

## AGENTIC AI · INTEGRATION RISK

# The Integration Depth Problem: When AI Becomes Load-Bearing

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There is a specific moment in AI deployment when the governance calculus changes. It happens when the system stops being an add-on and becomes load-bearing infrastructure.

Most governance reviews happen at or before deployment authorization. They assess the system as designed, at that moment. What they rarely capture is what the system becomes after months of operational use.

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*Integration depth accumulates faster than governance awareness.*

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An AI system starts as a useful tool. Over time, operational teams build workflows around it. Processes that used to run without the system now depend on it. No one marks the moment when it crossed from supplemental to structural — and it is never formally recorded. The governance documentation still reflects the state from authorization.

By the time anyone asks whether operational scope has drifted from authorized scope, the integration depth has already changed the negotiating dynamic. Replacing or significantly modifying the system is now more disruptive than managing the governance gap. The accountability conversation happens under pressure.

This is not primarily a technical failure. It is a governance design failure. Existing RMF implementation practice does not include a mechanism for tracking when a system's operational dependency has grown beyond its assessed risk profile. There is no standard trigger that initiates a scope review when integration depth crosses a threshold. The system does what it is capable of doing. The governance structure tracks what it was authorized to do.

GIAG Stream Two research is examining what oversight structures agencies have built to detect this divergence, and whether any of them are functioning as genuine controls rather than documentation artifacts.

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