



IDENTITY GOVERNANCE / INSIGHT PAPER

The Hidden Problem in Identity Governance



Most organisations don't need a new Identity Governance solution. They need their **existing** one to work properly. Here's how to fix it in 30 days, without ripping anything out.

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Most organisations don't need a new Identity Governance solution. They need their existing one to work properly.

Over the last decade of client engagements, I've lost count of how many times I've walked into an environment with a perfectly capable IGA tool that delivers almost none of the value it was purchased for. Not because the technology is fundamentally flawed, but because the implementation has drifted, decayed, or become so overloaded with exceptions that nobody trusts it anymore.

And when nobody trusts the IGA system, it becomes a cycle of doom - everything slows down, risk increases, audits become painful and the business loses confidence in the IAM function.

This article is about the real reason this happens, and how organisations can materially improve their Identity Governance posture in just 30 days without ripping anything out.



01

The uncomfortable truth: most IGA failures have nothing to do with tooling

Nearly every struggling IGA implementation suffers from the same root causes:

- **The joiner/mover/leaver process fractured years ago** and now runs on partial automation and heroics
- **Access models no longer reflect reality**, making every role review political and every certification campaign noisy
- **Orphan accounts and privilege creep accumulate silently** over time
- **Approval workflows break** and are bypassed
- **Business ownership disappears**, leaving everything on IT's shoulders
- **No-one measures success**, so no-one notices when things get worse



These aren't tool failures - they're posture failures. The distinction matters because posture can be improved quickly.

12-18 MONTHS - the typical cost of a full rip-and-replace, in budget and organisational fatigue. Most organisations simply don't need it.

Ripping and replacing an IGA solution? That's a **12-18 month commitment** with significant budget and organisational fatigue. Most organisations simply don't need it.



02 IGA drift is real, and it's happening everywhere

Identity Governance rarely fails in a dramatic, rather it's a slow, incremental process whereby suddenly no one trusts the tooling.

Some of the most common things we see are:

- Broken connectors that are worked around.
- Special access exceptions that have become permanent.
- Certification campaigns so bloated that nobody reads them.
- An access request process with ten steps when three would do.
- A role model that hasn't been touched since the last reorg.
- Vanilla configuration focused on tool functionality rather than the actual business process.

Collectively, these erode the entire governance posture. By the time leadership notices, the IGA tool is being blamed. But the tool is rarely the issue.



03 It's possible to make measurable improvement in 30 days

There is a window of opportunity that most organisations overlook. You can materially improve your Identity Governance posture within **30 days** by focusing on three things.

01 Diagnose

Expose the real problems, not the perceived ones: weakest controls, highest-risk accounts and where governance happens off-platform.

02 De-risk

Fix the dangerous stuff first: excessive privileges, orphaned accounts, broken workflows and toxic access combinations.

03 Optimise

Deliver tangible wins in automation and journeys: simpler joiner/mover/leaver, leaner certifications, stable connectors.

First, diagnose the real problems (not the perceived ones)

A structured diagnostic exposes:

- Weakest controls
- Highest-risk accounts
- Worst operational bottlenecks

- Misalignments between process and configuration
- Misuse of the existing tool
- Points where governance is happening “off platform”

Then de-risk the environment by fixing the dangerous stuff first

Before anything else, these are commonly:

- Excessive privileges
- Orphaned accounts
- Broken workflows
- Toxic combinations
- High-risk roles
- Authentication gaps
- Access paths nobody realised existed

Prioritisation is your friend here: risk assess and then act! Practical intervention in increments beats design perfection. (Spoiler alert: there is no such thing anyway - it's about what needs to work for the business now.)

Finally, deliver tangible improvements to automation and user journeys

These will usually involve:

- Simplifying joiner/mover/leaver flows
- Reviewing and streamlining certification requirements to meet actual business needs without the noise. Approvers are much more likely to engage when you remove friction wherever possible.
- Stabilising connectors
- Reviewing and streamlining other operational processes
- Introducing lightweight but effective governance controls



None of this requires a new tool. It requires a disciplined focus on posture improvement, delivered quickly.



04 The myth of “we need a new IGA tool”

Replacing your IGA platform because policies aren’t followed or workflows are broken is like replacing your car because the tyres are flat. (I did that once, but I’d also had the car for 14 years and was bored of it too!)

The existing investment is almost always salvageable. The challenge is that organisations conflate “we’re not getting value” with “the technology is wrong.”

In reality the technology is usually fine; it’s the configuration that’s outdated and the processes that don’t reflect reality. The original implementation was either “just get it done” or the business has changed faster than the governance model has.

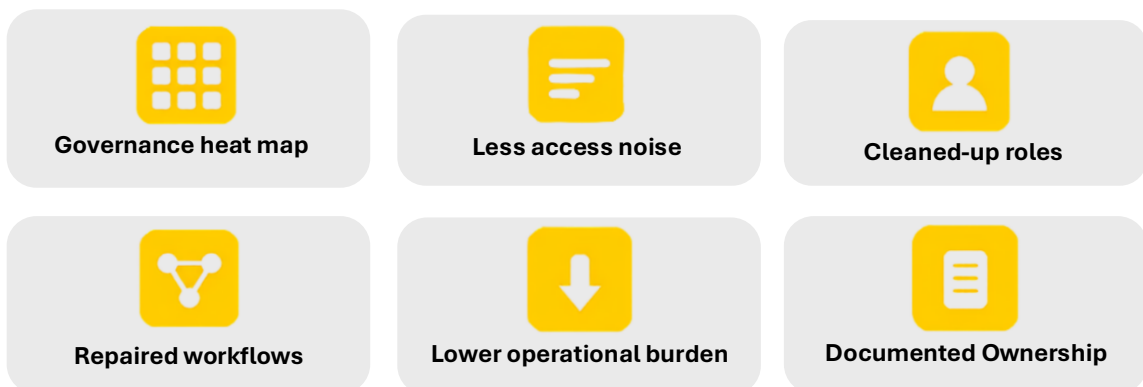


A 30-day reset is enough to stabilise, optimise, and prove whether replacement is actually needed. In most cases, it isn’t.



05 What good looks like after 30 days

Done right, a well-executed posture improvement sprint can (depending on your priorities) produce:



- A clear heat map of governance maturity - helping you spot and prioritise your riskiest exposures
- Reduced access noise and fewer certification items - via an optimised JML process or a reset of recertification campaigns
- Cleaned-up role definitions - reviewed and sanity checked
- Repaired or simplified workflows and improved flow success rates
- Reduced operational burden - fewer workarounds or time-consuming manual interventions
- Documented ownership

It's also worthwhile to capitalise on your improvements and draft a 90-day roadmap for continued improvement.

Rather than getting stuck on the theory, the difference is measurable. We build momentum that you can pick up: leadership sees progress, IT gets some relief and you see an improvement in audit results. The best part? The business sees faster access and you get fewer complaints.



06

Who this works for

Our 30-day governance reset is particularly effective for organisations that:

- Already have an IGA tool but don't trust it
- Know they're not getting value from their investment
- Need to reduce risk quickly
- Are under audit pressure
- Have stalled transformation programmes
- Want improvements without committing to long-term consulting

It is **not** for organisations looking to replace their IGA tool tomorrow, or those starting from scratch.



07

Final thought

Identity Governance doesn't fail loudly. It fails quietly, gradually, and often invisibly, until someone finally connects the dots.

But the fix doesn't have to be slow. It doesn't have to be expensive. And it definitely doesn't require tearing out what you already have.

Sometimes what you need is not a new platform. Instead, it's a short, sharp intervention that diagnoses the real issues, de-risks your environment, and restores confidence in your existing investment.

If that sounds familiar, you're not alone. A 30-day reset may be all that's required to get you back on solid ground

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Ready to strengthen your **identity posture?**



Book a free, no-pressure 45-minute IAM Maturity Workshop. We'll review your current environment and show how a focused 30-day reset can restore confidence in the investment you already have.

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About Madigan Solutions

An Identity & Access Management consultancy specialising in Identity Governance, Workforce and Consumer IAM, Privileged Access Management and non-human identity. As an IBM Silver Partner, we deliver and run IBM Security Verify platforms for regulated organisations across the UK and Ireland.

