

How TRILANTIC Transformed a Jumbled Mountain of Documents into an Organized Collection

Case Study



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When Americans and American lawyers think of litigation and legal technology, they typically think of attorneys in private practice and law firms that represent corporations. Fewer people think of the courts themselves, even though judges and officers of the court play critical roles in every case. And fewest people of all consider international proceedings that may have structures quite different from the American civil and criminal legal systems.

Recently, TRILANTIC, a UK and European-based provider of litigation support services, was asked by a permanent international tribunal to assist its prosecutors, who worked directly as officers of the court. An important case was coming up for trial, but the court lacked the resources to cost and time-effectively work through voluminous documents obtained as part of an international criminal investigation. Could Equivio technology be the missing piece that would help the prosecutors ready their case in time and within their budget?

THE PROBLEM

Prosecutors for the tribunal had received approximately 50,000 documents that had been gathered from three different countries. Reviewing and storing these voluminous materials in the hardcopy format in which they had been collected was impractical, so the materials had been digitally imaged, with OCR text generated for each document. However, even with the information in searchable electronic format, working through the documents was a slow process that simply wasn't pulling together the evidence that the prosecution knew was contained within the materials. Reviewing the documents was proving time-consuming, unfruitful, and unhelpful for assembling the prosecutors' case. With time running out for case development and trial preparation, prosecutors were running the real risk of walking into the courtroom underprepared and outgunned.

THE DEPLOYMENT

After consulting with the Court and its prosecutors regarding the specific needs of the case, TRILANTIC suggested using Equivio to better organize the documents and streamline the prosecutors' document review process. Equivio was a natural choice, not only because of the benefits it would offer the document review team, but also because the technology could be deployed quickly and on a mobile basis inside the Court's own buildings, where the highly sensitive evidentiary materials were stored under tight security.

The Equivio remote installation was swift and straightforward. A single TRILANTIC consultant brought two identically-configured professional-grade laptop computers to the secure location where the electronic materials were located. Loading the data and running Equivio near-duplicate identification took only a half-day, including human analysis of several test runs designed to adjust the Equivio similarity thresholds to most

effectively group documents. After processing was complete, the resulting Equivio analysis was loaded into the Court's existing litigation support database platform.

THE RESULTS

Working with OCR text is always a challenge because even small differences in the condition of otherwise identical hardcopy documents can create dramatic differences in the OCR text that is generated. Equivio near-duplicate identification, however, both compensated for minor differences between documents caused by OCR errors as well as identifying substantially similar documents that contained unique content. Grouping exact and near-duplicate documents into Equivio EquiSets effectively reduced the document collection by nearly a third (~30%), significantly reducing the amount of human time needed to complete the prosecutors' review of the collection. Near-duplicate identification also helped the prosecutors gather a deeper understanding of the relevant documents that they did find, since closely related documents were only a click away instead of spread across multiple searches and reviewers. Finally, thanks to near-duplicate identification, the review team could feel confident that when they located a key document, they also had immediate access to all the closely related materials that added further context to the key evidence they had uncovered.

Using Equivio near-duplicate groupings to enhance the review also significantly reduced the time the prosecutors needed to complete it. Instead of scrambling until the last minute, the prosecutors, using only their limited resources, completed their review ahead of schedule, freeing up valuable additional time they could use to integrate their fact evidence into the legal cases or otherwise spend time "lawyering" instead of flipping through documents. Because constantly increasing document volumes generally lead to overruns in the review process, completing such a project with time left over was a rare and remarkable achievement—and an opportunity that the prosecutors enthusiastically exploited.

Deploying Equivio also saved the tribunal money—a critical factor for an organization that has to stretch its budget as far as possible. Unlike other solutions that have significant hardware and support staff requirements, Equivio could be deployed at the court's secure facilities by a single TRILANTIC consultant using equipment a single person could carry. In addition, the consultant not only organized these documents in a single day for enhanced review, he also completed all data processing and loading ahead of schedule—a significant and unexpected feat in the e-discovery and litigation support world. Faster completion, in turn, translated into fewer billable hours of consultant time for the tribunal.

CONCLUSION

The prosecutors were delighted with how Equivio had turned an imposing mountain of documents into an organized collection from which they could easily find key evidence. Not many litigation support vendors receive thank-you notes from their clients—but TRILANTIC did: “[We] take this opportunity to thank you for the successful and expeditious run of the project.” Perhaps the greatest compliment came a few weeks later, however, when TRILANTIC received an unexpected call from the prosecutor’s opposing counsel. Having seen the ease with which the prosecution was extracting key evidence from the discovery collection, the defense team was interested in using Equivio too!

ABOUT EQUIVIO

Equivio develops text analysis software for e-discovery. Users include the DoJ, the FTC, KPMG, Deloitte, plus hundreds of law firms and corporations. We offer Zoom, a platform for analytics and predictive coding. Zoom organizes collections of documents in meaningful ways. So you can zoom right in and find out what’s interesting, notable and unique. Request a demo at info@equivio.com or visit us at www.equivio.com.

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