In-Place File Analysis & Management

Top 5 Bank

Background

Headquartered in the U.S., this large bank operates globally with millions of individual consumers, small banks, prominent multinational corporations, and government institutions as customers. Throughout operations, the bank has generated several petabytes of data and billions of documents in its file shares.

Data volumes of that size create challenges around storage cost and risk. What you don't know will hurt you in today's regulatory landscape, requiring organizations to fully control all their data for legal and privacy compliance. As regulators increasingly monitor unstructured data, such as files, the risks associated with retaining ungoverned documents grow.

Attempted Solution and Challenges

The Bank originally initiated several attempts to address this data sprawl by understanding what data exists in their file shares and deleting ROT (redundant, outdated, trivial) data. They brought their stakeholders from legal, compliance, records, and privacy together, but after one year were only able to delete 1 million documents. At their present-day volumes of several billion documents, they realized this process wouldn't scale. The Bank began to look externally for a solution to their files clean up challenges, all of which boiled down to three core problems:

1. No Control

The Bank's inability to apply governance on files means they did not know what information was being stored—preventing them from acting upon that knowledge for privacy, compliance, and file cleanup.

2. No Global Oversight

The Bank was incapable of implementing a universal, in-place records management strategy as each location used disparate retention policies. This regional approach to file management lacked a single source of truth, means of tracking documents, and a defensible method to determine which files were eligible for deletion.

3. Excessive ROT Files

In the absence of ongoing governance, the Bank's file shares bloated with terabytes of redundant, outdated, and trivial data (ROT). These files created excessive overhead costs and opened the door to countless privacy and security challenges.

A Better Solution

ZL File Analysis and Management was deployed across the company's file shares and SharePoint sites worldwide, providing the bank with several critical capabilities:
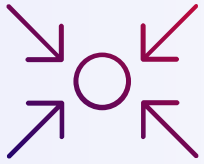
A Single Source of Truth

ZL File Analysis and Management enabled unified virtual management of all the Bank's files through one platform—without creating data copies—allowing the bank to enact global and regional policies on files. As a result, the Bank gained a single source of truth, significantly easing the file management process.

Audit Trails and Defensible Deletion

Every enterprise today must prioritize defensible deletion to satisfy various business, regulatory, and legal obligations. This requires developing a unified set of policies that incorporate requirements from record-keeping, privacy, legal eDiscovery, and compliance, while retaining detailed audit trails to record what data was deleted and why. The result is a defensible audit trail that can demonstrate to regulators and legal stakeholders that data was deleted for legitimate purposes.
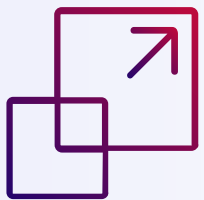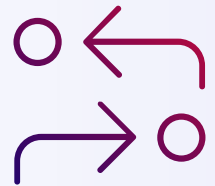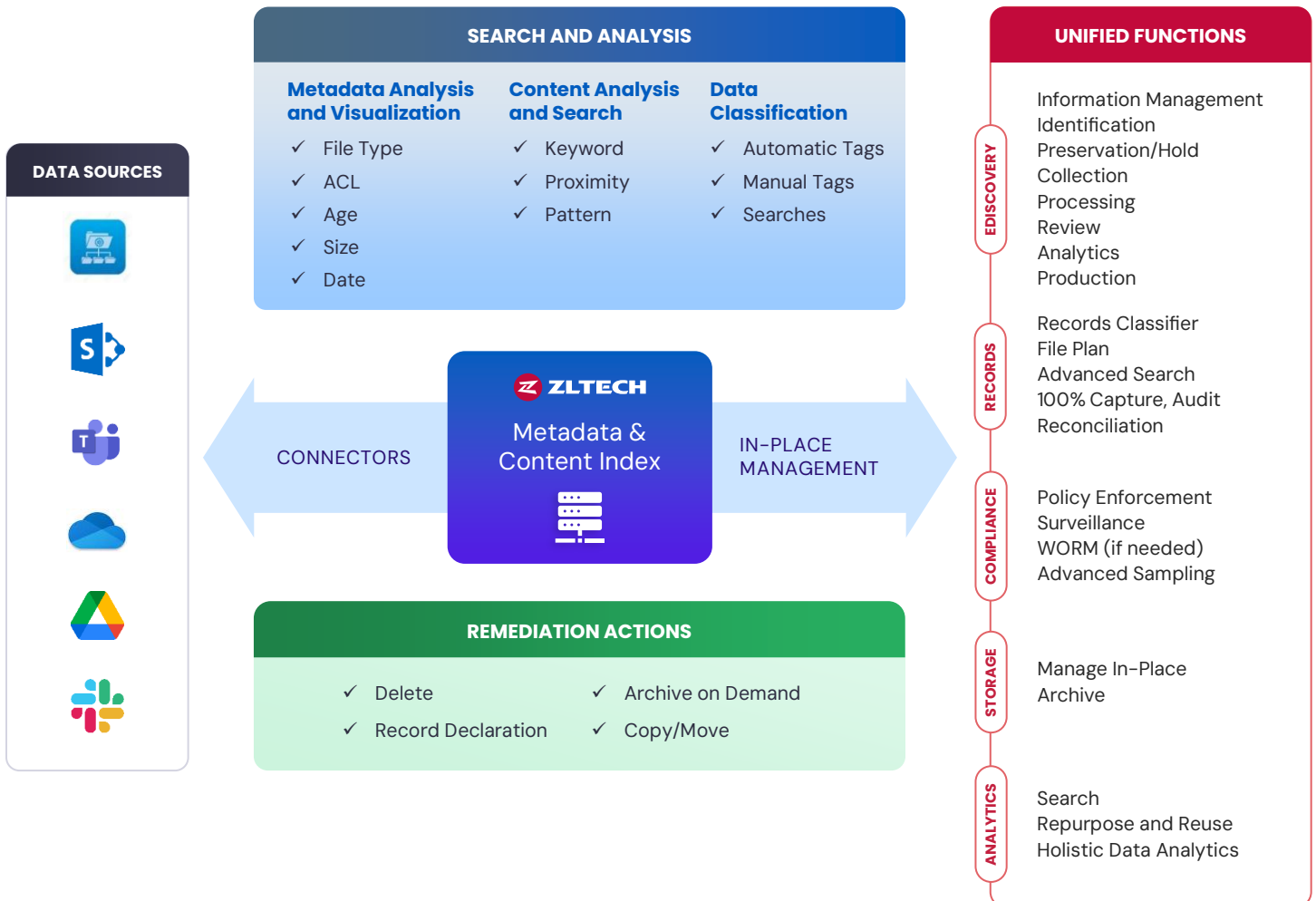
Massive Scalability

Designed to meet global data requirements, ZL Tech's unified architecture scales to today's massive data volumes and complex regulatory landscape. ZL Tech provided this large bank with a unified management solution for data lying in various countries, each with their own privacy requirements. The result is a cohesive workflow that allows regional stakeholders to review and execute disposition on the data they own, along with the capability to deliver global oversight across all worldwide data for global administrators.
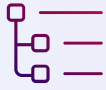
In-Place File Governance

Traditional information governance relies on an archive, in which all documents are copied and stored. Unfortunately, this increases storage costs, data exposure, and management headaches.

In contrast, in-Place management delivers the benefits of information governance, without the archive (or any of the data copies, risk, and cost associated with it). Under this approach, the essence of every document is extracted for search and analysis, without duplicating the document itself.

From this centralized platform, users can execute records management functions on the data source, including document classification, retention, review, and defensible deletion. Manual and automatic file tagging allows the Bank to classify documents and apply custom policies that align with regulatory requirements. Additionally, the Bank can now declare high-value files as records, remediate personally identifiable information (PII), and flag ROT files for deletion.

DATA SOURCES

SEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Metadata Analysis and Visualization
- ✓ File Type
- ✓ ACL
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Size
- ✓ Date

Content Analysis and Search
- ✓ Keyword
- ✓ Proximity
- ✓ Pattern

Data Classification
- ✓ Automatic Tags
- ✓ Manual Tags
- ✓ Searches

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Metadata & Content Index

CONNECTORS

IN-PLACE MANAGEMENT

REMEDIATION ACTIONS
- ✓ Delete
- ✓ Record Declaration
- ✓ Archive on Demand
- ✓ Copy/Move

UNIFIED FUNCTIONS

EDISCOVERY
Information Management
Identification
Preservation/Hold
Collection
Processing
Review
Analytics
Production

RECORDS
Records Classifier
File Plan
Advanced Search
100% Capture, Audit
Reconciliation

COMPLIANCE
Policy Enforcement
Surveillance
WORM (if needed)
Advanced Sampling

STORAGE
Manage In-Place
Archive

ANALYTICS
Search
Repurpose and Reuse
Holistic Data Analytics

10B+
Documents Managed

1.6+ PBs
ROT Defensibly Deleted

Zero
Copies Created

Results

In 2023, the Bank scaled its cleanup efforts by focusing on the most pivotal 1,400 data sources. They reported deleting 11 million files in March and 10 million files in the following month.

The scalability of in-place management enabled tangible progress in the Bank's ROT cleanup efforts, going from 1 million documents deleted in a year to 10 times that amount every month. The cost savings alone from reduced storage is massive, along with several other legal, regulatory, and business benefits that proved to be transformative.

Looking forward, the Bank has several options to transform its consumption and use of unstructured data with the ZL Platform. In-place management can be combined with selective archiving of any information that requires it, whether it's for compliance, privacy, records, or legal needs. Additionally, the same technology that makes large scale files clean up possible can be used to search, filter, and deliver relevant data to AI and analytics platforms. This capability enables the Bank to align governance initiatives with its greater data strategy, including digital transformation, cloud, and AI.

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+1 (408) 240-8989 | zlti.com | info@zlti.com