Many FOIA teams struggle with large, unwieldy data sets, coupled with tools that seem to lose effectiveness after those sets surpass certain size limits. Additionally, many FOIA teams aren’t comfortable with the complicated boolean search structures required by many systems. Everlaw makes the FOIA search experience both powerful and straightforward, to empower every member on the team to be productive and efficient. We’ve developed tools that make it easy to construct complex searches more intuitively, and our cloud infrastructure means that searches run almost instantly across millions of records. Searches are easy to save and share with other members of the team, and can be used to quickly build redaction workflows to more efficiently complete FOIA requests.

### Instant Visual Search

The visual search builder on the Everlaw platform is designed to be easy and more natural with a simple, drag-and-drop interface. Users can quickly construct complex searches with building blocks made up of metadata terms, document contents, redaction status, document properties and much more. “Smart” fields consolidate metadata information like senders and recipients into single fields for simplified searching. The search preview window updates instantly as new conditions are added, enabling users to check their search quality before running the final version. Searches are saved automatically as soon as a user hits ‘Begin Review” and a card appears on the user’s home page that can be easily shared with individuals or groups of users on a FOIA matter. In addition running the basic contents search they are used to, this search tool can help FOIA case teams search for all of the documents that have not been redacted, or have been redacted with a particular exemption code, or may belong to a particularly sensitive custodian and need a second set of eyes. Because Instant Visual Search is so fast and easy to use, rather than being a hindrance, searching becomes not only a part of the standard workflow, but also a methodology for better quality control and team communication.

### Search Term Reports

Everlaw also offers a Search Term Report (“STR”) functionality. Search term reports can be set up by keyword, metadata property or complex boolean logic. For each term or expression, Everlaw displays the total number of hits, the unique hits and the hits with the full family
included. Reports can be set to refresh automatically daily, eliminating the need to manually update every STR in a case each time new data is added. STRs download in a clear and visually appealing format that can be very helpful in determining if all of the pertinent data for a FOIA matter has been collected, or if there appears to be gaps in the collection. These STR's can then be used to refine the terms that are used to perform the data collection. STR's can also be used to set up persistent highlight sets across a FOIA matter. The terms in these sets will be highlighted on all documents as the teams review and redact them, and the highlights can be used to navigate from term to term, as well for performing a bulk redaction of a highlighted term or phrase across a document (or document set) with a single click.

Data Visualizer

Many people comprehend information more effectively through visualizations. Everlaw’s Data Visualizer’s interactive visuals provide key insights from document dates, metadata, contents, formats, review activity, and predicted relevance. Rather than crafting manual searches, the user can select data properties from the visuals that are relevant to the FOIA matter. In this way, they can quickly filter down into only those documents most likely to be responsive to the matter at hand. Users can also customize visual dashboards for quick reference for the most commonly used filters for FOIA such as custodian, date range, or document type. When a user applies the filters from the Data Visualizer, a search card is generated just as when they run a traditional search, and similarly the results can quickly be shared to other team members.

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 video on searching.