are sent/received via available application hooks or APIs. |
| Normalizes content from multiple communication sources to provide common data format to archive solutions. |
| Provides integration with specific archive vendor offerings via API. |
| Logs communications and reconciles delivery to archive. |

Source: Gartner

While email has been the most traditional communication channel in scope of DCG solutions, there are multiple types of communications channels to be factored into a governance strategy. The scope is constantly changing as new communication tools are frequently introduced to the market and adopted by employees. Recent evidence suggests enterprise organizations' customers are dictating the communication tool of choice.

Figure 1 represents the scope of integrations for DCG solutions to support. They are shown by communication tool categories and includes a sampling of offerings used by enterprises.

<span style="color:#c0392b">**Figure 1: DCG Scope of Communication Channels**</span>

**DCG Scope of Communication Channels**



Source: Gartner
Note: This is a representation of channels and not an exhaustive list.
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Gartner

DCG solutions support multiple use cases and provide many outcomes and benefits to an organization. Table 2 provides detail on the benefits of DCG solutions for each use case.

**Table 2: Use Cases and Benefits of DCG Solutions**

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

| Use Cases ↓ | Benefits ↓ |
|---|---|
| Archive | Supports fundamental capabilities to capture multiple sources of digital communication and store within a central and consolidated platform to support multiple business requirements, including categorization, data retention, search/access and life cycle management. |
| In-Place Integration | Facilitates access to and possible remediation steps for data within the respective sources to provide real-time feedback, search, compliance, governance and analytics of the data. |
| Investigation | Investigates communications data that has been captured. This may include multiple scenarios, including satisfying audit requests, internal investigations and other e-discovery requests. Capabilities may include basic and advanced search, tagging, visualization, saving searches, exporting data, case management, legal hold and role-based access controls, such as assigning investigators. Additional features may expand this use case to align with e-discovery tasks such as identifying, preserving, collecting, processing, reviewing, analyzing and producing electronically stored data. |
| Compliance | Creates and administers policies that align to the monitoring and retention of digital communications for regulatory and compliance purposes. This may include use of supervision and surveillance capabilities. |
| Governance | Expands the scope of compliance, defined above, by introducing abilities to expand enrichment and monitoring of employee use of communication tools, based on an organization's general guidelines and governance strategy. |
| Analytics | Improves DCG capabilities through the introduction of AI/ML and data models to improve efficiency and accuracy, and to gain new insights and additional business value from the solution using data enrichment capabilities. |
| Trade Reconstruction | Categorically specific to the financial services industry, trade reconstruction connects multiple communications to trade activity, which provides a timeline of activity to a corresponding trade. |

Source: Gartner

# Market Direction

There are multiple influences that are disrupting the DCG market. They are impacting existing solution capabilities and creating opportunities for new vendors. Key directional aspects of this market include:

■ **Public-cloud-hosted, SaaS-based offerings to match scale requirements:** DCG solutions are often SaaS-based offerings with limited options for on-premises or PaaS. A significant shift in platform architecture, driven by scaling requirements and adoption of cloud service provider data services, has transitioned many existing vendor solutions from private cloud infrastructure to deployment on public cloud infrastructure. Newer vendors to the market are principally deploying solutions on public cloud infrastructure.

- **Expanded use and number of messaging applications:** Over the last 12 to 18 months, there has been a heightened governance focus on employee use of messaging applications. Of particular interest are messaging applications such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Signal and iMessage. The use of these tools is not only driven by enterprise employee interest, but also the request of enterprise customers to use specific applications to conduct business. Historically supported through third-party connector offerings, archiving vendors are developing or acquiring technology to support this requirement.

- **Expanded use of mobile devices:** The expanded employee use of mobile devices is driving greater adoption of DCG archive and connector solutions for mobile device communications. This requirement is not only specific to messaging applications mentioned above, but includes mobile text messages, calls and recordings. This has led some enterprise organizations to reassess their corporate-owned-device or BYOD policy. (See Quick Answer: Are Mobile BYOD Programs Still Viable for Regulated Employees in Financial Services?) DCG vendors have introduced distinct technologies that focus on supporting both corporate-owned devices and BYOD.

- **Integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning and natural language processing (AI/ML/NLP):** DCG solutions are advancing the use of AI/ML and NLP in areas such as data classification and categorization, identification of sentiment and enhancement of proactive supervision/surveillance. These advancements are automating processes and leading to greater accuracy in governance and compliance efforts.

- **Inclusion of generative AI (GenAI) and large language models:** GenAI and LLMs have the potential to dramatically change DCG solutions in areas such as creating conversational compliance interfaces, surfacing an enterprise's compliance trends and remediation steps, and authoring or summarizing compliance status.

- **Complexity of communication tool capabilities:** Though some considered it a temporary condition driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, work from home remains. It accelerated the adoption of new and more complex communication solutions. These new communication tools have introduced characteristics beyond the linear and basic send/receive characteristics of email and chat. Communication tools allow content to be edited and deleted, support reactions and emojis, introduce new participants and remove them, and incorporate audio, video, dynamic links and onscreen content. This has driven DCG vendors to accelerate coverage of more communication tools, as well as expand the scope and depth of integration to align with communication tool characteristics and customer requirements.

- **Differentiating supervision from surveillance**: Historically, proactive monitoring, defined as supervision, has leveraged the use of lexicons. Lexicons are a preconfigured list of keywords, terms and expressions that vendors and their customers have created. They are applied against employee communications to flag content. Complementing or replacing lexicons, the introduction of AI/ML and the use of data and language models into proactive monitoring is now addressed as surveillance.

- **Aggregated enterprise analysis**: Historically, DCG solutions have monitored and generated alerts to content by a specific employee. Broader, nonregulatory use cases for DCG solutions have been observed in some solutions, which provide aggregated or anonymized contextual analysis. The focus of these solutions is to highlight trends, behaviors and other sentiment to generate new insights on an organization's work environment. They provide general feedback to an organization, based on employee communications in digital communications tools, to identify trends in areas such as employee productivity, sentiment and workplace conditions.

- **Interactive policy enforcement**: Interactive policy enforcement, such as email quarantining, hasbeen minimally used due to multiple complications. New advancements in DCG solution integrations with communications tools now provide a real-time ability to match a defined-use policy against content that is being sent, displayed or actioned.

- **Compliance risk versus security risk**: Most frequently used for adherence to compliance use cases, solutions are expanding to broader uses in security risk. This provides organizations with an ability to leverage DCG solutions to enforce or monitor the use of communications against security-based scenarios. The use cases may expand to include data loss prevention, insider risk management and security posture. Tangentially related to DCG solutions, instant secure communication solutions from vendors such as Thales Group (Ercom) and RealTyme may be integrated to extend secure communications use with compliance requirements.

## Market Analysis

Gartner retired the Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Information Archiving in 2022. This DCG research recognizes the rise in communication tool complexity and demand from clients to seek guidance on the selection of vendors and solutions that specialize in communications governance (see Note 1). This market is inclusive of not only archiving solutions, but has expanded to recognize the scope of vendors supporting communication connectors.

Though multiple vendors and offerings have been in the market for over a decade, the complexity and volume of communications, and a more-critical regulatory and corporate governance environment, have introduced new strategies and entrants to this market. Vendors are innovating to address complicated forms of communications, such as mobile, workstream collaboration, messaging applications, and voice and meeting solutions. They are modernizing archiving infrastructure to improve scale and introducing new AI/ML-driven data categorization, sentiment analysis and supervisory capabilities.

The DCG market is heavily influenced by regulatory requirements specific to communication tool use. Requirements may include establishing usage policies, capturing and retaining communications for a defined period, enabling search of communications content for audit, discovery or reporting purposes, and monitoring communications to assess employee adherence to defined policies. The most clearly defined communications governance regulations come from the financial services industry. Financial services organizations are regulated by entities such as the SEC, FINRA, CFTC and the FCA. This results in the majority of spend in the DCG market coming from the financial services organizations. Demands for response to public record requests have drawn significant investment in DCG solutions by public government entities, including federal, state and local municipalities.

Beyond financial services and public government, highly litigious organizations will frequently leverage DCG tools. This would include markets such as pharmaceuticals, healthcare, retail, construction and manufacturing. DCG solutions provide a means to proactively collect communications, and more effective capabilities to facilitate investigation processes. Broader market adoption may also result from DCG solutions' abilities to identify or contribute insights on general company, department or team sentiment, business or workplace conduct issues, and employee productivity and efficiency. Additionally, the focus on security risk, as well as compliance risk, could result in the use of DCG solutions across more organizations. This may include improvements to efforts such as data loss prevention, forensics and insider risk management.

The DCG market is primarily identified by vendors who offer archiving solutions to support corporate governance and regulatory compliance obligations. Vendors offering only connectors, while playing a vital role in allowing an archiving solution to support a communication channel, are often secondary in an organization's selection.

DCG vendors differentiate their offerings based on a number of important criteria. Many of them align to the use cases that were reviewed in the market description. As enterprises rapidly adopt new communication tools to address work from home requirements, shadow IT and their own customers' demand, DCG solutions with distinct capabilities to support these new communications have become much more visible in the market.

Unique attributes of DCG solutions include the following:

- **Scope of communication channel coverage:** The race to qualify and integrate as many communication channels as possible has been at the strategy forefront for many vendors in this market. The differentiating capability of the supported channel is the quality of the integration with the channel. Vendor integrations can include basic data export and transformation routines that generically treat multiple communications types as email. They can also be more advanced, leveraging vendor APIs, maintain all related metadata of the communication and perform bidirectional integrations. This can have a significant influence on the quality and scope of data captured and archived.

- **Methods of classification and categorization:** Use of communication type, metadata and keywords has been a common method of organizing communications to a group of data within an archiving solution. Differentiating approaches to advanced classification and categorization have been influenced by the use of data models, LLMs and contextual-based analysis, which can result in more accurate and improved organization of communications.

- **Search and discovery capabilities:** Critical to supporting an organization's ability to respond to audit and search/e-discovery requests, vendors differentiate in their ability to manage cases, organize, visualize, filter and manage search results, simplify input of complicated queries, and provide SLA-based performance.

- **Supervision and surveillance capabilities:** The use of lexicon-based rules has been the prominent method of establishing rules to monitor communications against policy. Newer, more advanced supervision- or surveillance-based monitoring capabilities use vendor data models or LLMs and machine learning to complete these tasks. These data models have an opportunity to be more agile than lexicon-based rules, supporting multiple languages, recognizing changes in vernacular and providing overall communication context to be included in the assessment to a policy. The results can be used for improved automated monitoring/tagging, and accuracy and efficiency outcomes or results, such as a reduction in false negatives or false positives.

- **Real-time enforcement of behavior:** Many solutions rely on postcommunication or batch-oriented review techniques to perform supervision. This can lead to assessment or reporting of the issue well after the communication has occurred. The use of real-time enforcement makes it possible to interactively head off an incursion of communication policy, preventing an issue from occurring in the first place.

## Representative Vendors

*The vendors listed in this Market Guide do not imply an exhaustive list. This section is intended to provide more understanding of the market and its offerings.*

### Vendor Selection

The DCG market includes vendors focused on digital communications archiving and supervision, and those specializing in communication tool integrations and connectors for data collection purposes.

Table 3 provides an overview of representative DCG software vendors offering archiving and supervision solutions, as well as representative DCG software vendors offering connector solutions.

**Table 3: Digital Communications Archiving, Supervision and Connector Solutions**

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

| Vendor | Product Names |
|---|---|
| 17a-4 | Data Parser |
| Archive360 | Unified Data Governance Platform |
| Aware | Contextual Intelligence Platform |
| Barracuda | Barracuda Message Archiver |
| Behavox | Quantum |
| Bloomberg | Vault |
| CellTrust | SL2 |
| Global Relay | Archive, Surveillance |
| Hearsay Systems | Relate |
| Intradyn | Email Archiver, Social Media Archiver, SMS/Text Archiver |
| Jatheon | Archiving Suite |
| LeapXpert | Communications Platform |
| Microsoft | Purview Communication Compliance |
| Mimecast | Cloud Archive, Supervision |
| MirrorWeb | Insight |
| Movius | MultiLine |
| Nuclei | Capture |
| Pagefreezer | Enterprise Collaboration Archiving, Mobile Text Archiving, Social Media Archiving |
| Proofpoint | Archive, Capture, Patrol, Supervision, Automate |
| SafeGuard Cyber | Compliance |
| Shield | Communication Compliance & Surveillance Platform |
| Smarsh | Digital Safe, Enterprise Archive, Professional Archive, Capture |
| Solix Technologies | SOLIXCloud Common Data Platform |
| SteelEye | Data Platform |
| Symphony | Compliant Messaging |
| TeleMessage | Mobile Archiver |
| Theta Lake | Risk and Compliance Suite |
| Umony | Instant Messaging Compliance, Mobile Recording |
| Veritas | Veritas Alta Archiving, Enterprise Vault, Alta Capture, Merge1 |
| ZL Tech | Unified Archive |

Source: Gartner (November 2023)

# Market Recommendations

I&O leaders should use DCG solutions to solve challenges associated with the broadening scope of communication tools used by employees. I&O leaders must consider the following in selecting and deploying DCG solutions:

- Mitigate potential corporate and regulatory compliance violations by shifting from a reactive to a proactive posture using DCG solutions.

- Shortlist DCG solutions that best align the scope of digital communications sources to required business use cases, such as compliance, governance, data retention, search/e-discovery, supervision, surveillance, analytics and insights.

- Challenge DCG vendors to clearly explain how integration of natively and third-party-developed communications connectors works in their respective solutions. This should include details of data format, completeness of metadata capture, and any bidirectional feedback between source and archive.

- Scope vendors' capabilities to support mobile and messaging application communications in selection criteria, as employee use, and regulatory and corporate oversight, of these tools accelerates.

- Differentiate vendor solutions by assessing whether data models, AI/ML and NLP are critical components of their offering in data classification, e-discovery, supervision, and analytics use cases.

## Note 1: Gartner's Initial Market Coverage

This Market Guide provides Gartner's initial coverage of the market and focuses on the market definition, rationale and dynamics.

## Recommended by the Author

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

Quick Answer: Are Mobile BYOD Programs Still Viable for Regulated Employees in Financial Services?

DOJ's 2023 Compliance Guidance: How to Respond to Four Critical Updates

Oversight, Disclosure and Risk Management: Compliance Program Implications of Recent DOJ and SEC Actions

Hype Cycle for Storage and Data Protection Technologies, 2023

Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications as a Service, Worldwide

# Table 1: DCG Solution Capabilities

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| Classifies data to customer-defined categories. |
| Assigns and manages access privileges for multiple use cases, including end-user search, e-discovery and proactive monitoring. |
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| Connectors ↓ |
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| Specializes in integrations with distinct communication channel(s) to access content. |
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| Provides integration with specific archive vendor offerings via API. |
|  |

Logs communications and reconciles delivery to archive.

Source: Gartner

## Table 2: Use Cases and Benefits of DCG Solutions

| Use Cases ↓ | Benefits ↓ |
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| Compliance | Creates and administers policies that align to the monitoring and retention of digital communications for regulatory and compliance purposes. This may include use of supervision and surveillance capabilities. |

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| Behavox | Quantum |
| Bloomberg | Vault |
| CellTrust | SL2 |
| Global Relay | Archive, Surveillance |
| Hearsay Systems | Relate |
| Intradyn | Email Archiver, Social Media Archiver, SMS/Text Archiver |
| Jatheon | Archiving Suite |
| LeapXpert | Communications Platform |
| Microsoft | Purview Communication Compliance |
| Mimecast | Cloud Archive, Supervision |
| MirrorWeb | Insight |

| Vendor ↓ | Product Names ↓ |
|---|---|
| Movius | MultiLine |
| Nuclei | Capture |
| Pagefreezer | Enterprise Collaboration Archiving, Mobile Text Archiving, Social Media Archiving |
| Proofpoint | Archive, Capture, Patrol, Supervision, Automate |
| SafeGuard Cyber | Compliance |
| Shield | Communication Compliance & Surveillance Platform |
| Smarsh | Digital Safe, Enterprise Archive, Professional Archive, Capture |
| Solix Technologies | SOLIXCloud Common Data Platform |
| SteelEye | Data Platform |
| Symphony | Compliant Messaging |
| TeleMessage | Mobile Archiver |
| Theta Lake | Risk and Compliance Suite |
| Umony | Instant Messaging Compliance, Mobile Recording |
| Veritas | Veritas Alta Archiving, Enterprise Vault, Alta Capture, Merge1 |
| ZL Tech | Unified Archive |

Source: Gartner (November 2023)