

Case Study

Sherlock Finds Key Trial Documents in 220 Gigs of Emails – Right Before Trial

The email arrived on a quiet afternoon in late July. Grady Glover, the Ediscovery Manager for a SoCal boutique litigation firm, had reached out to Merlin for help with a recent discovery. He seemed anxious: “I might have an immediate use for Sherlock, please call me right away.” We reached out immediately to see what was up.

Grady’s firm had recently taken over representation of a leading medical provider, involved in a high-stakes labor dispute. A key defense was that the employee had multiple disciplinary issues prior to his termination, but the original law firm hadn’t found anything to substantiate that claim.

“Trial is set for August 15th (less than two weeks away) and we just discovered 220 gigabytes of emails that previous counsel had missed,” he explained. “There isn’t time for a traditional review here, but we are convinced there are key emails in there that can help our defense,” he added. “Do you think Sherlock could help us find information we can use for cross examination?”

We could easily see Grady’s predicament. Two hundred and twenty gigabytes of emails came to almost 500,000 individual emails—430,000 after removing duplicates. A team of ten reviewers handling a hundred emails an hour would take more than 50 days to wade through that digital ocean; trial might be over by then.

This was a job for Sherlock.

Sherlock is an AI-powered digital document bloodhound. He runs on a set of smart, machine-learning algorithms designed to make it easier to find information in large document populations.

Grady had met Sherlock at a West Coast eDiscovery conference a few months prior. “It was totally amazing to me, and I knew I needed to find a special use case to get the firm to let me try out such innovative technology,” he explained. This \$20M matter seemed like just the case given the short deadline and the lack of review help. “I thought I could use Sherlock myself to find the documents, without putting extra bodies on the project,” Grady added. “And there wasn’t really a choice anyway. Sherlock was our only practical option.”





“Sherlock was incredibly simple to use. I was amazed at how quickly Sherlock began finding relevant documents.”

Grady Glover

Putting Sherlock Through His Paces

Mindful of the impending deadline, we had the emails processed and the site set up within about 48 hours. Sherlock was so easy to use Grady was able to jump into the investigation with little to no training. “You just start with one or more relevant documents and send them to Sherlock,” Grady explained. He instantly analyzed the documents I sent and started finding more good candidates for review.” he exclaimed.

Kathy Hogy, Merlin’s VP of Operations, worked with Grady on Sherlock strategy. She had run legal operations at a major financial institution for the past 16 years and was involved in hundreds, if not thousands, of similar investigations. “One of my first suggestions was to include the trial exhibits in the Sherlock collection,” she explained. “We could send those to Sherlock, either individually or in groups, to see if he could find other information that might be important to their defense.”

Grady took the suggestion and ran with it. On the first day, he found a key email about the defendant’s previous disciplinary actions. Excited with the quick find, Grady kept moving forward. He was finding exactly what the team needed. The emails, which contained instances of discipline that were not identified in the HR files, would be perfect for cross examination.

Grady also found the description of a prior disciplinary incident eerily similar to the one for which the employee had been terminated. This demonstrated a pattern of conduct. And even more damning, Grady discovered that the plaintiff had emailed his wrongful termination attorney a year before his termination, connoting that he intended to set up his employer for a bogus wrongful termination claim.

In just two days, Grady found thirteen key documents that were on-point and all but dispositive of the matter.

“The team was shocked by the results,” said Grady, “and used eight of the thirteen emails as additional exhibits.”

Speed and Ease of Use Were the Winning Combination!

The defense ultimately prevailed with an award of costs and fees to boot. Grady attributed part of the firm's success to Sherlock. "It was totally amazing," Grady enthused. "You start with a massive amount of digital data that is bound to have good stuff in it. The problem is how to find what you need quickly without the resources of a large review team," he added.

The simple answer for Grady was "Sherlock." As he explained, "Other systems would have gotten me there eventually, but Sherlock's speed made all the difference. And I didn't have to spend hours in training; it started finding documents immediately. We were busy in final trial preparation and Sherlock saved the day, at least with respect to those documents."

Grady sees a lot of future potential for Sherlock, potential that goes far beyond finding key documents for cross examination. "Sherlock can be used for a lot of things," Grady concluded. "We can use it for early case assessment, deposition prep, arbitrations and even initial investigations. Merlin is also about to release a review workflow module and the underlying CAL [continuous active learning] engine should cover production reviews as well. I plan to ask Sherlock for help in future cases and I know he will be ready to go."

Job well done, Sherlock. Good boy!

You can reach Grady at his new AI-driven ediscovery company:



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To Learn More about Sherlock



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