

LexisNexis® Document Profiling allows law firms to fully and rapidly leverage their in-house expertise.

Sebaly Shillito + Dyer,
a Legal Professional Association

Overview

Location: Dayton, OH

Industry: Legal

Customer Profile:

Sebaly Shillito + Dyer (SS+D) is an independent, full-service business and commercial law firm whose clients include small and large closely held companies as well as publicly owned national and international corporations.

Business Situation:

The firm needed to move its document collection to a new Document Management System (DMS), which presented a challenge because much of the firm's work product lacked meaningful, searchable profiles and categories of classification.

Solution:

SS+D used the automated, scalable LexisNexis Document Profiling solution to "clean up" and organize its document collection, allowing the firm to quickly and fully leverage its work product and in-house expertise.

Benefits:

- Eliminates the need to manually classify documents within a DMS
- Makes firms' document collections quickly searchable and accessible
- Allows firms to quickly integrate the document collections of new hires
- Audits the status of sensitive documents

Product Summary

Client Development

- Martindale-Hubbell® Law Directory

Research Solutions

- *lexis.com*® service
- Factiva®
- Shepard's® Citations Service

Practice Management

- LexisNexis® Total Search
- LexisNexis® Document Profiling

Each year, attorneys generate thousands of documents that must be archived for future reference. LexisNexis Document Profiling enhances the value of law firms' document collections by profiling and classifying these documents automatically, making them available for reference and re-use on demand. It also identifies documents that require special security measures; identifies and eliminates duplicate work product; and allows accounting and leadership personnel to track trends across profile data to provide insights into individual, practice area and firm performance. Such efficiencies allow legal professionals to be more productive and responsive to clients and free them to pursue more profitable work.

The Situation

A commitment to strong client relationships and unparalleled customer service is the hallmark of **Sebaly Shillito + Dyer (SS+D)**, an independent, full-service business and commercial law firm based in southwestern Ohio. This emphasis on the customer has a significant impact on the firm's investment in information technology.

"Delivering high-quality legal services to clients is our mission, and we recognize technology has a direct bearing on our success," said **Michael Moloney**, managing partner, SS+D.

In 2006, SS+D invested in a new Document Management System (DMS) to organize its work product. This DMS, like others on the market, relies on legal professionals to profile and classify documents within the system so they can be located and retrieved at a future date.

Converting the firm's document collection from one DMS to another, however, was a complicated undertaking, made more challenging by the fact that much of the collection lacked meaningful, searchable profiles. This lack of searchability kept the firm from fully leveraging its in-house expertise.

“If we had known about Document Profiling prior to our DMS conversion process, it would have saved us six weeks of time up-front, and probably six to nine weeks of time overall ...”

Michael Booth
SS+D partner and IT committee chair

The Solution

SS+D needed a tool to “clean up” its document management system—one that would profile and classify documents automatically, without the intervention of IT personnel or impact to legal professionals’ workflows. When LexisNexis introduced its proprietary Document Profiling technology to members of the firm’s IT committee, it immediately piqued their interest.

“We realized that Document Profiling could help make a DMS conversion easier,” said **Michael Booth**, SS+D partner and IT committee chair. “When we learned it could be carried out with a minimum of inconvenience to the firm, it became that much more attractive.”

Document Profiling uses a powerful, scalable engine to make law firms’ document collections accessible as never before. It identifies unclassified and misclassified documents within a DMS as well as those without profiles, and uses pattern recognition, linguistic analysis and LexisNexis legal intelligence to derive new profile values for them. It also evaluates existing classification categories to determine whether they align with best practices.

In the case of SS+D, Document Profiling revealed that nearly half of the documents resident in the firm’s DMS did not have meaningful profiles, with values that made them searchable. It also detected an abundance of miscellaneous and unused categories that made classifying new documents and searching for individual documents inefficient and unproductive.

Additionally, Document Profiling identified—and later recovered—several key fields lost during the conversion, including the last revised date for all documents in the collection.

“I was sold (on Document Profiling) from the preliminary audit report, for not only did the information look right, it also exposed a lot of holes in our document profiling system,” said Booth. “I didn’t realize how many documents had no profiles, or were classified in ‘other’ or ‘miscellaneous’ categories.”

Once profiles within a document collection are both enhanced and standardized, Document Profiling can be used to reclassify each document into logical categories consistent with best practices and the firm’s needs. Such optimization makes the firm’s work product accessible almost instantly.

“If we had known about Document Profiling prior to our DMS conversion process, it would have saved us six weeks of time up-front, and probably six to nine weeks of time overall,” Booth said. “Even implementing the technology midstream, as we chose to do, saved us a significant amount of time and effort.”

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Michael Booth
SS+D partner and IT committee chair

The Benefits: Beyond Profiling and Classification

Booth and Moloney came to realize that the benefits of Document Profiling were not limited to profiling, classification and DMS conversions, however.

Protecting Sensitive Documents

Documents that require special security measures present a unique challenge to legal firms. Access to such documents must be restricted as part of the firm’s overall Risk Management strategy, yet identifying and locating such documents can often be difficult and time consuming—especially if profile values for such documents are incomplete or absent.

Document Profiling addresses the issue of access by performing a security audit that evaluates public versus locked-down documents by author, practice area, client and other criteria. Its search engine then identifies, through pattern recognition and full-text analysis, documents that should be secured.

“I expected the initial Document Profiling audit to identify a security difference, but didn’t expect the level of detail it provided,” Booth said. “It told me, by client matter, what documents were locked down and for whom access was restricted. It also identified documents that particular individuals were locked out from but shouldn’t be. This sort of information offers tremendous efficiencies for IT personnel.”

Delivering business intelligence

Success in the business of law requires continual analysis of a firm’s operations. Document Profiling delivers the intelligence and organizational tools to support such analysis.

The technology offers insights into individual, practice area and firm-wide performance by tracking activity, patterns and trends across data over time. It also detects inconsistencies between a firm’s DMS and other systems, including accounting and matter databases. Such information allows firm management to align these systems to get a clearer picture of performance and revenue.

“The business intelligence information offered by Document Profiling helps leaders obtain a more accurate picture of productivity across all categories and personnel, which is essential to effective firm management,” said Moloney.

Integrating the work of new hires

When attorneys leave one firm to join another, they often bring a library of electronic documents that pertain to their specific practice. These documents must be added to their new firm’s DMS—an effort that can be complicated by the lack of metadata or differences in the two firms’ profiling and classification strategies and document management systems.

“In a merger, Document Profiling not only makes both firms’ intellectual property more uniform and accessible, it provides a consistency that is critical when establishing a new brand identity.”

Michael Booth
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Document Profiling simplifies this task, using algorithms, tools and mechanisms to identify patterns. These patterns are then used to generate and consolidate metadata values for firm-wide consistency.

“Document Profiling is a natural fit in the case of lateral hires when an attorney brings a significant library of documents,” said Booth. “It simplifies the integration of their documents and eliminates the headache that would normally accompany such efforts.”

Facilitating mergers and acquisitions

Document Profiling can also facilitate changes of a broader magnitude, such as mergers between firms. By normalizing the way documents are profiled and categorized between document management systems, Document Profiling helps simplify the transition process.

“In a merger, Document Profiling not only makes both firms’ intellectual property more uniform and accessible, it provides a consistency that is critical when establishing a new brand identity,” said Moloney.

Ease of Deployment

The Document Profiling solution draws on LexisNexis legal expertise and investments in technology to conduct an initial audit and analysis of a firm’s document collection. The audit requires approximately three weeks to complete and is performed by LexisNexis personnel with minimal impact on a firm’s day-to-day operations.

Audit findings include a set of recommendations designed to streamline and organize the collection and ensure that access to sensitive documents is limited to those with proper authorization. Once a review of these recommendations is complete and decisions pertaining to access and categories of classification are made, the Document Profiling engine can clean up and optimize the DMS in a matter of days.

“The entire process was painless and transparent, and required minimal coordination with our IT personnel,” said Booth. “Best of all, it did not detract from our staff’s ability to work.”

The Document Profiling engine resides on a temporary, secure server that sits behind a firm’s firewall. This server is connected to the firm’s DMS servers for the duration of the engagement. Components of the engine can also be placed on an existing, permanent server longer-term to provide new and updated document profiles on an ongoing basis.

The Results

The partners of SS+D view Document Profiling technology as a win-win because it allows them to offer better service to clients while promoting efficiencies that lead to increased profitability across the firm.

“Document Profiling enhanced the value of our document collection by allowing our attorneys to tap the full breadth of the firm’s work product quickly and efficiently,” said Moloney. “These efficiencies allow us to serve clients in a more expeditious way, and free our attorneys to pursue more profitable, higher-value work on behalf of the firm.”

Moloney is also quick to praise the business intelligence and security benefits of the product.

“A Document Profiling audit delivers information about document security and trends in production that are valuable to anyone managing a law firm,” he said. “It also helps a firm ensure that its document management system is aligned with other critical systems, such as those in accounting.”

About LexisNexis

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