

## Leveraging Xacta for Regulation Upgrades

### Xacta® for Upgrading from NIST 800-53 Rev 4 to Rev 5

*How to use automation to simplify and streamline the process of upgrading.*

**Regulations are not static, and regulatory bodies release periodic updates. However, Xacta has been designed to adjust to these changes and simplify the process of upgrading from one version of a regulation to another.**

Staying current with regulation changes is an expected part of federal compliance teams' ongoing work. However, upgrading from one regulation version to another can be complex and time-consuming. This is where Xacta offers a solution that simplifies and automates the process, relieving your team of a significant workload. **With Xacta, you can reuse as much data as possible, saving your organization enormous time and effort.**

#### Some of the changes from Rev 4 to Rev 5 are substantial

Some changes are considered **editorial**, meaning they're minor control changes involving rephrasing or additional statements. More substantial changes, however, fall under the **non-editorial** category, encompassing merged controls, split/distributed controls, withdrawn or retired controls, and other changes.



Revision 4		Revision 5	
AC-5 a	Separation of Duties	AC-05 a	Separation of Duties
AC-5 b	Separation of Duties		
AC-5 c	Separation of Duties	AC-05 b	Separation of Duties

*Figure 1: Example showing how sub-elements of the control AC-5 in Rev 5 don't line up exactly with sub-elements of Rev 4.*

**Shifting control statements and sub-elements:** When comparing like controls in Rev 4 to their equivalents in Rev 5, some control statements and sub-elements may shift. This makes it difficult to easily upgrade without being able to account for these changes in an automated fashion—potentially resulting in weeks of manual effort.

Manually upgrading an existing project full of data from one version of a regulation to another would be a daunting task. That task becomes exponentially more challenging when a new version of a regulation not only has more controls but the control structures have also

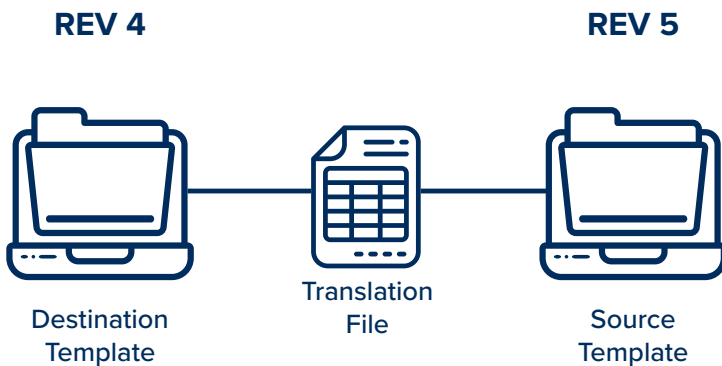
changed. Throughout the process, you need to ensure that artifacts and data stay aligned with the correct controls. Meanwhile, you and your team may also be facing multiple compliance deadlines.

**Organization-defined values:** Compliance with NIST 800-53 Rev 4 includes filling out organization-defined values. There are 850 of these in Rev 4—and filling these out can be a laborious process. In Rev 5, this number nearly doubles. However, when you use Xacta to upgrade from Rev 4 to Rev 5, the values you've previously entered for Rev 4 are mapped to their Rev 5 equivalent, so you don't have to enter them again. Xacta also allows you to use these values in tests, significantly easing the burden of checking for Rev 5 compliance.

## Translation files are key

The team behind Xacta can account for these differences in regulation versions using translation files. The team also performs the gap analysis between the revisions, using material provided by NIST and vetting each control statement line by line. The analysis includes the extent of the change, data ported over, additional actions that may be performed, and baseline changes.

When using Xacta to perform a regulation upgrade from Rev 4 to Rev 5, teams need to load a translation file and then select the Rev 5 regulation. After a few clicks, your assessment project's old regulation is overwritten with Rev 5 content.



## Simplify upgrades through automation

To account for what are often substantial changes between regulation versions, the team behind Xacta has revised the platform to simplify these types of upgrades moving forward. These changes are designed not only to simplify the process of migrating from Rev 4 to Rev 5 but

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also streamline and automate the process of migrating from other earlier versions of regulations to later ones.

One of the benefits of using Xacta for regulation upgrades is its ability to retain key items. This ensures that your data, including associations, workflow status, inheritance, custom process steps/custom list pages, overlays, and more, remains intact and mapped to the relevant controls.

**There are inherent differences between the NIST 800-53 regulation in its Revision 4 (Rev 4) and Revision 5 (Rev 5).**

**Upgrading from one version of a regulation to another doesn't have to be frustrating and time-consuming.**

Organizations leveraging Xacta to upgrade from NIST 800-53 Rev 4 to Rev 5 are able to speed up their time to compliance with the latest security standards across several categories. This includes the new family of privacy controls, which, in Rev 4, were previously located in an appendix. These controls, which address personal data protection, have been elevated to a more prominent position in Rev 5, reflecting the increasing importance of privacy in today's security landscape.

Another new component in Rev 5 is supply chain risk management. Its integration into 800-53 highlights the importance of securing system components and services from development to delivery and maintenance.

In addition to regulation upgrades, compliance teams can also leverage Xacta to automate tasks such as generating required documentation, continuous compliance, and more to stay on top of critical deadlines.

For more information, please contact us.

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