

Client Success STORY

Bucks County District Attorney's Office

4.5 Million Physical Court Documents Converted
to Searchable Digital Images



About Bucks County District Attorney's Office

Located in Doylestown, PA, District Attorney Matt Weintraub serves the office as the chief law enforcement officer for Bucks County. He was appointed in 2016 and has over 25 years of experience as a prosecutor. The office, under his leadership, is committed to ensuring the administration of justice, the prevention of crime, and the safety of all members of the Bucks County community. DA Weintraub and the office have reduced the number of overall prosecutions year after year by not only seeking punishment for violent criminals but also rehabilitation for offenders who can benefit from the established treatment programs.

After hearing from Michael Glaser, HIG's Director of Sales Record Storage, and Document Conversion at the July 2020 Pennsylvania District Attorney Conference, the Bucks County District Attorney's office reached out to Higher Information Group for help. The DA's office was sure that Higher Information Group could help them convert their sea of paper court records into efficient and searchable electronic files.

The Challenges and Needs

Storing over 12,000 boxes of court documents in three different warehouses, the Bucks County DA's office struggled to use these files efficiently on many fronts. Records stored included prosecution records dating back to the 1960s. One of the warehouse locations was about 40 minutes from the justice center in an evidence warehouse. If DA staff needed a file, it required back and forth communication with evidence custodians and time spent manually hunting down the correct file in the right box. The process of accessing files when needed was cumbersome - a waste of time, energy & resources.

The inefficient search for and transfer of files resulted in confidentiality and security risks. Paper files also made it impossible for more than one person to access each file at the same time.

Client CHALLENGES

- Inefficient use of employee time spent searching through physical records
- Storage space to house thousands of boxes of records
- No digital access to court records
- Impossible to have more than one person accessing each file at a time
- Confidentiality/security of sensitive paper documents at risk

Fortunately, and due to the pandemic, the Bucks County District Attorney's Office qualified for the Federal Cares Act Fund to digitize their paper records. With this in mind, the Bucks County District Attorney's office did its due diligence in researching solutions. They ultimately reached out to Higher Information Group with a defined scope of work. They felt confident that the team at HIG had the infrastructure to do what they needed in the necessary timeframe.





Client Needs

- ⊗ Pick up boxes of files from warehouse locations
- ⊗ Transportation to the scanning facility
- ⊗ Secure storage while offsite
- ⊗ Prep and scanning of all documents
- ⊗ All files indexed by case number and name
- ⊗ Image on demand 1/2 day response service as needed
- ⊗ Indexed imaged files on two hard drives - both in-office copy and backup copy
- ⊗ Securely return any paper files that must be retained
- ⊗ Secure certified destruction of paper records no longer needed
- ⊗ Per Cares Act Funding, the agreed-upon project required completion by 12/31/2020
- ⊗ An extension was given, and conversion work continues for 2021

Proof of Concept

Before agreeing to contract with Higher Information Group, the client requested a sample of what they could expect from the project. This proof of concept includes running a small quantity of the physical records through the process to demonstrate the steps involved and what the final product will look like. Converted documents were then provided to the client on a flash drive, allowing the Bucks County District Attorney's office to assess exactly what to expect from the overall project.

The Solution

With the proper funding now available to the Bucks County District Attorney's office, Weintraub's team was faced with the task of finding a more efficient and accessible storage solution for decades worth of hardcopy court documents. After receiving the Proof-of-Concept files, the client could accurately gauge the level of service that



Higher Information Group's team would deliver. With an NDA, the Bucks County DA's office entered into an agreement with HIG to convert all hardcopy records into digital files based on pricing aligned with the source of funding, the Federal Cares Act.

Higher Information Group helped determine a monthly budget in advance to better provide for the client, and the client was invoiced accordingly.

The initial steps of this project involved HIG's internal couriers picking up the hardcopy records from the client's three warehouse facilities. These couriers are subject to background checks and are required to sign nondisclosure agreements (NDAs), making them fit for jobs involving sensitive documents.

Once the files arrived at HIG's secure scanning facility in York, PA, they were indexed and cataloged in the specific manner the client predetermined. Through the use of high-speed scanning equipment, documents are converted to searchable digital images.

If a member of the District Attorney's office needed a specific file while it was in HIG's imaging center, they requested the "Image On-Demand" and the files were sent via secure FTP site or secure email.

Backfile Conversion is the process of replacing and converting large volumes of hardcopy files with digital copies or images to be archived and stored. After the scanning was complete, records were securely destroyed, and a Certification of Destruction was provided to the client, eliminating any additional need for storage space.

The client now has access to scanned records via indexed image files on a hard drive.



"Due to COVID, the Bucks County District Attorney's Office had an opportunity to digitize many of its old paper files. But it had to act quickly due to the time limits of the funding. HIG rose to the challenge. Despite the challenges of time and COVID, HIG provided professional and expeditious service and has produced a quality digitized product for us to use in the future."

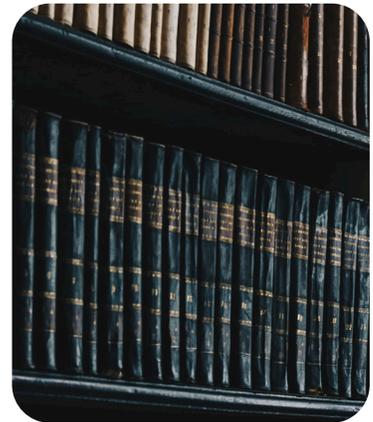
Matt Weintraub

Bucks County District Attorney



Project RESULTS

- Increased collaboration - Multiple staff can access files anytime, simultaneously
- 4.5 million records now electronically searchable
- Save time - no more staff time wasted sorting through bulky boxes and transferring files to other sites
- Ensure compliance by securely protecting sensitive data
- Mitigate risks involved with physical documents like fire, flooding, theft, etc.
- Relieved storage issues at evidence facility, thereby improving evidence management



The Results

With the project's conclusion, the Bucks County District Attorney's office now reaps the many benefits of having digital access to court documents. Not only did the process relieve storage issues, but it also mitigates the risks involved with physical documentation such as fires, flooding, and other natural disasters or theft. Digitization of the court records ensures compliance by securely protecting all of the data.

Furthermore, the once-massive maze of paper documents was no longer eating up the time of employees who had to search through bulky boxes. Now, the team has access to 4.5 million searchable image records electronically, reducing the transfer of paper files back and forth from their storage facility. Staff also appreciate that more than one team member can be working with the same file concurrently.