

White Paper

**A Complete COTS Solution for
Processing FOIA Requests**

Version 6.1



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April 2008

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1. PROBLEM

For many federal agencies, dealing with FOIA requests and preparing federally mandated reports is largely a labor- and paper-intensive process, with little or no up-to-date automated support. To be able to comply with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, eFOIA requirements, E.O. 13,392, and the Open Government Act of 2007, agencies need a solution that is designed specifically to manage FOIA requests and appeals; rapidly generate the new mandatory reports, standardize and improve agency responsiveness and ability to meet statutory deadlines; communicate electronically with requestors; enable requestors to track the progress of their requests on the Internet; provide complete, consistent and reliable data; automate fees calculations and invoicing, and management/administrative documents and statistics; and reduce time, labor, cost and paperwork. The following is a list of problems found common to each agency looking to implement an eFOIA solution:

- Existing Tracking and Reporting system data resides in a hodge-podge of databases with limited interoperability.
- Data entry is time consuming and awkward resulting in poor and inconsistent data integrity.
- Existing systems do not provide any redaction capability.
- Limited search and sort capabilities.
- System is not available to remote offices.
- Inability to generate the Annual FOIA Report.

Lacking an effective electronic FOIA system, the processing of requests creates vast amounts of paper copies for reviewing, redacting, revising, delivery to requestors, and office retention. This mode of operation costs agencies thousands of dollars to manually process requests and wastes the time and skills of staff in shepherding paper documents, when it could be spent on much higher-level work.

A completely manual or partially automated system usually does not have a central repository where all documents for a particular request can be readily accessed. With distributed processing across field offices or otherwise geographically distributed locations, there is usually no standardized process for responses, content and style that makes use of templates to eliminate duplicative writing and keyboarding. The lack of a standardized, agency-wide, web based standardized system means that FOIA Officers and their staff cannot rapidly and efficiently share information and documents. This situation also increases maintenance cost and training requirements. Tracking the status of a case in progress, controlling and directing workflow, redirecting priorities, retrieving responsive documents, reducing backlogs, and manually preparing management and the annual report are but a few more obstacles of the paper/manual process.

Additionally agencies are facing significant litigation challenges resulting from appeals and delays in responding to requests which can not be effectively tracked using a manual system. As the number of requests increases often time's more extensive processing time is required for information coupled with increased pressure from the Congress, the media and the public for faster responses without a concomitant increase in human resources. Agencies are looking for a uniform system that will provide a complete automated system for tracking requests agency-wide and in a consistent manner.

2. SOLUTION:



FOIAXpress™ is the most comprehensive, Web-based, COTS application available for processing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act (PA) requests. It is designed specifically to automate FOIA and PA case processing for public requests for information in records under the control of a government agency. The application is currently in use by 50 government agencies, and is rapidly gaining recognition across the federal government as the best value solution.

This powerful, feature-rich application has been upgraded to make it easier for agencies to automate their FOIA business processes, be in compliance with e-FOIA regulations including the Open Government Act of 2007, and transform the work of FOIA processing from paper, manual labor and needlessly repetitive tasks to automated processes commanded by menus and icons.

FOIAXpress™ electronically stores, retrieves, redacts, and prints documents for delivery to FOIA requesters. It also keeps track of FOIA processing statistics and fees, and generates reports on the number, types, and disposition of FOIA requests processed, as required by the U.S. Department of Justice. Requests can also be submitted and tracked over the Internet using the FOIAXpress Public Access Link (PAL).

FOIAXPRESS™ VERSION 6.1: “ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, ACCELERATES COMPLIANCE”

All of the new features, functions and reporting enhancements in FOIAXpress™ version 6.1 incorporate a number of suggestions made by a number of our customers, and requirements identified by Executive Order 13,392, and the Open Government Act of 2007. FOIAXpress™ version 6.1 has been designed with you, our FOIA customer, in mind to help you process requests under the FOIA in an efficient and appropriate manner, and to achieve tangible, measurable improvements in FOIA processing.

What's New

- Microsoft .NET (dot net) Platform Support
- Simplified Installation with zero foot print on the desktop
- Improved security features for FDCC compliance
- Expanded Annual Report to include new Open Government Act of 2007 requirements
- Revamped 20-day clock
- Additional administrative features
- New features in Request module
- New features in File cabinet (document management)
- Find And Redact and other review function enhancements
- New features in Custom Reports and Audit Reports

New Technology

AINS has taken a major undertaking with the release of FOIAXpress™ version 6.0 in moving to .NET technology which will provide substantial benefit in improving the performance of our product. Improvements that will be realized by moving to .NET technology include but are not limited to:

- » Scalability Provides platform for future technology
- » Maintainability Integrates disparate computing environments
- » Reliability Protects existing investments
- » Interoperability With existing applications
- » Integration With legacy systems
- » Security Component Architecture

In addition to the robust features and functionality that currently exists, FOIAXpress™ version 6.1 provides advanced features and functionality needed today by FOIA Officers to promote accessibility, accountability, and openness in Government. FOIAXpress™ version 6.1 also provides compliance with the decade-old E-FOIA amendments, which call for agencies to electronically receive and respond to FOIA requests.

Administrative enhancements that have been added include:

Sections	New Features/Functions
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Application Security is enhanced using AES encryption. ● Passwords have been extended to twelve characters. ● Uses SSL and TLS technology.
Configuration	<p><u>General > Document</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ability to configure the annotation text and configure the header and footer section of documents. ● The 20-day clock has been updated in accordance with the requirements stated in the Open Government Act of 2007.
Correspondence Templates	<p><u>Email Templates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Email templates are now designated as internal and external to segregate the correspondence with requesters and internal correspondence requesting for documents.
Custom Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Custom fields have been added to the request, requester, document and electronic reading room modules. ● Ability to customize the type of fields (data types, default values etc.). ● Ability to create multiple tabs with custom fields. ● Custom fields have been added to the search interface to make searching records more effective.

End-User enhancements that have been added include:

Sections	New Features/Functions
Home	<p><u>Preferences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to select more than one exemption code for redactions as your default preference. This will save time when redacting large number of documents.
Requests	<p><u>Requester</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While creating a new requester, if the requester is recorded for bad debts with the agency, system will automatically check/select “delinquent” • When creating a request, users now have the ability to create folder owner information. <p><u>Create/view Cases</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to link up requests with multiple cases. • View documents in Case Folder: Users now have the ability to view which documents were added to which sub request. • Another level was added in the document tree view to represent the sub request. • Notes can now be viewed in alphabetic order • The alerts pertaining to each case can be viewed in alphabetic order to enhance the readability. <p><u>Appeals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal types are no longer hard coded and can be configured in the miscellaneous fields form the admin section. • Users can add or edit the reference field for Appeal request type even after saving the request <p><u>Search Screen</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custom fields have been added to the search screen. • Folder owner filter has been added to enable search by folder owners <p><u>Request for Documents</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users now have the feature to receive a read receipt whenever they email a request for documents • The ability to mail/send reminders to the program office has been added.

Add Documents

- While adding the documents to the case folder/review log, we have added the feature to select and add multiple documents simultaneously to the case folder/review log

Deliver Documents

- You can now deliver documents or correspondence to multiple email addresses.

Final Actions

- Improved consistency throughout all the reports.

File Cabinet

Document Management

- Search and Redact:
 - Users now have the ability to search for words or phrases on a page, set of pages or in an entire documents.
 - Reviewers now have the ability to redact or highlight text by individual word, phrase, paragraph, line, page or use "Find And Redact" feature to search and redact multiple occurrences of keywords (words/phrases/patterns) across an entire document set of documents (or case folder).
 - Ability to create a "Find and Redact" criteria list, add and delete items from the list, import a list, cut and paste a list and user defined preferences.
 - Ability to search for data type formats (patterns), i.e. SSN, Telephone numbers, Employer Identification Numbers (EIN), and Credit Card numbers. (Credit Card number formats include Visa, American Express, Master Card, Discover) and automatically redact such patterns.
 - Ability to define custom patterns.
 - Search and automatic redaction of email addresses.
 - Redact using region identification on the pages. Allows region based redaction criteria templates.
 - Ability to define codes per word or phrase to be automatically redacted along with the marked words and phrases.
 - Ability to specify colors to be applied to "Find And Redact" redactions or markups.
 - Ability to place code on redacted layer, as a default, or on margin on side as an option.
 - Ability to refine documents that have gone through one round of search and perform an additional search of words on the same document, and the ability to undo a change, without loss of work.
 - Save the Search & Redact criteria and apply it to different documents one by one or by set of documents, real time or in background.
 - Convert markings to redactions on a document.
 - Ability to view pages as thumbnails and mark for deletion in thumbnails image view.

Full Text Search

- Simplified search function when performing full text search. The search directly highlights the pages matching criteria as well as points to the text selected.

Page Properties

- Improved OCR text for the page.
- Displays Image formation (detailed) such as image size, resolution, compression, OCR status, format, etc.

Importing Pages

- Automatically enables TIF conversion of supported non TIF documents. Makes use of Microsoft office imaging driver to convert documents into TIF format.
- New User Interface which is easy to use and requires fewer mouse clicks to perform the action.

Document Tree structure

- Another level has been added in the document tree view to represent the sub request.
- Ability to open multiple folders at a time in the document tree.

Saving Documents

- Ability has been added to save individual pages in PDF, TIF, PNG, or JPEG.

Redactions

- Position and placement of the exemption codes on the redaction box can be changed (i.e. top, middle, and bottom and left, center, right).
- We have added an option to choose text color for redactions
- The text field for redaction comments has been increased to one thousand characters
- You can now configure multiple exemptions as your default codes. This is especially useful when redacting large documents with similar or common exemptions
- You can now hide or view codes when redacting documents
- You can now hide or view codes when printing/saving documents

Annotations

- We have increased the text field for Annotation to 500 characters
- Users can now set the font size and style for the annotation and page numbers.
- Users now have the ability to display annotation text as headers and footers.
- Users have the ability to select the text justification, font and size.

Page Numbering

- Font size can be set for page numbers.
- Users now have the ability to configure page numbering by document
- User can specify the position of page numbers on the pages when printing or saving the document to disk

Reports

General

- You now have the ability to customize the header and footer in reports. You can change the alignment, size and font style of the text you want to print as **annotation** and **page numbers** in your reports
- All reports are included with folder owner information. This appears as a selectable field as well as a filter in generating reports.

Custom Report

- Now when you generate custom reports based on the requests or any criteria, the information of the linked/referenced cases will also be included.
- Custom reports now give you the enhanced flexibility to search on any custom field that has been created using the attributes of that particular field such as (text box, drop down list, default values, grouping, length of the field, etc.).
- In **Request For Documents (RFD) > Filter By >** new field named "Open RFD" is added to generate report based on request for document which is still open
- In **Request For Documents > Select Fields > status of the case, description, comments** fields have been added to enhance the quality and readability of the report.
- In **Request For Documents > Select Fields > Requested Date** is changed to Referral Date
- In **Request For Documents > Sort By > Requested Date** is changed to Referral Date
- You can now generate detailed Request Report which includes **Request id, Requester Name** and **Correspondence Information**.

Audit Reports

- Apart from recording users' successful login information, you can now store the information of failed login attempts into the system for up to two months. This feature meets the baseline security requirements of information assurance policies. You can also generate audit reports with this criterion.

Annual Report

- Now includes Section XII items a through g including the statistical reports required by DOJ in item f.
- Includes new reporting requirements in Section VII to include:
 - The median number of days taken by the agency to process different types of requests based on the date on which the request were received by the

agency;

- The average number of days for the agency to respond to a request beginning on the date on which the request was received by the agency,
- The median number of days for the agency to respond to such requests,
- The range in number of days for the agency to respond to such requests;
 - based on the number of business days that have elapsed since each request was originally received by the agency the number of requests for records to which the agency has responded with a determination within a period up to and including 20 days, and in 20-day increments up to and including 200 days;
 - the number of requests for records to which the agency has responded with a determination within a period greater than 200 days and less than 301 days;
 - the number of requests for records to which the agency has responded with a determination within a period greater than 300 days and less than 401 days; and
 - the number of requests for records to which the agency has responded with a determination within a period greater than 400 days;
- The average number of days for the agency to provide the granted information beginning on the date on which the request was originally filed, the median number of days for the agency to provide the granted information, and the range in number of days for the agency to provide the granted information;
- The median and average number of days for the agency to respond to administrative appeals based on the date on which the appeals originally were received by the agency, the highest number of business days taken by the agency to respond to an administrative appeal, and the lowest number of business days taken by the agency to respond to an administrative appeal;
- Data on the 10 active requests with the earliest filing dates pending at each agency, including the amount of time that has elapsed since each request was originally received by the agency;
- Data on the 10 active administrative appeals with the earliest filing dates pending before the agency as of September 30 of the preceding year, including the number of business days that have elapsed since the requests were originally received by the agency;
- The number of expedited review requests that are granted and denied, the average and median number of days for adjudicating expedited review requests, and the number adjudicated within the required 10 days;
- The number of fee waiver requests that are granted and denied, and the average and median number of days for adjudicating fee waiver determinations;

Out-of-the-Box eFOIA Tracking, Monitoring, and Management Features and Functionality

FOIAXpress™ is the most complete eFOIA COTS solution for receiving and processing FOIA/PA, appeals and other type of requests on the market. FOIAXpress™ manages workflow from initial scanning of a request letter to completion of case processing, tracking and reporting workflow statistics, integrated email and other correspondence, and fee calculation and invoice generation and tracking. FOIAXpress™ Public Access Link (PAL) allows requesters to submit requests, track case status, receive fee/waiver information, receive email and other correspondence pertaining to the request, and download documents from the Internet. FOIAXpress was designed specifically for FOIA/PA request and case management.

FOIAXpress™ is a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) web-based application that provides compliance with e-FOIA regulations through a powerful application that will transform the FOIA experience from a cumbersome, manual labor to an automated, electronic process. FOIAXpress™ provides FOIA Officers with a state-of-the-art tool for keeping track of FOIA processing statistics and fees, and generating reports on the number, types, and nature of FOIA requests processed, as required by the US Department of Justice. The following provides a breakdown of the Out-of-the-Box features contained within FOIAXpress™.

FOIAXpress 6.x - Features & Functions	
Runs On	Request for Documents
SQL, Oracle & MSDE	Electronically request documents from program offices, institutes, departments, etc.
Development and Design	Send correspondence with request
Web Based	Attach request letter to request for documents
508 complaint	Set due dates for request for documents responses
- Integrated with JAWS	Set automatic alerts (reminders) of due dates
- Keystroke Shortcuts	Track entire history of request for documents
Easy Integration	Generate ad hoc reports
Hummingbird, Documentum and other DM/RM systems	Document Management
System Configuration	Add and delete documents to DM
Set target date from received screened and assigned	Full-text search (including images)
Calculate target date using business or calendar days	Keyword search
Set default processing time	Attach and scan documents
Fiscal year configuration	Conversion tool
Security	Image tools
Password protection	- Zoom in & out
Controlled login attempts	- Best fit, fit to width, fit to height, actual size, rotate left-right
Application timeout	- Deskw
Single sign on available	- Page navigation (first, last, next, previous, and go to)
Define features tracked for audit	Redaction Tool

Archive/purge audit trails	Rectangle and polygon tools
Audit trial ad hoc reports	Apply, modify and delete redaction codes
System / File cabinet / Case privileges	View and print as opaque, transparent or translucent
Parent / Child Relationship	Add and view comments
Control Configuration Management by users or groups	Add, edit and delete bgcolor and forecolor
Remove Icons from view of unauthorized users or control access to each file cabinet type	Format font size and style
Regulate classified / unclassified documents	Move redaction comments anywhere on page
Control access to request types by users or groups	Redact page/document in full
Assignments to unauthorized users restricted	Annotations, page numbers
Custom Fields	Search & Redact Predetermined Content
Three requester custom fields	Create, modify and delete multiple layers of "Burned in" redactions
Five request custom fields	
Five document custom fields	Reports
Five electronic reading room custom fields	Export all report types (Excel, Word, CSV, HTML)
Mark custom fields as "Required"	Save, name, retrieve and modify searches
Attribute searches on custom fields	Saved reports
Generate reports using custom fields attributes	- Private reports per user
Request / Requester Types	- Share reports with individual users or groups
Unlimited agency-defined request and requester types	Annual Compliance Reports
Track all required types for annual compliance (FOIA, FOIA/PA, Appeals, etc.)	Standard (cover page version)
Track request types not reported for annual compliance (PA, Congressional, Whistle Blowers, etc.)	Standard by region
Custom case format number for each request type	Standard with detail by agency, region and
Fees & Invoicing	DD Form 2564
Define agency fee rates	Custom Reports - Ad hoc reports
Define fee incurral rules	Request reports
Automatic calculation of figures	Requester reports
Unlimited fee item creation	User reports
Prepare cost estimations	Request for documents reports
Fee waiver tracking and alerts	Billing Reports
Custom invoice annotation	Bad debtors
Create multiple invoices (standard and/or DD 2086)	Pending fees

Payment, refund and balance tracking	Case - processed cost - fees
All fees tracked for annual compliance reporting	Invoice details report
Correspondence Templates	Request Management Reports
Word, WordPerfect and RTF correspondence editor (provides word processing features & functions spell check, track changes, insert comments, etc.)	Historical reports
Merge fields automatically populated with case	Request Status reports
Requester templates (corresponding with requester)	Volume Reports
Memo templates (internal agency usage)	Final Action Report
Send and receive correspondence to and from a case	Use exemption codes to generate reports
All correspondence sent and received tracked in respective	Document Reports
View, modify and delete correspondence from case folder	Document Case Reports
Electronic signature integration with ApproveIt	Document Inventory report
Help Options	Search Features
Online searches (full-text and index)	Full-text search (including images) in DM
Download user manual from application	Full-text duplicate request search
Training movie within application	Attribute searches
Technical / User Support desk	E-mail Notifications
Requester Tracking	Automatic assignment notification
Track all requester metadata	E-mail invoice
Associate requester with category (commercial, private individual, educational / non-scientific)	E-mail correspondence
Requester history in one click	E-mail request for documents
- View all requests for requester regardless of status	E-mail delivery of responsive documents
- "View only" snapshot of previous requests details	
- View outstanding balance of each request	Workflow Automation
Request Tracking	"Perform Next Action" button evaluates status of displays:
Track all request metadata	- Next logical workflow action
Search and view duplicate requests	- All other permissible workflow actions
Search and view similar requests	Remote Review
Track multi-track type (simple, complex, expedite)	Electronically send documents for review
Billing and shipping information	Manage each review independently
Track case priority (low, normal, high)	Send documents in PDF, TIF, or ADX format

Amount requester willing to pay (relates to fee alerts)	Password protect classified/sensitive documents
Track third party contact information (i.e.; attorney, PI, on	Create your own status table
Track single or multiple requested items	
Track review status of request	
Attach and scan softcopy of documentation into case folder (i.e.; request letter, expedite, fee waiver documentation)	
Action history tracked for each request	
Create alerts (reminders) to perform specific tasks	
Track notes by user, date, time and action	
View all correspondence sent or received for request	
View all responsive documents	
View screen capture of delivery package	
View all associated appeals from original case folder	

FOIAXpress Open Architecture

As with all AINS COTS products, FOIAXpress is designed as modular, open architecture, ready for custom configuration and expansion as the client's needs change and expand. AINS has developed a single graphic interface for all of the FOIA tasks, integrated with Documentum, Hummingbird, OpenText, SharePoint or standalone, and using Oracle or MS SQL Server as the database. Figure 1 presents a simplified view of the FOIAXpress architecture.

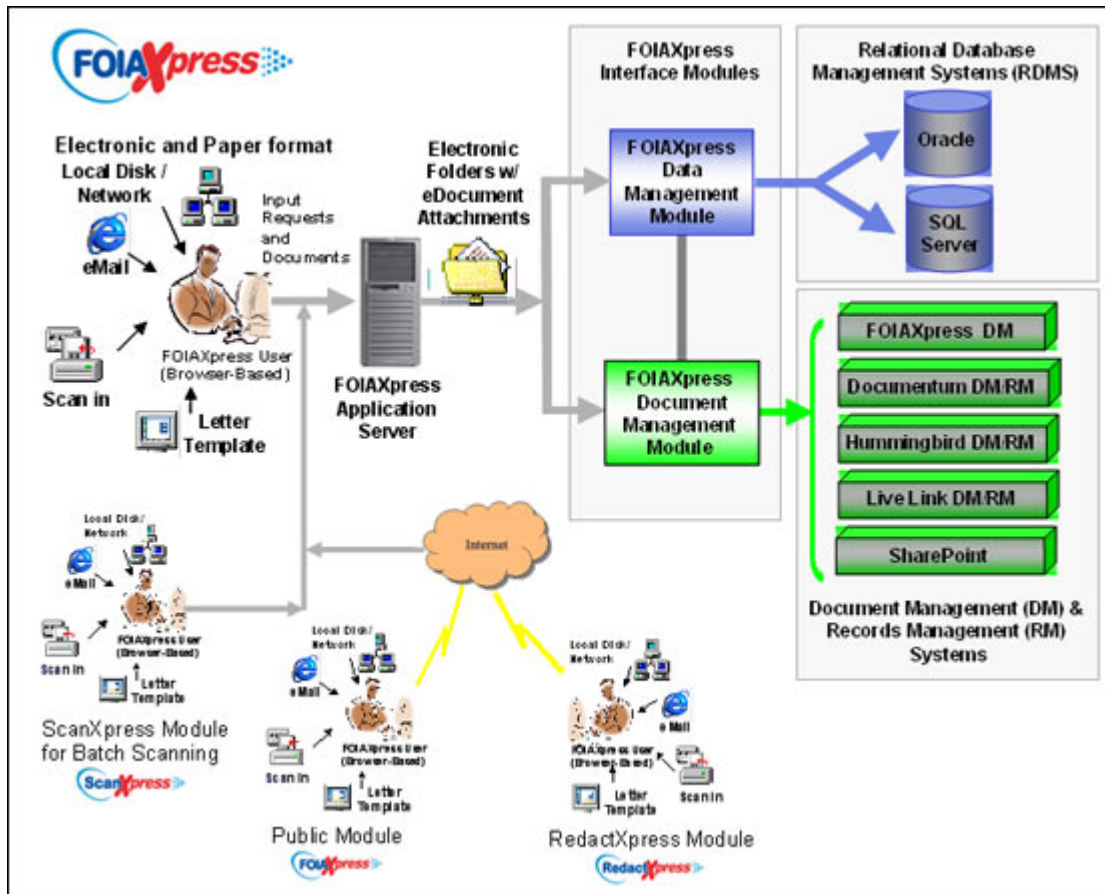


Figure 1. FOIAXpress Open Architecture

Build or Buy?

Some agencies are considering building a system from scratch which could take years and cost millions of dollars; others are seeking integrated COTS solutions in the marketplace at much less cost. The answer is FOIAXpress™. Our system is ready to go – no development – no delays!

- » Speeds production and annual DOJ reporting
- » Eliminates backlogs
- » Facilitates FOIA Compliance
- » Automates redaction
- » Simplifies handling appeals
- » Reduces paper

FOIAXpress is a browser based eFOIA processing system which has been developed in a manner that it has sufficient capability and flexibility that it can be implemented in any FOIA office without modification. The product contains a requestor database, request manager, and a document repository.

Processing capabilities include a payment manager, letter generator, release manager, and a myriad of reporting capabilities to include automatic generation of the annual report. The redaction component has a variety of configuration options that simplify processing and feed the annual report. Query capabilities include full text search and ad hoc reporting.

The fact that the application is browser based and provides for processing flexibilities that satisfy all of the defined processing requirements provides for a variety of long-term benefits.

No Programming Required Environment

The fact that FOIAXpress is able to satisfy 100% of the requirements defined through application configuration, without requiring any application programming provides multiple benefits and economies. This means that as future releases of the product become available, agencies will be able to install the update without requiring any additional programming, which means that upgrades are accommodated quickly, and without additional expense to modify the custom code to upgrade the custom portion of the application. Out-of-the-box features and functionality include but are not limited to:

- Web-based, COTS eFOIA solution
- Automatically generates annual compliance report for Department of Justice
- Electronically stores, retrieves, redacts, and prints documents for delivery to FOIA or PA requesters
- Tracks appeals
- Classifies and tracks (simple, complex & expedited)
- Access control / privileges
- Correspondence template generator
- Receive and log requests; includes duplication detection, metadata tracking, on-line review and redaction, web posting, and billing.
- Classify FOIA/PA requests and appeals
 - Communicate with requesters
 - Consistency of response
 - Enhanced communication
- Standardized letters
- Track costs and fees
- 508 compliant
- Meta-data and full text search
- Scan and import files
- Multi-layer redactions with rectangle and polygon shapes.

Compliance and eFOIA Management



With the tide of legislation and the volume of requests rising, government agencies need a comprehensive COTS solution right now!

FOIAXpress™ the true cost effective way to manage your FOIA office is Ready Now!

Check out FOIAXpress™ today!

If you need a comprehensive solution for your Freedom of Information Act responsibilities, call us for a free consultation and live demonstration of FOIAXpress™.

**301-670-2300 or Info@ains-inc.com.
We guarantee that you will find it worthwhile.**



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