

Integrating Paper & Electronic Review

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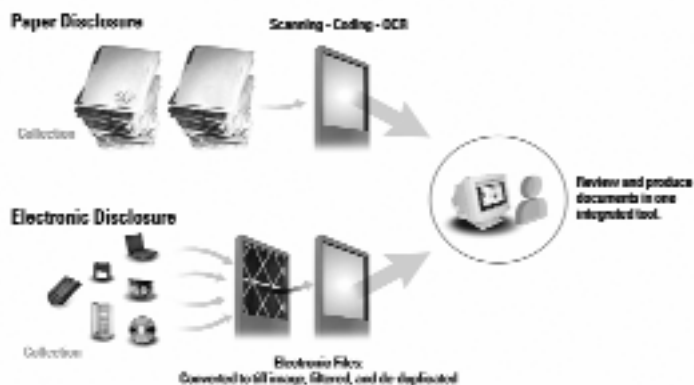
The average lawyer today probably spends more time working on discovery/disclosure than on any other aspect of litigation, including liaising with clients, negotiating settlements with the opposing party and carrying out research. Until recently, paper documents were considered the primary, if not exclusive, source of evidence in all types of litigation.

Today, while electronic documents and emails are becoming increasingly important in litigation, paper documents will continue to be a crucial source of evidence. As such, law firms should consider implementing solutions for better managing their review of both paper and electronic documents.

In modern litigation, the initial collection of electronic evidence can involve a variety of media, including DVDs, hard drives and backup tapes. This amounts to several gigabytes of data or the equivalent of tens of millions of pages. Even after sophisticated searching and filtering technologies have been applied, the resulting set of potentially relevant evidence may still encompass millions of pages. In addition, lawyers will still need to review and rely upon a significant volume of paper documents. With this comes the challenge of being able to “keep a handle” on both sources of evidence.

When dealing with these volumes of evidence from disparate sources, long gone are the days when the solution was to print everything to paper. This would be the electronic equivalent of searching for relevant evidence buried within warehouses full of documents. The technology now exists for lawyers to review paper and electronic documents together in a single online document repository.

In short, the paper-sourced documents are scanned and coded into electronic format and these images are then merged with the electronic-sourced documents (emails, spreadsheets, etc.) in the same database. This allows reviewers to have access to all of the evidence “in one place” irrespective of format.



These sophisticated online repositories allow for multiple reviewers to access the same set of data simultaneously, regardless of where the review team is physically located. In other words, a team based in New York, Hong Kong and London can, with little more than an Internet connection, have equal access to their client's set of data.

Online repositories also provide reviewers with the ability to search through and filter the documents, place electronic “post-it” notes and highlights on the documents, categorise documents as relevant or privileged, and the ability to view electronic documents in their native file formats.

In today's fast-paced, multi-jurisdictional litigation, success in any case will depend increasingly on the firm's ability to quickly and efficiently identify, collect, review and manage substantial volumes of electronic and paper documents. Litigators who embrace online review technology to assist in these efforts will gain strategic and cost-effective advantages for their clients.

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