

eDiscovery for Mobile Presents Unique Data Collection Challenges



Most of the world's population now own cell phones and use them regularly for both personal and business concerns. Consequently, mobile data often becomes a significant factor in investigations and legal proceedings. However, eDiscovery for mobile inserts some new wrinkles into traditional data collection processes.

Until the last decade or so, phone calls and email dominated the communication sphere. But in 2007, messaging vaulted past phone calls, and the number of communications apps grows every day. Using a single mobile device, the same person will make phone calls, edit documents, send emails, create notes, and use a handful of different messaging apps.

This communication generates thousands of unique data pieces, some of which can prove highly relevant. But organizations and legal firms must take into account the unique challenges involved when approaching the mobile [eDiscovery](#) process. Following are just some of the difficulties to overcome.

Rapidly Advancing Technology

Smartphone technology evolves at lightning speed. For instance, in just 13 years, Apple has produced over 20 models of the iPhone. And frequent software updates include additional changes. These enhancements make mobile data more secure and improve communication options. But rapid changes, including [encryption advances](#), also complicate data extraction.



Data Access

The data generated or accessed via mobile devices may not actually live on the hardware. For instance, data accessed through the phone may reside in cloud backups or in third-party social media and messaging applications. Obtaining relevant data in these locations can trigger data privacy concerns and difficulties establishing data custody.

Furthermore, the layers involved on mobile devices make accessing the data a challenge. Physically possessing the device merely opens the door. Data collectors must also move through device passcodes, additional credentials for individual applications and login information for cloud accounts.

Multiple Data Formats

Consider the plethora of messaging types in common use. Besides the native texting app, mobile users employ Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Tiger Text, Snapchat, and others. Additionally, mobile users generate call logs, record voice memos, send emails, create calendar events, browse the internet, interact with social media and more.

Each type of data generated presents its own challenges in the extraction and review process. Different file formats require a variety of tools and strategies for collection. For instance, voice memos generally require transcription. A single phone can store thousands of messages. And advanced encryption in some apps can make extracted data impossible to review.

Separating Work Data from Personal Data

Employees often use the same phone for both personal use and business use. And the recent surge in remote work has complicated the picture even further. Data collectors must determine the level of privacy afforded. In addition, [BYOD policies](#) mean that employees hold significant control over data retention and the various applications in use.



Sheer Amount of Data

Efficient eDiscovery involves gathering the right data as rapidly as possible. Gathering large batches of data indiscriminately can result in lengthy delays. It also complicates the process of separating out the relevant information. This means increased expense.

Keep in mind that one gigabyte can equal up to 75,000 data pieces. Mobile devices typically include 32 to 64 gigabytes of storage, in addition to data stored in the cloud. The amount of data available means that data collectors must plan carefully to determine the types of data to extract as well as the methods used to extract and review the information.

Untangling eDiscovery for Mobile Data

Navigating eDiscovery for mobile data requires an up-to-date understanding of the tools and challenges presented. The [eDiscovery experts](#) at Messaging Architects provide the expertise you need to quickly identify relevant data and connect to that data wherever it resides. With the right tools, organizations can facilitate [early case assessment](#) and reduce cost.