Case Study: Government Investigations – Reducing 6 TB of Data for Document Review

We used a **forensic analysis** of the laptop to recover evidence indicating that... **the employee was logged onto the network after hours** and was **accessing proprietary corporate files.**

An Avalon client needed help responding to a government inquiry that involved a significant amount of data. The client was motivated to comply with the pre-suit request to dissuade the Department of Justice from filing a suit.

The Challenge

The client needed to collect data from the desktops, work laptops, and mobile devices of 11 custodians. The initial volume of information collected was unmanageable: It consisted of roughly 20 million digital items, totaling nearly 6 TB of data.

The Strategy

Avalon was engaged to cull the dataset to a more manageable size. First, our digital forensic experts deleted any unnecessary system files by applying deNISTing protocol in conjunction with their own custom script to isolate system files left after the deNIST was run. Next, we employed a custom custodial deduplication – where one can set an order of importance to the custodians. So, if a duplicate file was found among three custodians, the file belonging to the most important custodian was retained and the others were withheld from the eventual review set. These two protocols alone reduced the dataset size by more than 35%.

Our team then worked with the client and their outside counsel to create search terms. We also translated the plain language into complex Boolean search strings. Some terms turned out to be too inclusive and had to be reworked several times. But, eventually, after numerous tweaks to the search terms, the volume of data to be reviewed was reduced to 135 GB and roughly 351,000 items. The dataset was hosted on Avalon's Relativity platform.

Because this was still a large amount of data to review, the client hired an outside managed review service to take a first pass and used their outside counsel in the quality control stage. The client was initially hesitant to apply Relativity analytics due to the costs and forged ahead with a straight linear managed review.*

At the peak of the review, more than 100 Relativity users were coding in the database. During the quality control rounds, however, it was discovered that certain parts of email threads were being coded in

drastically different ways, which caused certain items to be produced that should have been withheld. The client decided to employ Relativity analytics to utilize email threading for the sake of a quality control process. After threading was applied, the quality control round corrected the errors and the amount produced was 71 GB consisting of 97,317 items – a tremendous decrease from the initial 20 million.

The Results

The lawsuit never materialized, in large part, due to the cooperation and data provided by the client. The client also learned the importance and benefits of using email threading at the beginning of the eDiscovery process.

---

*UPDATE: When this case study was written, Avalon did not offer managed review. We now provide world-class document review services, including first level review, foreign language review, quality control, second level review, redactions, market surveillance, contract management, deposition preparation, targeted searching, and privilege log.

In addition, Relativity analytics is now included in the cost of any hosted review workspace, so there's no need to be concerned about the price going up when implementing email threading and other useful analytical tools and processes. Finally, Relativity has eliminated per-seat user licensing fees to help reduce costs as well.

QUESTIONS?

For more information on any of our services, please contact:

Rebecca Rudell
Marketing Manager
rebecca.rudell@teamavalon.com