How Many Pages in a Gigabyte?

Your client calls to request an estimate of how much it will cost to conduct a review of the client's electronic files. In your mind the formula is clear—the number of pages to review divided by the number of attorneys on the review team divided by the average number of pages reviewed each day equals a rough estimate of the number of attorney hours required for review. In such a scenario, attorneys may find themselves trying to do quick calculations on Post-it® notes based solely on the number of gigabytes. Unfortunately, that leaves one key factor in the equation unknown: What is the number of pages?

Arriving at the answer can be a little tricky. The number of pages in a given file varies widely based on different file types and characteristics; such as whether the original file contains system data in addition to the readable data (as in a .pst email file); includes special formatting (as in an .xls spreadsheet file); or contains only pure text (as in a .txt text file). The secret to making a good page estimate is to evaluate the file types included in the dataset.

The table below provides an average number of pages per gigabyte for some common document types.

DOCUMENT TYPE	AVERAGE PAGES/DOC	AVERAGE PAGES/GIG
Microsoft® Word® Files	9	64,782
Email Files	1.5	100,099
Microsoft® Excel® Files	50	165,791
Lotus® 1-2-3 Files	55	297,317
Microsoft® PowerPoint® Files	14	17,552
Text Files	20	677,963
Image Files	1.4	15,477

Although the actual number of pages cannot be determined accurately until the data is actually processed, it is possible to provide a ballpark estimate before a project begins. Once the scope is established, attorneys will be in the best possible position to set client expectations and begin working on the rest of the electronic discovery plan.

Exhibit 4

The Discovery Experts: Data Collection and Forensics Consultants

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