

# Analytics Answers Your Top 4 Questions About the Unstructured Content Living Across Your Organization

## Take the Guesswork Out of Storage Planning, Content Migration, Compliance, and Cloud Platform ROI

Content can be an organization's most valuable asset. But it can also be a cumbersome liability if it isn't well understood. That's because we are creating and sharing more files than we ever have, and that will only continue to increase. While the right content and information can make our jobs easier and business performance better, the wrong data can get in the way. If you are holding onto volumes of information that are no longer useful, it can devalue current data, take up expensive capacity, clutter up your new cloud platform, and make compliance audits take a lot longer. These stumbling blocks can hurt your company's ability to operate at full speed.

So, how do you gain better insight into your organization's content so you know what's mission-critical and what's not? By analyzing the data and the context around it, you can make more informed decisions that benefit the entire organization. Let's examine how the right analytics can help answer four key questions so you can make your content work for you.

### 1. How do I know what to delete, archive, and keep in tier one storage?

#### Analytics Answers Questions Such As...

- Which of my cloud-based platforms are within 10% of reaching storage capacity?
- Who is sharing information with people outside the company? What information are they sharing?
- How do I know what data needs to remain in my tier one storage system?
- Can I delete these files that are more than five years old, or am I required by law to archive them?
- Which group of users should move first to the new cloud-based platform?
- Do we have users who haven't uploaded anything into their cloud collaboration account in six months?

Analyzing your content lets you glean intelligence that can help to determine which information can be deleted, which information can be archived, and which information needs to remain in tier one storage for quick access and fast collaboration. But not all analytics solutions are created equal.

One type of solution is a file-based analytics tool, or what we call 'stand-alone analytics. These types of tools are often available for free download and are only helpful if you are looking for surface level information, such as who has access to certain folders or how much data lives in certain file sets. That's because, with these types of tools, it's difficult to connect different systems, such as file servers and various cloud systems, and to look at all that content as a whole. Its limited capability can only give you a one dimensional view of the information inside the company, unable to help you understand how the data relates to each other and how people interact with it.

With a narrow view, you're missing important insight that helps determine which information is mission-critical that requires tier one storage, such as client projects on deadline, and which information can be archived, such as files owned by employees who are no longer with the company. Stand-alone analytics yields slivers of insight, tricking people into making a decision based on incomplete information.

However, if you use a contextual analytics solution that's typically deployed via software-as-a-service, you're able to run an analysis on different sources at the same time, so you can review comprehensive results from a central pane of glass. By having this 360 degree view of your company's data, you have a much better idea of the significance of your content, who is using it, and its role within the organization. With that insight, you are in a much better position to determine exactly which data requires more bandwidth and needs to remain on the primary storage system. That intelligence also enables you to predict capacity needs and then make informed decisions about storage purchases. Otherwise, with partial knowledge, you may end up buying more storage too early, or buying it when it's not needed at all, which increases costs unnecessarily.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

With a context-oriented solution, conducting analytics on your data is as easy as set it and forget it. You can simply log into an admin account, start an analytics job, and let it

start scanning and doing its thing. When it's done, you get detailed reports from the directory level down to the file level that help you uncover traits about your data and gain a solid understanding of your environment. These solutions also provide dashboarding software that depicts the results in charts and graphs to make it easy to discover, explore, and understand a set of data - even if it's new to you. You can opt to view the analysis by user, by data type, or by location on premises. Then it becomes much easier (and faster) to decide what to delete, what to archive, and what's essential to the day-to-day business that needs to remain on the primary storage system. That knowledge can lead to more simplicity, speed, and savings for the organization.

#### Real-life use case: Knowing what data can be archived

With tens of thousands of employees, it was critical that a global company map its directories to the right users in the new cloud platform. With analytics to show the way, the IT team was able to know which content should move to the new platform, and which content should be consolidated and moved into an archive system on-premises. This decision saved both storage capacity and related costs.

## **2. How do I know if my content migration plan will work?**

Now that you've used analytics to gain a better understanding of the data that drives your business, you'll be able to derive more value from a content migration. But if you don't have an analytics capability that enables you to fully understand the content you're moving, you won't be able to make effective decisions about where it's going or know who will be affected. When that happens, the migration is at risk for delay, files are potentially misplaced, users will undoubtedly be disrupted, and the company may very well be in violation of compliance with industry regulations.

Unfortunately, most migration tools either do not have an analytics capability or the analytics feature is very limited because it's an add-on versus being purpose-built for a migration that demonstrates the impact of moving people and their content. For example, a basic analytics feature may tell you that you have 5 terabytes that belong to 100 users that need to be migrated. However, it cannot tell you that one user owns 4.5 of the 5 terabytes. In that case, you won't know that it's going to take a lot longer to move that one person to the new platform, and that the other 99 people will be able to

move very quickly. In a different scenario, let's say the analytics tool tells you that you have 50 terabytes of data that need to be moved. But what it doesn't tell you is whether the 50 terabytes represents 1000 files, which can move fairly quickly, or if it's 100,000 files with lots of permissions and metadata that will take much longer and affect more people. The more permissions there are to audit, the more questions there are that need to be asked, such as verifying why a certain account team in New York needs to share files with a team in Los Angeles.

Additionally, if the cutover isn't done quickly, it not only delays end user adoption of the new platform, it forces IT to have to keep two systems running in sync for a longer period of time. In these scenarios, the analytics is not providing a contextual view of the data. Therefore, it's difficult to understand the implications of a big data move and make informed decisions for a smooth and successful migration.

The power of contextual analytics demonstrates its value with [large-scale content migration projects](#) by providing a people-centric view of the content. In order to effectively plan a migration, it's important to see how people are using the data and how they collaborate with others using that data. This point of view enables IT teams to know who to ask if they can delete or archive certain files or folders, for example. With this point of view, you'll know which set of data should be the first to move to a cloud platform and which data should remain on-premises, for now.

Contextual analytics also play a role in designing a successful data migration. Pre-migration analytics simulate the migration process from beginning to end so you can identify any potential errors and fix them before you begin. You'll also be able to have a window into statuses like whether or not all of your users are provisioned. Once you know how people will be impacted when their data moves, you can successfully architect and design the migration around the requirements of their job.



### Real-life use case: Knowing when to make the move

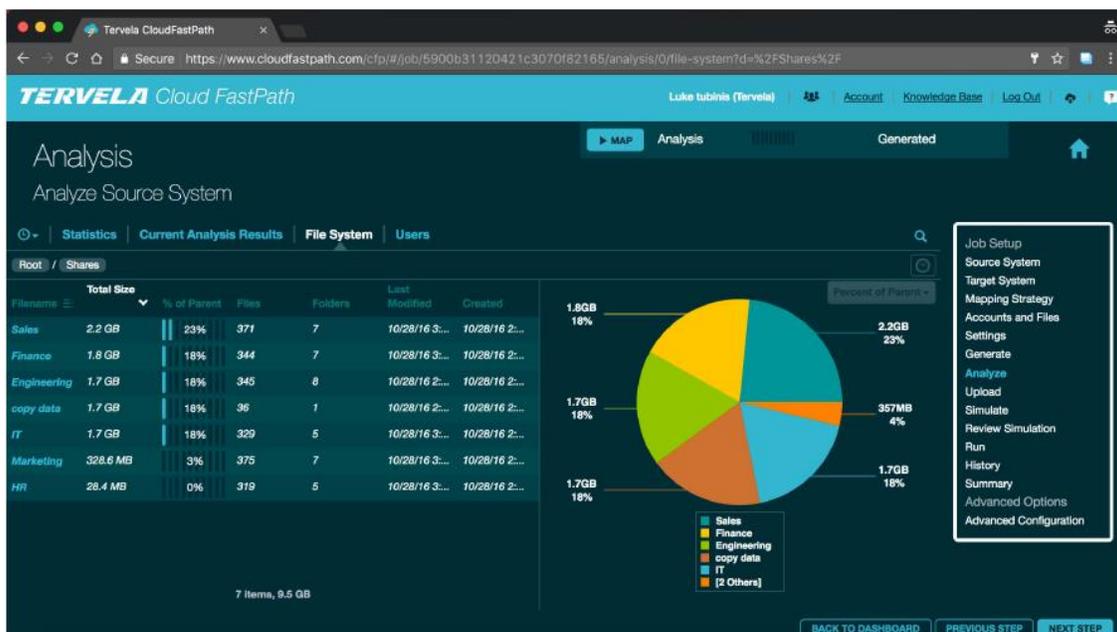
A global TV broadcast company based in Europe was planning a very large-scale migration from its existing cloud platform to Dropbox, which entailed moving data in phases, such as by geography, department, and user role. Knowing that a group of journalists would be covering the royal wedding during the migration project, IT was able to input that particular user group into the analytics to isolate them from the rest of the migration. The pre-migration analytics showed how long it would take to move this group of journalists so the migration could be planned around their deadlines. Without the pre-migration analysis, the transition would have taken place at the wrong time and disrupted many of the end users, not to mention the business.

### **3. How do I know if my cloud collaboration platform was worth the time and cost of moving my people?**

An analytics capability that offers a contextual view of the data not only helps you make decisions about a migration, but it also indicates how you should structure your content in the new platform to maximize its value. However, if you're not regularly using analytics, it's nearly impossible to identify any inefficiencies that exist on the source. Without that knowledge, you'll likely end up bringing those issues with you to your new cloud platform; the very same flaws you were trying to eliminate when you decided to move your content.

If you move content that is no longer useful into your new Box platform, for example, it makes it more difficult for your end users to find the information that they need to do their jobs. If you have a directory that contains 100 sub folders with information that doesn't relate to what people are working on, your end users will have to click through a dozen levels before they find what they need. So, not only is this stale content potentially taking up capacity that costs money, it prevents you from recognizing the full potential of your new cloud-based collaborative platform. And worse, your people and your business won't be able to perform up to their full potential.

The right analytics can show you that the file folder structure on the source was not effective, so you'll know how to organize it differently in your new cloud platform, enabling your end users to be more productive. Analytics can also help improve productivity by showing IT who may not be leveraging the new platform. For example, the analytics can show if a certain group of people hasn't used the new OneDrive account in six months. That way, IT can take steps to educate these people on how to use the cloud-based capabilities to their advantage. By helping your users be more collaborative and productive, you're also helping to maximize the company's return on its investment in the new platform.



Just as how contextual analytics helps IT better predict on-premises capacity and growth to make smart purchase decisions, the same holds true for analyzing capacity on cloud-based systems. When organizations use multiple cloud-based platforms, the analytics can be invaluable. IT teams can use the insight to stay ahead of storage requirements so they can develop proactive purchase plans. IT can also ensure that end users have the necessary bandwidth to support their data accessibility and sharing needs, helping to boost end user productivity and company performance.

Real-life use case: Creating a blueprint to organize content

A Midwest university with more than 100,000 users and terabytes of data moved its content into a completely new, more organized structure. Running an analysis on the source enabled the university to develop well thought out top level folders, then pre-create directory structures and permissions for the new cloud platform. This new, more organized structure simplified administration and helped users more easily navigate their content.

**4. If I migrate my organization's content, will I still be in compliance?**

Aside from maximizing investment in the new platform, predicting storage needs, controlling costs, and making sure end users can do their jobs efficiently, robust analytics also helps companies remain compliant with industry regulations. For example, a permissions analysis can show you exactly who is sharing information with people outside the company through an "access map." This insight is obviously important from an industry compliance standpoint, as well as to be able to support internal company policies.



Analyze and Identify



Consolidate Systems



Cleanup Storage



Predict Outcomes

Analytics also enables you to automatically map permissions and then create rules to selectively apply or change permissions to content and subsets of content. That way you can automatically grant, revoke, or audit access for millions of directories and files at a time in order to remain compliant during and after a migration.

Real-life use case: Moving people and content while maintaining compliance

A national financial services firm had a complicated shared drive which included departmental work, as well as a directory made up of folders for clients. The firm needed to retain proper permissions for the client folders and move ownership of all other content to the department heads. The IT team was able to split the shared drive accordingly and retain proper permissions for the client folders and automatically remap ownership for the rest of the content so the firm remained compliant during the migration.

**Conclusion**

The biggest concern we hear from customers is being able to do everything in their power to avoid disrupting their end users. Therefore, it's imperative to have a multi-dimensional, contextual view of the content across your organization. That insight isn't possible if you separate your people from the data because you won't know how changes to one affect the other. We live in a world now where incurring the time, risk, and cost of a do-over is not an option.

When you have intelligence about your data, you can see its level of value to your people. With that intelligence, you can make the right decision the first time, whether it's knowing when to increase your on-premises capacity, knowing when to migrate certain users to the new target, knowing which cloud platform is best for your needs, or knowing how to maintain compliance. Because you won't be guessing - you'll know. To evaluate your current storage environment, visit Cloud FastPath to get your [free analysis](#).