

BEST PRACTICES

How to choose the right notifications in Archer



Ensuring that the right people in an organization get the information that they need, when they need it, is essential for supporting an effective risk management program. Like every GRC solution, RSA Archer offers a variety of notification types and configuration options. Notifications can be sent to anyone with an email address, and it can be configured with third-party tools to send text messages or integrate with other messaging systems.

With all of these options, the challenge is making the most effective use of what's available to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged with GRC activities. Archer notifications typically fall into one of three categories:

1. **System activity alerts.** For example, if a risk level for a specific asset under management of a business unit increases, a notification can be sent out to the business unit manager alerting them of the change.
2. **Distribution of information.** Quarterly, monthly, weekly and even daily reports are often required by the business to monitor threats or changes. Archer can be used to distribute information contained inside the tool on a periodic basis to a variety of stakeholders.
3. **Action requests.** When action is required, users can be invited to access a record and conduct an action, such as reviewing or approving records.

Things to keep in mind

Notifications are something each of us encounter every day in one way or another. A notification can come in the form of someone leaving a Post-It note on your desk, a conversation you have with a colleague at the coffee station asking you to check your email, or even an email from a prince in a far-off land who wants to send you \$400,000 in exchange for your banking information.

Much like notifications in our day-to-day lives, notifications from a GRC platform can be both effective and ineffective. For example, if I get a notification from my airline saying *"your flight has changed"*, that's not nearly as effective as a notification that says, *"your flight will be delayed for two hours, and you need to check in to confirm your attendance"*.

Start with the same best practices you would use for any effective electronic communication. Pick a subject line that accurately describes what the notification is about. In the main body, include any steps, reports, actions or metrics that are relevant for the user for this particular notification.

Another thing to consider is the **quantity of notifications**. Sometimes too much information can hinder effective communication. We have all been bombarded with an email chain that seems to last an eternity, with a new email coming in every ten minutes. The more emails received, the less likely it is that the emails are being read. Similar issues can occur with GRC tools if notifications are configured to be sent too frequently. This is often



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referred to as “nagware”. If a notification is being sent on a routine basis or is being triggered at a high frequency, the recipient can often feel overwhelmed and be unlikely to take in all of the information from the notification itself, or even worse, tune out all together.

In order to reduce notification clutter, it is important to place yourself in the shoes of the recipient when configuring the notification. A simple but important question to ask is, “*does this user really need to know about the information included in this notification?*” We often find that more people are receiving notifications than really necessary.

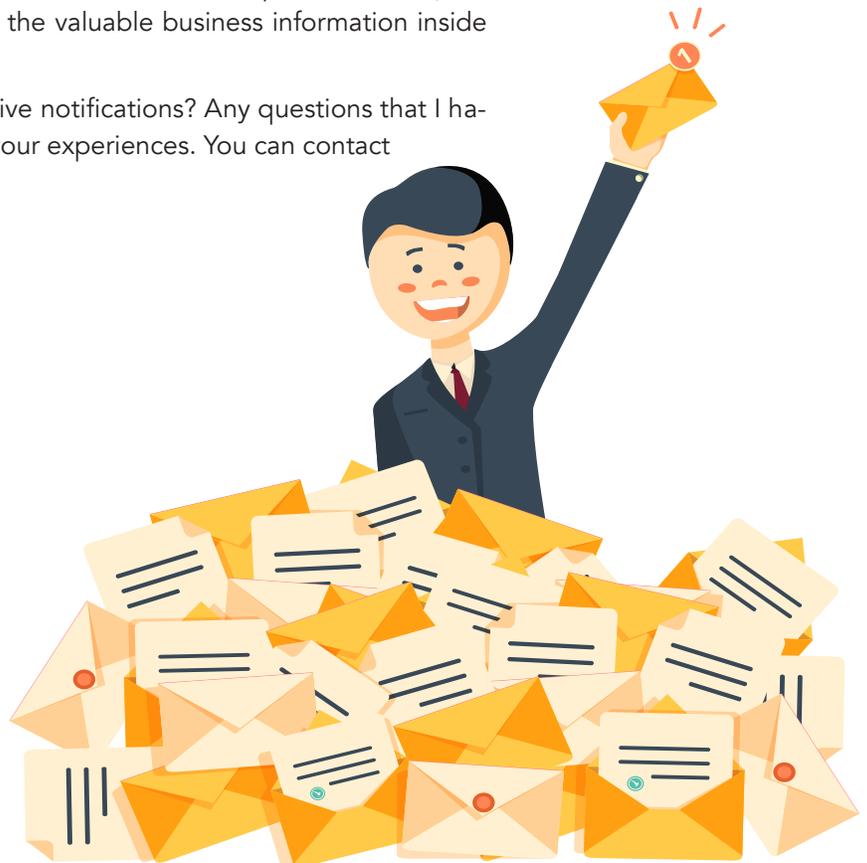
Catering to your needs with RSA Archer’s notifications

Within the RSA Archer solution you have the option to choose from different types of notifications. The different types cater to different forms of implementation with each having its own strengths and weaknesses. Different types of notifications can allow users to address different people inside and outside of Archer, set a schedule for distribution, provide visuals and reports, link back into the Archer platform itself and even provide notifications to admins about the platform. The chart on the next page provides a summary for your reference.

All in good balance

Selecting the correct notification, tailoring that notification to address the right stakeholders and including the key information without bloat is the key to building effective, efficient notifications. Keeping users informed and engaged will ensure the success of your GRC program. That’s sometimes easier said than done – luckily Archer is highly configurable and as you collect feedback from your users, you can continue to adapt and evolve your solution to ensure you’re getting the most from the valuable business information inside the solution.

Do you have any tips or tricks for creating effective notifications? Any questions that I haven’t covered here? I would love to hear about your experiences. You can contact me at wrainey@icebergnetworks.com.



Types of notification available in RSA Archer

TYPE	IDEAL AUDIENCE	ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
On-Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent to anyone involved within the Archer workflow or who should be updated of events within the tool • Can be users inside or outside of the Archer system • Recipient can be defined by end user for any record, or be predefined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to use templates that can keep style and layout consistent. • Ability to manually send a notification. • Users outside of Archer can be included in notifications • Used in advanced workflow as the source of notification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to change frequency
Subscription	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best used for users expecting to see information from a specific application within Archer • Often used for predefined groups of users who are stakeholders for a specific application within Archer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be easily tracked in notification reports, since we can filter by template • Users can opt out (if allowed) • Centralized tracking of all notifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If one addressed user is unable to receive the notification, the notification will not be sent to any users
Distributed Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent to predefined users both inside and outside Archer with a report embedded • Often sent to executives who don't frequently login to Archer or do not have access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for an entire report to be distributed to defined users • Can predefine delivery schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only able to distribute reports, not based on records but a predefined report
Data Driven Events (DDE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to immediately alert Archer users, triggered by a rule being satisfied within Archer • Recipients are predefined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will send to defined users regardless of subscription settings • Can predefine delivery schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot filter the notification execution result for tracking purposes as there is no template to DDE notifications • If one addressed user is unable to receive the notification, the notification will not be sent to any users (same as with subscription notifications)
Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by admin to monitor the health of the Archer platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to send out notifications when something has gone wrong, for example with mail merge, data feeds, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to admin functionality • Ability to change the text content of the notification, but unable to change who it is sent to