

Postmates Delivers Intuitive, Review-Ready Slack Data Exports With the Help of Hanzo Hold



Postmates

Industry

Internet

Location

San Francisco, CA

About

Postmates is transforming the way local goods move around a city by enabling anyone to get any product delivered in under an hour. Available for iPhone, Android and on the web, the on-demand logistics service connects customers with local couriers, who purchase and deliver goods from any restaurant or store in a city, 24/7.

Objective

Postmates—a rapidly growing delivery service—considers the collaboration platform Slack to be a critical component of its business communications. As the importance of Slack has grown, the IT team was concerned by how long it took to search for and export data for internal investigations and ediscovery matters. Rather than having his engineers as a persistent bottleneck, the head of IT at Postmates was determined to find a solution that would allow HR professionals and lawyers to quickly search for, preserve, and collect Slack data themselves in its native format with all of the context available

Key Issues

- Save time searching for Slack data in both public and private channels so as not to delay time-sensitive investigation and litigation matters
- Identify a solution that was intuitive enough that non-technical staff could use it, eliminating the IT bottleneck associated with Slack searches and data exports
- Integrate all aspects of Slack data management into the information governance framework at Postmates, including the existing ediscovery review platform
- Easily produce Slack data in its native format so it is contextual and legally defensible

Approach

Since adopting Hanzo Hold, Postmates has dramatically reduced the time required to search for, preserve, and collect data from Slack for internal investigations and ediscovery requests and they anticipate a significant reduction in time for any future data requests under new data privacy laws. Hanzo Hold has been so easy to use that the Postmates IT team no longer needs to design searches or generate exports which has traditionally been a time consuming project. Postmates is confident that it can find and produce any relevant data very easily with the Hanzo solution without the involvement of other teams or outside sources, saving a significant amount of time and money.

Situation

Postmates is the country's largest on-demand delivery platform, specializing in picking up and delivering whatever its clients need—from restaurant meals, champagne, and sourdough bread starter kits to household quarantining supplies like hand sanitizer and toilet paper. Postmates' network enables its drivers to deliver goods from 600,000 linked merchants to over 80 percent of households across the United States.

This volume of deliveries takes serious collaboration, which is why Postmates has been leveraging Slack as a communication platform since 2016. "It's our core collaboration tool and where we have most of our business conversations," said Sean Joerg, Head of IT for Postmates. "Especially with COVID and the switch to working from home, Slack is how our teams stay in touch. Whether it's for business issues like project updates and real-time troubleshooting or fun activities like virtual events and calls for volunteers, it's all happening on Slack."

Postmates uses both private and public Slack channels to discuss business. Joerg reported that about 20 percent of conversations occur in public channels; the remaining 80 percent is evenly split between private channels and direct messages, one-on-one or involving multiple parties. Postmates has also integrated numerous other apps and services with its Slack, such as Jira for ticket management.

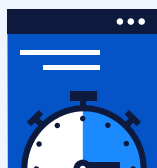
When it comes to managing all of those communications and the organizational information within them, Postmates implemented its standard retention. But the company quickly learned that preserving or collecting information from Slack for use in ediscovery or investigation wasn't going to be straightforward.

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Challenges

Postmates started out using Slack's built-in functionality to export data in JSON files. Joerg noted that Slack wasn't built with ediscovery in mind; its discovery capabilities are "bootstrapped components that were added on after the fact to a system that was designed for something else entirely."

Not surprisingly, he continued, "The JSON export wasn't working for us. It's not the most portable or understandable file type. Suppose you're looking to query the data within Slack or extract any useful information from it for an investigation or a discovery matter. In that case, you have to build a database and run queries against it." And while the IT team at Postmates was fully capable of building those databases, that approach had three significant shortcomings.



Slack Queries Take Too Much Time

The first issue was a familiar one: the IT team at Postmates had too much to do, and not enough time to do it. Building databases to query Slack data "just wasn't the best use of our time," Joerg explained. "The labor-intensive process of building a separate database for every inquiry our HR or legal team had was going to be untenable as a long-term approach."

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The IT Department Created a Bottleneck

It wasn't just a matter of how long it took IT to run queries—that delay also introduced a substantial bottleneck that impacted the business. “Litigation and investigation matters tend to be urgent. We don't want the IT team to be a barrier that's going to prevent HR and legal from taking immediate action in response to a concern,” Joerg explained.

Postmates' goal was to adopt a system that would create the least amount of time and friction to respond to investigations and ediscovery inquiries. “We needed to achieve a level of self-service where our HR and legal teams could start their investigations and run them easily without requiring technical assistance,” he said. Postmates wanted to ensure that it adopted a platform that non-technical employees could use to create their own queries, designate custodians, launch investigations and get the data they need quickly. That wasn't going to happen as long as the company relied on JSON exports to preserve and collect Slack data.



JSON Exports Weren't Review Friendly

Finally, the JSON exports generated from Slack's inherent discovery capabilities weren't remotely ready for review. Joerg noted, “Identifying specific data within an export—like narrowing down a time scale, or focusing on a particular channel, or looking for keywords within that channel—was taking a lot of database work. IT had to manually parse that data down and find the information that our team needed to satisfy the inquiry.” Even after we extracted the information, it still had to be translated into a format that the HR or legal team could easily read and understand, which created delays and IT became a bottleneck to get the data ready for review.

In light of these challenges, Postmates realized that it had reached a level of organizational maturity that demanded a better solution. “We'd achieved a size and status, and a maturation level with our existing policies and procedures, where we needed to have better control of our Slack data,” Joerg said. The emergence of data privacy laws added a layer of complexity and urgency to the issue. “We were asking how we would promptly respond to data requests if we had to continue with this painstaking database-building process. Slack is so intrinsic to how we operate that we couldn't leave it out of our information governance planning.”

Solution

Postmates identified three priorities for its Slack solution:



It needed to quickly ingest Slack data, search through it, and return a result that was ready for review.



The platform needed to be intuitive and accessible to non-technical employees, from lawyers to HR professionals.

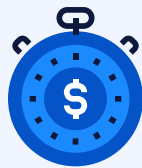


Any solution had to meet Postmates' stringent security requirements.

In its quest for a solution, Postmates first tried one of Hanzo's competitors, but that didn't last long. "I couldn't even tell you who it was," Joerg laughed. "I think we went as far as to sign on with them, but we had issues related to correctly scoping custodian data, along with support issues and quickly realized it wasn't going to work, so we switched to Hanzo."

Benefits of Hanzo

Immediately after adopting Hanzo Hold, Postmates started seeing exceptional results.



Hanzo Hold Saves Time

Joerg noted that before implementing Hanzo Hold, "Any request for data from Slack, or for custodian-level reporting, would have taken days, if not weeks, to answer." Using Slack's internal capabilities required building and maintaining a database and running queries against it to narrow the scope. That enormous investment is gone. "Now, with Hanzo, we can scope an inquiry and set it up within literally minutes—or we can hand it over to a non-technical team to handle themselves. That saves us so much time and keeps us self-sufficient without relying on or paying other teams."

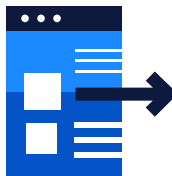
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Hanzo Hold Is Easy to Use and Eliminates the Reliance on Other Teams

Its intuitive, non-technical interface makes Hanzo Hold accessible to lawyers and HR professionals. “People who are accustomed to searching for data in other consumer-facing products can easily pick up on how to use Hanzo Hold,” Joerg explained. Both scoping and targeting searches are straightforward. He continued, “I’ve had a few times where I’ve set up a search and started to second-guess myself. It seems so easy that I’ll ask whether I’m doing it right! And the answer has always been yes, I did it correctly—it really is that easy.”

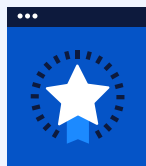
Because so much of the conversation on Postmates’ Slack occurs within private channels, Joerg noted, he’s been particularly pleased to learn how easily Hanzo Hold can access that information. “Before we had Hanzo Hold, it was often hard to be on the outside, looking in and trying to figure out how to query a private channel. We could leverage the discovery API in Slack to run a bunch of queries, but honestly, my engineers’ time was better spent on other things,” he said.



Hanzo Hold Produces Review-Ready Exports

It’s not just Slack searches that are easier with Hanzo Hold: data exports are now painless as well. According to Joerg, “This has been such a valuable benefit for Postmates. The legal team can export data to any standard review tool without calling IT in for assistance. The export ends up being easily viewable, and it’s straightforward to generate.” And exports are complete, including file attachments, so Joerg doesn’t have to worry about losing anything in translation.

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Hanzo Hold Creates Confidence

Since adopting Hanzo Hold, Joerg said, “We’ve experienced a tremendous boost in our confidence, which has correlated with a massive reduction in stress.” That confidence was attributable to two different safety nets. First, he said, “The way Hanzo Hold searches for data, I know that we’re responding to requests accurately—we’re not missing data because of the way we’ve designed or executed a query.”

The second safety net wasn’t about the Hanzo Hold platform itself. Instead, Joerg continued, “I love that this product is backed by a team of extremely responsive, capable support staff. If something isn’t working, we don’t have to bear that concern alone: we have a support team who will chase down the problem, fix it, and get us going again.” This gave his team “the confidence that comes from knowing someone is standing behind you at the ready.”

Joerg concluded, "Slack information governance is a big blind spot for a lot of companies. Anyone who's looking to fill that gap and make sense of the data they're generating within Slack with an easy-to-use product that's backed by a responsive supporting partner couldn't do better than Hanzo."

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Sean Joerg, Head of IT for Postmates.

Is your organization ready to get a handle on its Slack data? Hanzo can help. [Contact us today.](#)

About Hanzo

Hanzo brings context and a greater understanding of enterprise data to corporate legal and compliance teams by providing in-house control over dynamic and collaborative data sources. This control allows organizations to reduce billions of dollars in risk, litigation, and compliance costs and elevate their corporate legal and regulatory compliance responses. Hanzo's software empowers defensible preservation, targeted collection, and efficient review of dynamic content from enterprise collaboration applications and complex websites. Hanzo is SOC 2® Type 2 certified, demonstrating its commitment to data security and serves large corporations worldwide. Learn more at hanzo.co and follow updates on Twitter: [@gethanzo](https://twitter.com/gethanzo) or on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hanzo).

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