

Rewrite or Modernize Decision Tree

Choose a change strategy after understanding the system and its dependencies.

Work through these options

1. Retire: no required user, integration, record-retention obligation, or business process still depends on it. Plan data disposition and a safe shutdown.
2. Wrap: the core behavior remains useful, but integration is the obstacle. Add an interface with access controls, validation, monitoring, and ownership.
3. Refactor: the desired changes are bounded and the team understands the behavior. Change small pieces behind characterization tests.
4. Replace gradually: route one workflow at a time to a new implementation. Plan data synchronization, reconciliation, rollback, and the eventual shutdown.
5. Rewrite: assess this when required behavior cannot be achieved through bounded changes, or the platform cannot be operated acceptably. Record alternatives, migration costs, business rules, and transition risks.

Before changing anything

1. Map dependencies with users and operators. Capture important current behavior in tests, including exceptions.
2. Use sanitized test data. Check outputs against business requirements; preserving an existing bug is not the goal.
3. Choose an accountable owner, a reversible first step, success measures, and stop conditions. No option is automatically safe.

Chosen approach and evidence: _____. **Next reversible step and owner:** _____.