

# Millennials Are Leading – Is Your Company Following?

*A new generation of employees is setting the pace for modern communication*

**By Trisha Anderson / Inventus, LLC**

According to the U.S. Census, there are over 83 million millennials. They make up over a quarter of the nation's population. The growth of this demographic has had an inevitable impact on the demographics of the workforce. By the year 2020, millennials will account for 46 percent of all employees.

There have been many articles written about this sometimes misunderstood generation – how to communicate with them, what is important to them and what they want to contribute to the world. While those details are important, this article will focus on how the millennial generation has impacted and will continue to impact the legal discovery landscape.

For the generation born in the digital age, electronic communications are preferred over face-to-face conversations or phone calls. A key component that millennials are looking for in the workspace is access to top up-to-date technology that can help them thrive. In response, companies are deploying applications like Skype for business, Gchat or more collaborative tools that enable conversations without the need for face to face human interaction or even telephone calls. Facilitating a collaborative dialogue in a format and environment that is familiar to and in line with the way that millennials prefer to communicate, both at work and on their mobile devices, simulates a constant connection and can demonstrate their contribution in the workplace.

In order to attract millennials, recruiters are encouraging companies

to adopt and even develop technology designed to increase productivity and collaboration. Companies that use Slack, a cloud-based team collaboration tool, can reduce their internal email by an average of 48.6 percent (according to Slack). However, reducing internal email by 48.6 percent is also generating a comparable amount of Slack data.

Some business divisions have claimed to have eliminated internal email use altogether, which means that identifying and capturing communications that could be essential to discovery would not be included in traditional network and server collections, or workstation imaging. As a result, e-discovery service providers are seeing more requests to assist with data from dynamic internet and wiki sites, shared documents, Slack, WhatsApp, Text and other social media platforms and cloud-based applications.

The bottom line? Technology required to enhance productivity and efficiency in the workplace has created additional data sources. While this is a result of growth, innovation and development, corporations, outside counsel and vendors should prepare for and be aware of these data sources, and how they can impact discovery. For example:

**Corporations:** Consider your information governance, compliance, privacy and social media policies. It is essential to collaborate cross-departmentally and with IT on the tools and technology that your company deploys, and to establish data retention and deletion protocols around these tools. It starts with awareness.

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**Outside Counsel:** Ask your clients and data custodians how they are communicating and collaborating at work. Messaging applications can be considered informal and are often overlooked, when the reality is that these applications are the main form of communication for some key departments.

**Service Providers:** Understand the collection process for these applications, and what information they can gather. Collaborate with IT, and sometimes directly with the service providers, to determine the exports and reports that are available from

these tools. Then consult your clients on efficient work flows to review this data.

Millennials aren't the only demographic using these tools and applications, but they are influencing the adoption rate in the workplace. Spending an average of 3.5 hours a day on their mobile devices alone, they account for a significant percentage of the 200,000 Instagram posts and almost 300,000 tweets that go out every minute and will continue to contribute to the growing 2.5 quintillion bytes of data generated daily. As technology advances, the demand for faster and better tools and applications that are integrated with your social media and work-based applications is not only creating additional data sources but also blurring the lines between personal and professional communications.

Companies that proactively identify and address alternative data sources by implementing internal policies and protocols will be ahead of the game, and can significantly limit their exposure to risk and reduce costs related to e-discovery.



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