The Electronic Discovery Reference Model For UK Litigation Teams

The Electronic Discovery Reference Model (EDRM) provides a structured approach to electronic disclosure in UK litigation. This guide details each stage from identification to production, using a worked commercial dispute to illustrate the process and highlight key considerations for UK legal teams.

e-discovery.uk, Computer Forensics Lab. Published 2026-08-29.
https://e-discovery.uk/library/the-electronic-discovery-reference-model-for-uk-litigation-teams

THEEDRMEXPLAINED · A GUIDE FOR UK LAWYERS The Electronic Discovery Reference Model for UK Litigation Teams Identification to Production, Through a Worked Commercial Dispute COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB DISCOVERY. UK

§ ABOUT THE AUTHOR PREPARED BY COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB E-DISCOVERY TEAM ACPO / NPCC DIGITAL EVIDENCE PRINCIPLES RELATIVIT Y-READY HOSTED REVIEW CPR PART 35 EXPERT REPORT S FULL CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY DOCUMENTATION

§ CONTENTS In this guide

§ 01 · ORIENTATION Executive summary

§ 02 · THEMAP What the EDRM is, and how it maps onto English disclosure INFO. IDENTIFICATION PRESERVATION COLLECTION PROCESSING REVIEW ANALYSIS PRODUCTION PRE GOVERNANCE

§ 03 · THECASE The worked example: Halworth v Brydon SYSTEM / SOURCE WHAT IT HOLD S FIRST-WEEK STATUS

§ 04 · STAGE1 Identification HALWORTHVBRYDON · IDENTIFICATION

§ 05 · STAGE2 Preservation HALWORTHVBRYDON · PRESERVATION

§ 06 · STAGE3 Collection HALWORTHVBRYDON · COLLECTION

§ 07 · STAGE4 Processing: what actually happens to evidence between collection and production THEPRINCIPLETHATMAKESTHEFUNNELDEFENSIBLE HALWORTHVBRYDON · PROCESSING

§ 08 · STAGE5 Review HALWORTHVBRYDON · REVIEW

§ 09 · STAGE6 Analysis HALWORTHVBRYDON · ANALYSIS

§ 10 · STAGE7 Production HALWORTHVBRYDON · PRODUCTION

§ 11 · THE NUMBER S The funnel in numbers: Halworth v Brydon end to end STAGE ITEMS IN ITEMS OUT WHAT CHANGED, AND WHERE THE (ACTIVE) EXCLUDED ITEMS ARE

§ 12 · CROSS - CUTTINGDUTIES Integrity, privilege, data protection and proportionality across the model

§ 13 · WHEREITGOESWRONG Common mistakes and technical limitations Common mistakes across the model Technical limitations to understand

§ 14 · INTERROGATORIES Questions to ask Ask your client Ask your opponent (through the DRD and correspondence) Ask an e Discovery provider

§ 15 · DRAFTING AIDS Suggested wording for instructions PROCESSING PROTOCOL (COREOPER AT IVE PA R AG RAPHS) PRODUCTIONSPECIFIC AT ION (FOR THE DRD) WEEK LY CHECKPOINTREPORTING (PROVIDER INSTRUCTION)

§ 16 · QUICK CONTROL Checklist and red flags The EDRM checkpoint checklist Red flags

§ 17 · ESCALATION & COMMON QUESTIONS When to involve a digital forensic expert Frequently asked questions What actually happens to evidence between collection and production? Is the EDRM binding in England & Wales? Do small cases need all seven stages? Why was only a fraction of the population ever read by a lawyer? Who owns each stage, us or the provider? What happens to the data after the case?

§ 18 · REFERENCE Glossary CAL DRD EDRM Sources and authoritative references DISCLAIMER

§ HOW A SPECIALIST LABORATORY CAN ASSIST Working with Computer Forensics Lab Speak to a forensic examiner, not a salesperson. INSTRUCTTHELAB NEWENQUIRIESEMAILE - DISCOVERY

Questions and answers

What actually happens to evidence between collection and production?

It is expanded, indexed, stripped of system files, de-duplicated, threaded, OCR'd, filtered by date and negotiated terms, prioritised by analytics, read (in part) by lawyers, privilege-checked, redacted where required, and assembled into an ID'd, hash-manifested production, with every excluded item suppressed rather than deleted, every suppression logged and reversible, and volumes reported at each step. In Halworth v Brydon that pipeline turned 2.14 million collected items into 9,650 produced documents without a single item being destroyed, and §§7-11 of this guide walk each step with the numbers.

Is the EDRM binding in England & Wales?

No, it is an industry reference model, not law. The binding framework is PD 57AD or CPR 31/PD 31B (and CPIA in criminal matters). But the model is how methodology is described, quoted and negotiated in practice, and the DRD effectively asks you to document your EDRM, so fluency in it is fluency in the procedure.

Do small cases need all seven stages?

Every case passes through all seven, the question is weight, not existence. A two-custodian tribunal claim still needs a hold, a documented collection, some culling, a review and an orderly production; each stage may be a page of notes rather than a workstream, but skipping one entirely is where small cases go wrong.

Why was only a fraction of the population ever read by a lawyer?

Because reading all of it is neither affordable nor more accurate. The unread remainder is not ignored: it is term- negative or ranked low by validated analytics, sampled statistically, and retained intact. Courts have accepted this architecture since Pyrrho (2016); the defensibility lives in the sampling numbers, which is why the checkpoint reports matter.

Who owns each stage, us or the provider?

Identification and preservation: lawyer-led with client IT. Collection and processing: provider-executed under written lawyer instruction. Review: lawyer-owned. Analysis: shared. Production: provider-executed, lawyer- certified. The certificate signatory owns the whole chain, which is why the per-stage deliverables should land on the lawyer's file, not just the provider's.

What happens to the data after the case?

Disposal, the model's implicit final stage: return or verified destruction of collections, review sets and productions under the provider contract and the client's retention policy, subject to appeal windows and any continuing obligations, with destruction certificates on the file. Agree the terms at instruction, not at archive time.

Source: https://e-discovery.uk/library/the-electronic-discovery-reference-model-for-uk-litigation-teams. Free to read and share with attribution to Computer Forensics Lab, e-discovery.uk.