The Google Admin's Playbook For Data Subject Access Request (DSAR)

GAT+

Shield

Flow

GAT labs

Enterprise Resources: Data Subject Access Request (DSAR)

In the age of GDPR, CCPA, and a growing landscape of data privacy laws, the **Data Subject Access Request (DSAR)** has become a top priority for every organization.

For IT teams managing Google Workspace, responding to these requests is complex, manual, and high-stakes:

- Data is scattered across **Gmail, Drive, Calendar, Groups, and more.**
- Deadlines are short, with regulators expecting responses **in 30 days or less.**
- Personal data is often intertwined with third-party information, requiring careful review and redaction.
- Mistakes or delays can result in fines and reputational damage.

This guide provides a clear, actionable framework for handling a DSAR from start to finish.

We'll walk through a proven **6-step plan** and show you exactly how to use GAT Labs to transform your compliance process from a chore into a repeatable, defensible workflow.

Your 6-Step Plan for DSAR Compliance

Compliance isn't a single action. It's a methodical process. This framework ensures every step is auditable, repeatable, and legally defensible.

Step 1: Acknowledge & Verify

- **Action:** Confirm the requester's identity and the scope of their request.
- **Goal:** Prevent legal mistakes and unauthorized data disclosure.

Step 2: Leverage Google Vault for E-Discovery

- **Action:** Create a "Matter" in Vault and run queries across your domain to locate relevant data.
- **Goal:** Build a forensically sound data set for export.

Step 3: Export the Data

- **Action:** Initiate the export from Vault in the required format (e.g., PST or MBOX for emails).
- **Goal:** Create a structured package that includes all relevant data and metadata.

Step 4: Supplement with Advanced Tools

- **Action:** Go beyond metadata. Use advanced tools for content-based searching, file access auditing, and secure delegation.
- **Goal:** Capture all personal data and nothing more.

Your 6-Step Plan for DSAR Compliance

Step 5: Review & Redact

- **Action:** Carefully review and remove any third-party personal data.
- **Goal:** Protect the privacy of other individuals and avoid legal exposure.

Step 6: Securely Deliver & Document

- **Action:** Encrypt the final file, deliver it securely, and document every step.
- **Goal:** Maintain integrity and create a full audit trail for regulators.

Enterprise Resources: Data Subject Access Request (DSAR)
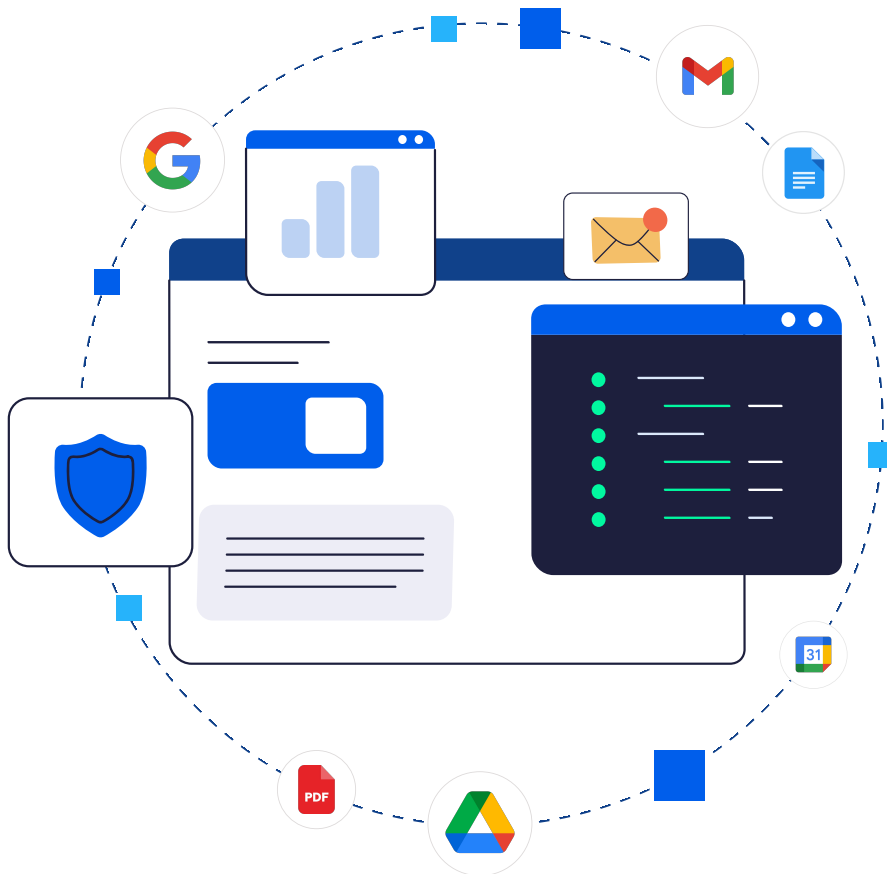
GAT Labs in Action: Extending DSAR Compliance in Google Workspace

Google Vault provides the foundation for e-discovery, acting as the historical record of your domain. But it leaves blind spots in file-level visibility, delegation, and repeatability. GAT Labs complements Vault by filling those gaps and giving IT and compliance leaders a live-environment DSAR process that is faster, auditable, and defensible.

Here's how GAT supports each stage of your workflow:

Step 1: Acknowledge & Verify

The requester's identity should be confirmed through your legal or HR team. Once verified, GAT Flow helps enforce the internal approval process for the DSAR.

You can set predefined flows that notify legal or compliance officers, require their approval before searches or exports begin, and log each decision. This prevents missteps and ensures the verification process is fully documented.

Step 2 & 4: Discovery & Auditing

Challenge: Google Vault searches are metadata-driven and don't allow file preview. You only see the full content after export, which risks incomplete or inaccurate results.

GAT+ Advantage:
- Run content-based searches across Gmail, Drive, Calendar, Groups, Contacts, and more.
- Search by keywords, metadata, or sensitive data patterns (like names, IDs, or email addresses).
- Preview file contents before export, reducing trial-and-error
- Identify externally owned files shared into your domain, a blind spot Vault and most tools miss.

GAT labs

GAT Labs in Action: Extending DSAR Compliance in Google Workspace

Step 3: Export the Data

Challenge: Vault exports are manual and repetitive.

GAT Advantage:
- GAT+ enables precise, repeatable exports directly from search results across Gmail, Drive, and other services.
- GAT Flow adds automated approval workflows, so only authorized export requests proceed.
- Every step is logged, reducing errors and ensuring consistency across DSAR requests.

Pro Tip: Automating Exports with GAT Flow

GAT Flow can take the manual work out of exports by:
- Configure Vault holds through automated workflows
- Automatically upload Vault exports to a Shared Drive for easier access
- Streamline the entire export process so every DSAR is handled consistently

For step-by-step instructions, see:
- Configuring Google Vault Holds with GAT Flow
- Automatically Upload Your Google Vault Exports to a Shared Drive (First Time Setup)
- Streamlining Google Vault Exports with GAT Flow

Flow
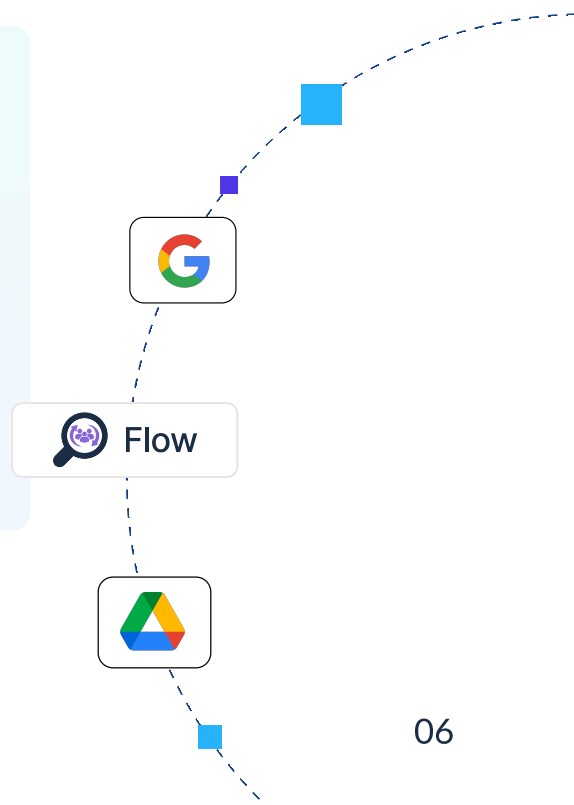
GAT labs

GAT Labs in Action: Extending DSAR Compliance in Google Workspace

Step 5: Review & Redact

Challenge: Reviewing sensitive user files for DSARs normally requires Super Admin rights, which creates security and compliance risks.

GAT Unlock Advantage:
- Provides a secure, approval-based workflow for temporary access to specific files or emails.
- By default, only Super Admins can request access. With Delegated Auditor roles in GAT+, other authorized users (such as legal or compliance officers) can initiate requests without holding permanent Super Admin privileges.
- Every approval and access action is fully logged, creating a defensible audit trail.

Step 6: Deliver & Document

Challenge: Manual documentation leaves gaps in your compliance record, making it harder to prove DSAR responses were handled properly.

GAT+ & Flow Advantage:
- Generate audit logs of every search, export, and access request.
- Track who accessed what data, when, and why at file-level detail.
- Enforce role-based access controls to ensure that only authorized staff handle sensitive information.

While secure delivery is still performed via your chosen encryption and sharing tools, GAT ensures every step of the process is fully documented and defensible, giving regulators a clear, verifiable record of compliance.

GAT labs

Conclusion: From Reactive to Proactive

DSARs don't need to be a source of stress. By following a structured framework and combining Google Vault with the live-environment toolkit of GAT Labs, your organization can move from a reactive, manual process to a proactive, automated one.

The result:
- Faster responses that meet regulatory deadlines.
- Reduced risk of errors or missed data.
- Stronger overall data governance.

Vault is your historical record. GAT+ gives you live visibility and control. Together, they provide the most complete DSAR approach.

Your DSAR Solution is
One Click Away.

EXPLORE THE DSAR RESOURCES

SCHEDULE A DEMO

15 DAY FREE TRIAL

GAT labs