



HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO - CLERK OF COURTS & JUVENILE COURT

A redaction software case study



"I believe strongly that as a public entity, we should make it as efficient as possible for the public to have access to these documents in our justice system. But we also have a duty to protect the privacy of vulnerable individuals in our community. Implementing Extract's redaction software allowed us to strike a perfect balance between these responsibilities."

Pavan Parikh

Hamilton County Clerk of Courts

AT A GLANCE

- Procurement process via formal RFP
- Driving force was to make their records available online
- 2 million pages per year
- Went live with Extract in 2022
- Utilizing ID Shield's Web-Based User Interface (UI)

BACKGROUND

Hamilton County is located in the southwestern corner of the U.S. state of Ohio. As of the 2020 census, the population was 830,639, making it the third-most populous county in Ohio. The county seat and largest city is Cincinnati. The county is named for the first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton.

Hamilton County sought to enhance the security of sensitive information contained within their court documents while simultaneously making them accessible online. To achieve this goal, the county implemented ID Shield Software, developed by Extract Systems, in collaboration with their existing Case Management System (CMS) provider, PROWARE. This case study explores the procurement process, implementation challenges, redaction methodology, and the successful outcomes achieved by Hamilton County.

Hamilton County initiated a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a suitable solution for implementing redaction software. PROWARE and Extract jointly responded to the RFP and emerged as the winning solution providers, securing the contract.

MOTIVATION

The driving force behind the implementation of redaction measures was Hamilton County's aspiration to make court documents available online. The county had encountered a previous incident where unredacted records, including Social Security Numbers, were published online, leading to a case of identity theft. In response, the records were promptly removed from online platforms, and remained offline for more than a decade.

Hamilton County became the 21st government agency in Ohio to implement Extract's technology. Joining Courts of Common Pleas in the counties of Cuyahoga, Lake, Lucas, Montgomery, Wood, and others. Extract also provides solutions for municipal courts and redaction services for one-time backfile projects.

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IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

The order for Extract's ID Shield redaction software was received in June 2021, marking the commencement of the implementation phase. The implementation primarily focused on two departments within Hamilton County: the Clerk of Court and Juvenile Court. However, the rollout process faced delays, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and because the Juvenile Court was still defining their plan for handling redaction.

The implementation of ID Shield Software was officially live on September 1, 2022. The system was configured to redact sensitive fields, including Bank, Credit Card Number (CCN), Driver's License Number (DLN), Social Security Number (SSN), Protected Party, Witness, and Victim information. It's worth noting that the redaction process only applied to select document types on a day-forward basis.

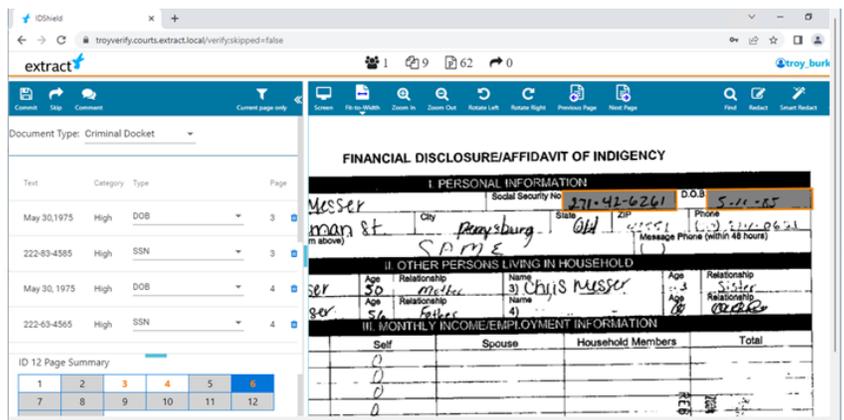
RESULTS

In Ohio, like other states, it is the responsibility of the filer to redact court documents. However, Hamilton County recognized the presence of numerous documents containing sensitive information being submitted and expressed discomfort with making such records available online. To address this issue, the Clerk of Court's office and Juvenile Court adopted Extract's automated redaction software, ID Shield, in 2022. The Clerk's office focused on a specific subset of documents, and it was discovered that slightly more than 25% of the incoming files still contained personally identifiable information (PII). To handle the situation, a hybrid workflow was established wherein ID Shield automatically redacts certain documents, while others are forwarded to a verification queue with proposed redactions for manual review by personnel.

In June of 2023, Hamilton County decided to double their annual license from 1 million to 2 million pages per year.

ABOUT ID SHIELD

OCR output is critical to any redaction process. The better the quality of the OCR output file, the greater the accuracy of the redaction. Extract Systems redaction software starts with the OCR engine, deploys machine learning to classify documents, and layers additional recognition technology into the software to find data within complex unstructured documents. Extract's data detection rules find and redact all sensitive data types.



Extract's Web-UI

This is a proprietary formula that incorporates pattern recognition logic, phrase context proximity and keywords into the software based on the data that needs to be captured and secured. Redaction zones are burned in, making it impossible for identity thieves to retrieve private information. All hidden metadata associated with the redacted text is eliminated.