



PREVALENT®

Introduction to

Prevalent Synapse™

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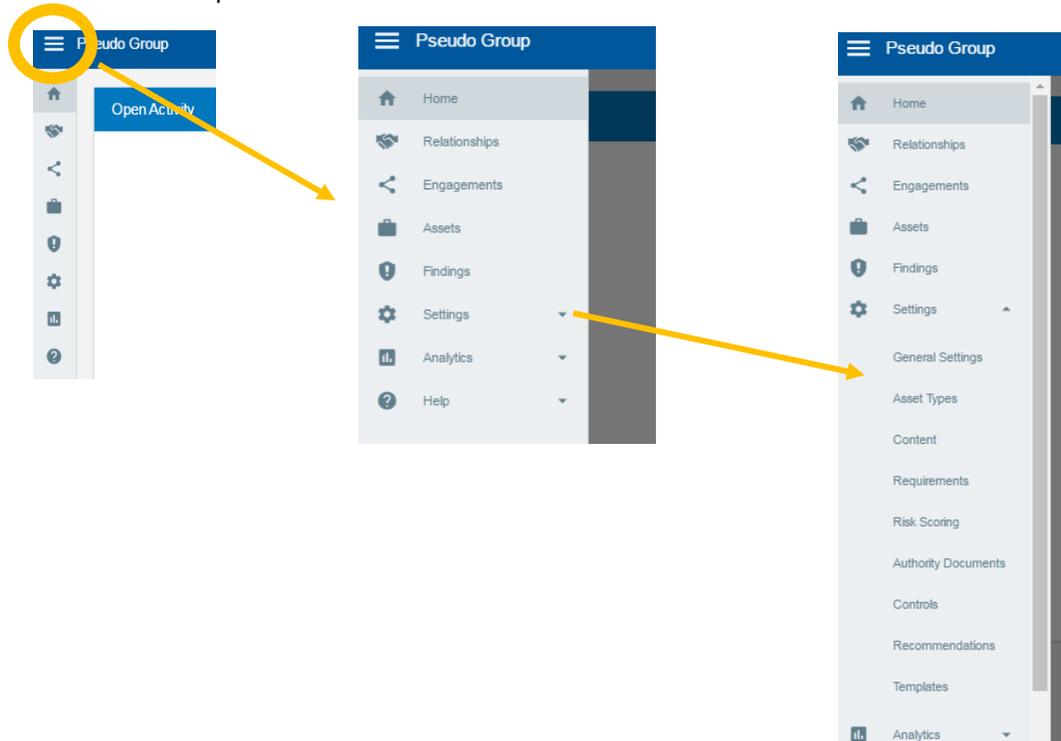
Welcome to Prevalent Synapse™: the next generation of Prevalent’s industry-leading third party risk management platform, built on the foundation and accumulated experience of the first automated third-party assessment product, introduced by Prevalent in 2011.

A fully SaaS-based platform, Synapse includes a host of advanced features and workflows, analytics, and an architecture designed to facilitate the rapid deployment of Prevalent’s growing collection of vertical networks.

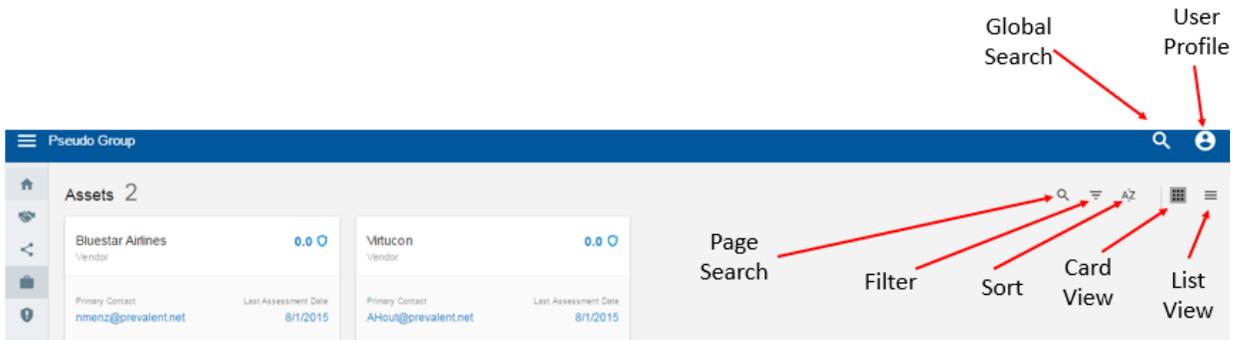
This guide is intended to provide a short introduction to Synapse for both first-time users, as well as current Prevalent VRM 3.x customers.

Synapse Navigation Tips

Synapse’s menu item descriptions are displayed by selecting the Menu icon, and can be expanded even further via the expansion arrows.



The Relationship, Engagement, and Asset pages each have the same set of page controls:



Note that the filter button will only show available filter options. For example, when filtering on the Content Page, if we only have Survey Content, we only show Survey, and would not show FlexForm in the filter list.

This symbol indicates the ability to add an item (e.g. Asset, Engagement):



Understanding Prevalent Synapse Set-Up Terms

Synapse concepts are built on a simple hierarchy of items. The basic element is “Content.” A collection of “Content” is called a “Requirement.” A collection of Requirements forms a “Tier.”

Content

There are 2 basic forms of Content in Synapse:

- Flex Form
- Survey

Note for 3.x users: we’ve incorporated the “Policy” content type into the Synapse Flex Form, so sending a document to a third party is a function now available via a Flex Form.

Flex Form

A Flex Form is a mini-survey that can comprise six potential elements:

- A request for a vendor to upload a document (e.g. SOC II report)
- A yes/no question answer
- A question with a free form text answer
- A date selector
- An input field for a number (e.g. cyber insurance policy coverage amount)
- Ability to send a document to a 3rd party and obtain their response/acceptance (formerly known as a “Policy” in VRM 3.x)

Synapse is delivered with a built-in, commonly-used Flex Form, but Synapse users can either modify pre-built Flex Forms, or create them from scratch (although we recommend new surveys be built in conjunction with our Prevalent team based on previous customer experience). Unlike Surveys, Flex Form items cannot be individually scored for risk.

Survey

Surveys are a series of questions, and are at the heart of the Assessment process. Surveys comprise 4 types of questions:

- Yes/No
- Single Choice (from a list of options)
- Number
- Text

Prevalent Synapse is delivered with built-in surveys (e.g. SIG, SIGLite), but users can either edit built-in surveys, or create new Surveys of their own design (again, we recommend Prevalent build custom surveys). Individual Survey questions can be mapped to Controls, which can be linked to Authority Documents.

Requirements

Requirements define how evidence requests are created and assigned when an Asset is assessed. Requirements may be used individually or grouped within a Tier when defining the Engagement scope. For example, a Requirement for a Tier 1 Vendor (one with access to sensitive data) assessment may be a full SIG, while the Requirement for a Tier 3 Vendor may be only SIGLite.

Tier

Engagements (see definition below) are classified to determine how deep of an assessment needs to be performed. Synapse is delivered with a Tiering Wizard that can categorize an Engagement based on the type of information vendor(s) may access, process, or retain. This initial classification establishes priorities for determining when and how the Engagement will participate in the formal risk assessment process.

Authority Document

An Authority Document is either an Internal Policy or Compliance Standard (e.g. ISO, PCI) that governs the evaluation and risk scoring effort of 3rd Parties. Using Synapse, nature 3rd Party risk programs can affiliate requests of Vendors/3rd Parties with an Authority Document, purposefully building their Requirements and Content to reflect desired compliance expectations.

Controls

Controls are organizational objects which specifically define an organization's expectations or regulatory requirements for specific operational, policy or technical processes. Controls link evidence to Authority Documents and Recommendations.

Risk Scoring

The importance or criticality of a Survey question or other Evidence element is captured in its Risk Score. If a Survey question addresses an issue considered critical, a Failed answer will contribute more to the Asset or Engagement Risk Score than if the question were considered minimally significant.

Assessment

A point-in-time, in-depth collection of survey questions, flex forms, or requests for other evidence sent to an organization with which a business relationship exists, to determine if that entity's data security controls are sufficiently robust.

Task

An element of an Assessment that can be independently tracked with a due date. A Task typically comprises a Questionnaire, or a sub-section of a larger Survey. A Task can be assigned to either an internal or external contact.

New to Synapse is the concept of a Manual Task. A Manual Task can be triggered outside the structure of a scheduled Assessment as an individual Task, or it can be added to an on-going Assessment.

Tiering Wizard

A short, pre-built questionnaire that ships with Synapse used by an internal third party risk, vendor management, or information security professional to preliminarily assign an Asset to a Tier. The Tiering Wizard provides the initial scoping for Engagements and its use provides consistent classification of Engagements based on the nature of the services being provided by the vendor.

Service Framing

More in-depth than the Tiering Wizard, Service Framing comprises a questionnaire sent to the 1st Party's business owner, and/or the 3rd party. The responses are used to risk-score the Asset, but only for the purpose of assigning a Tier. The Service Framing risk score does not impact the overall risk score of the Asset determined by Assessment. Note that per-tenant, custom Service Framing is targeted for release in the second half of 2017.

Asset

An individually assessable entity. Standard Asset Types that ship with Synapse are: Vendor, Solution, Software Solution, Service Solution, Data Center/Hosting, Call Center, SaaS Offering. Synapse users can create custom Asset Types.

Engagement

A collection of Assets grouped together for varying reasons. An Engagement has Assets, a Tier, Requirements, and a Schedule. In addition, each Engagement has a Risk Reviewer, and an Evidence Reviewer. An Engagement is typically analogous to a project or service.

An Engagement in Synapse is equivalent to a Relationship in 3.x.

Relationship

An individual Asset used across multiple Engagements. As the same Asset could be part of multiple Engagements, the Relationship function enables Synapse users to understand all the Engagements that the Asset is part of. Whenever an Asset is added to an Engagement for the first time, a Relationship is automatically created for that Asset (Synapse users cannot “create” Relationships). This gives Synapse users a single view of an Asset’s presence across their entire environment. Relationships represent an association between your organization and another. A Relationship can be inbound (clients assessing your organization), outbound (your organization assessing your vendors), or bi-directional.

Widget

An individual table or chart, typically with an x-axis and y-axis, or a table with rows and columns. Widgets are often internally interactive; timeframes can be changed and charts respond, or elements are clicked on and more details are displayed in connected tables.

Dashboard

A collection of Widgets (minimum of one) on a single view.

Report

A collection of point-in-time Widgets, tables and text laid out in document format, intended to be distributed as a point-in-time view electronically (pdf) or hard copy.

Synapse Architecture

Synapse provides a common interface for first and third parties. Derived from the Synapse/Network philosophy, Synapse architecture is use-case agnostic. That is, Synapse users will access a common interface whether the user is launching an Assessment of one of its vendors, or responding to an Assessment request from the user’s customer. With a common login, Synapse users can be either consumers of Evidence (e.g. Surveys), or Evidence contributors.