

GUIDE TO AUTOMATED REDACTION WITH AI FOR PII

INTRODUCTION

Redaction is the process of obscuring or removing sensitive information, such as text or images, from a document prior to publication or release—whether in the context of a document production for a legal matter, a Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) for data privacy regulation compliance, or even a notification report in the wake of a data breach. Why would enterprises and the counsel representing want to redact information? Organizations redact information that is personally identifiable, sensitive, or proprietary such as trade secrets or financial data.

Redaction protects an organization and the people it serves by removing sensitive information. However, as increasing amounts of data are stored and collected, and enterprises deal with new categories of data privacy reports, manual approaches to redaction have become increasingly difficult to manage. Not only do manual approaches require additional steps in any document production, it's challenging to maintain consistent levels of accuracy in what data is redacted.

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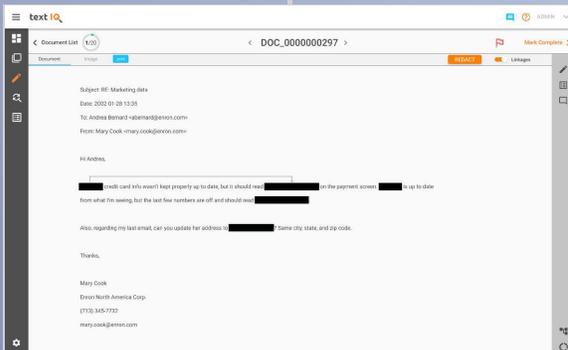
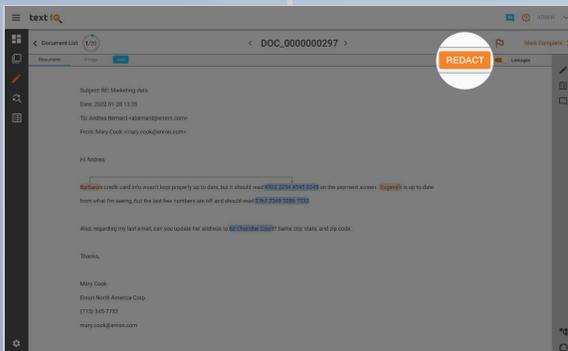
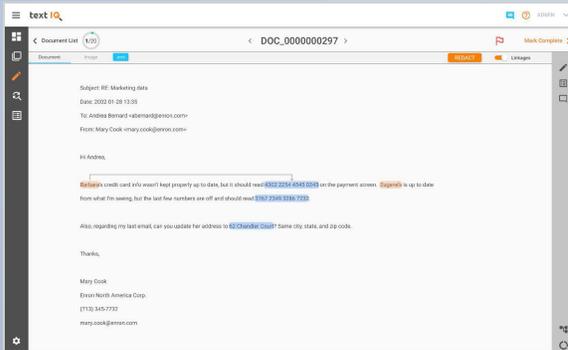
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Why do we need automated redaction?

In tandem with the explosion of data that enterprises collect, store, and process, the number and breadth of data privacy regulations that govern how enterprises need to account and share that data has proliferated. The outcome is that there are more consequences to not ensuring redaction of sensitive and personal data in documents shared with third parties, while existing manual approaches by their nature cannot scale to address growing volume.



What needs to be redacted?

PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS:

Name, address, SSN, phone number, birthdate, fax number, email address

FINANCIAL DETAILS:

Account numbers and information

PROPRIETARY DETAILS:

Trade secrets, confidential information

VEHICLE IDENTIFIERS:

VINs, license plate numbers, serial numbers

GEOGRAPHIC IDENTIFIERS:

Geographic subdivisions smaller than states, initial 3 digits of zip codes

PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION:

Names, dates (except year), age, phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses, medical record numbers, health plan beneficiary numbers, account numbers, certificate/license numbers

DEVICE IDENTIFIERS:

IP addresses, serial numbers, URLs

BIOMETRIC IDENTIFIERS:

Including finger and voice prints

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Full-face photos and any comparable images

OTHER:

Judiciary records, other PII

Legacy Redaction Methods

Before the digital age, redaction meant inking over or cutting out information from a document, and—believe it or not—there are still some people who print out their documents, redact by hand, and then scan them back into their computer systems. It goes without saying that this is wildly inefficient.

More recent methods involve redaction software that provide a user interface for searching through documents and making redactions. While we can look for keywords or even black out every instance of specific words or phrases, we still face serious problems.

Not only does it take a lot of time to redact sensitive information from tens of thousands of emails or from databases in the terabyte range, but it's also easy to miss something. A search for the keyword "address" may miss the typos "adres" or "addres" made during data entry, or it could miss the phone number with a 123-456-7890 format among all the numbers with (123) 456-7890 formatting. And that doesn't even begin to address codewords, exceptions, or other irregularities.

Even if an application is programmed for auto-redaction, solving the time issue, the larger, more critical accuracy problem remains. The simple fact is that human data is way too messy for rule-based programs to handle. This leaves organizations and firms in a bind: unwilling to rely on imprecise software to complete the job, and unable to afford the cost and risk associated with human reviewers.



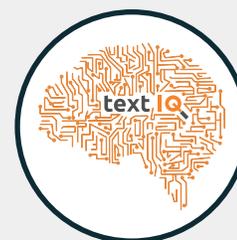
GOOD

Manually redacting personal information



BETTER

Basic software blacking-out search terms



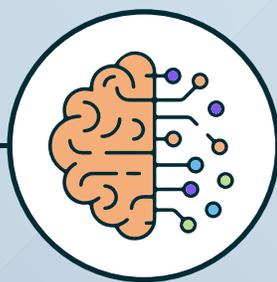
BEST

AI auto-redacting regex & special category data at scale

“Anywhere we can reduce the burdensome process of redaction would be extremely helpful. **Hearing things like auto-redaction gets me very excited.**”

Leeanne Mancari

Litigator, Co-Chair of eDiscovery
& Information Management Platform
DLA PIPER



Artificial Intelligence for Automated Redaction

In May 2020, Text IQ launched Auto-Redact powered by AI, a product that uses machine learning to go beyond regular expressions and to understand context. This AI solution has already been a huge game changer for large enterprises and our partner law firms. Text IQ was able to illustrate this point during the document review phase of a large, corporate litigation. The AI-powered Auto-Redact tool reduced the time spent on redaction by 78%, which equated to an approximately \$100,000 cost reduction and 6-week time reduction for the project.

How can AI achieve these breakthrough results? It all starts with unstructured data, such as emails, text documents, instant messages, photos, audio files, and other types of unlabeled data, but rule-based applications struggle to make sense of it. Text IQ utilizes a type of AI called self-supervised learning to parse it. These algorithms begin training on clean data, like the type that a search function could easily find, and then use that learning to expand into the chaotic noise that makes up most of our datasets. Instead of relying on subject matter experts to tell it the rules, self-supervised learning figures them out on its own.

What remains is a layer of intelligence that's both fast and accurate. Once the parameters are set, Auto-Redact independently analyzes the data, finds sensitive information, and redacts it. It's quicker, easier, and more reliable than any other method.

Leeanne Mancari, litigator and co-chair of eDiscovery and Information Management Platform at DLA Piper, recently stated that, "Anywhere we can reduce the burdensome process of redaction would be extremely helpful." She concluded, "Hearing things like auto-redaction gets me very excited."

THE TAKEAWAY

Computers excel at automating routine, tedious tasks, and this frees people up to do more interesting work that adds higher value. Redaction was historically too complicated for software to handle accurately due to the inability to understand context, semantics, and other intricacies, as well as the high risk of failed regulatory compliance. We couldn't trust them with independent redaction. Fortunately, AI is now smart enough to tackle these complex tasks.

Interested in learning more? Email sales@textiq.com with questions or to schedule a demo.



Text IQ is a Top 100 AI company trusted by some of the world's largest enterprises and government agencies. With a reimagined approach to identifying, managing, and mitigating risk in enterprise data, Text IQ's pioneering AI technology uncovers 90% of sensitive information at a 75% reduction in cost and time. Enterprises, law firms, and government organizations have used Text IQ's AI to identify and protect sensitive and confidential information, reduce risk, elevate their privacy programs, and create fair and inclusive workplaces. Read more about Text IQ on [TechCrunch](#), [VentureBeat](#), [Fortune](#), [Forbes](#), and [Axios](#).

Recently, Text IQ joined forces with Relativity, a unicorn and leading data platform, which has more than 300,000 users in over 49 countries and serves thousands of organizations globally—primarily in legal, financial services, and government sectors, including the U.S. Department of Justice and 198 of the Am Law 200. By joining hands with Relativity, we are excited to realize our shared vision of helping customers organize their data, discover the truth, and act on it.

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