



Hanzo Guide to Enterprise Collaboration Data Challenges





Introduction

The growth of enterprise collaboration platforms has created a new set of data challenges that have never been encountered before. With the increasing number of channels and messages, it has become difficult for organizations to manage the large amounts of data that are being generated. The complexity of the data makes it difficult to inspect, and it often includes emojis, acronyms, and abbreviations. This makes it hard to discern the context of the messages, especially since they are often disjointed single lines of text.

The custodial data is even more challenging to define as members can join or leave the collaboration platform at any time, and the permutations of public and private channels only add to the complexity. Additionally, the informal nature of communication on these platforms increases the risk of data loss or misinterpretation.

Enterprise legal teams are finding that their ediscovery matters and investigations are increasingly requiring the collection of collaboration data. For example,





Built-In Ediscovery Tools Fall Short with Collaboration Data

Current solutions that are based on simple connectors are inadequate, and they are unable to effectively manage complex data often resulting in uncontrolled volumes of content that are passed downstream to expensive outside counsel review. This exacerbates the already high costs of ediscovery.

One problem with out-of-the-box solutions is the lack of data insights pre-collection and the inability to understand the relationships between the custodians and channels, which put enterprises at risk of over-collection. When you add the massive volume and complexity of the data, the ediscovery process becomes difficult to manage.

Enterprises need automated data insights that can help inform their case strategy, reduce risk, and save costs. The use of pre-collection data intelligence, data visualization, and data enhancement powered by AI can help enterprises target their collections, understand where conversations are happening, and improve the efficiency of their ediscovery and investigation processes.

Higher Data Complexity with Large Enterprises

When collaboration messaging apps like Slack and Teams first fell on the radar of legal teams, the first order of business was simply collecting the data in a way that met evidentiary requirements. As I mentioned above, this task is becoming increasingly part of the standard operating procedure with litigation teams. However, industry studies are beginning to show that when it comes to these data sources, it's not a one-size-fits-all situation.

Organizations with only a few legal matters a year aren't going to face the same challenges as large multinational enterprises. So a solution that works for a smaller company regarding the discovery of their messaging data won't be enough to handle the challenges of a much larger entity with multiple ongoing matters.

A great example of the complexity of a large messaging environment came from a recent webinar Hanzo conducted with ACEDS when **Larry Braggi of IBM** stated that he has a



With a dataset this large and this complex, a simple collect-everything approach will not suffice when it comes to finding relevant ESI.

Continued Development Of AI

Artificial intelligence makes lists like these every year, so why should this one be no exception? For this list, let's focus on how AI can help with some of the abovementioned problems.

The nature of messaging apps vs. email creates some unique challenges when it comes to scoping matters, locating relevant ESI, and culling data down to usable sizes. One of the most interesting things is the relationship between data export sizes and the number of messages.

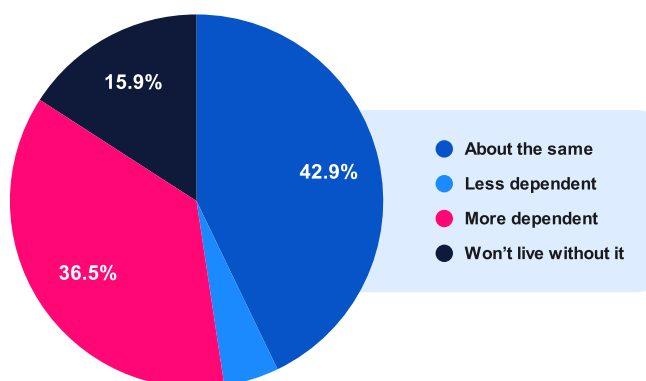
In one example from Hanzo's data science department, a Slack export of only **725 MB (*that's right, megabytes*) of plain text yielded over 18 million messages**. So on the surface, the data export is very small compared to an average email export for discovery, but the number of messages contained within that export is huge. One might think an export falling under a single gigabyte would be fine for manual culling and review, only to find 18 million messages to be sifted through.

If an organization only had a few matters per year, this still might be tenable, but for a large corporate enterprise with large messaging instances, additional help will be required to parse through data, map channels and custodians, detect and locate PII and other sensitive information, and conduct keyword and entity searches on large sets of unstructured chat conversations that don't have the benefit of standard organizing fields (To, From, Subject, Date) that all emails carry. So as messaging continues to become the standard in enterprise communications, more advanced tools will be needed to comb through the mess.

The Importance of Collaboration Tools in Enterprises

In the 2022 Collaboration Data Benchmarking Report, just over a third (38%) of organizations said that they could not live without collaboration tools, while another 35% said that some of their teams could not live without collaboration tools. When asked how important collaboration tools will be 12 months down the road, 16% of organizations said they wouldn't be able to live without them, while 37% said they will become more dependent on them.

Expected Reliance Change in 12 Months



This dramatic increase in organizations' reliance on platforms started with the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing expansion of remote work. But collaboration app user expansion has continued each year since 2020, and there's no doubt they're here to stay.

Why are collaboration platforms beneficial?

According to our survey respondents, the perceived benefits of collaboration platforms include:

- Larger distribution
- Ease of use compared to email
- Availability on mobile devices
- Allow users to easily create groups for projects
- Provide project visibility (like a digital bulletin board)
- Increase productivity through multitasking
- Easier to apply data governance policies compared with email

MS Teams is the Leader in Enterprise Collaboration but Slack is still Prevalent

Primary Collaboration Platform	2022	2021	2020
Combination of Platforms	13%	32%	24%
Microsoft Teams	79%	55%	54%
Slack	8%	8%	5%
Google Chat	0%	3%	2%

Microsoft Teams remains the dominant collaboration platform for 79% of organizations that used collaboration tools in 2022. This number increased from just 55% in 2021. Smaller companies and startups in particular tend to use Teams or Slack as their primary method of communication; email is available, but isn't the preferred option.

So why has Teams quickly become the preferred platform? The two main reasons are given are that It's built into Microsoft 365 enterprise packages, which most organizations already use, and it provides relatively easy back-end data management through Microsoft's Security and Compliance Center.



What Are Organizations Worried About When It Comes To Managing Collaboration Data During Ediscovery?

The rise of collaboration tools is a good thing for organizations overall, but the fast expansion in the use of these platforms among enterprises has brought up concerns regarding how to manage the data they produce and specifically how to respond to eDiscovery requests for that data.

These are the answers respondents gave in the benchmarking survey.

- Organizations' ability—or inability—to employ defensible preservation methods
- The implementation of governance rules and policies concerning collaboration data plus related training and enforcement
- Privacy, cybersecurity, and risk management
- The burden of managing collaboration data in discovery in light of current inefficiencies, difficulties in reviewing that data, and the frequent inability to find information
- The increasing volume of collaboration data and the associated costs
- Difficulty determining where, among various tools, specific data resides
- Lack of jurisprudence and judicial understanding of collaboration data



Overcoming the Ediscovery Challenges Associated with Collaboration Data

The growth of enterprise collaboration platforms has created a new set of data challenges that have never been encountered before. With the increasing volume and complexity of data, it has become difficult for organizations to manage it effectively.

So how can organizations stay on top of this overwhelming volume of collaboration data? The answer lies with technology. Organizations must plan ahead and put the right tools in place to adequately manage the increasing volume of collaboration data so they can efficiently respond to eDiscovery requests and subpoenas.

Survey respondents largely recognized this need: about 19% reported that they already had collaboration data management solutions in place, while 38% said they might invest in new technology depending on demand and 17% reported that they planned to invest in the next 12 months. The remaining 26% said that they were satisfied with their current approach.

These percentages are relatively small considering the growth of collaboration application adoption. And while current solutions may be adequate, as data grows exponentially, it's going to become unmanageable in a matter of years or even months, particularly if more than one matter arises.

Fortunately, advanced solutions built to handle the challenges of large enterprise data can help organizations apply information governance principles, defensibly preserve collaboration data, and respond to eDiscovery requests quickly and cost-effectively.

That's why, when it comes to investing in tools to manage collaboration data, looking ahead is very important, because the future will be here sooner than you think.



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