



MONOLITH FORENSICS
OWN YOUR DATA

How Ankura Eliminates Reliance on Disparate Data Sources When Managing eDiscovery Cases

Case Study



200+

acquisitions per month
entered into Monolith



<30

seconds to surface
acquisition data



"In a matter of seconds, I can locate an evidence item and all of its pertinent information, including its physical location."

Corey Salm,
Director of Digital Forensics, Ankura

Challenges

Streamlining evidence and storage tracking

Corey Salm, Director of Digital Forensics at Ankura, is a strong proponent of digital transformation. He believes that by streamlining backend processes and empowering your team, you're able to better serve your clients in turn. That's a philosophy he embraces when corporate litigation requires any type of forensic collection.

Before Monolith Forensics, managing the company's large amounts of evidence was a huge undertaking. Tracking was done via Excel spreadsheets hosted on SharePoint. This enabled the team to collaborate, but the solution also came with major drawbacks.



Corey explains, *"Spreadsheets and custom databases, while granular, tend to be difficult to keep consistent across a large team. This made it challenging, in some instances, to keep track of evidence which can result in longer lead times to locate information."*

Inconsistent record keeping between practitioners made it difficult for Ankura's team to easily consolidate all of their information. It also compounded the difficulty of delivering timely data-backed insights to clients.

"If a client asks for information on a certain case, it shouldn't take you more than 30 seconds to answer their question. You shouldn't have to scramble to find who tracked what or where data lives," Corey says.

It was time to modernize. Corey began to seek out software solutions that would help Ankura streamline evidence and storage tracking. His search ended with Monolith.

Ankura Consulting Group, LLC

An independent global expert services and advisory firm that helps companies navigate change, risk, disputes, finance, performance, distress, and transformation.

HIGHLIGHTS

Challenges

- Streamlining forensic analyst and lab manager workflows
- Delivering more timely insights to clients
- Adopting user-friendly case management software

Solution

- Monolith is available on-premise or in the cloud
- Designed to accommodate forensic analyst workflows
- Precise fields add consistency to data storage processes
- Track evidence movement from intake to release
- Review an array of stats on evidence and casework

Results

- Consolidated forensic data in a single pane of glass
- 200+ acquisitions per month entered into Monolith
- Acquisition insights surfaced in under 30 seconds





Corey says, “We demoed other products, including the most widely used forensic case management software on the market. Most were confusing to use—UIs were dated or they required a lot of customization to function in our environment.

Monolith was different. It was ready out of the box, with all of the fields we needed preloaded. Its UI is modern. There’s a desktop app and a web version that you can access through Chrome. Being able to leverage the evidence program without having to install anything was a big win for us.”



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Solution

Designed by and for digital forensics teams

Having never used forensic case management software before, Ankura wanted to avoid a steep learning curve that would eat up valuable time and resources. Monolith's ease of use was a huge selling feature for Ankura.



"Someone can pick up Monolith and be pretty well-versed and comfortable within a day or two. We recently gave all of our project managers permission to view our entries, so they can easily review important information like what we collected, what was the size, et cetera," Corey says.

Monolith was developed by a team of digital forensics consultants, with the needs of other consultants in mind. It's tailor-made for eDiscovery and purposefully built to track evidence from intake to release, including movement within the lab environment.

For example: If Corey needs to collect a phone, he can create an evidence entry for the phone. He can fill in when he gained custody of the phone, when he ran acquisition from it, and the exact moment of release. Monolith logs the entire chain of custody, and it's set up to reflect a typical team's workflow.

"Monolith's leadership has a forensic background, so they're very familiar with the eDiscovery industry and what kind of information we need to log. Every workflow is set up to accommodate exactly how we handle all of our acquisitions: remote, onsite, various data types, and even cloud data," Corey says.

Consolidated casework and evidence

Ankura hosts Monolith in the cloud. They enjoy having the ability to enter and store evidence, track casework, measure analytics, and access case data from anywhere—no app installation required.

With Monolith, critical insights are only ever a few clicks away. Everything is consolidated and consistent, and finding information about their data has never been easier.

"Now, when my colleagues are going in and adding evidence, I know that they're entering the same information that I am because we're all following the same field layouts. Then I can filter and group on any field and see all evidence items, all child evidence, and all acquisitions in one page just by clicking through the tabs. It's very easy," Corey says.



Ankura's team can now generate reports populated with case details for use with archiving or as a template for forensic reports. According to Corey, aggregating all of this data into a usable format was "challenging" before Monolith.

"With Monolith, we can pull metrics in seconds. If management wants to see who's acquiring the most data in a year, I can run that report. Or I can report on the types of data we have, or the software we're using the most, et cetera. With disparate spreadsheets in multiple locations, it's hard to aggregate that information," Corey says.

Responsive support

The final thing that sets Monolith apart is the relationship. Monolith continues to accept feedback, incorporate suggestions, and improve on the platform month after month. The result is a forensic case management system that scales alongside Ankura's evolving needs.



"Monolith's support is absolutely phenomenal, I usually get responses to my questions in minutes. In the past six months, they've already added significant new features—many based on our feedback," Corey says.



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Results

Surface acquisition data in under 30 seconds

Thanks to Monolith, Ankura's need to maintain and amalgamate disparate spreadsheets is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Now, everything they need for new projects is in a single pane of glass.



"All of our new projects are entered into Monolith. We're not leveraging our previous workflow for anything going forward. Monolith enables us to create a level of transparency internally to help keep everyone more informed," Corey says.

For Ankura's team, the practical benefit of consolidated data is that forensic analyst and lab manager workflows are more streamlined. Previously time-consuming and labor-intensive processes, like locating and destroying time-sensitive evidence, are now much more efficient.

"Ankura worked on a project with collections across three continents: North America, Europe, and Asia. The case settled and, as part of the settlement, Ankura was required to destroy all collected evidence within 24 hours. Using Monolith, we were able to quickly locate all the evidence preserved around the globe and collaborate with local resources to destroy the evidence swiftly and efficiently."

For Ankura's clients, Monolith generates more trust in Ankura's eDiscovery processes, delivers more timely insights, and drives more powerful data-backed decision-making.



"By implementing Monolith we now have the ability to track the chain of custody electronically, and by utilizing the built-in QR coding system, we are able to quickly and efficiently locate acquisition information," Corey says.

In a few months, Monolith revolutionized Ankura's data preservation and evidence management process. Now, Corey is dreaming up new ways to use Monolith to benefit both his team and Ankura's clients.



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“Monolith is already benefiting the forensics team. We’ve put in 500 acquisitions into Monolith so far this year, and we’re averaging around 200 per month. Now we’re talking about adding a new workspace for our processing team,” he says.

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