

# Redact-It® Helps State Agency Comply with the Public Records Act

## Vertical Industry

- State and Local Government
- Public Sector

## Functional Areas

- Public Records
- HR

## Company Facts

- Diverse state agency dedicated to the safety, health and security of millions of workers

## Challenge

- Redact privacy and confidential information before releasing records to the public

## Redact-It Solution

- Quickly and safely redact content
- Easy to redact all instances of a name, address, Social Security number, phone number and more
- Add-on option to OCR TIFF documents on load
- Create fully sanitized TIFF or PDF renditions of the original document for easy distribution

In the U.S., each state has its own variation of a Public Records Act which requires that non-confidential records maintained by state, county and city governments be made available to the public. One particular Informative Graphics Corp. (IGC) customer is a state Labor Department which must meet a tight deadline in responding to public requests. Within five days of receiving a public disclosure request, the agency is required to respond by (1) producing the record; (2) acknowledging receipt of the request along with a reasonable estimate of the time needed to fill the request; or (3) denying the request.

In addition to the deadline, the state's Labor Department is challenged with protecting privacy and confidential information before records are released to the public. The state agency must redact only the exempt information and disclose the rest of the document. Exemptions include such things as bank account numbers, taxpayer information, residential addresses and Social Security numbers.

## Improving Efficiency and Responsiveness

Given limited budgets and staff, the Labor Department is continually looking for more efficient ways to respond to public records requests. To help meet these goals, the agency successfully deployed IGC software to improve response time and redaction methods.

The Labor Department oversees programs to protect the safety, health and security of workers in the state. For example, a worker who claims to have been injured on the job can file a discrimination complaint with the Labor Department if he feels that he is being discriminated against by his employer because he filed for workers' compensation. An agency investigator is then assigned to compile evidence to confirm or deny the discrimination claim. The complete complaint file contains interviews and exhibits submitted by the worker and the employer.

As explained by a Research Analyst with the department's Public Records Division, "The complaint file could contain any number of document types, including emails, paperwork, phone records; anything that either side might use to make their case."

If the case generates public or media interest, the Labor Department could get outside requests for public records related to the case. Prior to releasing any documents, privacy and confidential information must first be redacted. "The claim information contained within the file is confidential to anyone other than the employer or the injured worker," said the Analyst. "Any information that reveals the identity of the worker has to be redacted."

Records requests coming into the department could require redacting as few as 50 pages or up to more than 20,000 pages.

*Continued*

## Redact-It Helps State Agency Comply with the Public Records Act

(Cont.)

### Redact-It Protects Privacy Information

To redact public records, the Analyst and her public records colleagues use Redact-It® by IGC. Redact-It is an easy-to-use, electronic tool which safely removes privacy information and sensitive content from virtually any document type, including PDF, TIFF and Microsoft Word and Excel.

Redact-It makes it easy to redact all instances of a name, Social Security number, birth date, phone number, account number and more. Users can also redact predefined block out zones by creating a redaction template. Redactions can be applied simply by dragging a box, by searching for text strings or patterns or by applying reusable scripts. Redact-It also has an add-on option to perform optical character recognition (OCR) on TIFF documents as they are loaded.

Redact-It's verify panel lets users easily step through each redaction to ensure all text is completely covered, no erroneous content was redacted and that all sensitive content was, in fact, redacted. Redact-It creates fully sanitized TIFF or PDF renditions of the original document for easy distribution. Privacy content is actually removed in the output file, not just covered. No hidden text or metadata is transferred to the redacted file.

### Saying Good-Bye to Redaction Tape and Brackets

The staff recognizes the efficiency Redact-It offers. "We're saving a lot of time using Redact-It," said the Analyst. "Before Redact-It, our office was redacting by hand with white redaction tape. Then we would bracket the area in pen so when you photocopied the document you could see where the white tape—or redaction—had been applied."

"Electronic redaction is much better, especially for someone like me," she laughed. The Analyst explained that she prefers a clutter-free desk, "Redact-It is neater, cleaner, and makes it easier to stay organized. Now, I don't have stacks and stacks of paper on my desk waiting for white redaction tape."

Now she explains that she can scan a document, creating a TIFF file. Because her department purchased the OCR add-on, Redact-It automatically performs OCR on the TIFF files upon open. The second time the Analyst used Redact-It, she was able to set up a script to look for 20 claimant names and then apply it to the TIFF file after Redact-It performed the OCR step. "Redact-It did the 201 redactions in about a minute and a half," she said. "By hand, it probably would have taken me two days to go through, apply the tape, and bracket everything."

### Summary

Redact-It makes it easy for state agencies to redact privacy information before releasing public records.

Having deployed Redact-It just a few short months ago the Analyst said, "It's now become second nature. I can't even think about the redaction tape. In fact, I had some in my desk and I got rid of all of it. I put it back over into the supply store and said, 'I don't want to see this ever again!'"