

# Case Study

eDiscovery

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## Maricopa County Attorney's Office

The Maricopa County Attorney's Office takes data searches from painstaking to productive by leveraging OpenAxes as a Ricoh eDiscovery Managed Services solution

*"By working with Ricoh and the OpenAxes team, we were able to look at the way we were doing business and gain new perspective on things we probably could improve upon that previously weren't being considered."*

— Gary Peet  
Director of Information Technology  
Maricopa County Attorney's Office  
Phoenix, Arizona

### ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

The Maricopa County Attorney's Office (MCAO) in Phoenix, Arizona serves one of the largest populations in any U.S. county with nearly four million residents. They prosecute more than 35,000 felony criminal cases a year—along with a robust civil roster—while simultaneously participating in community events, providing crime prevention resources and strengthening the community at large.

Located in the southern part of the state, near the Mexico-United States barrier, their national profile has skyrocketed in recent years as they took on cases that attracted widespread media attention. As their profile grew, so did the number of public records requests (PRRs)—from the media, private attorneys, public entities and residents alike.

Stuck with outdated manual and semi-manual processes that served them at lower volumes in the past, MCAO was struggling to keep up with surging demand to produce data. Now, with the spotlight squarely on them, this problem could no longer wait for a solution.

With a mounting backlog of PRRs—and a growing need to improve their legal hold and other eDiscovery processes—they issued an RFP to find a technology partner to provide the right guidance and solution to make their process less painstaking and more productive.

### CHALLENGE

- Growing public records requests
- Manual and semi-manual workflow process
- Disparate data formats and silos
- Costly automation solutions

### SOLUTION

- Ricoh eDiscovery Managed Services
- OpenAxes technology solution
- Software customization
- Relativity® Assisted Review

### RESULTS

- Business process improvement
- Affordable automation solution
- Quick, thorough, efficient data searches
- Opportunities to expand solution

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### CHALLENGE

Five years ago, the county's PRRs jumped exponentially because of growing media attention. MCAO went from processing approximately 30 PRRs per year, to processing more than a thousand per year.

As requests continued to grow, they increased their staff from two to nine. The employees included a custodian of records, a mix of full- and part- time attorneys, paralegals and support staff. But that wasn't enough to reduce the typical nine-week turnaround time. One IT staff member spent six weeks trying to find and pull all the data for a single PPR.

Another critical issue was that the data resided in a variety of formats that included hard copies, emails and unstructured files on shared drives. The staff had no way of consolidating the data, forcing them to hunt through disparate data silos to find the records they needed.

Legal holds were also weighing the department down. They relied on their Adobe® technology platform to perform basic keyword searches for legal holds, but the technology was limited and it pulled up far more records than needed.

When the RFP responses started coming in, MCAO was enthusiastic, but unfortunately none of the proposals were feasible. They did select one provider, only to learn the costly solution exceeded their budget and scope.

"That provider's solution was powerful and capable, but I'd equate it to bringing an elephant gun to a squirrel hunt," said Gary Peet, Director of Information Technology at Maricopa County Attorney's Office. "Plus, it was cost prohibitive to implement countywide."

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Continuing with the wrong tools for their data intake process, searches and storage via silos simply wouldn't do. Peet turned to Ricoh eDiscovery for a solution—one that was robust and reasonably priced, that would automate their data and streamline their process and workflow.

### SOLUTION

Ricoh eDiscovery had recently added the powerful new solution, OpenAxes, to its technology portfolio. With no up-front capital investment, OpenAxes is a subscription-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution that resides behind an organization's firewall for on-premise identification, collection, smart culling and data management.

Ricoh manages and maintains the technology, handling everything from installation, configuration and software updates on an ongoing basis. Users are provided login access to view their data—all at a fixed cost.

It sounded almost too good to be true for Peet and his team, who were tired of conducting labor-intensive data searches in the trenches. But after Ricoh demonstrated the OpenAxes solution, the IT department was sold. They quickly became the champion for Ricoh's solution, propelling it through their legal department as well as other stakeholders to gain final approval.

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“The Ricoh and OpenAxes solution was an easy choice,” said Peet. “With other solutions, we would have to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in capital costs. With Ricoh’s solution, we pay a flat monthly fee and run OpenAxes on our existing server infrastructure and it is easily incorporated into our public records review workflow to satisfy the needs of our civil and litigation division.”

Once the decision was made, Ricoh implemented the OpenAxes solution within a week and provided one-on-one training sessions with users to ensure they understood all the functionality and could begin using it immediately.

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“The people at OpenAxes and Ricoh spent time with us to customize the solution to our needs,” said Peet. “It was a very good process and we got everything we needed.”

For instance, before OpenAxes, searches would primarily scan only emails contained in the current email database. Older emails that had been archived as a Personal Storage Table (PST) file were much more difficult to search. Ricoh customized the solution to find open and available emails

as well as those encapsulated into PST files. Ricoh also eliminated time-consuming indexing of folders that were being searched. Now, they have a continuous, live index of folders accessed—reducing a typical 20-hour indexing process down to a few minutes.

### RESULTS

The Maricopa County Attorney’s Office now has a powerful technology tool in OpenAxes and a collaborative partnership with Ricoh eDiscovery that has transformed their PRR and legal hold workflow processes. They conduct searches quickly, thoroughly and efficiently to meet the growing demand for information.

Now, they’re looking to expand the solution to other government agencies in the county and build on the capabilities of OpenAxes to streamline more of their business processes.

“By working with Ricoh and the OpenAxes team, we were able to look at the way we were doing business and gain new perspective on things we probably could improve upon that previously weren’t being considered,” said Peet.

### Affordable solution, streamlined automation

As a government agency, funds are rarely plentiful and most solutions for automating data searches are pricey. By implementing Ricoh’s OpenAxes technology, MCAO found exactly what they were looking for—at a cost they could afford.

“Prior to Ricoh and OpenAxes, our searches were limited,” said Peet. “Now, we can get into more source information to do our searches and we have a greater scope of folders that can be searched.”

MCAO has significantly streamlined their approach to the legal hold, identification, collection, processing and search phases of eDiscovery. Using the data filtering and tagging features of OpenAxes, they can cull down the same amount of data that previously took them 6 weeks, in just 3.5 hours.

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They can also meet large-scale Public Records Requests efficiently and are seeing a 50 percent cost savings over their legacy methods. In addition, multiple departments in the organization are better able to meet their legal obligations for responding to Public Records Requests promptly. They have also implemented a highly-efficient operational model for self-service requests.

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### Equipped for cases large and small

While the goal was to enable self-service requests in house, occasionally MCAO looks to Ricoh for assistance to export data out of OpenAxes for larger cases with vast amounts of data. For these cases, the data can be easily extracted from OpenAxes and imported into the Relativity® Review platform for MCAO’s eDiscovery team to analyze.

“There’s a lot more we think we can do with OpenAxes,” said Peet. “We just need to find the time to get in there and analyze what we should be doing.”

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