DISCOVERY SPECIALISTS

Discovery Specialists has over a decade of experience in search, data mining, and development of custom software. Our team is comprised exclusively of engineers, computer scientists and litigation experts. This structure enables us to deliver state of the art services in the challenging and rapidly changing field of electronic discovery and management of legal documents.

Our mission is to execute complex discovery jobs in a cost effective manner, observing tight deadlines and providing reporting and transparency throughout the process.

WHY USE DISCOVERY SPECIALISTS?

Leading Edge Technical Capabilities – Our entire team has a background in engineering and computer science (and several have advanced degrees in engineering, business, and law). This skill set enables us to deliver the best and most effective tools for the job at hand. We understand all file types, operating systems, databases, physical storage systems and legacy systems. In addition, we understand the business process flows that typically create the documents of a company and the legal requirements for preserving and handling these documents. Our clients rely on us to ensure all evidence is processed properly and there are no surprises that can adversely impact the case or cause unnecessary and costly sanctions by the court for improperly handling the evidence.

Content   Multi-Language Documents
Knowledge   Transparency
Cost Effectiveness
Price Estimation   *Job Customization*
Leading Edge   Reporting
Technical Capabilities   Ability

Job Customization – Every discovery job is different and has its own unique challenges. Given our technical expertise, we are not constrained by the capabilities of the off-the-shelf software solutions that are used by most other vendors. To solve these challenges, we write software tools and adapters required to properly process a job. These software tools are written either as standalone applications or as enhancements to the off-the-shelf software. We are not constrained by using a single tool – rather we utilize the best tool for a given job, or if the tool does not exist we simply create it.

Cost Effectiveness – Many vendors obfuscate pricing and make false promises of very low prices. But buyer beware! Often these projects end up with much higher costs due to hidden charges and costly mistakes that can affect the outcome of the case or cause unnecessary sanctions. With Discovery Specialists you can be assured that the job will be done correctly the first time and as cost effective as possible. You will have both visibility and understanding of cost drivers so you can properly budget the production costs.

Flexible and Nimble Boutique Service Provider – Due to the cross-functional skill sets of our team we can move very quickly and effectively.

Multi-Language Documents and Machine Translation – Increasingly, the discovery process involves multi-language documents which pose an additional challenge and can increase costs during the review process. We have the ability to identify the source language(s) in each of the documents. These documents can be tagged based on their native language to aid in attorney review and group documents for further translation. Discovery Specialists can also perform native language data mining which provides the most accurate results. Foreign documents can be machine translated if desired so review teams can do further searching and review in English and identify documents for certified hand translation. Discovery Specialists also offers court and FBI certified hand translation services.

Transparency – We proactively communicate with the client throughout the project. Our clients know exactly what the status is at each stage of the production. This is critical information that allows attorneys and IT staff to make educated decisions when deadlines are fast approaching. Our clients have access to a web based interface which provides the most up to date information about the status of the project, allows questions to be posed to engineers, gives data statistics, instant reporting, as well as invoice and job request information.

Reporting ability – For each job, we provide a series of free reports that identify key characteristics about the project, chain of custody for the documents, cost analysis to help better predict costs on future jobs, and exception reporting. We can also provide customized reports for an additional fee. For example, our "workplace community" report for email analysis enables attorneys to better understand potential connections amongst various individuals and teams. This provides valuable information when documents may appear to be unrelated or when deciding which individuals should be deposed in a case.
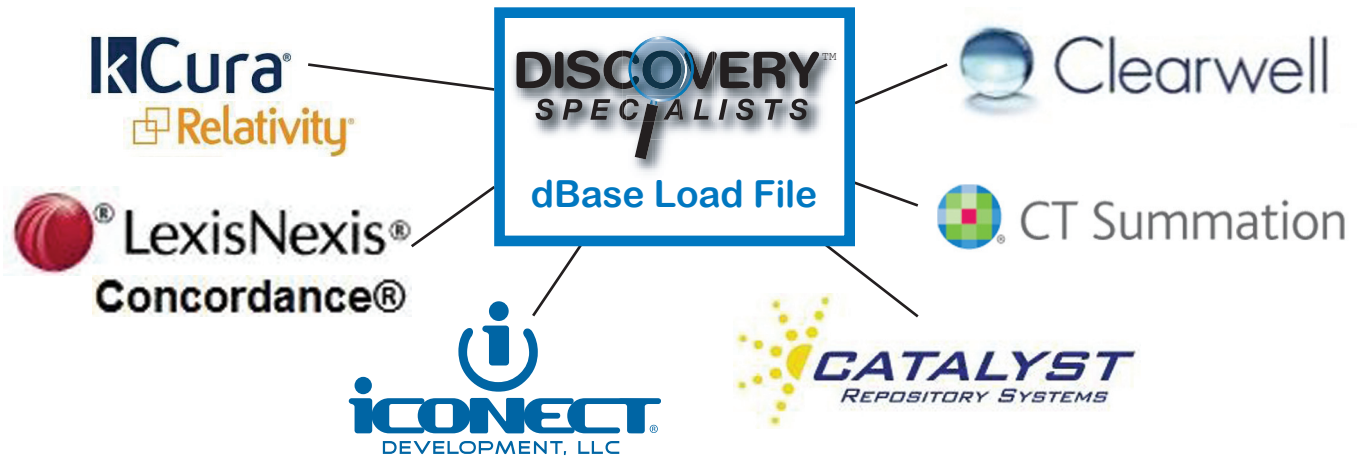
Price Estimation – While electronic discovery jobs are unique and have many moving parts, we strive to simplify the pricing so that it is easier to understand and properly budget. We can accurately estimate the overall costs even for the most complex jobs. In addition, we provide information on key drivers that could impact the overall cost of the project. Both simplified pricing, and a la carte pricing are available depending on the client's needs and job characteristics.

Understanding of Content – We do not blindly process collections of documents. Our team has a deep understanding of engineering, business and legal documents. When certain documents are challenging to automatically process, we can properly assess their relevancy and provide guidance and recommendation to our clients. This eliminates unnecessary steps and reduces overall processing time.

GENERAL PROCESSING AND PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES

Full Load File Compatibility – We are compatible with all standard industry review databases and can produce load files in any desired format, including custom/proprietary database structures. Below is a set of the most common set of systems in which we are asked to interface.

kCura® Relativity®

DISCOVERY SPECIALISTS™
dBase Load File

Clearwell

LexisNexis® Concordance®

CT Summation

iCONECT DEVELOPMENT, LLC®

CATALYST REPOSITORY SYSTEMS

Multimedia Files – Our preprocessing identifies audio and video files and converts them to a specified standardized output format (QuickTime, Windows Media, Flash, etc) so that the client's review team can more easily review those files on their own systems. In addition, we provide relevant metadata to better describe those files (e.g. length of audio/video, original file type, etc). Discovery Specialists has new state of the art software that can create dictation of these audio and video files to provide textual searching of the content.

Avoid Evidence Spoilation – Sanctions and even case decisions are becoming more frequent due to electronic evidence spoilation. We can help avoid the pitfalls of spoilation by properly handling the copying and transferring of data and counseling clients on the appropriate methods of document collection. We can also analyze data sets received from the opposition and alert clients if we discover data that may have been deleted, omitted, or altered during the collection or production process.

Data Tagging/Flagging – Data can be tagged by language, topics, keywords, subjects, custodians, business units, privilege, or any complex search criteria. This capability is often useful for attorneys who need to quickly review only a subset of documents (e.g. when preparing for a deposition with a particular person).

Data Culling – Often times clients have done data culling before we receive documents. However, whether documents are pre-culled, or we are culling documents, we utilize a sophisticated funnel to reduce the received data set to a subset of files that are relevant for the review process. Our funnel can be deployed to do one or more of the following: file type filtering, data de-duplication, email de-threading, contextual searching, and data type filtering. The resulting data set for processing is smaller and therefore reduces the overall costs and time of the production and subsequent review.

Decompress Files
File Separation
Data Extraction
Contextual Searching
Deduplication
Email Dethreading

Metadata Extraction – Almost every type of electronic document created contains metadata – information concerning the document that typically is not seen when the document is printed out. More and more cases require the production of native electronic files due to the changes in the Federal Rules in December of 2006. We have the ability to extract hundreds of types of metadata from electronic documents. Further, we can analyze emails produced as images and extract field information to populate the review database and re-link emails to their attachments.

SERVICES

Everyone on the Discovery Specialists team has an engineering or computer science degree – a unique and differentiated position in the electronic discovery industry – which allows us to tackle both simple and complex jobs effectively and cost efficiently. Quite often it is unclear what the complexities of a job will be until it begins. There are always landmines and pitfalls waiting around the corner. Due to our deep knowledge of data structures and software programming, we can quickly adapt our processes to any issue that may arise. We are not bound by off-the-shelf software that often has limitations on types of ocuments it can successfully process. Instead, we fit the software tools to the documents – utilizing the best tools for any given situation, or developing our proprietary tools when needed. Our ability to quickly develop customized tools and handle exceptions and issues beyond the capabilities of leading edge software packages gives our clients the comfort to know that they will never have to move projects to a new vendor in the middle of processing.

While many service companies will use off-the-shelf software packages and low skill labor to perform manual tasks in a production job, you can trust us to deploy the latest possible technology and solutions. This ensures all files are processed correctly, consistently, and gives the client the most accurate information on the documents. While we do use all of the latest available off-the-shelf software for routine tasks, we have ability to create customized software that interfaces with existing packages in order to properly solve and handle complex job requirements. The value this ability provides is often not seen by the client, because problems that would bring many other vendors to a halt are confidently resolved by our team without the need to burden the client.
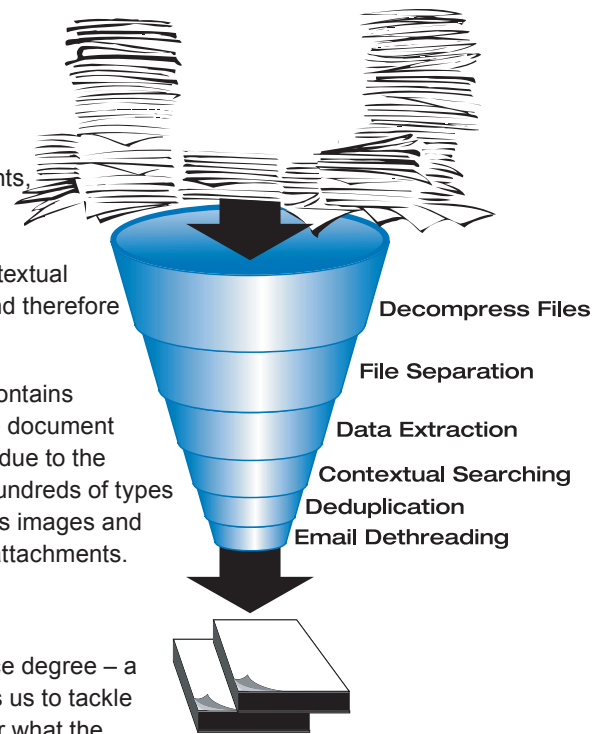
Our services include the following:

Collection – Our team has years of experience working within large and small corporations. We understand how data is stored, where data is likely to be stored, and the best ways to collect this data to ensure information is not accidently altered or destroyed.

Data Mining – We can create "surgical" searches to pull out documents that are truly relevant. The advanced searching capabilities exceed many tools available to most corporations that may not catch embedded documents or meta-data. The advanced searching along with our experience in locating relevant documents means more precise productions for our customers and less expense.

PRODUCTION
TRIAL GRAPHICS
DATA MINING
REPORTING
FORENSICS
COLLECTION
TRANSLATION

Forensics – We provide forensics services internally and through our partners that have experience testifying as expert witnesses in litigations. Forensics can consist of data recovery, password unlocking, re-creation of meta-data, identification of missing documents, tracking the path a document has taken through a network, or examination of out-dated technology.

Translation Services – We offer a comprehensive set of services to assist legal teams in more effectively managing the electronic discovery process in modern litigation cases which are increasingly international in nature and often contain documents in several languages. We offer both Machine Language translation as well as live translation. Through our proprietary Language ID technology we can ID single-language documents, but even more importantly we can identify documents that contain multiple foreign languages. We also have the ability to automatically search the datasets both in English and the matching foreign language terms. This capability enables us to efficiently identify all the responsive documents irrespective of the language they are written in.

Production – There are many options for the production of documents in today's complex litigations. This ranges from paper production to native file production, and everything in between. Our experienced engineers can show you the advantages and disadvantages of each production and the demands that will be placed on both you and the opposition for review.

Reporting – Throughout the collection, data mining, and production stages it is critical for lawyers to understand what is happening with the documents and keep track of the entire process. We understand this need and provide reports throughout the process memorializing the steps taken and results of each procedure. This is invaluable later in a case when memories fail and an understanding of certain documents or steps taken needs to be explained.

Trial Graphics – We provide comprehensive Trial Graphics services including trial exhibits, presentations with animations, 3D modeling, charts and timelines, demonstrative graphics, and Power Point presentations. Along with basic black and white document enlargements, we can create a variety of trial boards including full-color, hinged, laminated, Velcro, or magnetic. Additionally, we work with flip charts, dry erase boards, transparencies, overlays and photographic enlargements. Discovery Specialists can assist you by presenting courtroom demonstratives using state of the art trial presentation technology either directly in the courtroom or by preparing the materials for attorneys to present themselves.

U.S. LOCATIONS

We are regularly adding presence and support in other major metropolitan areas throughout the country. If your city is currently not on the map, feel free to call us and check - even if we do not have physical presence in your area, we are quite adept at working and managing complex projects remotely.

INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS

We also have presence in several international locations from which we support cases which are increasingly global and multi-lingual in nature.

Austria: Vienna
China: Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou
Croatia: Zagreb
Germany: Munich, Frankfurt
Japan: Tokyo

Singapore
Slovenia: Ljubljana
Spain: Barcelona, Madrid
Switzerland: Davos, Geneva, Zurich
United Kingdom: London

PROJECTS

The case examples below illustrate our capabilities as well as situations where Discovery Specialists were called in to rectify a job that was already in progress by other service firms that experienced problems they could not resolve.

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY – One of the nation's largest document processing companies made a critical processing error by providing page placeholders for duplicate documents without retaining any information on the original document. This happened because the software system they were using was either not set up correctly or did not provide the needed flexibility to record this information. This error resulted in the opposition making a series of discovery requests demanding to know the origins of the duplicate document placeholders. With a pending order from the court to provide this information, the document company could come up with no other solution but to reprocess the entire job. However, with over 3 million pages, there was no time for this crude solution.

We were called in to analyze the situation. With the existing data available on the documents, we were able to write an algorithm to automatically analyze the data and provide Bates numbers to the original document for each duplicate document placeholder. We reproduced the placeholder images citing the original document and the client avoided threatened court sanctions.

A NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY – One of the largest document processing companies began this production job but soon it was realized that privileged documents had been produced due to a bug in their "state of the art" processing system which was unable to search certain types of documents. This led to an embarrassing episode between the law firm and its client, and provided valuable information to the opposition. The company was not able to determine how often this problem occurred and had no other suggestion but to re-review by hand all the documents.

Discovery Specialists was asked to analyze the documents produced. We were able to generate a list of documents where this problem occurred, search those documents for privileged information and provide a list of documents to the client to be clawed back from the opposition before the right was waived due to a time limit in the protective order. In addition, on this project, a large number of documents had been previously mis-Bates labeled creating large overlapping ranges. The previous discovery company had not kept original images without Bates stamps on them so could only suggest regenerating the TIFF images and putting the new corrected labels on them. This process would have been time consuming and requiring reprinting of the entire document set. Discovery Specialists was able to develop an algorithm to accurately locate the Confidentiality and Bates labels on each TIFF image, remove those labels and put the corrected labels in their place. All this was done without reprinting the entire production, resulting in important time and cost savings.

AN INTERNATIONAL MULTI-PARTY LITIGATION – Ten defendants were producing documents to our client in both native and image format in six different languages. This required a coordinated effort for data extraction and OCRing of documents. Each data set had unique challenges. Along with Discovery Specialists, several other vendors were considered. However, the unique challenges in processing filenames and directory structures with Japanese and Korean characters was beyond the capability of many standard processing systems. Additionally, with so many languages in one data set, other vendors intended to make multiple passes through the data set to focus on each separate language. This would have increased the time necessary to finish the job and raise the costs of production.

Discovery Specialists was able to use its language detection processing to assess which documents contained foreign languages and then accurately machine translate only those documents. We even translated documents containing multiple languages. By use of proprietary technology and algorithms, we saved our clients both time and costs.

Another problem with foreign data sets on this job was the existence of documents created by proprietary foreign software applications. In some cases these software applications used file extensions that are the same as more common applications. By analyzing the metadata of these files, Discovery Specialists was able to accurately identify the software applications that created these documents and either convert these documents to a standard format, obtain a copy of the foreign application to read the document, or precisely identify the type of document to the law firm in order to have their client output this document in a format that could be read. This same technology was applied to locate documents created by common applications such as Word for Windows, but where file extensions have accidently been entered incorrectly (e.g. .DOV instead of .DOC).

Discovery Specialists' ability to easily handle foreign documents is a big advantage for clients that deal with international companies. By accurately identifying correct languages in data sets, searches can be performed by Discovery Specialists where one search string can be used to search the entire data set containing different languages. Before a document of a different language is searched, the search string is automatically converted into that document's native language to improve the accuracy of the search.

In this same job, we also effectively resolved another challenge. Out of millions of pages of documents that were received in TIFF and PDF format, many were of poor image quality that standard OCR systems would not be able to accurately read. Discovery Specialists applied a series of image processing techniques to documents in a multiple pass OCR system to get the best results possible. Images that are simply too poor to be accurately OCR'ed were flagged for manual review. Many of these image documents were emails. Discovery Specialists used its email field extraction algorithms to pull relevant information (i.e. TO, FROM, CC, SUBJECT, DATE, and ATTACHMENT fields) from the images and populated the review database allowing these documents to be more easily searched, sorted, and referenced to the email attachments. OCR text files were provided along with some of the produced documents. However, the text files did not match the images. While the law firm responsible for producing these mismatched documents was asked for a corrected production, the time to correct this mistake was going to negatively impact our client's time to adequately prepare for related depositions. Discovery Specialists was able to create a program to automatically detect and correct mismatched text files and images and quickly have the documents ready for review.

Another problem encountered with the opposition's production was overlapping Bates ranges. This mistake by the opposition was automatically detected and control numbers applied to those documents in the review database to let the attorneys still get started on their review, but allow the system to be updated at a later time when corrected Bates ranges were provided. Over 6 million pages were extracted, searched, and reviewed in this job. Discovery Specialists' ability to tag these documents by language, contextual searching, and file type allowed the attorney reviewers to quickly review the documents needed for fast approaching depositions, while the remainder of the documents were reviewed at a later time. In addition, reports were provided that showed gaps in the opposition's production, documents not produced, and people at the opposition's companies that appeared in many documents, but were not custodians for collection from the opposition. This allowed the attorneys to provide important details when pushing the opposition for further discovery.

HIEROGLYFIC DOCUMENT PRODUCTION – After an industry leading document processing company failed to correctly OCR a set of documents due to their system not being able to handle multiple languages in the OCR process, Discovery Specialists was asked to help. The original vendor could only suggest manually going through each document to see which documents were foreign and re-OCR those documents.

Discovery Specialists built a tool which self-taught itself the nature of the document based on an initial set of rules. This contextual algorithm was able to accurately and quickly determine which documents were foreign and pull those documents out for re-OCRing. This saved the client countless hours of review.

Further, during the original production of the documents, the system being utilized by the initial document processing company had created another error by disassociating emails from their attachments. Discovery Specialists developed a software tool which re-associated these source emails and attachments and provided a chart to the opposition, thus preventing a motion to compel order that would have required the job to be rerun.

PRICING

Pricing for litigation discovery has become a complex and opaque song and dance routine, where vendors give special promotional deals only with a guarantee for future business. Often the invoice you receive doesn't come close to the original quote due to under-estimation and hidden costs. Many times the under-estimation is due to simple lack of experience of a non-engineering sales person predicting the processing needed for a job, or a simple and crude sales trick to appear cheaper than competitors.

At Discovery Specialists we believe in transparency of costs so that you can make an educated decision on how to proceed with discovery and create and accurate budget.

We do offer volume discounts, and no job is too small. Every job is truly unique, and the best way to get the most accurate cost estimate is by speaking with one of our account managers to understand all aspects of the project. We will then submit a formal quote to you along with any variables that may affect the price estimate or length of time to finish the project.

Our objective is to simplify the pricing so that it is easily understandable and does not contain hidden charges and fees. With difficult economic conditions and increased scrutiny, budgets are closely watched and it is essential to accurately plan for costs, and execute on that plan. In general, our pricing is linked to the volume of data that needs to be processed, and types of services requested (e.g. OCR, machine translation, production of TIFFs, etc). Please contact one of our specialists to obtain a quote/estimate based on your specific needs and requirements.