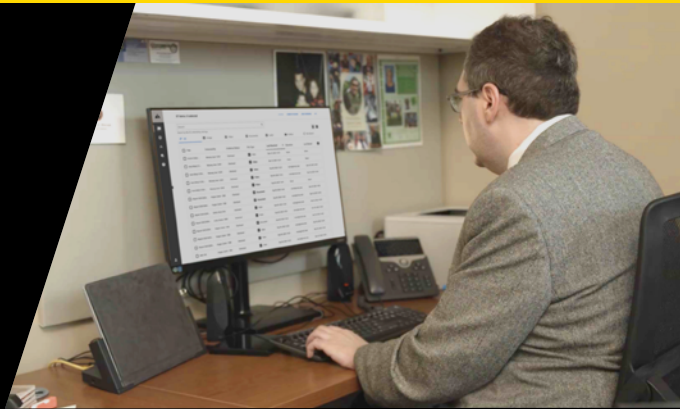




SEEKING JUSTICE: HOW BROWARD COUNTY PROSECUTORS ARE MODERNIZING DISCOVERY FOR FASTER, FAIRER CASES



INTRODUCTION: PROSECUTORS' MISSION TO PURSUE JUSTICE IN A DIGITAL AGE

Prosecutors in the Broward County State Attorney's Office play a critical role in the justice system, making decisions that impact lives, protect victims and uphold public safety. Their mission extends beyond securing convictions; it is about ensuring justice is served. The pursuit of justice is not measured by conviction rates or case wins but by fairness, accountability and the ethical responsibility to hold the right individuals accountable.

As the chief law enforcement agency for Broward County, the State Attorney's Office is the second largest in Florida, with over 200 prosecutors and more than 450 employees handling tens of thousands of cases each year. Their work ensures that victims receive justice, the accused are treated fairly and the community remains safe.

"My core responsibility as a prosecutor is to do justice. That's our entire job, to do justice, to do the right thing. Success as a prosecutor, essentially, is just doing justice," said Ross Weiner, an Assistant State Attorney in the Traffic Homicide Unit.

However, in today's digital age, the pursuit of justice has become increasingly complex. Each case generates a vast amount of digital evidence, including body-worn camera footage, surveillance videos, cell phone data and more. Managing this influx of information presents a significant challenge for prosecutors.

"The Broward County State Attorney's Office receives digital evidence every day on every case that we get... Every case has at least seven pieces of digital evidence – we have cases that have seven and then we have cases that have 700. The digital evidence is just increasing day by day," said Melissa Steinberg, a prosecutor specializing in Sexually Violent Predator Crimes, and overseeing the Body-Worn Camera unit for the State Attorney's Office.

Unlike defenders, prosecutors must disclose all evidence to the defense under the Brady Rule—a constitutional duty, not just an administrative task.

Before Axon Justice, this process was slow and inefficient. Prosecutors had to manually copy evidence onto DVDs, send them by mail and manually track each piece of discovery. Missing evidence could lead to delays, courtroom disputes and, most critically, the risk of wrongful convictions or denied justice for victims.

"Before we had Axon Justice, trying to share evidence with the defense was problematic because we would have to burn stuff to CDs and send it to them. We were always running into complications where they were claiming that they never received the evidence. With Axon Justice, we have ways of tracking that and we can tell them exactly when they received it, when they downloaded it, or if they didn't download it where it is," Steinberg recalled.

With tens of thousands of cases moving through the office each year, it became evident that change was necessary.



THE CHALLENGE: MANAGING AN OVERWHELMING VOLUME OF DIGITAL EVIDENCE

As technology has advanced, so too has crime—and the digital evidence associated with it. The Broward County State Attorney's Office receives millions of pieces of digital evidence each year, with body-worn cameras now standard in nearly every police department.

"I would say as far as how often our agency encounters digital evidence; it's probably on every single case. I don't think there are cases anymore that don't have digital evidence, whether it's photographs or videos or body-worn cameras,"

— **ROSS WEINER, ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY IN THE TRAFFIC HOMICIDE UNIT**

For Raul Palacios, Director of the Digital Evidence Unit, the sheer volume of evidence was staggering.

"In 2023, we had 3.8 million pieces of evidence [to process,]" he shared. And it only continues to increase each year.

In addition to managing digital evidence, prosecutors were responsible for ensuring timely compliance with discovery obligations. However, the previous process was highly manual and inconsistent:

- **Fragmented evidence delivery** — Law enforcement agencies provided evidence on USB drives, CDs, or even paper files. Some agencies relied on weekly couriers, delaying access to critical evidence.
- **Complex discovery sharing** — Sharing discovery with the defense was logistically challenging. If evidence was misplaced, prosecutors had to restart the process, further delaying cases.
- **Inefficient evidence review** — Without a centralized system, prosecutors had to search through DVDs, CDs or flash drives, listen to hours of audio and sift through scattered files.
- **Storage constraints** — Storing years of digital evidence on local servers was costly and difficult to manage.

These inefficiencies consumed valuable time—time that could have been dedicated to case preparation, victim meetings and the pursuit of justice.

THE SOLUTION: AXON JUSTICE AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR PROSECUTORS

For the Broward County State Attorney's Office, adopting Axon Justice was not merely about keeping pace with technological advancements; it was about enhancing public safety and ensuring more effective community protection.

"The primary challenge we face is really keeping up with the times, the technological advancements, particularly in the criminal justice realm. And Axon Justice has helped us with that... in working with law enforcement, our discovery obligations, looking at cases, being able to adequately assess and make proper and appropriate filing decisions when cases are presented to us by criminal justice entities. Axon Justice has really assisted us in that endeavor, in combating those head-on," said Harold Pryor, Broward County's elected State Attorney.

With Axon Justice, prosecutors gained a centralized digital solution to efficiently manage, review and share evidence.



HOW AXON JUSTICE TRANSFORMED THE PROSECUTORIAL WORKFLOW

1. Rapid digital discovery

- Prosecutors no longer need to burn CDs, mail flash drives, or manually track evidence. With Axon Justice, they can now send discovery to the defense with a single click.
- “I just received a call today. [The defense] said, ‘Can you send me the discovery?’ I went to our computer, I clicked a button and it was sent to them. So it’s much easier for us to collaborate with the defense, to be able to send the discovery to them using Axon Justice,” Weiner shared.
- Automated tracking provides transparency by allowing prosecutors to verify exactly when discovery was sent and received, ensuring compliance.

2. Unlimited cloud storage

- Axon Justice eliminates storage limitations and prevents lost evidence by securely storing all evidence files in the cloud, making them accessible anytime.
- “Prior to Axon Justice, [we were] concerned about the storage, [that we] wouldn’t have storage for our digital media. Now with Axon Justice, we have this unlimited storage. We not only have the body cam video evidence that the police agency shared with us, but our own data too. So we upload it to the cloud. It’s a relief. It’s easy and it’s safe,” Palacios explained.
- Cloud storage ensures long-term preservation of evidence, preventing misplacement or corruption over time.

3. Faster case preparation

- Axon Justice reduces hours of manual work, enabling prosecutors to focus on case preparation.
- “Prior to Axon Justice [discovery] was a little bit more complicated. [The Defense] would either come pick it up, you’d have to make copies of DVDs or they’d provide DVDs or flash drives. So it was a much longer process. You’d have to send it through snail mail because you couldn’t send large videos through email. Now, just like we talked about with receiving evidence from law enforcement with a click of a button through Axon Justice, we can send everything to the defense and they can download it very easily. It’s better for us and it’s much easier for them to be able to obtain the evidence. Prior to Axon Justice, sharing evidence with the defense was much more difficult and more time-consuming. It is much easier now,” said Weiner.

4. Advanced transcription and redaction tools

- To help save prosecutors’ time, Axon Justice’s transcription tool allows them to quickly locate key moments within recordings, making it easier to find critical details as they prepare their case.
- “Axon Justice helped our office immensely in regards to time saving, especially for reviewing cases. The transcript tool gives [prosecutors] the option to search for specific words and the video or audio literally jumps to that specific point,” said Palacios.
- Redaction tools allow prosecutors to efficiently blur faces, mute sensitive information and prepare evidence for court—without relying on IT specialists.



5. Enhanced collaboration and transparency

- Prosecutors and defense attorneys can now review evidence simultaneously, reducing disputes and ensuring both sides have access to the necessary information.
- “Axon has improved the collaboration between the defense, our prosecution and law enforcement immensely. The work that they’ve done has been groundbreaking in that they have really opened the lines of communication, made our lives a lot easier by creating a one-stop shop where we can have an interface and really exchange information, exchange digital evidence in a quick and timely manner. And I think it makes all of our lives easier. I think it ensures that justice is being served in an efficient manner,” Pryor emphasized.

THE IMPACT: STRONGER CASES, FASTER JUSTICE, SAFER COMMUNITIES

Since implementing Axon Justice, the Broward County State Attorney’s Office has undergone a significant transformation in how it seeks justice.

What once took weeks now happens in minutes. Discovery no longer lags behind casework due to physical media and manual processes. Instead of burning DVDs, mailing USBs and tracking down missing evidence, prosecutors can now send discovery instantly with a single click, ensuring compliance with the Brady rule and expediting case resolution.

Prosecutors no longer need to sift through extensive video files searching for critical moments. With Axon Justice’s transcription and keyword search capabilities, key evidence can be located within seconds, allowing attorneys to focus on legal strategy and less on administrative tasks.

Redaction, once a time-consuming, IT-heavy process, is now in the hands of prosecutors. Instead of waiting for technical support to edit sensitive material, attorneys can redact audio or blur footage in real time, making court presentations more efficient and responsive to judicial rulings.

Another important advancement has been the elimination of storage concerns, ensuring all digital evidence is securely preserved and easily accessible when needed. Before Axon Justice, prosecutors had to manage limited server space, with evidence scattered across DVDs, USBs and local hard drives. Now, unlimited, secure cloud storage ensures that every piece of evidence is accessible, protected and properly archived—reducing the risk of lost files and delays due to missing discovery.

Beyond streamlining workflows, these advancements enable prosecutors to focus more on their core mission—seeking justice while advocating for victims, building strong cases and upholding public safety.

“Axon Justice has transformed discovery. It’s been an industry leader, a leader in the criminal justice system, in creating an efficient and an effective way in how prosecutors and defense attorneys, but also how our law enforcement agencies, how we all work together and collaborate to bring some form of expediency and some form of finality in a quick manner, in an efficient manner in the criminal justice system,” Pryor stated.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF JUSTICE IS DIGITAL

For prosecutors in Broward County, justice has never been about winning or losing—it is about fairness, truth and protecting the communities they serve. However, in today’s digital age, the pursuit of justice must keep pace with technological advancements.

By adopting Axon Justice, Broward County prosecutors now have the tools to efficiently manage digital evidence, share it seamlessly and uphold their commitment to justice and public safety.

