Knowledge Services:

The Hidden Infrastructure for Successful Program Delivery

How knowledge services protects government from the costly avalanche of redundant, obsolete, and trivial material—and why AI alone is not the solution.

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Researchers at Statista estimate that 90% of the world's data has been generated in the last two years alone, with over 400 million terabytes of new data created each day.

This is a macrocosm for what is happening in our public programs. Government information expands in all directions: from legislation and business rules, citizen feedback and learned experience, and across multiple platforms and technologies.

Because when is the last time your program got *less* complex?

Public data is growing beyond binders, beyond document libraries, and beyond what any one employee can be expected to memorize. As this information grows, it doesn't just become more difficult to manage and maintain: it becomes a liability.

To stop the avalanche of dangerous content, governments must establish focused knowledge service practices that will help employees, public programs, leaders and AI-assistants make sense of their knowledge.

In this paper, we will explore the core principles of sound knowledge services, and what government needs to know to put it to work for Canadians.

1 Pressure Points

Information bloat and disjointed knowledge bring material costs to government programs and the people that run them. Consider just a few examples.

> **We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge.**
>
> – John Naisbitt

Information Access

In 2024–25, Canadian federal institutions received more than 200,000 access-to-information requests. More than 20 percent were not closed within legislated timelines, and administrative costs have continued to climb. Entire departments now exist to service FOI backlogs, much of which could be prevented by proper data retention scheduling, ownership, and disposition rules.

Daily Operations

Without an intentional knowledge practice, policy teams copy-and-paste the same paragraph from a local, offline Word file because they can't find the source. Contact centre agents give inconsistent answers because they trust the binder on their desk more than the intranet. Frontline staff invent workarounds because the "official" guidance was last updated by someone who retired last year.

| CASE STUDY |

IN PRACTICE: ONE ANSWER TO ONE QUESTION

A provincial ministry ran four disconnected knowledge bases across 150 program areas and 8,000 agents. Each knowledge base was managed independently based on program area, but with the same topics. This meant the answer to a question was duplicated four times, and not consistently. Maximus consolidated the knowledge to a single source of truth for every policy, procedure, and alert. Agent training dropped from months to weeks, citizen satisfaction rose 10 percent, and the same workforce attained 30 percent more capacity.

Change Management

Policies rarely change in a vacuum. A modification to one workflow typically impacts another, leading to a cascade of changes in workflows, work instructions, training, web content, and more.

With fragmented knowledge, applying these changes is a monumental task. Budgets expand to attempt to capture all the impacts, but inevitably, errors and out-of-date information linger for months or years beyond the expiry date.

Employee Onboarding and Offboarding

Knowledge can set new employees up for success—or leave them overwhelmed and stressed before they finish day one. When knowledge is scattered, training is less consistent, reference material is doubtful, and employees lose trust.

When an experienced employee departs the organization, the same problem finds a new outlet. With their offboarding, their accumulated knowledge goes with them. It's not recorded, shared, or built into the knowledge ecosystem.

2 AI Alone is Not a Quick Fix

Without effective knowledge management and proper guidance, AI can accelerate the ability to make things more complicated.

The federal government's own AI Strategy for the Public Service (2025–2027) is clear: AI will be integrated across the full range of federal work and will require trustworthy data and information management as a precondition. Canada's national AI strategy, AI for All, has committed more than $2.3 billion to accelerate adoption, with a target of 60 percent business AI adoption by 2034.

Meanwhile, a 2025 study from the Dais at Toronto Metropolitan University, funded through the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre, found that public sector workers are far more exposed to AI than the broader workforce (74 percent compared to 56 percent) with nearly half in roles where current AI tools could substitute core tasks outright. The tools are already in the building. The governance, for the most part, is not.

> **Any fool can make something complicated.**
> **It takes a genius to make it simple.**
>
> – Woody Guthrie

Here is what changes when you add generative AI to a fragmented knowledge base: the AI picks an answer for you. If the underlying source material was inconsistent, incomplete, or out of date, the model will patch the gap with something that sounds right.

Once that AI "answer" is created, it may be saved, shared, published, and copied. New material is added to your organization's global knowledge libraries (formal or otherwise) and becomes the source for new answers from human agents or AI.

This makes it easier than ever for redundant, obsolete, and trivial data to replicate within an organization, slowly and inexorably choking out actual accurate knowledge.

As a result, hallucinations grow. Researchers at HEC Paris maintain a public database of AI-driven legal hallucinations, and have documented approximately 1,800 cases since 2023, with half of these in 2026 alone. Those are only the ones that made it into court filings. The equivalent errors in benefits eligibility guidance, contact-centre scripts, and internal policy summaries are almost never caught.

AI did not create this problem. It has made it faster, cheaper, and more visible. For AI to contribute to the solution, it must be built on a strong foundation of knowledge management.

WHERE KNOWLEDGE GOES TO DIE

The Generative AI Hallucination Doom Loop



> **If the underlying source material was inconsistent, incomplete, or out of date, the model will patch the gap with something that sounds right.**

3 Future Proof Your Knowledge

Public sector organizations do not just need another platform to be the source of truth. Most already have too many.

What they need is a **structured operating model** for knowledge, one that clarifies the source of truth, searchability, auditability, accountability, and confidence in publishing. Underlying this model is a rigorous governance structure: the definition of who owns the information, who updates it, who ensures it is accurate, and who publishes it. These governance roles move knowledge services from technical or theoretical to a practical part of daily workflows.

In our work across federal, provincial, and municipal clients, five disciplines consistently separate organizations that are AI-ready from those that are AI-exposed:

1. Knowledge Management: The source of truth.

Which of these is the right answer?

A functioning knowledge program consolidates different versions of the same answer into one, establishes feedback workflows so it stays current, and gives frontline staff (and AI agents) a single place to retrieve it. This is the discipline that most directly determines whether AI outputs are grounded or guessed.

2. Information Management: Cross-system searchability.

Where can I find this information?

Standardized taxonomies, enforced metadata, and defensible information architecture are what allow a knowledge base to be found, filtered, and trusted across the enterprise. Without them, even the best-written policy document is invisible to the people (and models) that need it.

> **Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice.**
>
> – Anton Chekhov

3. Records Management: Approval and audit.

Why are there two versions of this?

Records management turns knowledge into an auditable trail, covering records from creation to archiving and disposal. Strict version control, retention schedules, and disposition rules ensure compliance with regulations, and enforce the policies that protect against unauthorized access and breaches.

4. Document Management: Digital collaboration.

Can I delete this old document?

Establish ownership, access controls, and lifecycle rules for the day-to-day content that programs produce. Done well, this is the layer that determines whether SharePoint is a source of truth or a source of confusion.

5. Content Management: Publishing workflows.

Is this webpage up to date?

Content Management provides the same rigor for external documentation as for internal knowledge management. It includes lifecycle practices, content publishing governance, and continuous improvement. Citizens can successfully self-serve with content that reflects internal knowledge.

Each of these is more than a collection of tools and technology. They are a living practice: a governed relationship between people, process, and technology. The organizations that thrive in the AI era will be the ones that treat all as a unified system, not separate procurement decisions.

The experts trusted to deliver it will be the ones with operational knowledge.

| CASE STUDY | **IN PRACTICE: GOVERNANCE ACROSS SIX DEPARTMENTS**

A municipality was managing documents across six departments and more than 500 SharePoint sites, with duplicate versions, undefined permissions, and no clear ownership. Maximus defined stewardship roles, built a modernization roadmap, and implemented retention policies. The result was a 30 percent reduction in information volume and 40 percent faster retrieval through standardized architecture, taxonomy, and metadata.

4 Who Will Do It

Governments must build the right knowledge practices, prioritized by impact, that will empower employees and public programs with knowledge.

Maximus doesn't represent platforms or technology. We bring in-depth knowledge of public sector operations, based on over 20 years of experience in Canada. Whether it's retention, information requests, or historical data, governments face distinct challenges compared to the private sector.

No government has the budget or the bandwidth to fix all of its knowledge at once. The organizations that make real progress are the ones that know where to start: which gaps are costing the most in speed, accuracy, or risk, and which fixes will free up capacity for the next one. That judgment doesn't come from a platform. It comes from having sat inside government operations long enough to know what actually slows programs down.

Maximus has hands-on experience delivering and modernizing citizen services across Canada. By partnering with Maximus, governments create sustainable knowledge ecosystems that connect people, processes, information, and technology. Maximus will:

- Assess and prioritize the knowledge gaps creating the greatest risk to speed, accuracy, and trust;
- Design the governance, architecture, and operating model;
- Implement the technologies, content structures, and workflows needed to support knowledge services; and
- Operate and continuously improve knowledge assets through governance, training, analytics, and optimization.

This partnership approach moves knowledge services from a one-time fix to an operational standard that lives on, continually improving knowledge.

| CASE STUDY | **IN PRACTICE: FROM 90 DAYS TO 26**

A provincial drug program was struggling to manage its records and their related metadata across seven programs and 480,000 active accounts. Rather than rebuilding every process at once, Maximus identified records processing as the single biggest bottleneck to approvals and billing, and targeted it first: digitizing and indexing more than 800,000 images, creating electronic forms to streamline submissions, and automating records approval and workflow activities. Processing time fell from 90 days to 26, resulting in earlier approvals, streamlined billing, and lower costs.

5 Salt over Silver

Why is knowledge so often ignored when it shapes everything government does, for better or worse? Precisely because it surrounds us, there's a tendency to assume that knowledge will always be available, accurate, and understood.

Knowledge is salt: unglamorous, uncounted, and invisible until it's gone — and then nothing else tastes right. There's an old folk tale about an emperor who asks his daughters to declare their love for him. Two compare their love to gold and silver. The youngest says her love is like salt — and is exiled for the insult, until the emperor sits down to an unsalted meal and finally understands what she meant.

That's knowledge in a public sector program. It's the seasoning nobody budgets for, nobody puts on the org chart, and nobody notices—until it's missing. Then nothing else works: the policy is unclear, citizens are confused, the auditor is unhappy, and the AI assistant is confidently wrong.

Knowledge underpins all that government does. It's what we use to keep our programs running smoothly and fairly. Like every other piece of infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water, and IT, knowledge decays without ownership, maintenance, and investment.

It's time for government to treat knowledge like the precious resource it is.

> **"Knowledge is salt: unglamorous, uncounted, and invisible until it's gone — and then nothing else tastes right.**

Delivered by Canadians. Powered by Experience.

Andrew Bailey leads Knowledge Services at Maximus Canada, where he builds the practical, governed knowledge ecosystems that keep public sector programs running. With the Knowledge Services team, he brings stewardship and structure to sprawling, fragmented information environments.



Andrew has seen first-hand that the line between "data" and "knowledge" is dissolving, and he brings the judgment to help governments treat structured records, unstructured documents, and tacit knowledge as governable assets, prioritizing the fixes that deliver results.

Andrew holds an MBA from the Ted Rogers School of Management, a Certified Data Management Professional designation (DAMA), and a Knowledge Management Competency Certification.

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