

What isn't a Semantic Layer?

Debunking common misconceptions about semantic layers



Not Just for Data

Semantic layers can connect all knowledge assets (e.g. data, information, content, people, products, customers, and more). Data fabrics have similar capabilities with a focus on data, but semantic layers are more expansive.

Not a Single Product

A semantic layer can't be achieved with just a data catalog, just an orchestration tool, just a graph database, or even just a BI layer on your data lake. The semantic layer architecture has reach beyond just one toolset, and it likely includes tools that your organization already has.



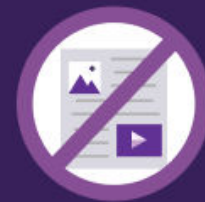
Not Just a Graph



A graph by definition gives us a way to extract and relate facts by core concepts (e.g. Customer) and attributes/properties (e.g. Name, Address). However, you need alignment on the shared meaning and understanding of these concepts through the other components of the semantic layer (e.g. enterprise metadata, business glossary, taxonomy, ontology) to have a true representation of your organizational knowledge assets.

Not All of Your Content

Semantic layers shouldn't integrate all of your knowledge assets. Their scope lies in the high-value assets that are relevant across the enterprise, not your transactional assets from one business area or process.



Not an Automated/AI-Generated Solution



You can't dump all of your content into an ML algorithm and emerge with accurate taxonomies or a business glossary. Domain experts need to be involved to curate your semantic solution, otherwise the "meaning" of the semantic layer is lost.