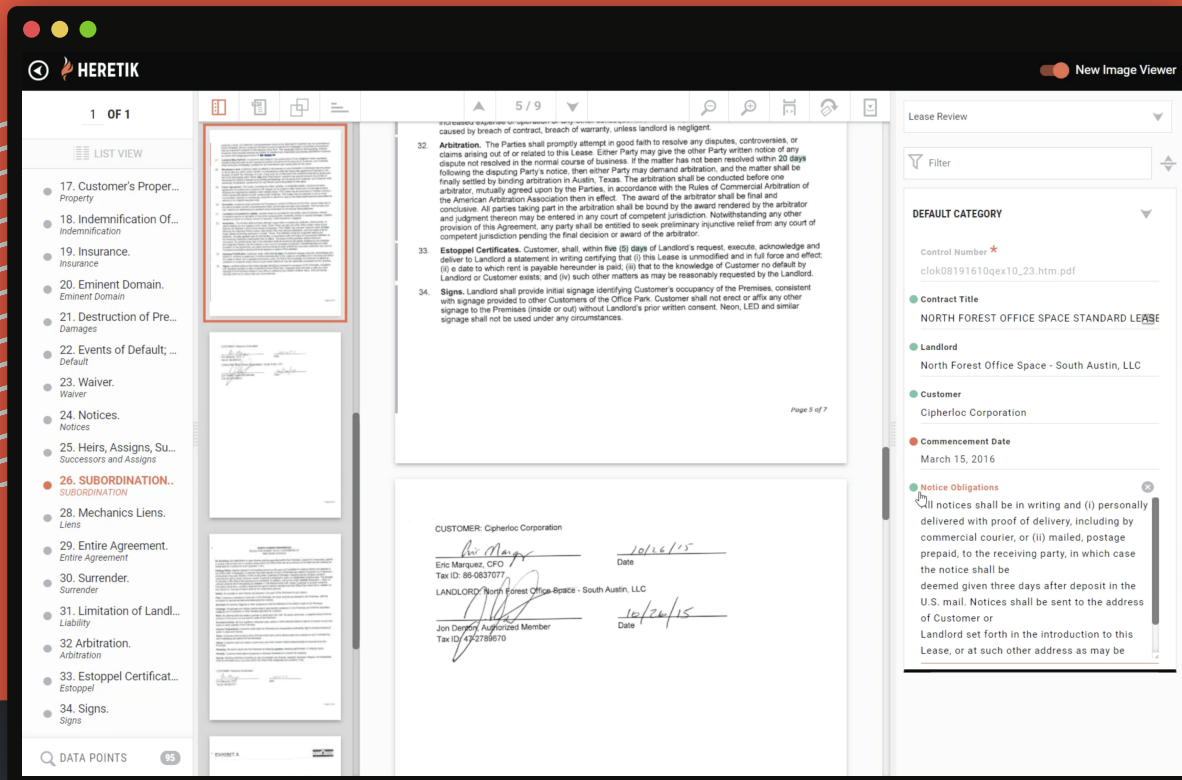oasis ╳ HERETIK ╳ AlixPartners

AlixPartners scales tech-enabled M&A review to new limits with Oasis and Heretik

How Oasis' infrastructure and Heretik contract review technology helped AlixPartners attorneys prioritize **a two million document M&A review in a matter of weeks**.

Authored by Sarah Podella

The urge to merge

In 2021, the global M&A market reached a record-high valuation at approximately **$5.9 trillion USD with over 63,000 transactions**. And while the tech industry was the clear leader in deals done, the financial sector came in second place, making up **12% of all deals** and reaching a 14-year high with a **59% year-on-year increase** in transactions.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, potential mergers or acquisitions between banks would require several months of extremely detailed deal discovery. During the pandemic, loan demand and lending profits were extremely low and there was a lot of uncertainty around risks or liabilities on potential acquiree balance sheets. However, Q3 2021 showed the first real glimpse at the post-pandemic world and with it, bank executives began resuming their aggressive M&A pursuits. Banks are now merging at a rate not seen since the 2008 financial crisis.

In this article, we follow the journey of a global financial institution that recently acquired another bank. After the ink of the deal dried, the acquiring bank found themselves with **over two million new documents that needed to be comprehensively reviewed – and quickly.** Buried in these agreements were new responsibilities, opportunities, and risks that needed to be understood, transferred, and/or amended as soon as possible. A daunting and seemingly impossible project for the bank to manage internally – luckily, they knew just who to call.

Turning to the experts

Having already built a successful and strong rapport with global consulting firm **AlixPartners**, the financial institution reached out to their Risk Analytics team led by Managing Director **Vineet Sehgal**.

With over two decades experience, Sehgal is known and well-respected for leading technology teams in financial projects of this complexity and scope. While his team has mastered the ability to use a toolbelt of tech to create sophisticated yet flexible workflows for clients, Sehgal says the real secret to their success is their unique philosophy about using technology.

> "We are **not bound by technology**. We start every project first understanding and setting the goals we want to achieve with the input of our client – regardless of how we get there. Then, we go back and figure out the technology, piece-by-piece," says Sehgal. "We are **very good at breaking the process apart** into pieces that we know specific technologies can work really well."

CLICK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **Alix**Partners

After meeting with the financial institution, Sehgal and his team understood the following to be the goals of the initial document review:

— **Organize the document set** to enable a more efficient and targeted review for attorneys. (ex. Prioritize active deal documents, flag multiple contract versions, re-group addendums and amendments, etc.)

— **Understand any and all contracts that are transferable** and what needs to be done to ensure the transfer is compliant and successful.

— **Create and share data visualizations** of key provisions and data points back with the acquiring financial institution.

Once the project goals were set, Sehgal reached out internally to his peer **Charles Cipione**, Managing Director at AlixPartners, who was actively managing key relationships with several technology partners – two of particular interest being infrastructure solutions provider **Oasis** and contract review technology company **Heretik**.

The solid foundation

Oasis is recognized as one of the **most secure** hosting providers in the industry, with over ten cybersecurity and compliance authorizations. Having already successfully executed several eDiscovery projects together, Cipione and Sehgal knew the Oasis infrastructure team led by Senior Solutions Engineer **Matthew King** would be the perfect hosting partner for a contract review project of this size. They also knew King had an existing relationship they could leverage with Heretik's Chief Software Architect and Relativity-guru **David Barnes**, which would allow them more technical support and flexibility with both **Relativity**'s document hosting platform and Heretik's contract review technology along the way.

With an understanding of the client end goals, the three groups – AlixPartners, Oasis, and Heretik – met to align on infrastructure requirements, technical support, communication, ownership, and timelines. The AlixPartner's team set expectations up front about maintaining a flexible workflow with transparent communication and willingness to iterate along the way. King and Barnes both recognized this project as an opportunity to not only stress test their tech and infrastructure, but also collaborate to build new technology solutions for projects of this scale

"A project of this scale comes with many unique challenges. It requires thoughtful, efficient, and methodical infrastructure management," said Barnes. "With Oasis, we were very confident we'd be able to achieve the required metrics."

As the review began, King's Infrastructure team stayed nimble and worked hand-in-hand with Heretik to meet the growing demands of the project. As obstacles arose, they continued working together to add and optimize resources. Knowing the scale of review project, Oasis customized the hardware and optimized each piece for the demands required by the application. King's team spun up addition virtual machines, increased CPU/RAM, and SQL to reach the desired throughput for the project.

"This project had a lot of firsts; at one point we were OCR-ing over one million pages per day," said King. "Meeting the metrics for this project was a challenging one. But we knew between Heretik and Oasis we had to get there. And we did."

Together, the three groups were able to work together and complete the initial review in an unprecedented amount of time. In a matter of a few weeks –

The three groups were able to cull the initial two million documents into 550,000 agreements for priority review – a 73% decrease – and they didn't stop there.

Tech-enabled review turns insight into action

With Oasis' solid custom infrastructure in place, adding the right technologies to automate and execute the initial review was the next critical step. Sehgal's team came up with the following combination to ultimately meet their client's goals:

- **Microsoft Access Database** was used for data visualization for the client review.
- **Brainspace** was used for data visualization for the internal attorney review.
- **Relativity** hosted in **Oasis'** secure environment was used as the document database.

Lastly, **Heretik**'s contract review technology was the final piece used to analyze and prioritize agreements, streamline the review, and create actionable next steps for the attorneys. →

# Seghal credits some of the key Heretik tools used for this review being:

Heretik Analysis – Identified contract types and then auto-segmented them by clause for quick navigation and priority review of active agreements by attorneys.

Heretik OCR *(Optical Character Recognition)* – Scanned documents to capture positional data and created plaintext and PDF-native agreements. Enabled key features for attorneys in the Heretik Contract Viewer (reviewing, searching, editing, coding, etc.)

Heretik Contract Viewer – Helped visualize contracts for attorney review and provided highlights and search for quick navigation to relevant language.

Data Point Extraction – Automated finding thousands of key data points relevant to the review goals.

Document Compare – Allowed attorneys to quickly compare entire contracts and/or clauses at scale to better understand similarities and differences in language.
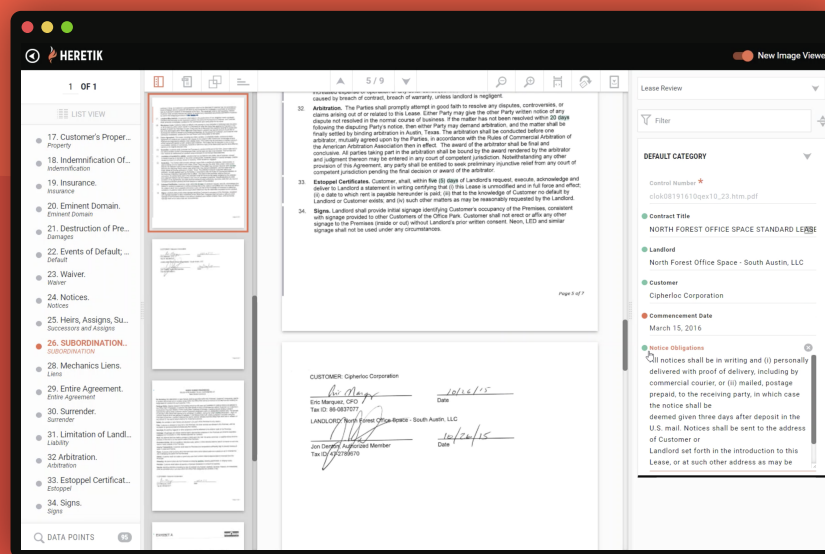
LEARN MORE

549,395
Unique Documents **Analyzed**

33,869
Unique Documents **Classified**

47,079
Unique Documents **Segmented**

113,963
Documents **Compared**

11,939
Unique Documents in **Viewer**

34,764
Unique Documents in **Reporting**

11,939
Data Points **Reviewed**

2,529
Key Data Points **Identified**

The perfect mix of people, process, and technology

What's most impressive about this success story was not the size of the project, the accolades of any of the teams involved, or even the total cost or resource saved (although the results speak for themselves). It was the self-awareness of each group – AlixPartners, Oasis, and Heretik. While each understood their own responsibilities and contributions, they also knew that for mutually beneficial success, they needed to work together.

"Any technology is only as good as the people behind it," said Barnes. "This project presented many unique challenges and it only worked because everyone was collaborative, transparent, and supportive."

"This project was truly the perfect blend of Heretik's software, Oasis' custom infrastructure, and AlixPartners running the project with the client," King said. "We have a very transparent relationship, which has helped us be able to support each other and projects like this successfully."

"Each of these groups had the right technical experience to support this project," Cipione added. "But the ability to harmonize it and work together to wrap technology around our shared goals for the client was the ultimate success."

Now that the initial review is complete, stay tuned for more updates as Oasis and Heretik continue to support AlixPartners and their client in the next phases of this unique project!

Interested in learning more or want to get in touch with the teams?

Check out these resources!

AlixPartners

For more than forty years, AlixPartners has helped businesses around the world respond quickly and decisively to their most critical challenges – circumstances as diverse as urgent performance improvement, accelerated transformation, complex restructuring and risk mitigation. These are the moments when everything is on the line – a sudden shift in the market, an unexpected performance decline, a time-sensitive deal, a fork-in-the-road decision. But it's not what we do that makes a difference, it's how we do it. Tackling situations when time is of the essence is part of our DNA – so we adopt an action-oriented approach at all times. We work in small, highly qualified teams with specific industry and functional expertise, and we operate at pace, moving quickly from analysis to implementation. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our clients until the job is done, and only measure our success in terms of the results we deliver. Our approach enables us to help our clients confront and overcome truly future-defining challenges. We partner with you to make the right decisions and take the right actions. And we are right by your side. When it really matters.

GET IN TOUCH

oasis

Oasis specializes in custom cloud solutions for complex, mission-critical workloads. Hyper-focused on performance and compliance, Oasis builds and manages custom private clouds that integrate high-performance hardware, network infrastructure, cybersecurity, disaster recovery, and a variety of managed services to provide a comprehensive cloud solution. The international company is headquartered in Los Angeles and London with distributed operations in five countries.

GET IN TOUCH

HERETIK

Heretik is a lightweight contract review application that seamlessly integrates into existing contract management tools. Our solution enables teams to transform existing agreements into structured, actionable data to efficiently handle all types of corporate transaction and regulatory response use cases, enhancing best practices with minimal disruption.

From inception, we've prioritized cutting-edge machine learning technology along with workflow capabilities to allow everyone within an organization to take immediate action on existing contract data. Whether managing massive corporate transactions, extracting critical data in global lease agreements, or comparing messy bespoke contracts, our solution reduces days or weeks of work to minutes. The results? More accurate bids, better win rates, larger capacity to manage contracts, and expanded footprints within key accounts.

GET IN TOUCH