WHITEPAPER

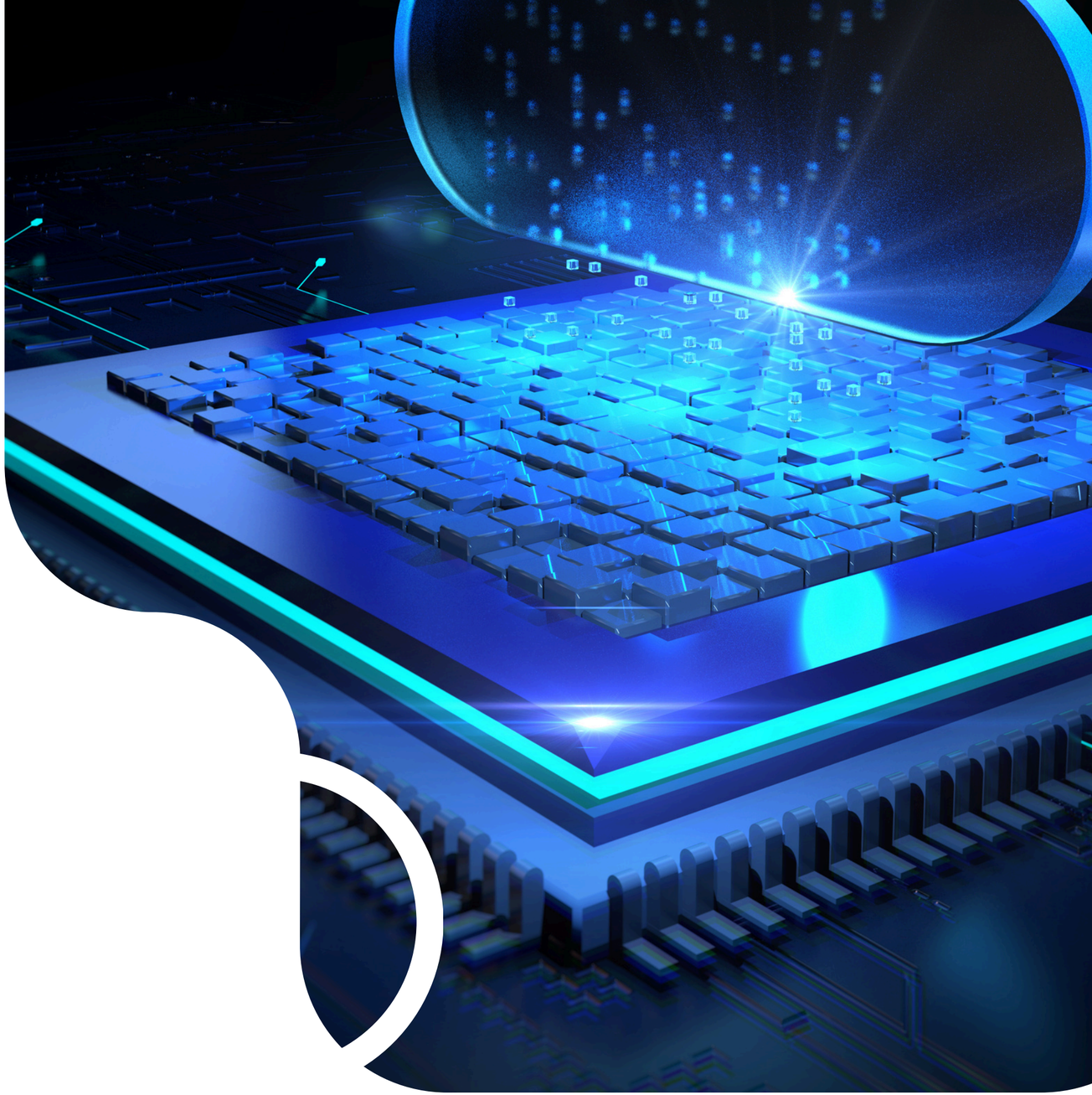
Modernizing IT Landscapes:

How the Solix Application Retirement Solution Leads the Way

SOLIX™
Empowering the Data-driven Enterprise

Understanding Application Retirement

Application retirement is the strategic process of decommissioning outdated or redundant software applications within an organization. This practice involves securely migrating critical data from these applications into an accessible and centralized repository, followed by a complete shutdown of the retired application. The primary objective is to simplify IT operations while ensuring that historical records remain available for compliance and business purposes. By retiring legacy systems, organizations can eliminate unnecessary overheads, reduce risks, and enhance the efficiency of their IT environments.



Risks of Outdated Applications

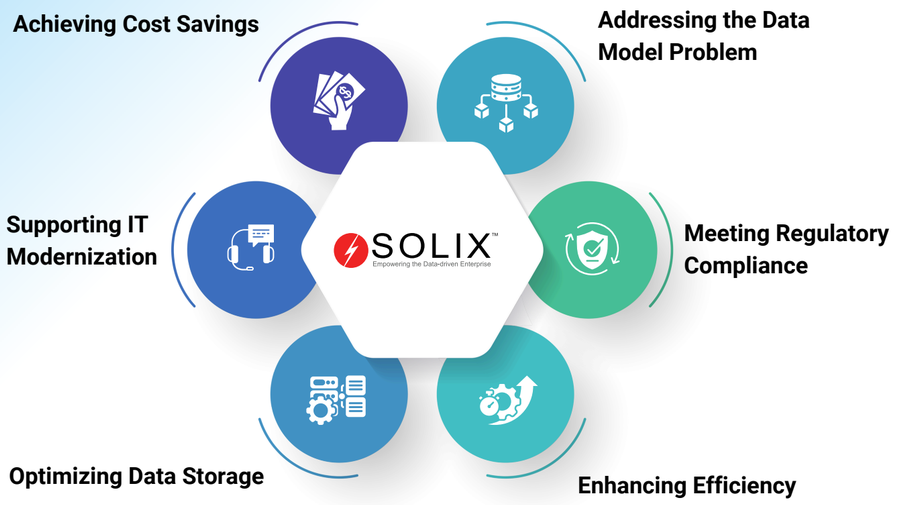
The presence of outdated applications in an organization’s ecosystem introduces several challenges with far-reaching implications. First, these legacy systems are notorious for posing significant security risks. Unsupported by vendors, they lack critical updates and patches, making them vulnerable to cyberattacks. Sensitive business and customer data in such systems could be easily exposed to malicious actors.

Additionally, outdated applications incur unnecessary costs. Organizations often bear high expenses to maintain legacy systems, including licensing fees, hardware upkeep, and operational support. These costs accumulate over time and divert resources away from innovative projects.

Moreover, outdated applications contribute to IT infrastructure complexity. Their inability to integrate seamlessly with modern systems creates bottlenecks, hindering the scalability and agility of an organization’s digital framework. Consequently, these systems become obstacles in achieving IT modernization goals and leveraging emerging technologies.

Why Does the Enterprise Need an Application Retirement Solution?

Enterprises face increasing challenges in managing their IT landscapes, particularly with legacy systems. An application retirement solution is essential to address these challenges effectively as outlined below.



- **Meeting Regulatory Compliance:** In today's regulatory landscape, compliance with data privacy and retention laws such as GDPR, HIPAA, and CCPA is non-negotiable. Enterprises must ensure that historical data is retained securely and remains easily retrievable for audits or legal inquiries. A reliable application retirement tool provides robust features to preserve data integrity, maintain detailed audit trails, and confidently meet these regulatory requirements.

- **Addressing the Data Model Problem:** Legacy applications often use proprietary or outdated data models that are incompatible with modern analytical tools and platforms. These data silos limit the organization's ability to gain actionable insights. An application retirement tool resolves this issue by cleaning and migrating data into standardized formats, ensuring seamless integration with modern systems.

- **Enhancing Efficiency:** Maintaining outdated applications consumes significant IT resources that could be better utilized for innovation and strategic initiatives. By retiring redundant systems, organizations can reduce IT complexity, streamline operations, and enable their teams to focus on high-value tasks.

- **Optimizing Data Storage:** An effective application retirement solution ensures that only relevant data is archived and stored. This optimization not only reduces storage costs but also accelerates data retrieval times, improving overall efficiency in handling historical records.

- **Supporting IT Modernization:** The retirement of legacy applications is a critical step in IT modernization. It eliminates technological debt and clears the path for adopting cloud-native solutions and other advanced technologies. This transition enhances organizational agility, scalability, and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

- **Achieving Cost Savings:** Retiring unused applications delivers substantial cost savings. Organizations can reduce expenses related to licensing, hardware, maintenance, and support. These savings can then be redirected to fund transformative projects and strategic growth initiatives, maximizing overall ROI.

Essential Features of an Effective Application Retirement Solution

The application retirement market has matured over the past 10 to 20 years, with numerous solutions now available. Providers have adopted diverse strategies to bring their offerings to market. To facilitate a seamless and efficient application retirement process, a solution must address a wide range of requirements. Below are the key features that define an effective application retirement solution.

- **Data Archiving and Retention:** A reliable application retirement solution should offer strong data archiving and retention features. It must enable long-term storage to preserve data quality, ensure searchable archives for quick access, and comply with organizational data retention policies and legal requirements. These features work together to guarantee that critical data stays intact, easily accessible, and fully compliant throughout its entire archival lifecycle.

- **Compliance Management:** Compliance management is crucial when retiring applications, ensuring alignment with regulations like GDPR, HIPAA, and CCPA. A robust tool should facilitate this by incorporating essential features like comprehensive audit trails to record all retirement process actions meticulously, data masking to protect sensitive information, and regular updates to address changing regulatory demands, ensuring compliance even for archived data.

- **Data Validation:** A reliable tool must provide strong data validation capabilities to maintain data integrity during application retirement. It should perform thorough consistency checks before, during, and after retirement, detect and correct errors to prevent corruption, and generate detailed reports for transparency and accountability.

- **Accelerated Deployment:** The tool should utilize prebuilt application integrations and automated database assessment tools to streamline deployment, reduce professional service costs, enhance archived data integrity, and improve user access—ensuring faster and more efficient solution implementation.

- **Integration with Data Analytics:** Archived data should seamlessly integrate with third-party analytics tools, enabling its use in organizational data insight initiatives. By incorporating historical data into current analytics frameworks, organizations can achieve more comprehensive analyses, gain deeper insights, and enhance decision-making processes.

- **Integration and Scalability:** A robust retirement solution should scale to accommodate diverse data volumes and the complexities of large-scale operations. It must handle extensive datasets without performance issues, support simultaneous application retirements, and provide APIs and prebuilt connectors for seamless integration with various systems. Efficient resource management ensures smooth operations without system overload.

- **Data Security and Privacy:** Ensuring data security and privacy is critical throughout and beyond application retirement. The tool must include strong security measures, such as encryption and masking of data in transit and at rest, to prevent unauthorized access. Additionally, features for detecting and addressing security incidents and managing subject requests enhance the overall security framework.

- **Access Control and Searchability:** Role-based access controls integrated with LDAP/SSO/AD enable authorized users to retrieve retired data efficiently, specific to their roles. Features like full-text search, saved queries, custom reports, and e-discovery enhance data navigation, ensuring compliance with both regulatory and business requirements.

- **Reporting and Analytics:** Robust reporting and analytics are vital for tracking the success of the retirement process. The tool should provide detailed reports covering data validation, compliance, metadata, data flow, primary or foreign key relationships, and preservation of application source code or technical documentation as necessary. Customizable or static report outputs allow users to create tailored reports to meet specific needs and requirements.

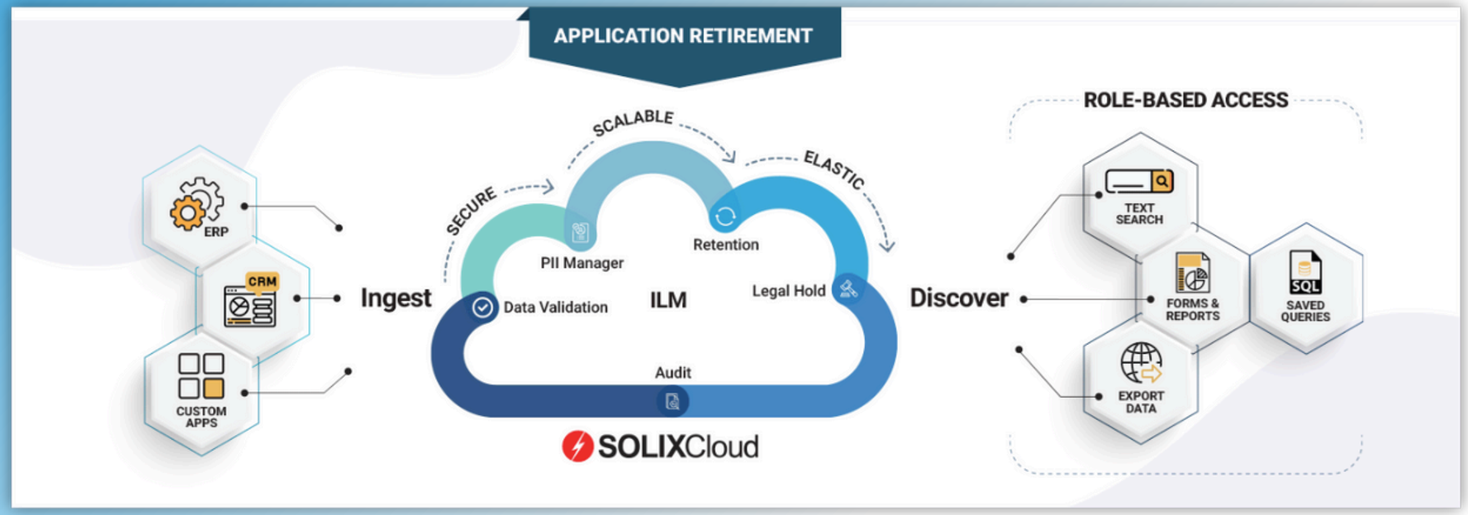
- **Automation:** Automation improves the efficiency and accuracy of the application retirement process. The tool should enable automated workflows for repetitive tasks, reducing manual involvement and minimizing human error. It should also allow users to schedule tasks for minimal business disruption and provide automated notifications and alerts to keep users updated on the process status.

- **Information Lifecycle Management Capability:** ILM ensures effective data handling from creation to deletion. Key features include enforcing retention, archiving, and disposal policies, automating transitions between lifecycle stages, and continuous monitoring with compliance and efficiency reporting. This approach helps organizations manage data securely and efficiently throughout its lifecycle, ensuring compliance and optimal resource utilization.

- **Pre-Built Templates:** Pre-built templates streamline the decommissioning process by providing standardized procedures and best practices, ensuring consistency and reducing errors across the organization. These templates optimize workflows and incorporate industry standards while allowing customization to meet specific organizational needs, offering a versatile and efficient solution for tailored decommissioning strategies.

Solix Application Retirement Solution

The SOLIX Application Retirement is a self-funding solution that offers a comprehensive Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) framework to retire legacy packaged and custom applications across relational databases and mainframe platforms. It also supports archiving all related unstructured data, such as report extracts (PDFs, Excel, .csv), documents, and multimedia files.



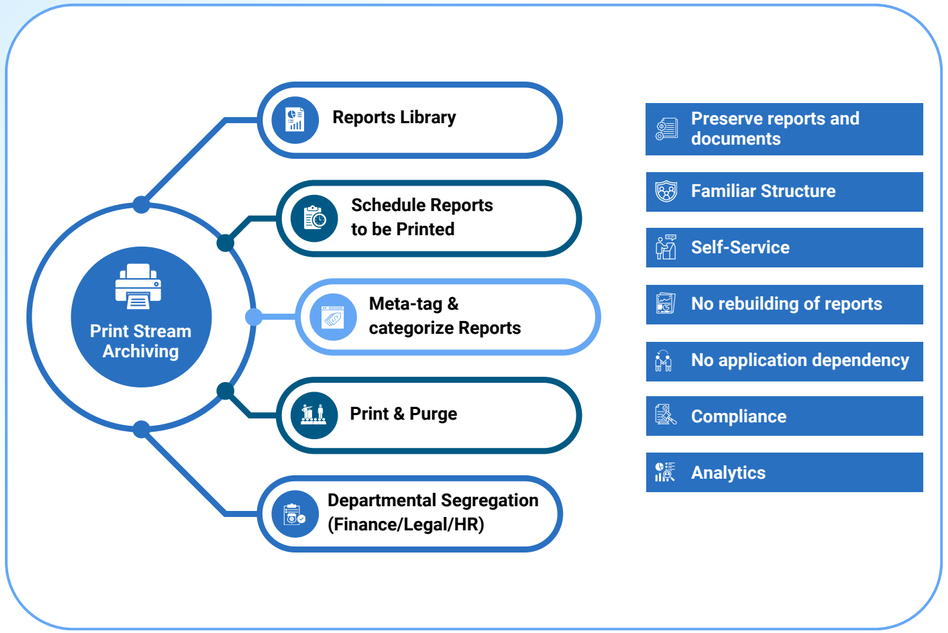
SOLIX has created software, a repeatable process, a methodology, and a suite of factory services tailored to address the challenges of application decommissioning. The SOLIX Application Retirement as-a-service solution is composed of three main components:

- SOLIX Common Data Platform (CDP) software-as-a-service in the Microsoft Azure cloud (or private cloud)
- The SOLIX Application Retirement Process and Methodology
- SOLIX Application Retirement Factory Services

The SOLIX Approach:

The SOLIX Common Data Platform (CDP) is central to Solix's approach for retiring applications and the associated data across all required platforms - on-premise, mainframe, cloud, or hybrid. It supports hundreds of legacy databases and sources and can automate the process of migrating data. Once migrated, it is crucial to validate that the data was copied completely and correctly. SOLIX CDP automates this process with extensive validation algorithms for every data type. The validation reports produced by these algorithms are key to convincing end users and auditors that, when the time comes, it will be safe to pull the plug on the legacy application.

The *SOLIX Application Retirement Process and Methodology* preserves as much context as possible to give value back to this data. Context is the crux of the data challenge. Here are a few scenarios of data challenges an enterprise may encounter, and illustrate how the Solix Application Retirement Process and Methodology could solve those data challenges.



- When an application is removed, the context provided by that application will also disappear, leaving the data to stand on its own. Many applications contain a data dictionary. SOLIX CDP can import and add this data dictionary to the archive repository. Imagine a table named "RPXXQ." Unless you were a developer familiar with this application, it is highly unlikely that you could ever know what kind of data was stored in this table. But if we preserve the user-understandable name for the table "Accounts Payable Invoices," it would be a different story.

- SOLIX CDP also provides a way to automate the whole process of static report output through its unique feature called the Virtual Printer. Before decommissioning the application, the solution runs a key report and saves the output as PDF files. It then archives these reports alongside the data or ingests previously created report files into the archive. These static reports are typically used for historical reference, compliance, audit trails, or documentation purposes, ensuring that a consistent record of the data is maintained even after archiving or decommissioning the source system.

- One of the most important forms of technical context for legacy applications is custom reports you may have created over the years, which contain valuable query code. Using the SOLIX CDP SQL Editor, you can run these preserved queries to recreate your custom reports inside the archive. SOLIX CDP can preserve the context of the legacy data by including other documents like reference manuals, technical documentation, procedure documents, operations documents, training documents, screenshots, printed statements, printed forms, etc.

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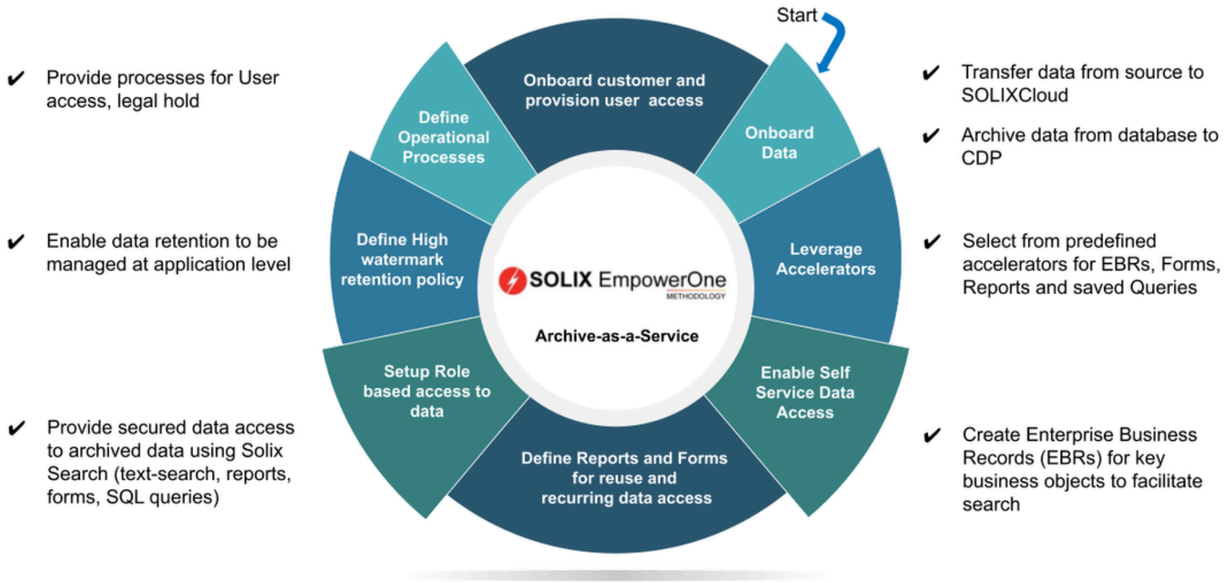
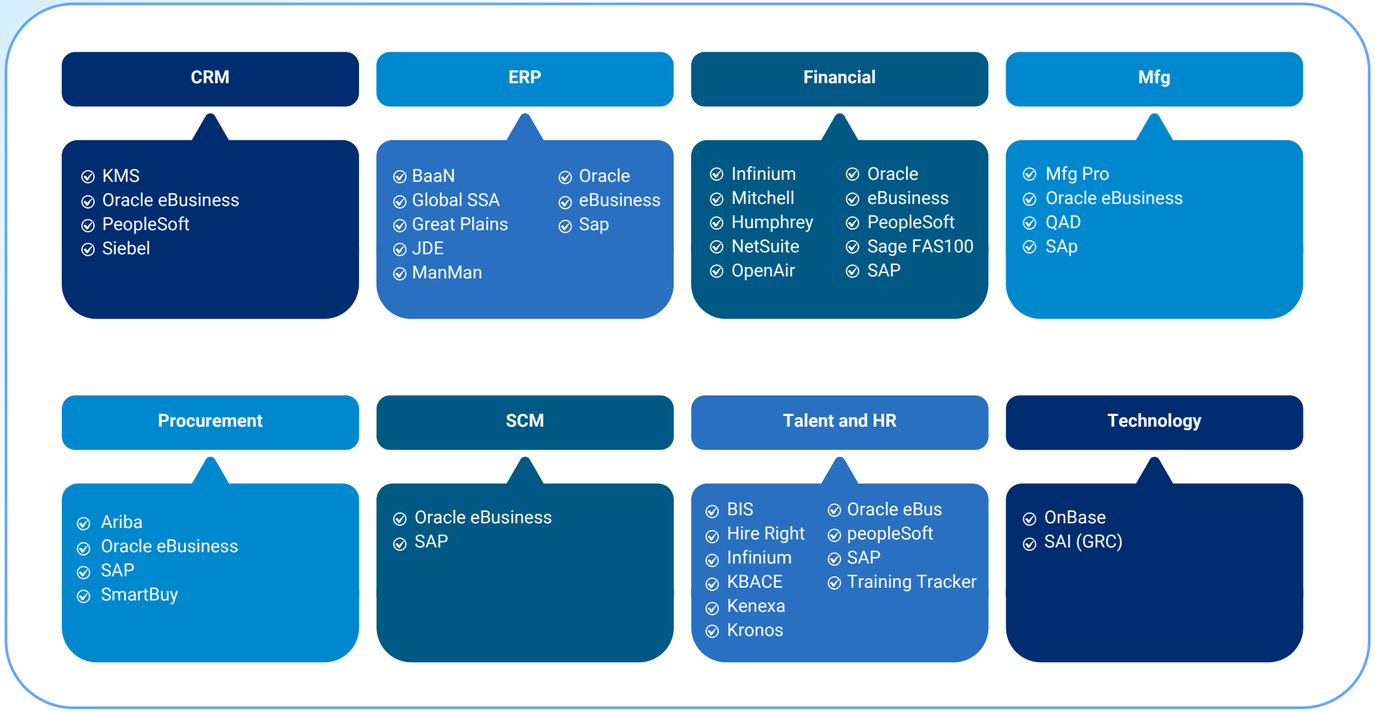
- The key to solving the data problem in an application decommissioning project is to understand the business object models used by the application. In most applications, the number of objects is typically a fraction of the number of reports/screens. If we focus on defining these key objects rather than replicating reports, we can cut the work on the retirement project down to size. SOLIX CDP introduced the concept of the Enterprise Business Record (EBR) to accomplish this goal. The EBR is a model of the entire business object (including structured and unstructured data) stored in a denormalized, flattened structure. With the EBR's search feature, a business user can access their data without knowing anything about SQL or the underlying data model. The EBR with Search enables the concept of self-service and end-user data access. Defining key business objects as EBRs and leveraging SOLIX's search capabilities enables organizations to meet end-user data access requirements while minimizing costs and maximizing savings, which can be redirected to strategic IT initiatives.

- Every end-user organization has its mission and challenges, and asking them to take some of their valuable time to learn a new way to access data will need to be justified. The answer for many organizations is the adoption of self-service, end-user data access powered by EBRs and search. As we have seen, one EBR representing a key business object in the application can replace many screens and reports. Coupled with the project accelerators provided by the Solix Application Retirement Factory team, which include out-of-the-box EBR definitions for most enterprise-class commercial applications, you have the start to a very cost-effective solution to this challenge.



The SOLIX Application Retirement Factory Service is a service component consisting of a large group of data analysts, archivists, and developers who specialize in solving the application decommissioning data challenge. The members of this factory team are experts in techniques like data modeling, code analysis, query log analysis, and reverse engineering. The team also comprises specialists for the most common enterprise-class applications currently being decommissioned. Another important benefit of working with the SOLIX Application Retirement Factory team is accessing their extensive library of reusable deliverables, like project accelerators for specific applications. In a nutshell, it is a factory approach for rapid deployment and is scalable to support very large projects.

Here is a small sample of the types of applications that have been retired by the factory team:



> **"You don't have to learn to solve the data problem alone. Let the Solix archiving experts help you through this hurdle".**

Key Capabilities of Solix Application Retirement

SOLIX Application Retirement and Decommissioning enables organizations to rationalize their application portfolio and reduce infrastructure costs. We help organizations transition from complex, on-prem legacy application management to SaaS-based, modern alternatives. The following are the key capabilities that have made the SOLIX Application Retirement solution the customer's choice for a very long time.

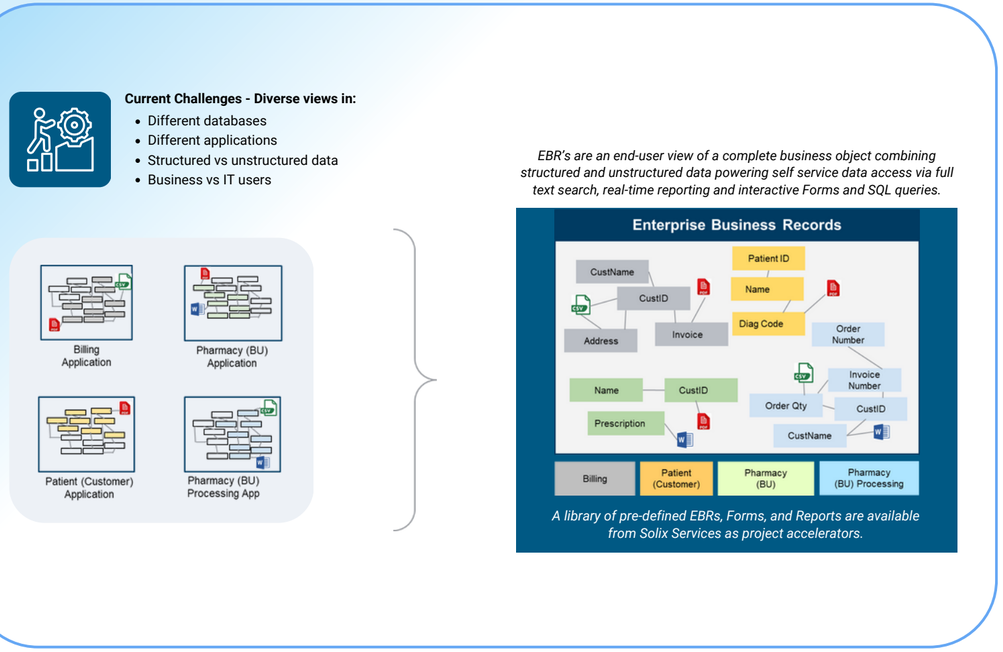
- **Metadata Driven:** Solix Metadata management is an end-to-end framework to explore all enterprise metadata and lineage from a centralized repository and business glossary. At the time of ingestion, it automatically captures and stores the structural and relational metadata to allow the building of custom retirement configurations and business objects. Metadata also helps preserve data integrity and implement a comprehensive data governance & ILM strategy based on business and regulatory requirements.

- **Information Lifecycle Management:** With the SOLIX Application Retirement solution, organizations can optimize their infrastructure with a tiered enterprise data management strategy and establish a control framework for proper data governance and compliance. ILM classifies data at creation and moves data across infrastructure tiers based on business rules and retention policies.

- **Process Validation:** As part of the application retirement process, Solix creates a copy of legacy applications' data, including custom tables, to the cloud and then validates the retired data against the source to ensure it has copied data in its entirety from the source. Once the data has been archived and validated, the legacy application software and hardware stack are ready to be decommissioned.

- **Print Report Archiving:** The solution offers comprehensive reporting for all structured data, supporting ODBC, JDBC, and SQL access for seamless database integration. Its comprehensive REST API allows easy interaction with other applications, enabling automation and efficient data retrieval. The tool supports legacy reports and enables the creation of custom and ad hoc reports for tailored and immediate data analysis. Organizations can use the Print Report archiving feature to capture business reports in PDF format for legacy applications built on proprietary databases without JDBC support. Organizations can also use this feature for all legacy applications, as it helps access regularly used reports without rebuilding them from archive data. These reports are denormalized, indexed, and tagged for easy text search and retrieval by end-users.

- **Enterprise Business Record (EBR):** EBR is a denormalized, point-in-time snapshot of a business transaction, including structured, semi-structured, or unstructured data elements. EBRs organize data into templates (i.e., invoices, customer data, spreadsheets, and other documents) for easy self-service access to complex business processes. EBRs support regulatory and analytic use cases by providing quick and well-structured access to complete transactional data. EBRs can be text-searched or queried. They are also available for authorized third-party applications through APIs.



- **Easy Access to Retired Data:** The Solix data access portal provides authorized users access to retired data. Through well-defined role-based access controls (that integrate with LDAP/SSO/AD), any number of authorized users can easily access retired data using full-text search, saved queries, and custom reports to meet compliance, e-discovery, and other regulatory and business requirements.

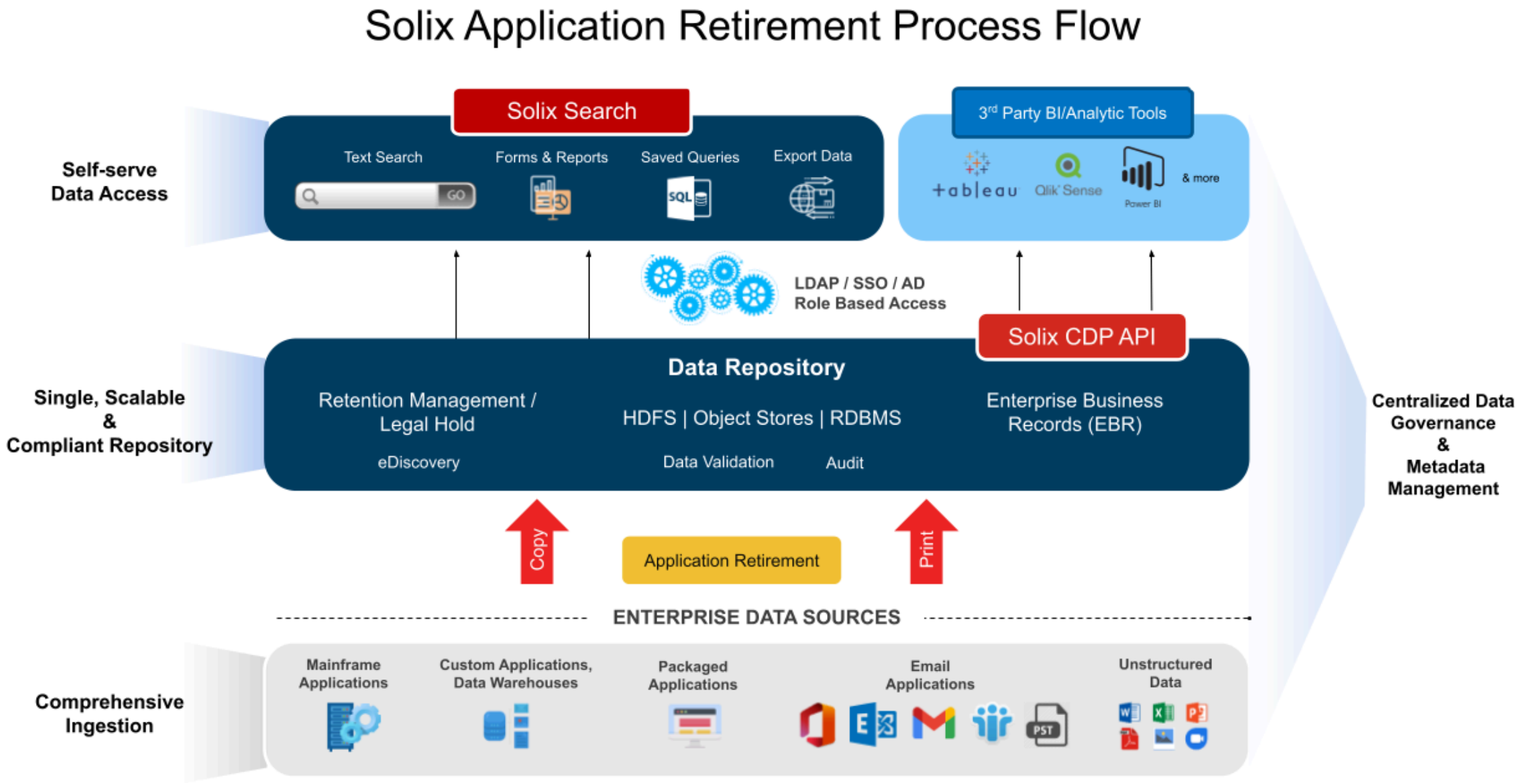
- **eDiscovery & Legal Hold:** With its robust text search and structured ad-hoc reporting compliance, legal professionals can quickly identify and retrieve records to meet data requests from regulatory agencies and law enforcement. Further, they can place legal holds on records of interest to ensure such data is retained beyond the pre-defined data retention periods to comply with legal proceedings.

- **Achieve Compliance:** Solix, with its comprehensive and flexible ILM and legal hold features for compliance and legal requirements. Additionally, the solution provides a comprehensive audit report of all actions performed within SolixCloud, including data ingestion, access, deletion, updates, and export. This helps compliance officers manage the compliance program effectively.

- **Policy-Based Data Retention:** Advanced Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) helps organizations navigate complex regulations and minimize accidental data deletion. Data is retained only as required by law, with automatic or manual purge options. A custom rules engine allows for tailored retention policies, while standard retention plans cover key regulations like PCI DSS, FISMA, GDPR, HIPAA, and CCPA.

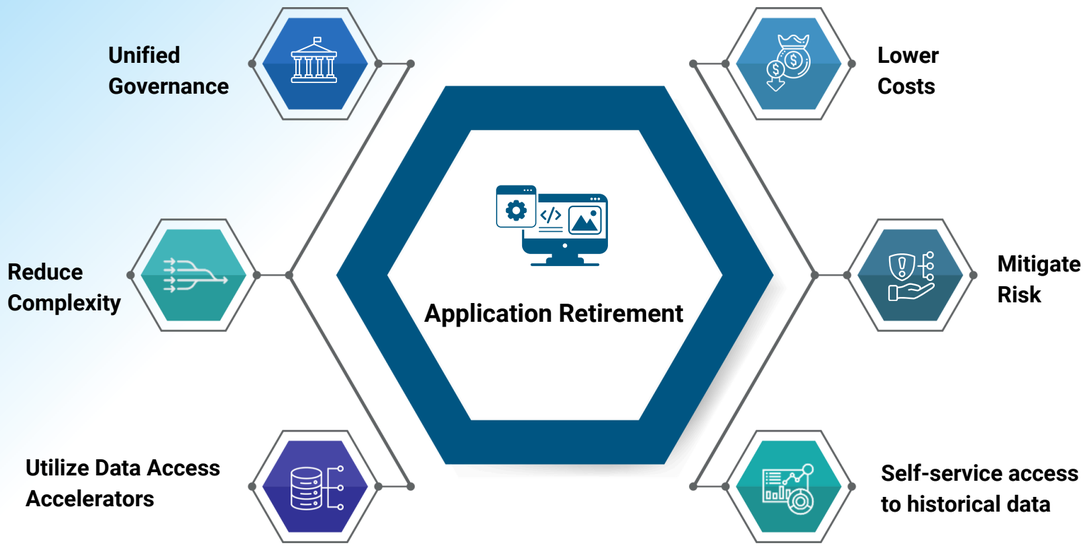
- **Reduce Costs and Free Up Resources:** By moving legacy applications to low-cost Cloud storage, SOLIX Application Retirement frees up expensive hardware resources and software licenses in your production environment. It also eliminates maintenance and support efforts, freeing up valuable time for IT personnel. These result in significant cost and resource optimization while ensuring continued access to retired data for business reporting and regulatory compliance.

- **Cloud Native Solution:** Solix offers application retirement as a fully managed, low-cost, pay-as-you-go service. It is secure and compliant and can scale according to your enterprise's needs. Solix is designed to control costs, boost application performance and availability, and meet compliance objectives.



Unmatched Benefits of SOLIX Application Retirement

The SOLIX Application Retirement Solution offers a suite of unparalleled benefits that empower enterprises to seamlessly transition from legacy systems to modern IT environments. By addressing key challenges and leveraging advanced technologies, Solix ensures data integrity, compliance, and cost-efficiency throughout the application retirement process. The following outlines the unmatched benefits Solix Application Retirement could deliver.



- **Reduce technical debt and infrastructure costs.**
- **Supports structured, unstructured, and semi-structured data.**
- **A centralized data governance and administration platform.**
- **Retire & decommission legacy applications at a low, fixed monthly cost.**
- **Meet compliance goals with policy-based data retention, legal hold, and role-based access.**
- **It supports ERP, CRM, custom apps, mainframes, file servers, IOT, email, documents, and social and log data.**
- **Application-specific accelerators for SAP, Oracle E-Business Suite, PeopleSoft, Siebel, JD Edwards, and Baan. (not built-in)**
- **Connectors for virtually any platform, OS, or data management system.**
- **End-user access to legacy data via full-text search, forms, reports, and ad-hoc queries.**
- **Eliminate the maintenance, infrastructure, and licensing costs of legacy applications.**
- **Leverage Solix application management experts to deliver the project efficiently.**

Customer Success Story

A leading global provider of tools, storage solutions, and security products, and the world leader in engineered fastening systems, operating in 60 countries with 50,000 employees and 100 manufacturing facilities, successfully leveraged the SOLIX Application Retirement solution to decommission their legacy applications.

Challenge

The company encountered substantial difficulties with its outdated legacy applications, plagued by high maintenance costs, compliance risks, and inefficiencies that stifled innovation and growth. Recognizing the need for a strategic approach to address these issues, the company embarked on an archiving strategy to store its legacy application data more cost-effectively.

Solution

After evaluating various solutions available in the market, the company selected the Solix Application Retirement solution due to its comprehensive capabilities. These included standard archiving, a globally relevant suite of data management mechanisms, built-in strategies to support worldwide compliance policies, competitive licensing fees, and significant cost savings. The Solix solution effectively addressed their challenges, making it the ideal choice. Initially, the company implemented the solution for a few selected legacy applications that had long been part of their ecosystem. Over the years, the company expanded this retirement strategy across its global business units, with Solix as its strategic partner.

Result

Decommissioning legacy systems with the SOLIX Application Retirement solution significantly enhanced system performance by reducing data load, eliminating redundant applications, and optimizing resource utilization, leading to improved efficiency in data management. The solution not only ensured the integrity of migrated data but also validated compliance with global standards. Additionally, the Solix solution streamlined data lifecycle management and retrieval, offering user-friendly, customized search capabilities and comprehensive audit trails. The most impactful outcome was the substantial reduction in technical debt and the enhanced enforcement of data retention policies, positioning the company for continued growth and innovation.

This success story exemplifies the transformative impact of the SOLIX Application Retirement solution, which enables organizations to effectively manage their legacy systems while driving business agility and operational excellence.

Trusted Worldwide by Industry Leading Organizations

Conclusion

Selecting the right application retirement tool is critical for ensuring a smooth, compliant, and efficient retirement process. By prioritizing features such as data archiving and retention, compliance management, data validation, scalability, user-friendly interfaces, integration capabilities, security, reporting and analytics, and automation, enterprises can effectively transition from legacy systems to modern IT environments. The insights provided in this chapter should serve as a comprehensive guide for IT professionals and decision-makers in choosing the best tool to meet their organization's specific needs.

References

Gartner

“Solix Technologies has been a leader in Gartner’s Magic Quadrant for Data Archiving and Application Retirement solutions for many years.

FORRESTER®

“Customers like Solix’s data search and data archiving capabilities, total cost of ownership, and technical support.

Bloor

“It’s fit for purpose, particularly in regard to data lakes, and is well suited for handling compliance in a world where regulatory requirements are both frequently changing and differ dramatically from country to country and region to region.

FROST & SULLIVAN

“The CDP provides granular knowledge and control of every data record from the moment it enters the system until purposefully deleted, — whether it originate from the cloud, on-premises, or multi-cloud — and that makes Solix CDP vital to the value generation of any organization.

ABC Supply Co. inc.

“Enterprise Archiving with Solix enables us to manage all of our data based on an enterprise blueprint with business rules for compliance and retention.

FINISAR

“Solix makes the high-volume extraction and retirement of machine data simple, with these larger data sets, we are able to perform meaningful analysis and leverage existing tools to determine root cause analysis and find defects.

ATD AMERICAN TIRE DISTRIBUTORS

“Database archiving has also helped ATD move toward a lifecycle management approach to data, meaning that the company is able to exercise more control over data's creation, storage, and deletion.

Microsoft

“Information archiving is now available as a service for public cloud users. “SOLIXCloud is a tool for organizations looking to archive their data and applications at scale.”

ORACLE

“Achieving Oracle Validated Integration gives our customers confidence that the integration between the Solix CDP and Oracle E-Business Suite is functionally sound and performs as tested.

KRONOS®

“We selected Solix because its archiving solution is best of breed and lends itself well to OEM deployment.

SOLIX™
Empowering the Data-driven Enterprise

Stay Connected

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