

NexGen FOIA Technology Showcase

Day 1, Topic 4: Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools that may assist with FOIA case processing

Since its inception in 1967, the Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act (FOIA/PA) has placed the onus on government agencies to disclose information and release documents upon request by the public. Agencies are facing a growing demand from its citizens to respond to these requests with speed and accuracy. In its current state, responding to FOIA/PA requests require large amounts of manual and time-intensive labor, cumulating in an increasing backlog of unprocessed requests. Fulfilling these requests is becoming increasingly expensive and directly contributes to ballooning overhead. Agencies require automated processing support services to close the growing capacity gap of documents that require manual processing for case management, redaction and eDiscovery.

IBM brings extensive experience deploying solutions, at scale, within Government environments in conjunction with unique past performance successfully delivering the largest Intelligent Automation Platform (IAP) in production within the Government. IBM is uniquely positioned to support our Federal Partners in closing this gap through the implementation of modern automation processes and technology to more efficiently process NARA's FOIA requests while maintaining a human-centric and quality management focus. IBM has successfully established partnerships to apply technologies that construct our automation platform, such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR), Intelligent Form Recognition (IFR), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to automate document intake, redaction, and eDiscovery processes. In this capacity, IBM has worked side-by-side with Government agencies to start-up and scale programs and automation platforms that operate 24x7.

IBM's automation platform is an Authorized To Operate (ATO) Commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution that has been successfully deployed across development, test, and production environments within the Government; is operable across security levels and agnostic to cloud environments; and is integrated with backend databases and incoming document ingestion streams. We bring processes and procedures to facilitate continuous performance monitoring and human-in-the-loop interaction to improve processing quality and accuracy.

Artificial Intelligence in the FOIA/PA Process

IBM is making use of AI today in our automation platform for driving automated workflows and performing automated redactions. These AI integrations come in many different forms, including the way in which we extract information from documents, to detecting entities within unstructured data, to the way in which we classify documents and retrieve information. The below section highlights just a few areas we infuse AI to our workflows today.

OCR/ICR Engines and Content Intelligence (AI/ML) – The platform's Automated Data Extraction capability is driven by OCR/ICR, ML, and AI as it retrieves data from the request for classification and identification of requested content to make intelligent recommendations on how to proceed with processing. Our extraction technology incorporates extensions to account for any degraded image quality and handle handwritten documents. Our classification is performed by NLP models, that incorporate AI to understand context, which is crucial in entity detection and allows for the highest quality extraction and redaction.



Document Retrieval – Beyond an understanding of what is being asked, AI in combination with integration capabilities such as APIs and RPA can be leveraged to not only understand the type of request, but take the next best action and retrieve the requested documents to support the next step in the workflow.

Entity Detection and Automated Redaction – Power by ML, the automated redaction tool identified and redacts sensitive data (e.g., third party, PII, PHI) and creates standardization across the redaction process. The IBM solution employs an automated redaction AI solution that detects and annotates redaction on a document with enhanced accuracy. This solution provides the ability to both automatically and manually redact documents, and can be integrated with a workflow to provide for human-in-the-loop capabilities needed to achieve transaction performance goals.

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