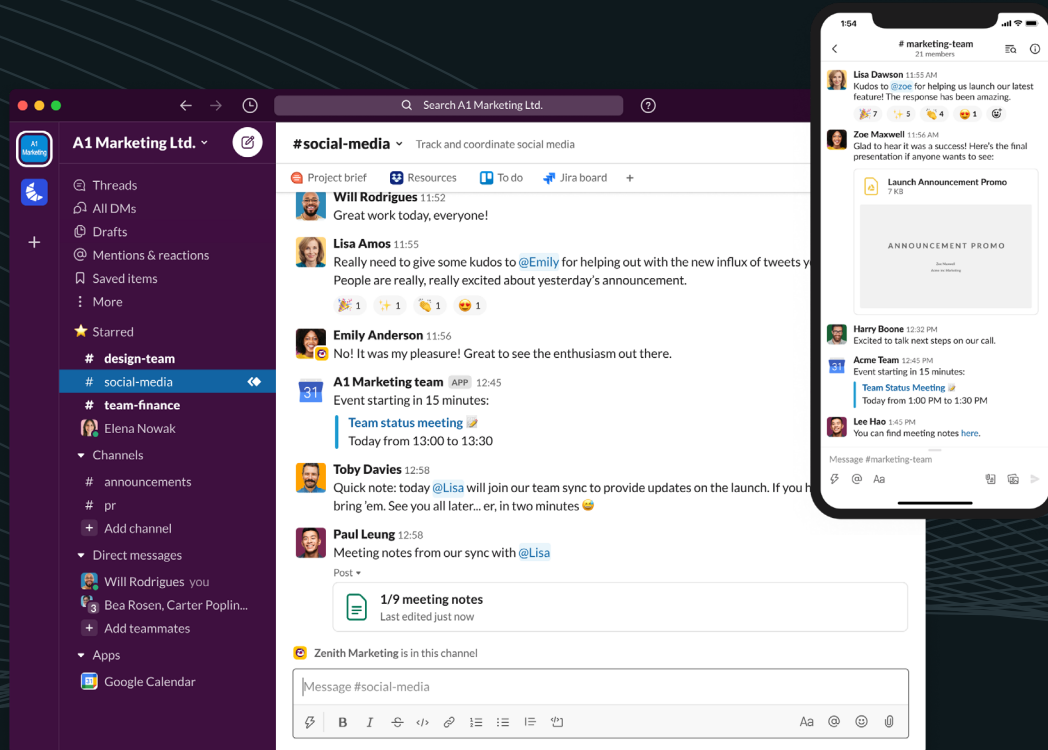


Three Simple Steps to Collect, Search and Produce Slack Data for eDiscovery



Slack is the new email of eDiscovery.

With more than 1.5 billion messages generated every month and more than 600,000 organizations worldwide using Slack—including more than 40% of the Fortune 100—the communications platform has become one of the main sources of electronically stored information (ESI) for disputes and internal investigations. And nothing indicates Slack's growth will slow any time soon.

In turn, Slack data is now one of the main headaches for even the most technically savvy IT and legal teams out there since, without the right tools and processes, conducting discovery on Slack data is almost impossible.

Large data volumes, inscrutable file formats, disjointed information, and the new communications paradigm created by chat data are all contributing factors to the great challenge posed by collecting, searching, and reviewing [Slack data in the context of eDiscovery](#).

But despite its complexity, Slack is an incredibly rich source of evidence and essential for understanding the full scope and details of your matter. People are generally less guarded when they communicate through chat messages, which are often real-time, spontaneous interactions—especially when they're under the impression those communications are not discoverable, or haven't considered it one way or the other.

It's also the case that a big part of the conversation has moved exclusively to Slack. In fact, on average, email traffic in organizations using Slack drops by almost half.

If there's one data source no legal or compliance professional should ignore, it's Slack.

In this guide, you'll learn:

- The main challenges posed by Slack discovery
- How existing technology can help you navigate them
- How to choose the right tool to handle Slack data
- A three-step approach to collecting, reviewing and producing chat data

Slack creates a much more multifaceted and complex picture of what's going on. It gives an entire community's perspective.



David Slarskey, Partner at Slarskey LLC

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The Not-So-Obvious Challenges of Slack Discovery

Slack poses a noise-to-signal problem. The platform acts as a massive spiderweb that catches every employee's stray thoughts, documents, links, gifs, videos, emojis, voice recordings, and more. The vast majority of that information is noise: irrelevant as evidence, but discoverable nonetheless and typically swept up in the dragnet of discovery collections. Therein lies the challenge.

But it's not just a matter of volume. The nature and novelty of this data pose a unique set of challenges for disputes and investigations.

Here are the most common ones:

More Than Just Chat Conversations

Apart from chat messages, Slack also aggregates data from the thousands of integrations they offer. This means that your Slack exports might include data from project management tools like Asana and Jira, contracts from tools like DocuSign, video recordings from UseBubbles and Gong, etc. — and it's all discoverable.

Imagine a scenario where you have a former employee who's accused of stealing IP. After exporting that person's Slack conversations you might find yourself decrypting confusing emojis to a colleague that suggest he may leave to a competitor, but also trying to figure out who gave him access to Figma boards, when did he access the customer lists in Salesforce, and so on.

Disjointed and Unreadable Information

Unlike email threads, where the flow of communication is pretty straightforward, Slack data is usually presented as disconnected conversation fragments that must be pieced back together.

With Slack, you can send direct messages, chat via public or private channels, share files and other types of data through the tools it integrates with, and even edit or delete past chats. When you export all that information, it can be hard to connect all the dots.

And then there's this: when you export data directly from Slack, it comes out in the JSON file format, computer code, which is impossible to read unless you're equipped with the right tool to render it.

Tricky Exports

Slack exports come with their own set of challenges.

For example, channels and direct messages are particularly problematic since they can't be exported unless you're under a Business+ plan or higher, so you would need to go through extra steps to get that information.

Similarly, individual users have the option to delete and edit not only single messages, but entire channels. Getting access to those edited and deleted chats also requires some extra steps in the exporting process.

Another major wrinkle is that, except for customers of Slack's Enterprise plan, when you export data, you must download your entire workspace, which often amounts to many millions of messages. Collecting data from individual

channels or conversations between individual users is reserved for the highest-paying customers.

Preservation and Legal Hold Challenges

All the aforementioned problems create thorny obstacles for the search and review process, but they also make it extremely hard for defensible preservation.

In fact, your organization must be an Enterprise Grid customer to benefit from Slack's legal hold feature. And even then, [Slack legal holds won't](#):

- Preserve messages or file data from Slack Connect spaces
- Preserve data in shared channels
- Prevent users from deleting entire channels
- Provide preservation notices or reminders to the appropriate Slack users

To prevent spoliation and execute a proper legal hold notice requires other tools.

Investigations Beget Investigations

Due to the nature of Slack, which, as we've discussed, can be a cesspool of conversation that should've taken place offline or not at all, it's not unusual to start reviewing Slack messages for one investigation and come out with three others.

Digging into employee Slack data without a clear focus can yield new investigations as it's not unusual you'll uncover conversations that signal some kind of misconduct or situation that needs to be addressed separately. To the extent that you can quickly separate the noise from the signal, you'll limit your potential liability and save yourself time and money in the process.

Impossible to Ignore

At this point, you might be considering leaving Slack data outside of the scope of the discovery process for your next dispute or investigation. Unfortunately, that's not an option.

Recent cases have demonstrated that courts are starting to acknowledge that discovery of Slack data is not only possible, but generally also proportional — and, thus, required.

For example, in a recent ruling in the U.S. Federal Court for the Central District of California on a patent infringement case, Magistrate Judge Alexander MacKinnon [approved the defendants' motion to compel production of Slack data](#), stating that, “Requiring review and production of Slack messages is generally comparable to requiring search and production of emails.”

And even if you decided to ignore Slack data during your discovery process, you'd be missing half of the story and, consequently, providing a suboptimal defense to your business or client.

A Burden to IT

Most HR and legal teams rely heavily on IT to collect and parse Slack conversations due to its complexity, which poses daunting technical challenges for that team.

For one, IT must spend hours testing the search terms and requirements provided by legal to find relevant data in Slack, which usually involves a good deal of back and forth between both teams until the exporting parameters are clear. They then proceed to pull all the relevant conversations and convert them

to a readable format for the legal team (generally, PDF.). This process alone can take several hours.

Once provided with the exported conversations, the legal team doesn't usually have a streamlined way to review all those conversations in PDF format, so finding the most relevant information can take an unreasonable amount of time (and usually entails running keyword searches in tools like Adobe), or come at the high expense of getting a third-party involved in that painstaking review process.

So, how can you turn this process around and empower your legal team to handle Slack data with barely any help from IT and without getting expensive third parties involved?

Good question. Read on...

How the Right Tool Can Enable a Streamlined Process for Slack Discovery

While Judge MacKinnon's comments around the accessibility of Slack data are on point, his statement only holds true for those organizations equipped with the appropriate tools and processes to successfully handle this type of ESI.

To be able to collect, search and review Slack data in a similar way to email, you need a tool that accounts for the technical challenges presented by Slack data, as well as the new communications paradigm created by chat communications.

Here's a checklist with the minimum requirements you should be looking for in your Slack discovery platform.

You'll learn why each of these conditions are crucial in the next section.

Slack Discovery Software Checklist

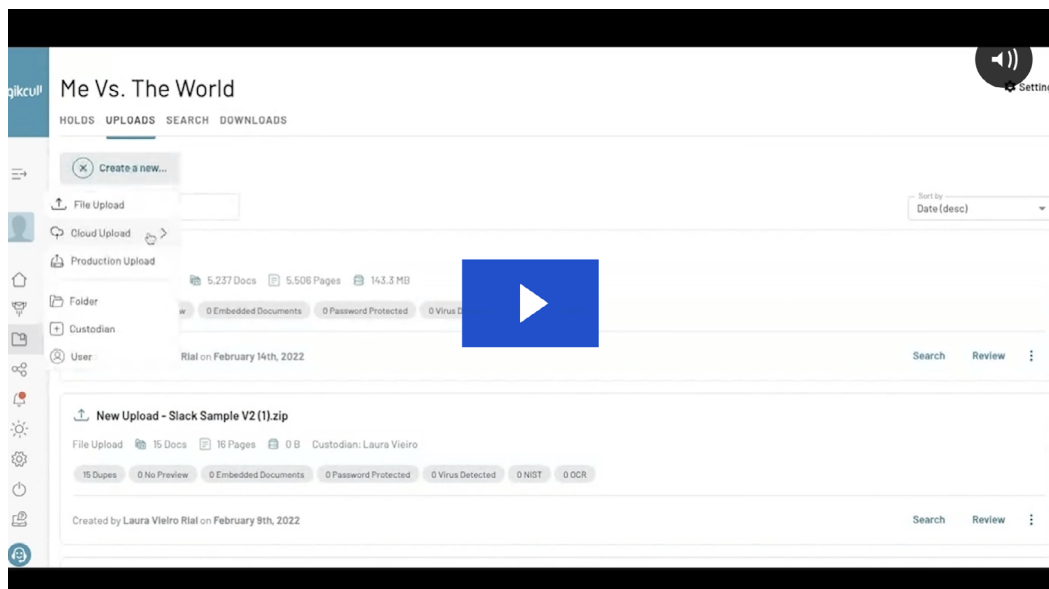
- ✓ A direct integration with Slack for instant collection or the ability to ingest previously exported Slack data with a simple drag and drop
- ✓ The ability to render and make searchable JSON code
- ✓ Processing capabilities to deduplicate, OCR, index, and turn your chat metadata into filters
- ✓ Chat-specific filters such as “Sender,” “Chat Participants,” “Channel Name,” and “Reactions”
- ✓ Advanced searching capabilities to detect edited/deleted messages and find conversations by relevant keywords
- ✓ Bulk redactions to hide sensitive information with a click
- ✓ Preservation and legal holds capabilities
- ✓ High security standards
- ✓ Ease of use so legal isn’t so dependent on IT (and vice versa)
- ✓ Collaboration options with third parties

Searching Slack Data in Three Steps with Logikcull: Connect, Cull, and Control

Logikcull is the only platform on the market that meets the aforementioned requirements.

In just three simple steps, you can navigate Slack discovery seamlessly regardless of the size of the collection. Let's dive into the process of what handling your Slack data end-to-end looks like in Logikcull.

Alternatively, you can watch the entire process in a short demo video [here](#).

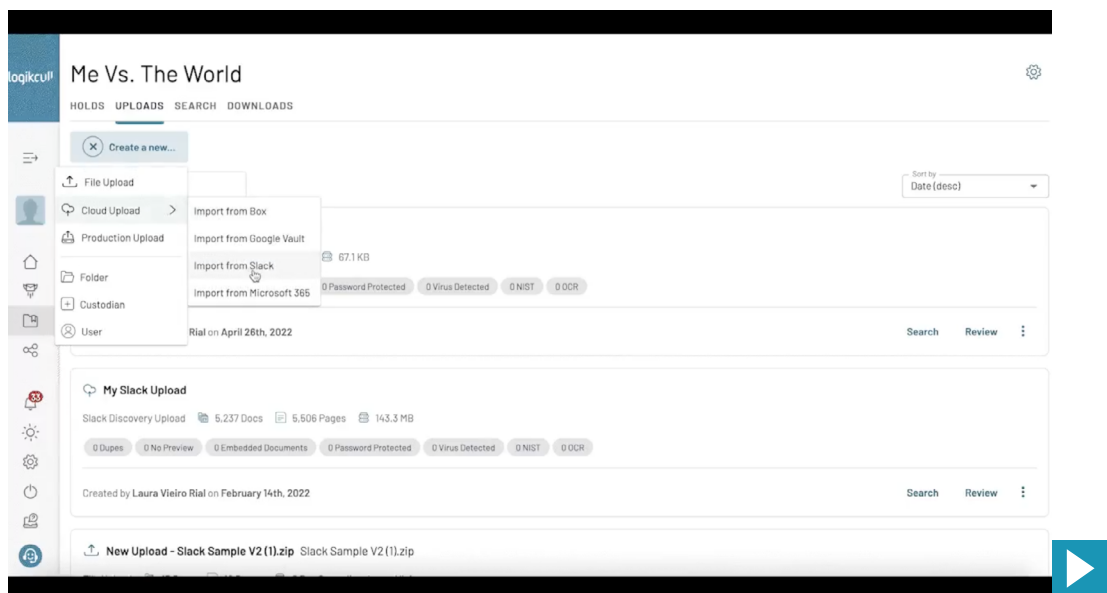


1. Connect (or Upload)

Collecting Slack data is usually one of the most time-consuming parts of the process for most legal and IT teams out there. With Logikcull, it takes just a few seconds. Thanks to its integration with Slack, you're able to pull your most relevant conversations directly from the source.

After you have created your first project in Logikcull, you can select the option to start a new upload from Slack. (Note that Logikcull also integrates with Google Vault, MS 365, and Box, so collecting data from those sources is equally easy.)

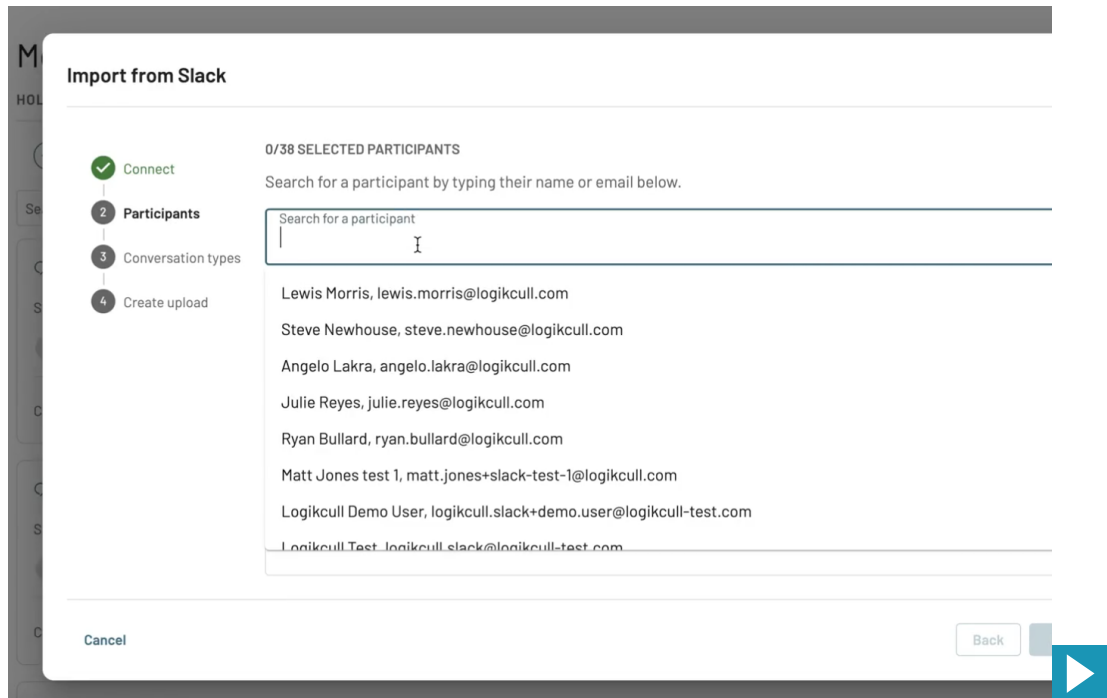
When you select Slack, it will be connected to your own Slack workspace, so you can quickly filter the data that you want to send to Logikcull. For instructions on how to connect your Logikcull account to Slack, [see our FAQ here](#).



The first steps are to select participants (as many as you need) and conversation types, where you can choose from direct messages, multiparty messages, public or private channels, and so forth. Then, you just need to:

- 1 Name your upload
- 2 Select a custodian for the data exported
- 3 Set the appropriate time range for the data that you need to export
- 4 Hit “Start Upload” to ingest your data into Logikcull. It’s that simple.

(If the Slack integration is not available to you, you can just drag and drop any previously exported files from Slack into Logikcull. The process that follows would be identical from this point on.)



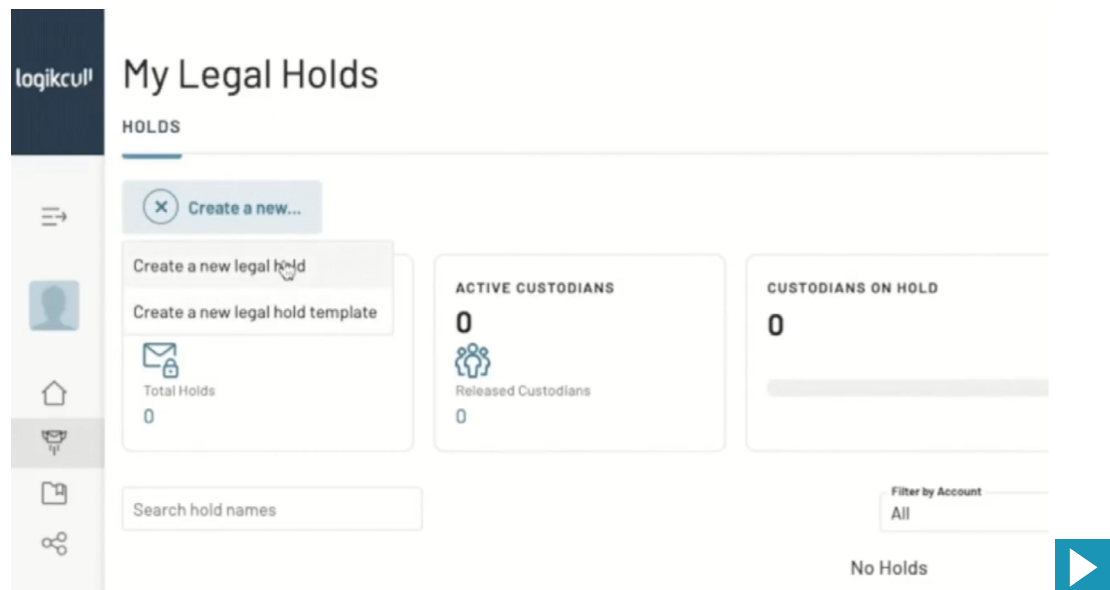
At this point, the Slack data goes through dozens of automatic processing steps such as deduplication, OCR'ing, conversion to readable image files, transcription of audio and video files, and, most importantly, rendering and indexing of your Slack data and metadata, so that conversations and messages can be easily filtered.

Using Slack's Connector to Preserve Your Data

Collecting Slack data is such a simple process with Logikcull that many teams are using this instant collection option as part of their legal hold process, in order to effectively preserve Slack data.

As mentioned, Slack's legal hold capabilities are far from ideal for most teams as they don't prevent users from editing or deleting information. So as soon as litigation is reasonably anticipated, you can use Logikcull's direct integration with Slack as a means of preserving all your relevant conversations outside of Slack's environment.

From there, Logikcull Hold can assist you in sending the hold notification, tracking acknowledgments of receipt, sending reminders, and releasing any active holds. It's all done from the same platform, so you can keep track of every step and quickly understand what's going on.



2. Cull

After your Slack data has been ingested into Logikcull, it's been processed and indexed, and any duplicative or invalid data has been removed from your view, you can start further narrowing down your collection to quickly find the most responsive conversations and get any irrelevant information out of the way.

To that end, Logikcull's filter carousel will come in handy. It operates similarly to the filters you'd use at Amazon to find a pair of shoes — except that instead of “size” or “model,” you'll be able to filter by criteria relevant to Slack, such as “channel,” “participants” and “reactions.” (The emojis that people use to react to any message actually present a ton of [interesting opportunities and challenges](#) for discovery.)

So, your first step to narrow down your data set would be to use some of these filters to set aside any chats that don't need to be reviewed. Let's imagine that you know that Lauren Reed and Linda Graves are the only people that matter in your case. Check this out:

The screenshot shows the Logikcull interface for a search titled "Me Vs. The World". The search criteria is "tags:responsive AND file_name:'My document.xlsx'". The interface displays several filter panels:

- Chat / Sender:** 2 OF 79 ITEMS. Includes Bobby Hart (@Bobby Hart) 660, Johnny Garza (@Johnny Garza) 660, Lauren Reed (@Lauren Reed) 641, Linda Graves (@Linda Graves) 636, Daryl Ramos (@Daryl Ramos) 637, Marcia Henry (@Marcia Henry) 632, Ryan Bradley (@Ryan Bradley) 616, and U02DS27HA05 83.
- Chat / Conversation:** 146 ITEMS. Includes Bobby Hart, Bobby Ryterski, Daryl Ramos, Gail Ruiz, Heather Fakeveri, Jim Pruetting, Joedie Villanueva, Johnny Garza, Lauren Reed, Linda Graves, ... 33, # random-11 33, # random-12 33, # random-shared 32, and # random-9a 9a.
- Chat / Reaction:** 197 ITEMS. Includes +1 24, -1 21, hand 20, laughing 20, facepunch 19, angry 17, heart_eyes 17, and no_mouth 17.
- Email From Domain:** 7 ITEMS. Includes enron.com 0, logikcull.com 0, gmail.com 0, logik.com 0, pcc.edu 0, eglug.org 0, and ubuntu.com 0.

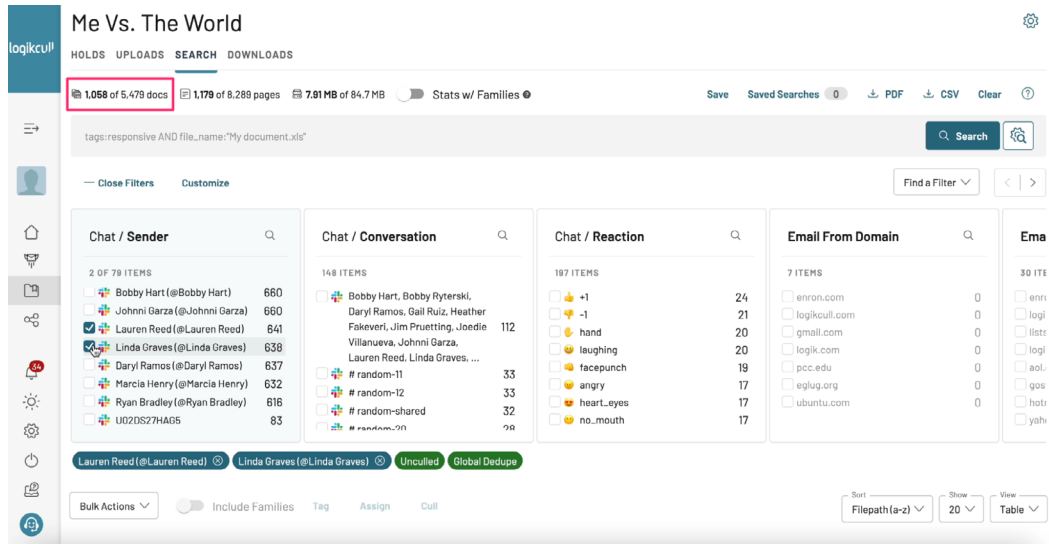
At the bottom, there are buttons for "Bulk Actions", "Include Families", "Tag", "Assign", and "Cull". A play button is visible in the bottom right corner of the screenshot.

Now look back at the number of relevant documents after applying those filters. Your data set has just been reduced by 80%.

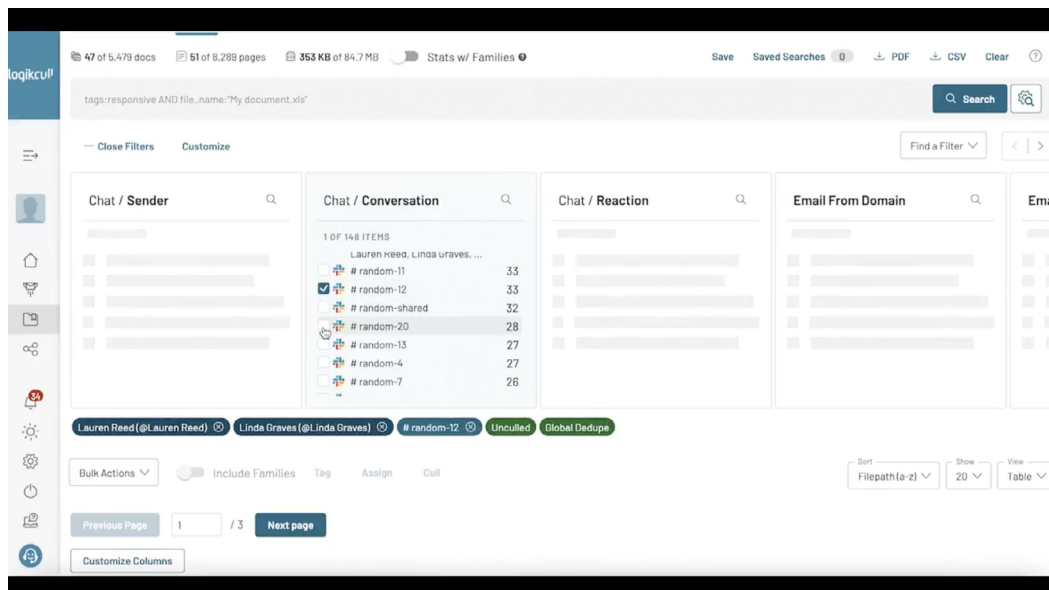
Applying the search terms that were provided and agreed upon with outside counsel and the regulators, we were able to reduce a collection of almost eight million Slack messages to roughly 32,000.



Kyle Kelly, Senior Technical Program Manager at Coinbase



But filtering doesn't need to end there, you could also select conversations that took place in specific channels, for example. We'll select channels Random 12 and Random 13.



And just like that, we reduced a data set of 5,479 records to just 93 by applying two simple filters.

Less Data to Review and a More Streamlined Way to Do It

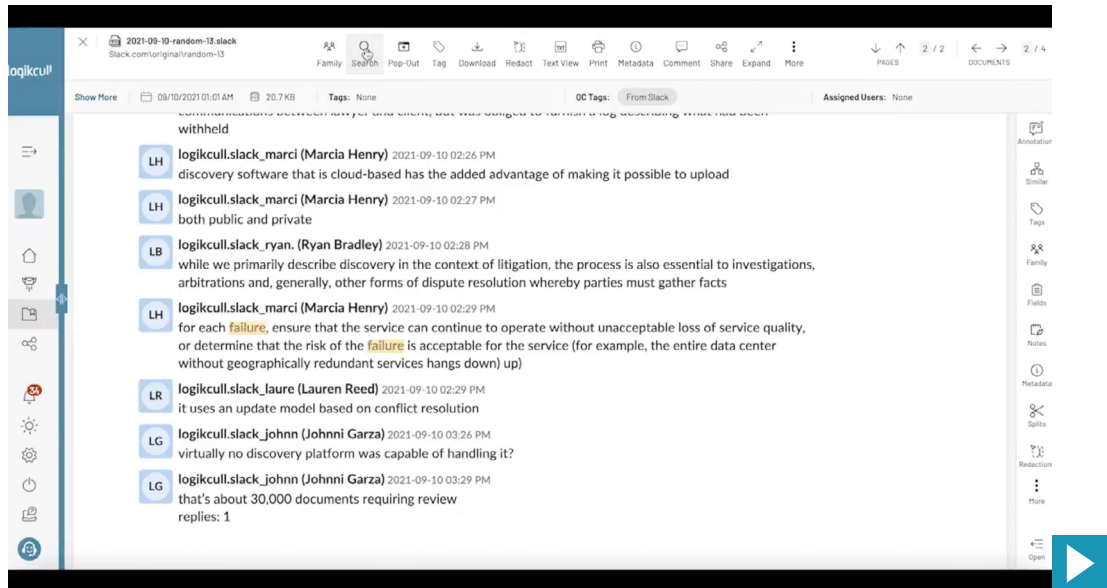
Now that you've culled all irrelevant documents, you can hone in on your most responsive conversations by searching for relevant keywords and analyzing the results of your search.

As an example, we can use the keyword "failure," which surfaces four files.

The screenshot displays the Logikcull search interface for a workspace named "Me Vs. The World". The search term "failure" has been entered, resulting in four filters: "Chat / Sender" (2 of 78 items), "Chat / Conversation" (2 of 148 items), "Chat / Reaction" (197 items), and "Email From Domain" (7 items). The "Chat / Reaction" filter is currently selected, showing a list of reactions such as "astonished", "facepunch", "fist", "joy", "laughing", "no_mouth", "tired_face", and "v". The interface includes a top navigation bar with "HOLDS", "UPLOADS", "SEARCH", and "DOWNLOADS" tabs, and a bottom section with "Bulk Actions", "Include Families", and "Tag Assign Cull" options.

Once you're ready to conduct an eyes-on review of your most relevant conversations, you'll have a host of review capabilities available that will greatly streamline your process.

Let's imagine you need to redact the word "application" on one of the documents you spotted previously. You can automatically apply redactions on any instance where the word was used—or even redact the full page if needed.

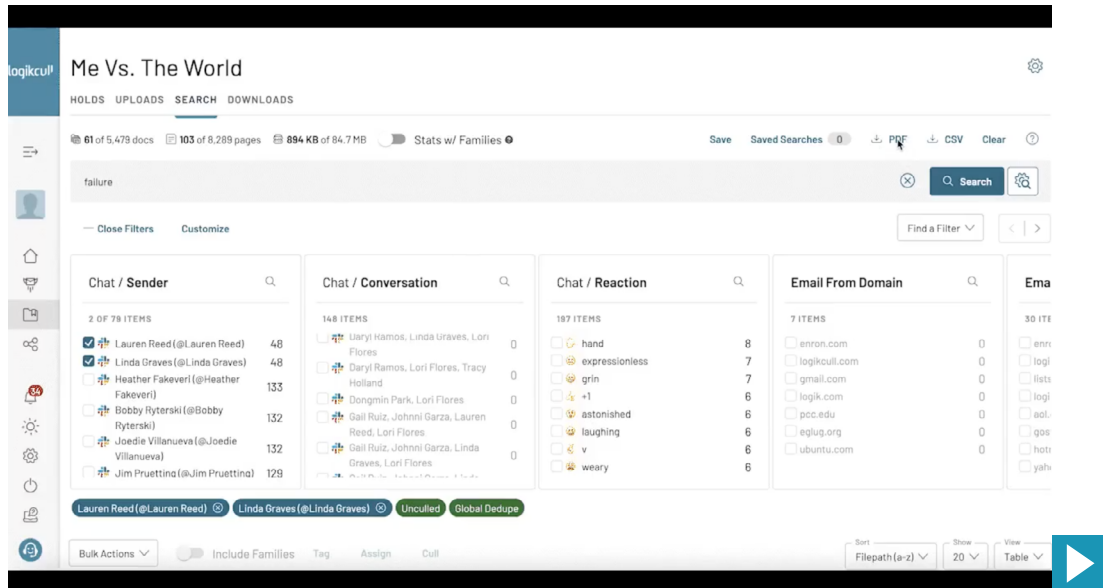


But apart from bulk redactions, you'll also be able to apply tags to multiple documents (for instance, to flag privilege, confidentiality, or relevance to specific issues), collaborate with your team in real-time with comments and annotations, and even find near-identical documents or conversations and get a side-by-side comparison of them.

Seamless Productions

Once the review of your Slack data is completed, you'll be able to either generate a production in any format required by the opposing party—or you can just download all conversations as a single PDF with just a click.

You may also share a safe link with the other party so they can access your reviewed documents directly in Logikcull, which enables you to remain in control of your data up to the very last step of the process.



3. Control

More than a last step, control is the superpower you acquire from the moment you upload your Slack data into Logikcull until you're ready to produce your reviewed files.

But what does this control entail exactly?

By ingesting your Slack data into Logikcull as soon as the risk of litigation arises or an investigation starts, you're proactively preserving your data and avoiding any unfortunate deletions, which keeps your company away from potential sanctions. You can also start a legal hold with a few clicks to alert custodians of their duty to preserve data.

From there, when a legal hold becomes a full-blown investigation or dispute, you can use Logikcull's Culling Intelligence to remove any irrelevant data from your collection and control the information that needs to be reviewed either internally or by your outside counsel.

If you're not conducting the review internally, you still stay in control of your data by inviting any reviewers into the platform, where they can go through your previously parsed documents.

And finally, you get total control over your productions by downloading your data in any format you need it or by sharing it with third parties with the ShareSafe technology for increased security.

In a nutshell, Logikcull allows you to keep the entire discovery process in a single secure place and streamline your Slack data management every step of the way — from preservation to production.