



AVOIDING THE BIG BANG:

Migrating data in small, manageable pieces



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Contents

3 Introduction + Do we need to move all of our data?

4 Does migrating all our legacy data make sense?

5 The Big Bang data migration (moving everything at once)

6 So what are our other options?

7 How to archive and decommission your data

8 Avoid the Big Bang with an iterative Migration strategy

Introduction

Atlassian applications like Jira and Confluence have evolved over the years. The method of moving data from one to the other is often influenced by their full-backup and restore mechanisms, which lead businesses to believe high-risk Big-Bang data migrations are the norm.

But they're not...

The good news is that there are more agile ways and low-risk alternatives that help deliver greater business value and benefits.



Do we need to move ALL of our data?

The Software Engineering Institute (SEI) at Carnegie Mellon University, which conducts research for the US government, advise thinking about the following key points when migrating data:

- Does migrating your legacy data make sense?
- What legacy system data can be re-used?
- What changes to the data are required to complete the migration?
- What migration strategies work best for you?
- What are your estimates for costs and risks?
- What's an ideal pilot project that'll help address certain risks?



Understanding these points is crucial if you want to ensure you'll get the most value out of your Atlassian data migrations for your business (with no extra cost or risk).

Does migrating all our legacy data make sense?

The risk and effort of migrating data from one platform to another increases the more you move. The quality of that data is a big factor; the further back you go – the bigger mess you’ll find. This risk is further increased if Atlassian Marketplace Apps have been used (due to their own complex data and bespoke hidden scripting)

Moving home? *Would you take EVERYTHING to your new house?*

To reduce this risk, it’s important to decide how much historic data you’ll be transferring into the new system. If you moved home, would you take everything with you? No. You’d have a clearout first! A good understanding of the source and target system is needed to ensure the data will be accurate, consistent and relevant, and avoid carrying over any problems such as unused workflows, custom fields in Jira, unread/unwanted pages in Confluence, etc. It’s vital these hidden legacy problems are not carried over, and we ensure that the data that populates the new system is fit for purpose and delivers a significant improvement on what you had before

Starting fresh with the minimum amount of data required lets you see more clearly, with a fresh outlook providing the most value for your business.



The Big Bang data migration (moving everything at once)

A Big Bang migration involves moving an entire dataset from your legacy instances to the target system in one operation, which is typically carried out over a weekend or a pre-planned downtime period.

Test it first

In order to mitigate as many risks as possible, several test migrations are conducted beforehand, resulting in increased cost and effort to complete weeks worth of remedial action before retesting. For example, a typical Big Bang data migration and consolidation of a Jira instance may take up to 30 days.

Create a rollback strategy

Big Bang migrations are made more difficult because over the last 5 years, the data volumes of Atlassian apps have increased. Even if you plan on having 48 hours of downtime to migrate your data, you'll still need additional time beforehand to test the migration with a rollback strategy.

Big Bang isn't the only option

Most businesses consider Big Bang data migrations and consolidations as their only option, but this often leads to moving everything in one go (including the problematic legacy data mentioned before) and not delivering good value.

The argument for moving legacy data in a Big Bang migration is often weak, considering the cost, risk, and effort. That's why an agile approach is often more favourable.





So what are our other options?

- Iterative Data Migration
- Phased Data Migration
- Trickle-feed Data Migration
- Synchronised Data Migration

All these methods have the same strategy of moving data in smaller increments. The only difference is how each of them approach it.

In the past, Atlassian focused on the Big Bang migration method, using their applications' full-export and import systems. But recently, they've started developing their Marketplace apps (the Confluence and Jira Cloud Migration Assistants) to allow iterative data migrations onto the Cloud platform

Right now, there are two challenges with an iterative Atlassian data migration strategy:

How can we keep our target and source systems data operable until the migration is complete?

How do we coordinate migrating user presets and functionality without breaking overall continuity?

In order for an iterative data migration to succeed, you'll need to effectively run two systems in tandem for a transitional period, with neither affecting the other.




Take a pragmatic approach

Move your teams or units one-by-one, starting with the newest teams and projects, while also decommissioning old data on the legacy system. For example:

- Update the IT Helpdesk so that if a customer needs a particular service, they're rerouted to the new Jira Service Management page on the target system.
- When migrating project data from regional teams to a new central Jira instance, moving data one team at a time may be the best option. When all your teams have migrated over to the central instance, they can be turned off safely in the legacy system.

The iterative strategy frees up time and resources for your teams that would've been spent mitigating a Big-Bang approach. For example:

- Improving workflows and business processes.
 - Streamlining data and improving status reporting.
 - Training and coaching new ways of working.
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How to archive and decommission your data

By migrating your data with an iterative strategy, you only need to move 20–30% of your data to deliver value for your business. The remaining data can be archived, decommissioned, and retrieved in case it's required for governance or record management

Defining your required data seems obvious and will make you ask the following questions:

- Is all the data I want to archive important?
- Is it detailed enough to be valuable?

A Jira database containing 20,000 issues may seem important from its size, but what if the only valuable records are the few hundred identified and their resolved defects? It's not necessary to carry over incomplete or irrelevant data; you're just wasting storage space.



One idea is to plan a managed iterative data migration and decommission the legacy system over a 12-month period:

- In the first few months, select your initial pilot teams and early adopters to migrate minimal essential data and move them into the target system first to shake-out any issues.
- As your teams continue moving to the target system, archive important data and decommission anything you're not using with a raw data export like CSV.
- The majority of your teams will have moved (or planned to have migrated) to the target system within the first 3–6 months.
- At 9 months, Plan how you'll manage moving the last of your teams and provide any additional support or remedial action if anything pops up.
- At 12 months, the remaining legacy data with value should be exported and stored into a form that can be imported if and when it's required (a CSV data export from Jira, a PDF Space export from Confluence, etc).

Avoid the Big Bang with an iterative Migration strategy

Clearvision have completed more migrations than any other partner and know first-hand that extended periods of downtime and significant efforts associated with the large volumes, complexity, and clean-up of unwanted legacy data are inevitable.

We also know the agile alternatives that deliver great benefits at a lower cost with lower impact and risk to your business.

If you're thinking of migrating, but are concerned with the risks involved, speak with us; you're in safe hands.

[Contact Us](#)



Migrations – Who should use a Partner

Atlassian offer a number of free tools and resources to enable a do-it-yourself migration to Cloud, there are a few reasons you may need extra support. Please use the chart below to see if you will need help with your migration.

SET UP	LIGHT	MEDIUM	COMPLEX
Atlassian Products	1-2	2-4	4+
Marketplace Apps	1-5	6-10	10+
Custom Fields	1-20	21-100	100+
Small instance <500 users			
Medium instance 500-1k users			
Large instance 1k-5k users			
XL instance 5k-10k users			
XXL instance >10k users			

	Low complexity	Self-service recommended
	Medium complexity	Partner recommended
	High complexity	Partner strongly recommended

Click below to check out our Atlassian Cloud Migration services

[Learn more](#)

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