Redaction in the digital age: Here's what you need to know

Welcome to Veritone's blog series on redaction. This series will dive into what information needs to be redacted, redaction best practices, automated redaction, and redaction for audio and video.

We've all seen—or rather, not seen—examples of what redacted information can look like. In the age of physical documents, this could look like stacks of papers with black bars covering text or covering someone's face in a photograph.

The digital era presents its own unique set of celebrations and challenges. Today, we have a surplus of different data mediums and tools that can help automate or speed up the redaction process, however it's this exact surplus that can create bottlenecks in different workflows and inspire a need for redaction services and tools that can keep up with demand.

Summary

In this blog, we'll cover:

- The definition of and purpose of redaction
- Different types of redaction
- Laws and regulations around redaction

Our first chapter is all about the concept of redaction, or sanitizing documents, audio, and video of certain information, usually for personal identifiable information (PII). Let's get started!

What is redaction?

In its most basic form, redaction is the process of removing sensitive information or personal data from a document or other form of communication.

Depending on the field or industry, redaction can look different. In this series, we'll be looking at redaction from the perspective of legal teams, law enforcement agencies (LEAs), and federal government agencies, so the discussion will focus on the redaction of different types of evidentiary data, such as text documents, imagery, videos, and audio.

What is the purpose of redaction?

Properly redacted evidence is an important way to protect the PII of those involved in the evidence along with the integrity of the case.

PII is any piece of information that permits an individual's identity to be inferred either directly or indirectly. Types of PII can include:

- Names
- Biometrics
- Social Security, driver's license, or Alien Registration numbers
- Medical or financial information
- And more

Redacting sensitive information also helps teams and agencies comply with legal processes and privacy laws while also preventing misuse or unauthorized access to sensitive information. Leaked PII could easily become a privacy incident and lead to disruptions in the case.

What types of redaction are there?

When it comes to the redaction of PII, there are a few different types to consider.

Manual redaction

This requires someone to manually identify and blackout, blur, or remove sensitive information within the data. This method is the most time-consuming and least cost-effective. For example,

Automated redaction

This method utilizes software algorithms to automate the identification and redaction of sensitive or confidential information. Veritone Redact is an example of automated redaction software that uses proprietary AI to minimize cost and maximize efficiency and transparency.

Real-time redaction

This involves the use of technology to redact sensitive information from audio and video in real time, or as it is being recorded. This could look like redacting sensitive information during a live stream.

Partial redaction

Partially redacting information could look like removing names, personal data, or likenesses while leaving other information intact.

Complete redaction

This method, on the other hand, completely removes all PII or sensitive information from the data and only shows the relevant information.

Redaction laws and regulations

Let's take a look at different laws and regulations that involve the redaction or handling of PII.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Enacted in 1967, FOIA offers the public the right to request to view or access records from any federal agency in an effort to keep government agencies transparent with US citizens. Unless the request falls under one of nine exemptions (due to protecting personal privacy, law enforcement, and national security). Because of these requests' sensitive nature, FOIA requires government agencies to redact confidential information before releasing public records, but according to law, all FOIA requests must receive a response within 20 working days.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

HIPPA is a federal law that provides national standards for protecting sensitive patient health information and keeping it from being disclosed or shared without that patient's knowledge or consent. Because health records are a form of PII and are highly sensitive, healthcare providers must redact the necessary information in order to protect the patient's right to privacy.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The GDPR is a legal framework for companies that are collecting and processing their consumers' personal information. This regulation requires companies to redact personal data to protect the privacy of individuals and help empower consumers by holding these entities accountable for the way their information is handled. Note: although the GDPR is a European law, these requirements can apply to any website that attracts European visitors, which includes many US-based companies, nonprofits, universities, and organizations.

California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)

Similar to the GDPR, the CCPA offers California-based consumers greater control over how businesses collect and use their personal information, requiring companies to redact these consumers' personal information before sharing it with third parties. The CCPA also presents consumers with the rights to know what personal information is collected and how it is used, to deny the sale of their personal information, to delete personal information (with exceptions), and to non-discrimination for exercising these rights.

And more...

Many other laws and regulations, such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA), also specify requirements for redacting sensitive information.

Continue learning:

What Needs to Be Redacted From Legal Documents?

In this chapter, we'll take a closer look at the types of information that need to be redacted from legal text, image, audio, and video files. This mostly involves PII but can include other confidential information.

Redaction Best Practices

After covering what redaction is and what information needs to be protected during the redaction process, we'll get into the best practices for performing proper redactions. By using redaction best practices, teams and agencies can prevent issues with privacy laws, legal processes, transparency, chain of command, and more.

Automated Redaction

In the digital age, manual redaction is becoming more unfavorable by the day. In this chapter, we'll discuss how automated redaction can help increase teams' and agencies' productivity, accuracy, and transparency while saving time, money, and employees' peace of mind.
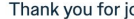
Video Redaction

The world is now overflowing with video content and data, which presents a double-edged sword to government agencies, LEAs, and legal teams: there's a mountain of evidence to help shine a light on the truth, but the time it takes to properly redact video evidence can present huge workflow issues to these teams. This blog will cover the unique challenges that video redaction presents.

Audio Redaction

Much like the blog on video redaction, this chapter will showcase the challenges and best practices for audio redaction, whether it's purely an audio file (such as a recording of a conversation) or part of a piece of video evidence.

Conclusion

Thank you for joining us for the introductory chapter of this series on redaction. If you or your team are interested in FedRAMP-approved, AI-powered automated redaction software or redaction services, contact one of our Veritone team members to learn more about how we can help you meet your redaction needs.

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Redaction in the Digital Age: Everything You Need to Know

Redacting Legal Documents With Artificial Intelligence

Thank you for joining us for the second chapter of our AI Redaction series. In our first introductory chapter, we covered the basics, including what redaction is, what type of data needs to be sanitized or redacted, and the most common type of information that needs to be redacted: personal identifiable information (PII).

In this second chapter, we'll go over the importance of redacting legal documents, what information is typically redacted from this data, and the challenges legal and eDiscovery teams face during the redaction process.

Summary:

- Why legal redaction is important for protecting privacy, confidentiality, integrity, and more.
- What information should be redacted, including personally identifiable, confidential, proprietary, financial, medical, or sensitive information.
- How AI applications like Veritone Redact can help legal practices overcome the challenges that redacting legal documents can present.

We will also answer common questions on the topic such as: "What does redacted mean in law?"; "Why is redacting legal proceedings information necessary?"; and "What information should be redacted in discovery?" Let's dive in.

What is the importance of redacting legal documents?

Redaction in its general form is the retroactive editing, blacking out, omission, or removal of certain information from audio-, image-, video-, or text-based data. When it comes to legal redaction, attorneys and eDiscovery teams often need to remove PII and other confidential information for the following reasons:

Protecting personal privacy

Redacting an individual's PII or other personal information helps to protect their privacy and prevent identity theft while helping legal teams maintain client-attorney privileges and the integrity of the case.

Maintaining confidentiality

Another type of data that should be redacted is confidential or proprietary information. While PII helps to protect an individual, omitting confidential or proprietary information helps to protect an organization or company, along with its intellectual property and trade secrets.

Ensuring compliance with laws and regulations

Redacting sensitive financial information and information related to ongoing legal proceedings helps to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, such as those related to privacy and financial reporting.

Preserving the integrity of the legal process

By redacting certain information, legal and eDiscovery teams can help ensure that the ongoing legal proceedings are fair and unbiased, as it prevents the release of potentially prejudicial information.

Avoiding legal liability

Beyond protecting clients, witnesses, and legal proceedings, properly redacting legal documents helps protect legal teams and firms. Failing to properly redact sensitive information in legal documents can result in legal liability for the person or organization responsible for the release of that information.

What types of information are typically redacted in legal documents?

Now that we've gone over the importance of redacting sensitive information, let's discuss the types of information that are usually omitted during this process.

Personal identification information

As covered in the last chapter, PII is any piece of data that can either directly or indirectly reveal an individual's identity. Types of PII can include someone's:

- Name
- Biometrics
- Address
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Social Security Number
- Driver's license number
- Alien Registration number
- Medical information
- Financial information
- And more

Children's information

Just like PII, information about minors, such as their names and addresses, may be redacted to protect their privacy during court proceedings.

Confidential or proprietary information

In order to protect a company's or organization's personal information, it's important to redact confidential and/or proprietary information.

This can include, but is not limited to a company's:

- Proprietary business processes
- Financial information
- Domain names
- Trade secrets
- Copyrights
- Ideas, techniques, inventions (patentable or not)
- Information relating to designs, configurations, documentation, records, etc.

Financial information

Financial information includes data regarding a person's or business' monetary transactions, including:

- Financial transactions
- Financial statements
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card numbers
- Credit ratings
- Payment histories

Information related to ongoing legal proceedings

By redacting any ongoing litigation or settlement negotiations, as well as any information that could potentially be prejudicial to the outcome of a legal case, legal teams can protect the integrity of their cases.

Medical or personal health information

Personal health information or protected health information (PHI) can be considered as PII. This covers:

- Medical history
- Treatments
- Conditions
- Disabilities
- Test and lab results
- Insurance information

Sensitive personal information

Information about an individual's sexual orientation, political views, or religious beliefs may also be redacted from legal documents and other data in order to protect the individual and possibly the outcome of the case.

Challenges of Redacting Legal Documents

With legal redaction, there are three major issues: identifying relevant pieces of sensitive information within legal documents and files, accurately and thoroughly redacting that information to prepare for proceedings, and achieving the balance of transparency and the need to protect sensitive information.

These three issues aside, perhaps one of the most prevalent problems is the time, cost, and effort it takes to go through the redaction process manually. Whether it's combing through text documents for personal information or redacting PII in video or audio evidence, manual redaction can take legal and eDiscovery teams hours to complete. And, as is the nature of tedious, detail-oriented work, manual redaction could potentially open the door to simple human errors.

With AI-powered tools and services like Veritone Redact and Redaction Managed Service, legal and eDiscovery teams can automate the lengthy redaction process—allowing practices to save valuable money and manhours while expediting their cases with greater efficiency, transparency, and accuracy.

Conclusion

With the right AI-driven tools and services, legal and public sector agencies can optimize and streamline their redaction processes while becoming more efficient and transparent. By adopting solutions like Veritone Redact—which increases speed, promotes transparency, and protects PII— these agencies and organizations can use AI for the greater good.

If you or your legal team are interested in AI-powered automated redaction or redaction services, one of our Veritone team members can help you learn more about our offerings.

Redaction in the Digital Age: Everything You Need to Know

1. Redaction in the digital age: Here's what you need to know
2. Redacting Legal Documents With Artificial Intelligence
3. Redaction best practices and how to implement them
4. How Automated Redaction (AI) Software and Services Work
5. Accelerate Video Redaction With Artificial Intelligence
6. Accelerate Audio Redaction With Artificial Intelligence

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Redaction best practices and how to implement them

Hello and welcome to the third chapter of our AI Redaction series, which will cover redaction best practices for legal professionals. Chapter 2: Redacting Legal Documents With Artificial Intelligence was all about the types of information that are typically redacted from legal data (such as personally identifiable information, or PII) and the challenges that legal and eDiscovery teams run into during the redaction process.

In this chapter, we'll get into the best practices for legal data redaction and why it is such an important topic for legal professionals to stay up-to-date on.

Summary:

- What types of sensitive information need to be redacted from legal documents and data?
- What does the manual redaction process look like and what are its challenges?
- What are the best practices for automated redaction, including the redaction of audio and video?
- How can AI-powered redaction software like Veritone Redact and Redact Managed Service help?

Lawyers, eDiscovery teams, and other legal professionals handle mountains of sensitive data on a daily basis. Not only are they handling and managing this information, but they are also responsible for providing information to the courts, regulatory agencies, opposing counsel, and sometimes citizens who have made requests for governmental records or personal data. Learning about and integrating redaction best practices are great ways to ensure that legal teams are sharing all the necessary information without breaching privacy or confidentiality.

What needs to be redacted in legal documents?

When it comes to redaction, legal documents and data have a specific range of information that should remain confidential in order to protect the individuals involved and maintain legal compliance.

We have detailed information on what pieces of information should be redacted from legal documents and data in Chapters 1 and 2, but as a refresher, private, confidential, or privileged information can include:

- Personal information, which can include PII like their name, Social Security Number, date of birth, protected health information (PHI), or some financial information.
- Privileged information, such as information that's protected by the attorney-client privilege as attorney work product.
- Confidential business information regarding intellectual property, trade secrets, internal organizational strategies, etc.

Depending on the sensitive information, its disclosure may occur in the context of eDiscovery, court filings, or at other times during the course of litigation. Legal teams may also have to compile and redact data in order to provide information to fulfill a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, or state law corollaries like open records laws, public records laws, or sunshine laws, which enable citizens to enquire and request information about how their federal, state, and local governments operate.

As stated before, the information that is being redacted will depend on whom this data is being shared with, but regardless of the recipient of the information, the data should be removed or redacted thoroughly. This could look like blacking out text, blurring someone's face, or even removing someone's name from an audio file—all of which require a lot of time and concentration when being conducted manually.

What goes into the manual redaction process?

The manual redaction process is a time-intensive one. For redacting documents, this could look like taking a black marker or a digital redaction tool and covering up the necessary text. For photos and videos this could look like pixellating or blacking out PII, someone's face, etc. And for audio and video, this could mean bleeping out or cutting moments where PII or other confidential information is mentioned.

While the process sounds straightforward, it's incredibly time-consuming when done manually. Aside from needing to check and double-check the work and creating a redaction log to maintain compliance and chain of command, there is a large window for human error and inadvertent disclosure, both of which could be detrimental and seriously harmful to the case, individuals involved in the case, and the legal professionals who are processing the information.

This is especially true when video is involved. When a video needs to be redacted manually, someone must go through the video frame by frame to ensure that nothing is missed—meaning that a 10-minute video could take an entire week to complete properly. Plus, on top of this time constraint, practices and teams need to also consider the cost it takes to dedicate employees' time to these efforts.

Fortunately, there are redaction software and tools available to help eliminate the need for manual redaction, enabling teams to speed up the redaction process while increasing accuracy.

What are the best practices for automated redaction?

Implementing automated redaction software is by far the best investment a company can make when it comes to cutting costs and time loss due to lengthy redaction processes. We've touched on what's involved with manually redacting specific files, now let's discuss best practices for automating the redaction of these formats.

Depending on the file's format, different best practices could apply. For physical documents and images, the redaction process will obviously remain manual, but depending on the tool in use, scanning the files could enable automation opportunities.

Best practices for text document and PDF redaction

The simplest way to redact information from documents and PDFs is to omit the information altogether. With automated redaction, teams can choose or input specific keywords, names, numbers, etc. that need to be redacted and the software can take care of it from there.

Best practices for audio and video redaction

Although the same concept and idea applies to audio and video redaction, due to the nature of these mediums, these files require a more intensive, more specialized process, which can greatly benefit from automation.

With audio redaction, automation software can identify pre-determined keywords and pieces of personal or confidential information and remove them from the audio. This becomes exceptionally useful when that audio is also part of a video file.

As mentioned before, video presents a huge time commitment: a five-minute video rolling at 30 frames per second requires redacting 9,000 frames. With automation software, legal teams can set their desired redaction needs, and AI can perform this tedious task in a matter of minutes while still maintaining a clear redaction log.

Using Veritone Redact for automated redaction

With Veritone Redact and Redact Managed Service, legal firms can save time and money while operating at a higher speed, efficiency, and accuracy. Thanks to our proprietary aiWARE platform, the reduction process can be performed in a matter of minutes as opposed to days. Plus, users still maintain total visibility and control—with Redact, it's easy to input which pieces of information need to be redacted, and the review process is just as clear and straightforward.

Check back for our next chapter for more information on automated redaction with AI.

Conclusion

Thanks again for joining us for our third chapter of this AI redaction series. We've discussed what types of information typically need to be redacted from legal data, the pitfalls of manual redaction, the best practices for automated redaction, and how AI-powered tools and services like Veritone Redact and Redact Managed Services can help improve legal teams' speed and accuracy. Join us for Chapter Four, where we'll dive deeper into automated redaction using artificial intelligence.

If you or your legal team are interested in AI-powered automated redaction software or redaction services, one of our Veritone team members can help you learn more about our offerings.

Redaction in the Digital Age: Everything You Need to Know

Redaction in the Digital Age: Everything You Need to Know

How Automated Redaction (AI) Software and Services Work

Welcome back to our series on AI redaction. In our previous chapters, we've discussed the unique challenges facing redaction in the digital age, redacting legal documents using artificial intelligence, and the best practices for redaction. In this chapter, we'll dive into AI-powered redaction and its impact on redaction software.

Summary

- What is automated redaction (AI)?
- How does automated redaction software like Veritone Redact and Redact Managed Service work?
- How can this software help accelerate a workflow without sacrificing accuracy?

Public safety and justice agencies handle massive amounts of sensitive data when dealing with media evidence. Before the advent of automated redaction software, redacting audio and video evidence was a time-consuming, tedious process. With AI redaction and redaction software, however, this once-laborious process becomes much more streamlined and efficient, allowing legal teams law enforcement, public safety, and justice agencies to keep witnesses and sensitive information safe and protected.

What is automated redaction using AI?

In past chapters, we've covered the types of personally identifiable information (PII) that needs to be redacted and the different types of files, such as documents, video, and audio data, that could hold this information.

While each of these mediums presents different challenges, the most time-consuming is data involving audio and video. But, instead of going through a piece of video evidence frame-by-frame, AI-powered redaction uses artificial intelligence to automate the redaction process.

In automating the redaction process, redaction software can help ensure that sensitive information embedded in audio or video evidence, like security or body-cam footage, is managed in a way that protects the privacy of individuals.

One of the main benefits of using automated redaction software is the immense savings in time, which allows police departments, justice agencies, and legal teams to focus their resources on their other duties, instead of keeping personnel trapped at a desk pouring over evidence. Since personnel needs to be paid, saving time also saves these organizations money. In addition, using AI to accelerate the redaction process removes the human element of error, improving the accuracy of evidence redaction and guaranteeing sensitive information is protected.

Instead of manually pixellating, cutting, or blacking out PII like in the past, automated redaction software allows a user to more easily select things like faces, license plates, names, and other PII which the software then tracks. For example, rather than needing to blur a face in every single frame, a user would simply select the face once and allow the software to obscure that face for the rest of the video.

That being said, not all AI redaction software can keep up with the intense demands and compliance regulations that law enforcement and legal teams need. Fortunately, there are certain products and services, like Veritone Redact and Redact Managed Service, that can.

How Veritone Redact and Redact Managed Service work

Veritone Redact is a cloud-based application that automates obscuring sensitive imagery or audio content in media evidence. This software (and sister service, Redact Managed Service, which runs on the same software) is capable of automatically identifying PII, like heads, license plates, and laptops, and displaying the results in chronological order. Users are also able to independently select PII to obscure, like ID cards or officer notebooks, and have the option to let Veritone Redact track the obscured item in the rest of the video.

Additionally, users can define a redacted zone manually and follow that zone with their cursor while the video plays, redacting the area their cursor follows. Of course, the keystone of Veritone Redact is its ability to redact detected and user-defined objects quickly—saving up to 90% of the time manual redaction would normally take. Because Veritone Redact automatically identifies PII, it is capable of catching sensitive information to redact that a human might have missed.

Imagine being tasked with redacting sensitive information in a video file being used as evidence in a criminal investigation. Odds are, this video is of a crime, and it could include sensitive information that isn't relevant to that investigation.

For example, say the video evidence in question is of a man being assaulted in his home while preparing his taxes. Obviously, the victim's tax information isn't relevant to the fact that his home was broken into and he was violently attacked—this is information that should be redacted.

The AI platform at the core of Veritone Redact, aiWARE, is capable of identifying the heads of everyone on video, the computer screen the victim was preparing his taxes on, and any sensitive desk he might have had on his desk at the time of the attack without user input. It will then obscure that imagery, keeping the victim's PII private and safe.

Veritone Redact also enables legal and law enforcement teams to search audio files and documents to find information while keeping a redaction log, maintaining compliance with other laws and regulations, and fulfilling chain of custody requirements.

Applications of Veritone Redact

While Veritone Redact was developed for use by law enforcement, justice agencies, and legal practices specifically, it has many other applications across other industries:

- **B2C Businesses:** Using the audio redaction capabilities of Veritone Redact, a customer service line for a financial institution, like a bank or credit union, can use recordings of customer calls for training purposes without revealing the customer's sensitive information, like their name, address, and social security number.
- **Education:** An online teacher might lean on Veritone Redact to protect their students' privacy if that teacher ever uploads a recording of the class session to an online platform.
- **Healthcare:** A childcare or healthcare facility could use the video redaction capabilities of Veritone Redact to protect the identities of children, patients, faculty, and staff during any video examination of that facility.
- **And more**

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about Veritone Redact's AI-powered redaction software and service. Here, we've discussed how Veritone Redact can help streamline the redaction process for media evidence of several varieties and how this tool can increase the accuracy of redaction services. We've also described uses for Veritone Redact that lay outside of the law enforcement and justice agency sphere.

In our coming chapters, we'll dive into the ins and outs of video and audio redaction, the unique challenges this medium presents, how it's used across different industries, and more.

If you or your team are interested in AI-powered automated redaction software or redaction services, one of our Veritone team members can help you learn more about our offerings.

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Redaction in the Digital Age: Everything You Need to Know

Accelerate Video Redaction With Artificial Intelligence

Thank you for joining us again for the fifth chapter of our AI Redaction series. Now that we've covered the basics of redaction, redacting documents with AI, the best practices for redaction and how to implement them, and how automated redaction software and services work, we turn our attention to the ins and outs of video redaction.

Summary

- What challenges does video redaction present?
- Which industries need to redact confidential information from video footage?
- How can AI-powered redaction software help solve the challenges of video redaction?

Video editing for any purpose is a time-intensive process—even a 30-second social media video could take hours to put together. Redacting confidential information and personally identifiable information (PII) from video evidence and video surveillance takes even more time.

However, in order to keep the PII of innocent bystanders and law enforcement personnel safe, video redaction is crucial. AI-powered video redaction software starts to remove the human element, taking the brunt of the workload in regard to video redaction, and freeing up resources for law enforcement and justice agencies.

The challenges of video redaction

The average video contains 30 individual frames per second of video footage, and when manually redacting PII from video evidence, law enforcement personnel and members of justice agencies have to edit videos frame-by-frame. A 30-second video could contain as many as 900 frames or more, and an experienced technician could take as many as eight hours or more to redact PII in a 10-minute video clip.

When a human technician redacts video evidence, you introduce the element of human error; what if the technician misses an innocent bystander's face in the background, or a license plate, or a badge number? Someone's privacy, or even safety, could be at risk.

Unfortunately, not all video evidence that needs redaction is pleasant to look at. If a human technician has to redact gory or disturbing video evidence, like footage of a violent crime, repeatedly viewing such traumatic images could have a negative effect on that technician's mental health and quality of life.

AI-assisted video redaction exists to remedy these issues in a plethora of ways. It can accelerate the video redaction process, saving up to 90% of the time it would take to manually redact video evidence. AI-powered video redaction software can reduce the mental strain on human technicians, catching PII they might have missed or redacting PII from graphic content that might take a toll on an individual's mental health.

Video redaction in different industries

Video redaction is used frequently by law enforcement agencies, in order to prepare video evidence for viewing by different populations—for use by news agencies or as evidence in the courtroom. In either case, it is imperative that this video evidence be devoid of any PII that isn't related to the focus of the evidence. Bystanders' faces and license plates need to be removed, as well as any other information that could be used to identify a witness.

Security agencies and legal entities, who generally prepare and submit video evidence for purposes similar to law enforcement, have similar responsibilities to preserve the safety of PII. Maintaining confidentiality of sensitive information is also of the utmost importance, and redacting video evidence can also help avoid legal liability.

Legal teams may also have to compile and redact data to provide the correct information to fulfill a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Data is redacted in these types of requests in order to protect personal privacy, maintain confidentiality, ensure compliance with the law, and preserve the integrity of the legal process. As we detail in Chapter 2 of our blog, legal documents fall under a specific set of redaction constraints.

Types of information commonly redacted:

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

- Names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, social security or driver's license numbers, medical or financial information, and more

Confidential or proprietary information

- Financial information, domain names, trade secrets, copyrights, ideas, techniques, inventions, and more

Financial information

- Financial transactions or statements, bank account or credit card numbers, credit ratings, payment histories, and more

Medical or personal health information

- Medical history, treatments, conditions, insurance information, and more

Information related to ongoing legal proceedings

- Ongoing litigation or settlement negotiations, information that could be prejudicial to the outcome of a legal case

Sensitive personal information

- Information about an individual's sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or political disposition

Children's information

- Information, such as names and addresses, of minors

Video redaction software and tools

Video redaction software can speed up the redaction process by a significant margin. Veritone Redact automates the video redaction process by automatically tracking sensitive imagery and detecting relevant items such as heads, license plates, officer notepads, and laptops. This functionality all but eliminates the need for a human technician during this tedious portion of the redaction process, meaning nobody has to take on the mental burden of obscuring the faces in a video of a violent crime or other traumatic incidents.

If an individual user needs to redact data not automatically detected by the aiWARE platform at the core of Veriton Redact, that user has the option to manually define objects to obscure. Veritone React will then allow the user to use their cursor to follow that item throughout the video or opt to let the AI-powered redaction software track the defined field through the rest of the video.

Unlike many AI-powered video editing tools available, Veritone Redact is developed specifically for use by public safety and justice agencies, meaning it comes equipped with functionality to aid in chain of custody requirements, collaboration between users, and maintaining audit logs of all actions taken.

In addition, Veritone Redact can come as part of Redact Managed Service, a white glove managed service aimed at providing professional support for law enforcement agencies and legal organizations without requiring them to invest in new technology. This service handles maintaining, monitoring, and reporting via its AI-powered redaction software, allowing quick delivery of quality, professionally redacted files to clients. Redact Managed Service also helps with FOIA compliance by quickly making redacted records available, helping build community trust in local law enforcement and legal agencies.

Conclusion

Thank you for continuing to join us for our AI redaction series. Here, we discussed the challenges of video redaction, focussing on how time-consuming the process is and the toll it has the potential to take on the technicians manually obscuring the video. AI-assisted video redaction software can cut the time to redact a video by 90%, which comes out to massive time savings when it can take up to eight hours to redact a single 10-minute video.

We detailed the different industries that might make use of video redaction software, from security to the legal and law enforcement fields, and the different benefits video redaction software offers to each type of organization. In addition, if you need a reminder of the type of information commonly redacted from files, it has been summarized.

Lastly, we outlined the capabilities of AI-powered video redaction software like Veritone Redact and Redact Managed Service, a white-glove managed AI-powered redaction service. In our next chapter, we'll discuss redacting audio files. If you or your team are interested in AI-powered automated redaction software or redaction services, contact a Veritone team member to learn more.

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Redaction in the Digital Age: Everything You Need to Know

Accelerate Audio Redaction With Artificial Intelligence

Chapters ⌄

Thank you for joining us for the final chapter of our AI Redaction series. So far, we've explored AI-powered video redaction, how automated redaction software and services work, the best practices for redaction, redacting documents with AI, and the basics of redaction. For our sixth and final chapter, we take a look at audio redaction.

Summary
- Why audio redaction is necessary
- How information is redacted from audio files
- The best practices for audio redaction
- What information is redacted from audio files
- Challenges presented by audio redaction

Audio redaction is the process of obscuring audio information in audio files. The goal is to safeguard personal information against misuse. Many different agencies, including law enforcement agencies, legal organizations, and healthcare providers have a responsibility to keep private certain personally identifiable information (PII) about the individuals they serve.

Any time there is an audio recording of an individual's PII, voice redaction is necessary to protect any confidential information or to comply with HIPAA law. Because so many different entities have a responsibility to safeguard the sensitive information of the individuals they interact with, audio redaction is of the utmost importance to data protection and maintaining regulatory compliance.

Why is audio redaction necessary?

Any service or entity that records conversations where individuals disclose sensitive information has a responsibility to keep safe such information. In the case of the healthcare sphere, providers, pharmacies, and other entities could face legal consequences for breaching HIPPA privacy regulations whether or not that breach is intentional. Lawyers and other legal organizations are required to maintain their own privacy protection standards.

Financial information, like credit card information used in any day-to-day credit card transaction, has to meet stringent safety and privacy requirements under the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). If ever a user ever has to call their credit card company and verbally verify or disclose any of their credit card information, that information must be protected. Individuals generally trust such professionals to keep their information safe from any nefarious use—a breach in this trust could cause a credit card company or bank to see an exodus of account holders.

How is audio redaction performed?

Manual redaction

Manually editing audio files is a time-consuming process that generally takes two to five minutes per minute of audio edited. This means that a ten-minute 911 call could take almost an hour to process. In many areas, like California, there exists a legal obligation to release records and evidence used in court proceedings within 45 days, but whenever that evidence contains audio information the voice privacy and audio privacy of certain individuals need to be preserved.

If editing a 10-minute audio file could take up to an hour, then it stands to reason an hour of audio evidence might take up to six hours to edit. There's no way around it: audio file redaction takes a long time. That means that in every instance there is a legal need to release audio evidence that contains PII, there is a lot of audio redaction work to be done.

Automated redaction (AI)

One of the most practical redaction solutions is audio redaction software. This software is one of many tools that can aid in secure audio redaction, but the top tier of redaction technology is automated redaction software, like Veritone Redact. AI-powered redaction solutions like Veritone Redact can help technicians locate important words or phrases spoken by persons in audio evidence like 911 calls, in-car video systems, body cam footage, or interview room recordings with a keyword search. Because all audio redaction is transcript-based, users gain added visual support to aid in the accuracy of their speech redaction efforts.

Best practices for audio redaction

For teams feeling bogged down by audio redaction duties, professional audio redaction software can help. When using professional audio redaction software, a user simply needs to input the start and end time of a clip of audio that needs to be redacted, and they can choose to either mute or bleep out that section of audio.

It is also of the utmost importance that agencies follow whichever industry or legal regulations apply to them: HIPPA for healthcare, PCI DSS for any organization that processes credit card transactions, or any of the myriad of legal regulations surrounding the release of evidence used in court proceedings. Failure to adhere to these privacy standards and legal regulations could result in legal or financial consequences, as well as a loss of trust in that particular agency.

Due to the importance of regulatory compliance, frequently reviewing and updating redaction practices to better comply with regulations is another best practice. To further your understanding of the best practices for redaction, review our "Best Practices for Redaction" chapter in our blog series.

What needs to be redacted in audio files?

Several different types of information need to be redacted in audio files in order to maintain the privacy and safety of individuals. The information needing to be redacted generally falls into one of three categories:

- **PII:** Personally Identifiable Information (PII) includes a person's name, address, phone number, email address, social security or driver's license number, medical or financial information, names and ages of children, and more.
- **Confidential Information:** Confidential information includes financial transactions or bank statements, bank account or credit card numbers, credit ratings, payment histories, and more.
- **Sensitive Information:** Sensitive Information includes any information about a person's sexual orientation, religious beliefs or convictions, political disposition, and more.

When redaction is concerned, it is important to note that redacting an audio file is not the same as editing that file. Yes, the end goal of redacting an audio file is to protect information and at the surface that can look like mere editing, but it is important to remember that redacting isn't changing any audio like someone could when editing an audio file. Redacting is the process of omitting sensitive information, and implies that no other changes have been made to the file.

Challenges in audio redaction

Despite its importance, audio redaction can be a challenging process. It can be difficult for a human technician or piece of software to identify every piece of sensitive information—no solution is 100% error-proof. Ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of pre-redacted audio is also important since such important personal information is at stake.

In addition, it can be challenging to maintain the audio quality of the original file which, when dealing with auditory evidence, can prove to be problematic, especially if the same file has to be redacted multiple times. Accuracy can help preserve audio quality in that it can prevent a file from having to be redacted over and over.

Conclusion

Accurate audio redaction is instrumental in preserving the privacy and safety of individuals. By redacting audio files, healthcare organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other legal and financial entities can help preserve the privacy of the individuals they serve, protecting their personal, health, and financial information.

The best practices for audio redaction involve using professional audio redaction software. AI-powered redaction software and services, like Veritone Redact and Redaction Managed Service, can reduce the time redaction takes by 90%. Professional audio redaction software can help by allowing you to search transcripts of files for keywords, aiding in the accuracy of redaction.

In addition, keeping current on and maintaining proper regulatory compliance needs to be a top priority when redacting audio files. The information that law enforcement, legal agencies, financial bodies, and healthcare companies need to protect includes a person's PII, confidential information, and sensitive information, as we've detailed above and covered in more detail in Chapters Two and Five of our blog.

For a refresher on the basics of redaction, feel free to review Chapter One of our blog for a primer on redaction in the digital age.

Thank you for joining us for our blog series on AI-powered redaction. If you or your team are interested in AI-powered automated redaction software or redaction services, one of our Veritone team members can help you learn more about our offerings.

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