

The Future of FOIA


The rapid evolution of technology over the years has radically transformed the FOIA landscape. The manually intensive processes of retrieving, storing, and sharing critical information increasingly demands automation and software that can save cross-functional teams time and allow them to manage higher volumes of data with greater precision and an overall reduced possibility of human error. Automation tools adopted out of the need to work remotely have increased legal teams' abilities to collaborate more effectively, and these tools are bound to remain assets as legal organizations resume in-person and hybrid arrangements in the coming months. The time for gaining similar technological competency for FOIA case teams is now, and the key is cloud-based software that allows every member of the team to get more work done, and faster.

Integration

Between retrieving and reviewing emails, text messages, social media communications, audio and video recordings, and numerous other forms of remote data, cross-functional teams need a reliable method of navigating the increasingly high volume and variety of data and satisfying their governance requirements. The old standard of working in silos on different objectives and playing catch-up is no longer viable, and the successful team of the future is one that collaborates seamlessly and remains productive regardless of the size and diversity of data. Everlaw represents the future for eDiscovery, FOIA, investigations and beyond. Everlaw's model would remove bottlenecks in collaborative FOIA response initiatives by creating a central space from which all data can be received, reviewed, and shared throughout the response process. By leveraging only the most up-to-date cloud technology, our centralized platform allows for unmatched communication, consistency, and control at every step in the process, be it investigation, litigation, or otherwise. All necessary tools are integrated together in a single platform, without the requirement of additional add-ons, installations or expensive upgrades. Additionally, by automating workflows that trigger actions at every level of an individual activity or a wider process, cross-functional teams can both improve how they collaborate on the conception of compelling narratives in real time, and also speed up the exchange of data and insights that help to make this possible.

Developmental Agility

Agencies responsible for FOIA responses are well-versed in the challenges that even simple forms of ESI such as email and Microsoft documents can create for a response team. While FOIA teams are still trying to overcome many of those familiar hurdles, the diversity of data types has multiplied exponentially in just a few short years. Beyond emails, now agencies



must handle the review of audio video files, Teams chats and text messages. It seems like every day a new file type emerges in (and begins to dominate) the market. As a result, agencies need to future-proof by selecting FOIA technology that can innovate rapidly, without requiring frequent downtime or maintenance and without requiring significant upcharges or add-ons every time something new is added. As a cloud native technology, Everlaw rolls out new features to our customers approximately every four weeks, and those updates go out to *all of our customers*. In 2021 alone, Everlaw released 128 impactful user facing features while maintaining higher than a 99.5% uptime (with scheduled maintenance). Legacy on-prem FOIA solutions just cannot keep pace with the rapid evolution of data in today's technology landscape.

Remote Collaboration and Self-Service

As a result of the pandemic, government agencies spent much of 2020-2021 adjusting to the need to work remotely (many for the first time). The need for team members at all levels to have unencumbered access to information in a remote setting has not — and likely will not — subside as the impact of the pandemic wanes. Ediscovery tools for remote access have been instrumental in keeping legal operations afloat during the pandemic, but have also often had the unintended, but beneficial side-effect of accelerating the speed and efficiency of legal teams. FOIA tools should be keeping stride to adjust to this new operational normal by leveraging cloud based, automated workflows like those that Everlaw has developed.

Everlaw's cloud-based automation tools are designed intuitively, allowing users at all levels of the organization to set up workflows without the burden of steep learning curves and coding knowledge. We have also optimized our software for speed and efficiency without compromising ease of use, and our technology currently leads the industry in document review, allowing reviews, enhanced by process automations, to happen at an unmatched rate of up to 140 docs/hour, approximately 2.5X faster than other cloud platforms. Additionally, the processing power of Everlaw's platform provides for optimal remote access and collaboration, allowing for typical organizational datasets to be processed at the rate of up to 900,000 docs/hour.

We look forward to exploring this topic in more detail during the Chief FOIA Officers Council's NextGen FOIA Tech Showcase. To learn more about Everlaw, please visit www.everlaw.com or view our short [product tour video](#).



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