The eDiscovery Forecast:

2021 Salary Survey

A note from our founder

AptSearch

What an interesting year we've had - the pandemic was an event that no one saw coming which has led to major upheaval for so many businesses. The world has adapted to a new way of working and many people have had unexpected changes influence their career paths. For eDiscovery, this new approach to working will likely see a change to how businesses operate and the tech we use, as well as, put a greater emphasis on important issues that have been brought to light, such as employee wellbeing.

As we move towards the light at the end of the tunnel, this report underscores how 2020 impacted our respondents, what people in the industry now expect in the year ahead, and hopefully adds to the discussion around how eDiscovery will grow from strength to strength as we move away from the worst of the effects of the pandemic.

In setting out our stall for this report, we wanted to know if hiring managers in the eDiscovery industry have enough visibility on candidate sentiments today. What remuneration are candidates expecting? What will attract them to a role at your organisation? What will keep them there? Is there enough junior talent available on the market? By sharing the perspectives of candidates and hiring managers alike, we provide some clarity on how to navigate the competition for talent. By revealing exactly what candidates want in a company, what they need to feel their career is flourishing and their thoughts on the workplace, the data we're presenting can be immediately utilised to support your hiring strategy.

We surveyed both candidates and hiring managers in the UK, Germany and The Netherlands. With these international insights, our goal is to present candidate attitudes that will give hiring managers a real understanding of the talent landscape and provide an edge in all matters of recruitment.

As a salary survey report, remuneration is of course an important topic. We asked respondents if they felt they were paid fairly and it was intriguing to see that the gap between 'fairly paid' and 'underpaid' was not so wide. Dissatisfaction with salaries is a quick way to lose your top talent and this suggests salaries are not being widely discussed.

"67% believe hiring processes will generally stay the same in terms of hiring difficulty."

Attracting and retaining talent will always be important in any industry, though we uncovered an important discussion around junior talent in the eDiscovery space. Those with less experience are moving to new roles more often than those who have been in the industry for a longer period of time. We determine why this might be and how you can keep professionals new to the industry happy in your business.

Finally, every industry needs to continuously evolve when it comes to new talent - that's a given. However, this will be hard to do when there is a distinct lack of gateways into the eDiscovery world. Are companies implementing training programs for future talent? Are these junior professionals getting enough time to learn from their more experienced peers?

Have a read through to discover the insights, I am sure you'll find it interesting. And feel free to **get in touch** with me if there's anything in this report that you'd like to discuss further.

Amit Pandit

Amit Pandit
Director at Apt Search

Go to the final page to get a full breakdown of salaries according to job titles and geographic locations!

# Contents

The 2021 eDiscovery Salary Review

Key salary insights for 2021

Salaries will always play a big part in attracting and retaining the best talent in the industry. We have calculated the average salary and explored the sentiments of respondents towards their salary. Is everyone happy?
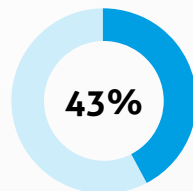
Approximate average salary across all respondents - this is based on the salary brackets in GBP
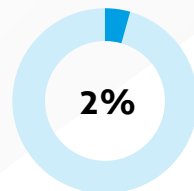
£87,402.60
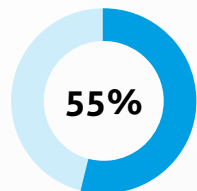
Paid fairly:	Underpaid:	Overpaid:
55%	43%	2%

With remuneration being a big motivator for respondents, are there too many people dissatisfied with their salary?

Following the events of 2020, employees are going to be more diligent when it comes to their career situation. For people who feel they are not paid fairly, it's a motivation for them to see what they can receive elsewhere. This salary dissatisfaction indicates that there are many respondents who have not had a salary review in the last year – as the dust settles on 2020, it's likely a conversation that they will want to have.

There seems to be more that can be done to meet salary expectations - it will play a big part in attracting and retaining talent in 2021. Conducting a thorough review of how staff - particularly high-performers - are rewarded throughout the industry is a good place to start. Companies can benchmark themselves against industry standards and improve their rewards packages accordingly.

Average salaries by profession

Project Management:

£70,754.39

53% of PM respondents happy with their salary

Sales:

£91,500.00

79% of Sales respondents are happy with their salary

Operations:

£72,166.67

50% of Operations respondents are happy with their salary
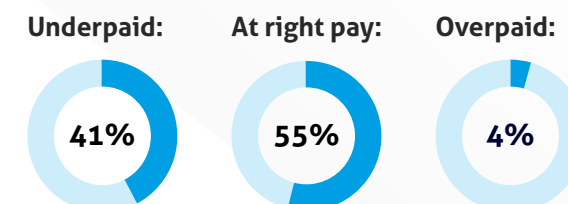
Salary sentiments by experience:

Respondents with 0-5 years experience

Underpaid:	At right pay:	Overpaid:
44%	54%	2%

Respondents with 5-10 years experience

Underpaid:	At right pay:	Overpaid:
45%	55%	0%

Respondents with 10+ years experience

Underpaid:	At right pay:	Overpaid:
41%	55%	4%

Across the industry, the attitudes towards salaries are almost universal – with over 45% of respondents across the three areas feeling like they are underpaid, there is significant dissatisfaction that needs to be addressed.

However, senior sales roles have much higher average earnings than their operations and project management counterparts and though a large proportion feel they are underpaid, the vast majority are satisfied with their earnings. So, the majority of dissatisfaction with remuneration can be attributed to those employed in project management and operations roles, which is where the focus on improving remuneration packages needs to be.

The People in eDiscovery

With new technology comes a demand for new skills. The industry is constantly moving forward, but what does this mean for the people working within it? Are companies doing enough to not only keep employees happy, but also attract the best talent to their business?

Industry experience vs time in current company

Across all three surveys, here is a breakdown of the experience level of respondents

- 10+ years — 35%
- 8-10 years — 14%
- 5-8 years — 25%
- 2-5 years — 22%
- 0-2 years — 4%
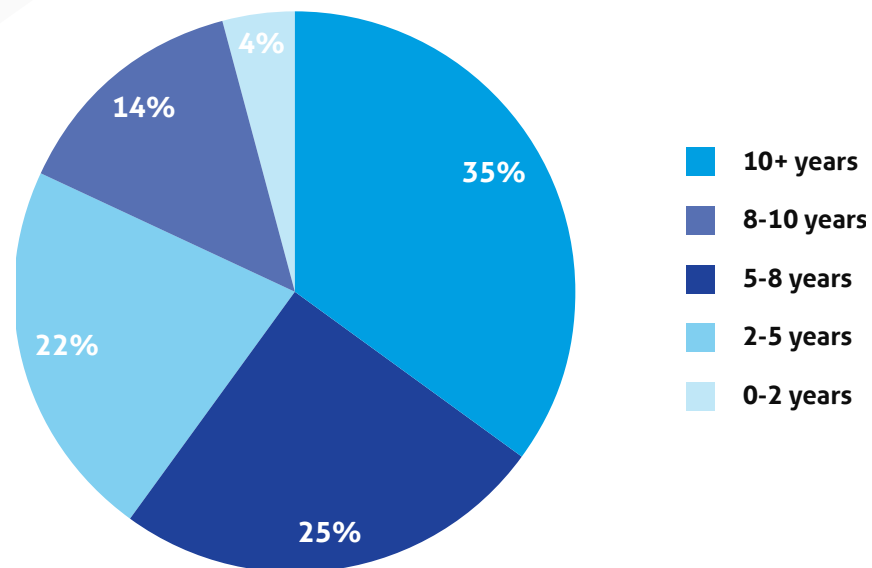
How long have people been in their current company?
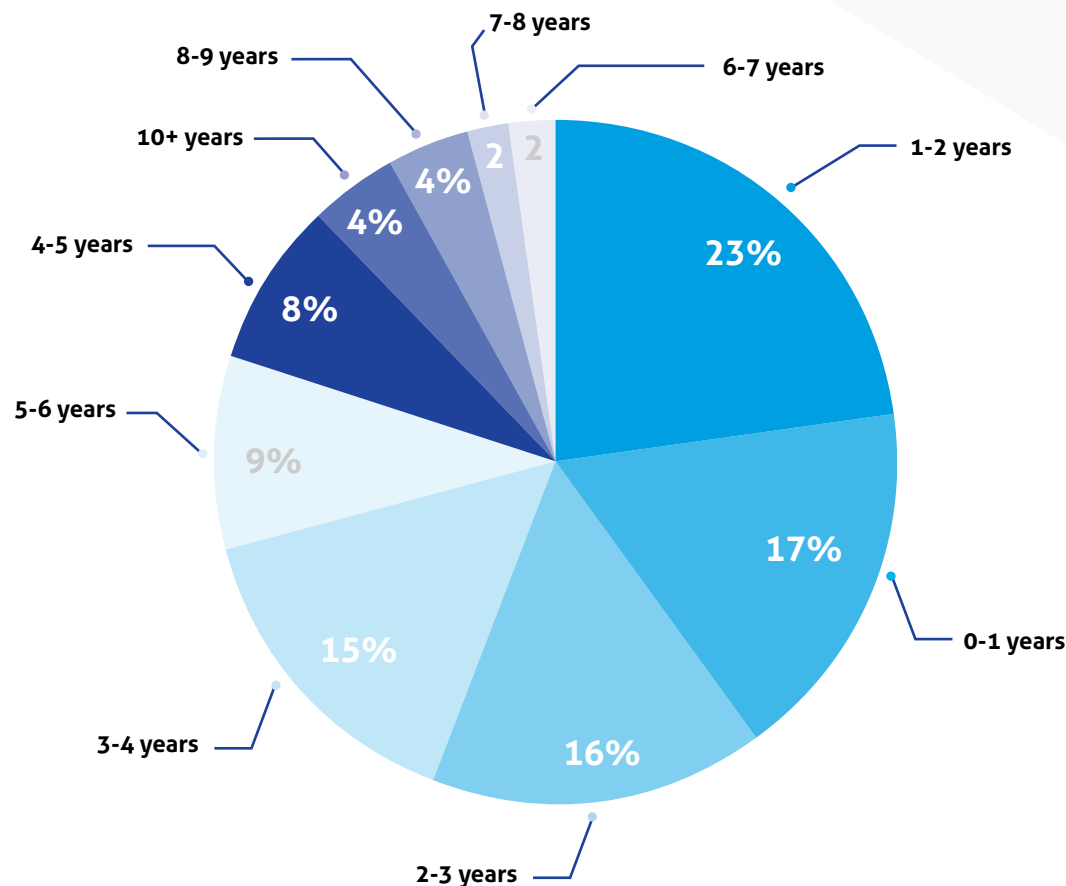
The right culture, projects and technology, are just a few factors that will help you retain your talent. This data, however, is indicative of more movement within the market for those who are relatively new to the industry, with less than 2 years of experience.

Those with more experience in the eDiscovery industry are remaining in their roles for longer, yet this seems to be the talent that is most sought after.

In a competitive market, the right opportunity is enough to poach the most experienced professionals. Motivations change with experience and it's not always about the salary. It is often those companies that can provide a distinct career roadmap and demonstrate the impact a person can make in their team, that succeed in securing experienced and talented individuals. Clear career roadmaps, which have grown in importance during the pandemic for candidates, have to become prominent in 2021 and beyond.
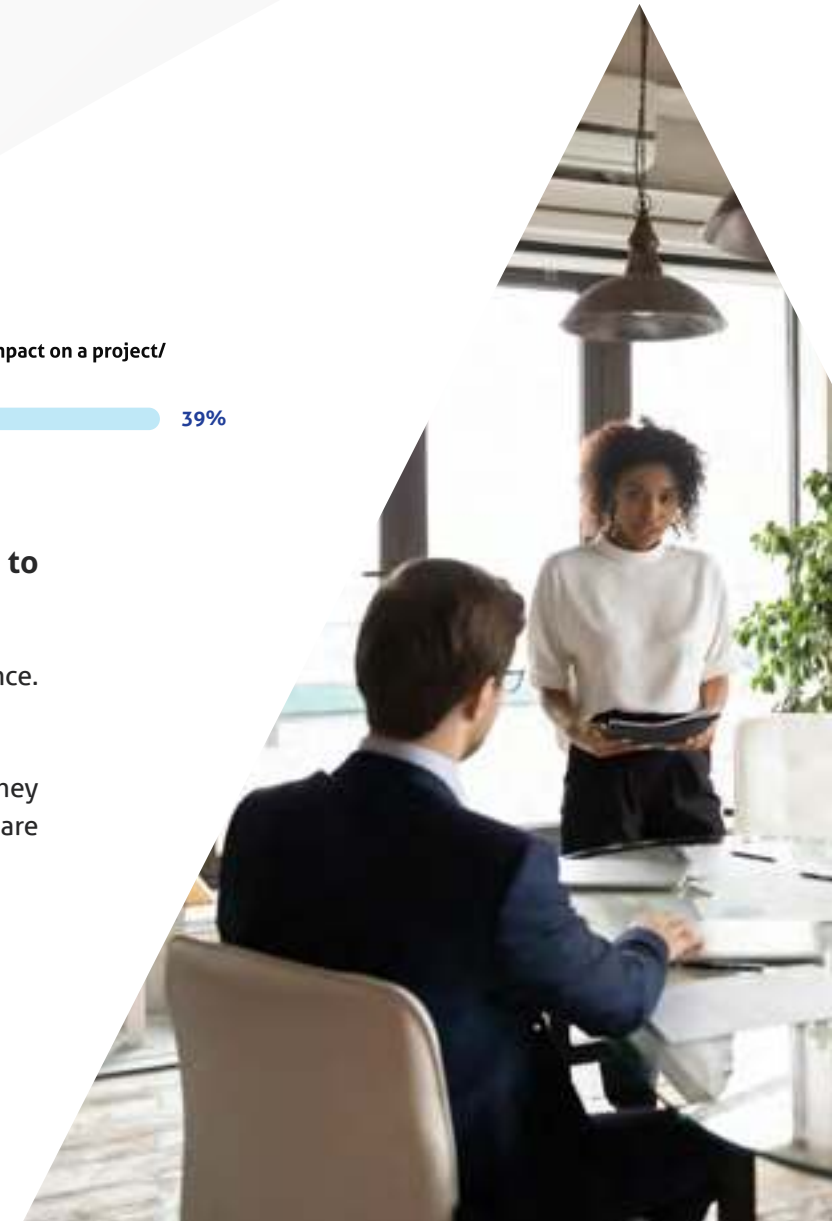
What motivates eDiscovery talent?

Top 3 Motivations

1. Career Prospects:

68%

2. Money:

63%

3. Ability to make an impact on a project/ within a company:

39%

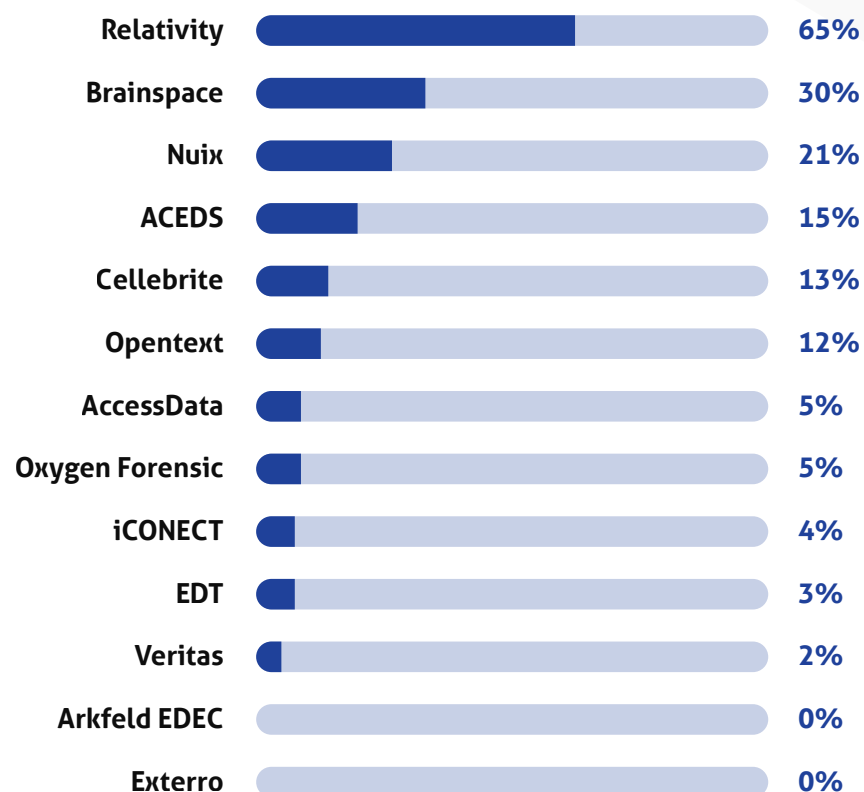**As shown here, 'money' and 'career prospects' lead the way in motivating people to seek a new role.**

When looking deeper, these motivations are unchanged across the industry regardless of experience. However, for respondents with 0-2 years experience, 'increased challenge' was the third motivator.

It suggests that the challenges they seek are being trusted to those with more experience, meaning they don't see any real growth in their role. Without this access to training and real career challenges, they are likely to look for it elsewhere.

Certifications among respondents

Relativity	65%
Brainspace	30%
Nuix	21%
ACEDS	15%
Cellebrite	13%
Opentext	12%
AccessData	5%
Oxygen Forensic	5%
iCONECT	4%
EDT	3%
Veritas	2%
Arkfeld EDEC	0%
Exterro	0%

Certifications as motivations vs experience

9% of these respondents fall into the 0-2 years category
23% fall into the 2-5 years category
41% fall into 5-8 years category
9% fall into 8-10 years category
18% fall into 10+ years

This lack of training and genuine career challenges is further enforced by the certification data shown here

For those with 0-2 years industry experience, it's worth noting that 33% of these respondents did not select any of the certifications listed above.

Candidates with the right certifications would naturally find it easier to find an entry level role - but those without, need access to more training. In the eDiscovery industry, are there enough university options or training schemes that provide a gateway into the industry for promising talent?
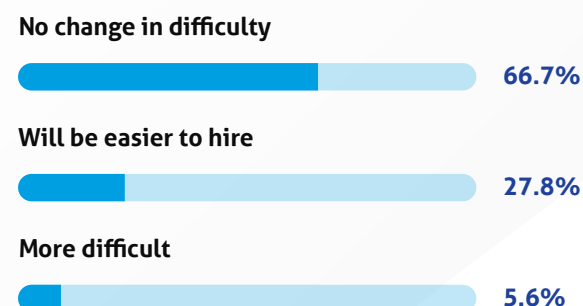
Companies can offer this training, be it internally or external courses, to win and keep emerging talent in the industry.
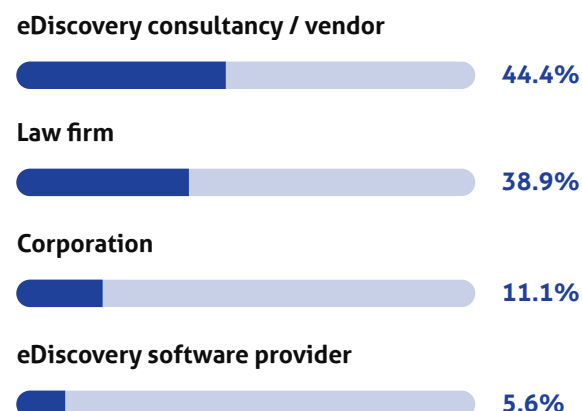
The eDiscovery Hiring Review

Across all industries, the hiring landscape has changed following the events of 2020. Despite these challenges, there is much to look forward to in 2021. We hear from the hiring managers within the eDiscovery industry about their thoughts for the year ahead.

Key hiring predictions

Hiring Difficulty in 2021:
What our respondents think

No change in difficulty

66.7%

Will be easier to hire

27.8%

More difficult

5.6%

Types of Organisations Our Respondents Belong To

eDiscovery consultancy / vendor

44.4%

Law firm

38.9%

Corporation

11.1%

eDiscovery software provider

5.6%

This definitely indicates a positive outlook. The pandemic changed the way people hired, with most interview processes moving online. However, **our respondents are expecting a positive return to having control of the hiring process.**

61% do not believe they will be hiring more freelancers compared to 2020, which indicates a continued focus on recruiting permanent team members. However, there has been an increase in the number of contractors in the market over the past year. This is interesting, particularly as we have seen a recent upsurge in hiring activity as the economy recovers and markets open back up. In a skills-short industry, there is increasing confidence amongst candidates who see plenty of opportunity to explore more flexible working options to fit their lifestyle and potentially increase their earnings. As candidate behaviours shift towards contracting, despite the sentiment of our respondents in this report, **it's highly likely that hiring managers will have to hire more contractors to bridge a gap while they search for permanent talent.**

Challenges and predictions for 2021

We invited our respondents to open up about the hiring challenges we might face in our industry this year. Uncertainty has naturally played a big part in the year gone by, but is there anything else we should prepare for?

Remote working: The move to a remote working environment has invited many challenges, such as remote onboarding, keeping teams engaged with consistent communication and ensuring productivity. A lot of organisations are looking to move away from the office - or have a blended model where people are coming in when needed or in shift patterns. Whilst there are clear benefits in offering employees flexible work choices and opening up the talent pool, companies must also consider the compliance challenges they may face, especially for roles that require access to secure data. The challenge for them will be in creating a new - compliant - methods to ensure a happy and productive workforce who won't be physically in the office at all times.

Concern for the team: Over the last year, maintaining good mental health and wellbeing has been a challenge, which means that both of these factors are going to be a big priority for 2021, as seen below. Due to the large shift towards working remotely, there will inevitably be more communication online and less face-to-face interaction and understanding social cues in new ways will initially present a big challenge. When you're physically with your team it's likely to be a lot easier to recognise if someone is struggling - scheduling regular check-ins with the team and facilitating a culture of openness and inclusivity will be the key to overcoming this.

Skills gaps: In particular, deep project management experience seems to be exclusive to much more senior candidates. A thorough understanding of the market is also key and this has a significant impact on junior talent, who lack access to the right courses for their experience level to bridge these skills gaps.

Despite these challenges, there is a lot of opportunity for companies looking to bring highly talented staff into the fold on a short-term basis. With more talent utilising contracting for its flexibility and remuneration benefits, there is an opportunity to bridge the skills gap whilst continuing to look for permanent hires. Though there are highly experienced contractors in the market, the majority of growth in the contractor market is due to less experienced talent, allowing them to diversify their experience, whilst companies can hire more junior candidates with less risk.

Priorities for 2021

Employee health and wellness

82.4%

Diversity & Inclusion

52.9%

New Technology / Innovation

52.9%

Geographically optimised talent models (work from anywhere)

11.8%

As we've seen, the wellbeing of the team is a big priority for eDiscovery leaders. We asked respondents to share their top company benefits and their thoughts on company culture. Will these all point to a happier workforce?

Company Benefits

It's interesting to note that only 26% of our salary survey respondents list remote working as a motivator for applying to a role. With remote/flexible working having become more prominent, candidates likely expect this to be a normal benefit of a role moving forward.

With employee wellbeing being so important following 2020, it's not surprising to see organisations offering this perk. Is this something you currently offer? Employees want to feel that their wellbeing is taken into account by company leaders, so we predict this perk will soon be even more prominent in the industry.

Career prospects are the biggest motivator for candidates when finding a new role. Are the benefits displayed here fulfilling that motivation? To really capture the attention of ambitious talent, perhaps more team training or clear progression plans could be highlighted as a perk to add in 2021.

88.9%

Flexible working

83.3%
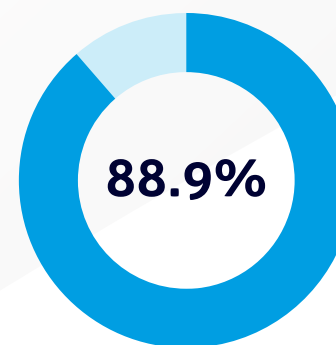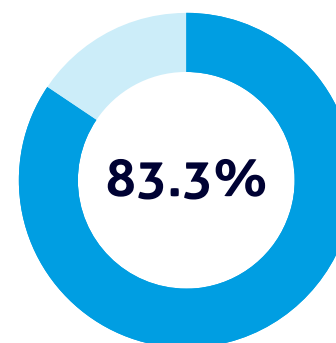
Access to financial and mental health advice

Company culture

Many respondents shared their belief in a supportive company culture. The general consensus indicates that eDiscovery teams are inclusive, diverse and technology driven people who are passionate about what they do.

For the year ahead, **it's the small things that will make all the difference.** Keeping a positive sentiment towards company culture should be a key goal for company leaders in 2021. Encourage employees to talk more about how they are doing, not just with management but with each other. Another point is the remote workload - check in with remote workers to understand how they are managing their workloads and to make sure that they are implementing simple and effective routines, like taking regular short breaks.

> " **Additional regular check ins and general chats required. People miss the 2 minute chat by the printer or the 5 minute gossip in the kitchen area. Always make time for remote employees.** "

eDiscovery Talking Points for 2021

Overall, we can see a positive outlook for the year ahead. Working towards normality will be a responsibility for everyone in the industry. These talking points will play a big part in opening up conversations and improving the way the industry can attract and retain talent.

Salary Dissatisfaction: There is not a huge majority of people who believe they are paid well, but 67% are paid less than the average salary of £87,402.60. This is reflective in most industries, with project management and operations professionals in particular. However, those in sales roles are overall very happy with their pay level. For the 67% being paid less than the average salary, we should highlight that many of these respondents are junior employees, with highly paid senior sales professionals bringing the average up at the other end of the scale.

Staff Retention: It's looking positive, particularly for those with more industry experience under their belt, with a high percentage of people remaining in their current companies for long periods.

Junior Talent: However, can the same be said for those starting out in the industry or with less experience? As they seek real challenges and training opportunities to start climbing the career ladder, organisations need to have a real gateway, training opportunities and a clear career map for junior staff.

Employee Wellbeing: Most respondents from the survey said this is a major focus for the year ahead. Think about how your organisation can integrate an employee wellbeing and feedback process - it will help current employees feel at ease and attract new talent too. Not only will employees feel listened to and appreciated, it allows companies to get to the heart of what their employees feel. This allows you to make improvements to the employee experience, leading to a happier workplace.

After a year of unexpected challenges and global economic upheaval, it's great to see positive sentiments from the market for growth and development. Technological advancement will continue at a rapid rate, while the competition for experienced talent who can make an impact in your business will be fiercer than ever.

That is where we can help. Not only do we continue to grow our network of specialist eDiscovery talent, but we are actively involved in the eDiscovery, Privacy and Cyber Security sectors by working to provide genuine gateway opportunities for potential new talent.

We also move with agility to respond to shifting market patterns and as candidate behaviours change with a growing number of contractors, we have developed our *Talent On Demand* solution. Whether you're looking to migrate from one litigation support / eDiscovery system to another or need project managers to hit the ground running, *Talent On Demand* can help. We have a network of experienced, independently vetted industry experts and advisors who are available at short notice for short or long term contracts that could be anything from a one day requirement to over a year.

To find out more about how we can help you grow this year, get in touch with us today.

Salary Benchmarks by Region & Job Title

	UK
eDiscovery Analyst	£41,400.00
Junior eDiscovery Project Manager	£25,500.00
eDiscovery Project Manager	£58,604.00
Senior eDiscovery Project Manager	£80,833.00
Relativity Master	£77,500.00
Director level Project Manager	£108,833.00
Client Services Director	£131,950.00
Inside Sales	£85,500.00
eDiscovery Business Developer	£73,500.00
Senior eDiscovery Business Developer	£111,454.00
Sales Director	£92,166.00
Head of Sales Global	£280,000.00
Operations Analyst (Processing experience)	£45,500.00
Operations Manager	£75,500.00
Marketing Manager	£75,500.00
Computer Forensics Analyst/Investigator	£60,500.00
Computer Forensics Manager	£45,500.00
Legal Technology Manager (Law firm)	£95,500.00
eDiscovery/Litigation Support Manager	£87,166.00
Document Review Manager	£68,000.00

	Germany
eDiscovery Analyst	€55,500.00
Junior eDiscovery Project Manager	€65,500.00
eDiscovery Project Manager	€75,500.00
Senior eDiscovery Project Manager	€108,833.00
Director level Project Manager	€95,500.00
eDiscovery Business Developer	€95,500.00
Sales Manager	€105,500.00
Head of Sales EMEA	€165,500.00
Operations Manager	€90,250.00
Computer Forensics Analyst/Investigator	€65,500.00
eDiscovery/Litigation Support Manager	€145,500.00
Document Review Manager	€85,500.00

	Netherlands
eDiscovery Analyst	€62,166.00