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Scalability Defined and Why it is Important

Posted by Kevin Nichols on Mon, Nov 07, 2011 @ 03:28 PM

Scalability has become a "catch-all" phrase of eDiscovery software providers from around the country. What does it really mean and why is it so important? According to the Collins English Dictionary, *scalability* is defined as "the ability of something, [especially] a computer system, to adapt to increased demands." Translating this concept to the average attorney is like speaking a foreign language to someone who is deaf. It just doesn't register.

Lawyers need to spend their valuable time writing, researching, and advocating for their clients, not taking on "pet" projects such as becoming IT experts or litigation support professionals overnight. This is why you hire a competent legal services provider with a proven track record and the confidence of an industry behind it.

Although the costs of eDiscovery services has decreased over the last several years due to the lack of stability in the economy, *scalability* is still the most logical and cost effective tool that law firms have to minimize their costs without losing precious time and the high quality of services that they require. A provider needs to be able to evaluate large quantities of information, possess multiple options to maneuver through unforeseen problems, and provide defensible solutions to protect their clients' interests.

Here is a tangible example of how *scalability* can make a significant impact in your practice:

Compressed Data Expansion – A small law firm has 10 custodians with 5 gigabytes of data each. The firm has an important pending discovery deadline and the vendor has quoted a price and a hard deadline for deliverables. During processing, the vendor finds various compressed files and the data expands from 50 gigabytes to a terabyte of data. What does the firm do? Some vendors will say that they cannot process that amount of data that quickly or lack pricing models that could keep the costs down. Hopefully, the vendor the firm is using has the capability to process this amount of data and still adhere to the deadline. Moreover, with advanced Early Case Assessment (ECA) tools, reducing this amount of data for a manageable review is still possible, and there are aggressive pricing models that can assist with keeping the costs as low as possible.

Scalability allows firms the flexibility to have vendors attend to their small matters with the same level of duty and care that they would for massive projects. Lawyers are customers and consumers, thus any company that wants to remain in business needs to have this capability.

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