



# Heyrick Research Relies on DataWalk in the Fight against Human Trafficking

## CUSTOMER STORY

## Heyrick Research

### About Heyrick Research

Heyrick Research is a Virginia-based company focused on counter-human trafficking, specifically as it relates to the Illicit Massage Industry (IMI). Heyrick Research uses their intelligence-driven approach to disrupt the business model within the IMI, which is the largest form of sex trafficking within the United States. The company's work includes cutting-edge research, data analysis, and coalition building.

"A key strategy for Heyrick is to work with our partners to defeat the IMI as an industry, instead of the whack-a-mole approach," said Danielle Mendheim, Director of Data & Analytics at Heyrick Research.

By recognizing that the IMI is a highly networked, extremely profitable, and nation-wide problem, the company aims to disrupt the economic drivers that allow this form of human trafficking to exist.

Heyrick partners with local and federal law enforcement agencies, anti-trafficking NGOs, academic/research partners, and others.

*"DataWalk software gives us the capabilities we need in order to execute our mission. With DataWalk our team can better demonstrate the networked activity within the IMI and this allows us to counter human trafficking more effectively."*

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Chris Muller-Tabanera  
National Director of  
Heyrick Research

## The Challenge

Heyrick's research over time showed that the IMI is a heavily networked form of human trafficking, and the company saw a critical need to more effectively identify and analyze connections between suspected illicit massage businesses, owners, and other parties within these networks. Vital to this activity is utilizing public business information.

It was also crucial to visualize these intricate networks so that findings could be more effectively communicated to Heyrick's partners in the anti-trafficking field, alongside written case studies.

Heyrick also recognized the need to maintain a central repository, where data and connections could be stored and analyzed, such that new connections could quickly be identified when additional data is later added.

## The DataWalk Solution

When faced with these challenges, Heyrick opted to deploy DataWalk software, which provided a data repository with integrated analysis and visualization capabilities. This tool allowed Heyrick to persistently store data and connections within DataWalk, and easily analyze and visualize data via a simple visual interface.

With DataWalk, Heyrick's analysts effectively identify and analyze connections between illicit massage businesses (IMBs), and often find common owners or other key connectors sometimes as deep as three or four degrees of separation. "Even if a business is nested among three LLC's, DataWalk enables us to see the methods and connections used to identify the owner," says Mendheim.

DataWalk also facilitates collaboration on cases throughout the team, as other analysts can quickly and easily see new items and connections.

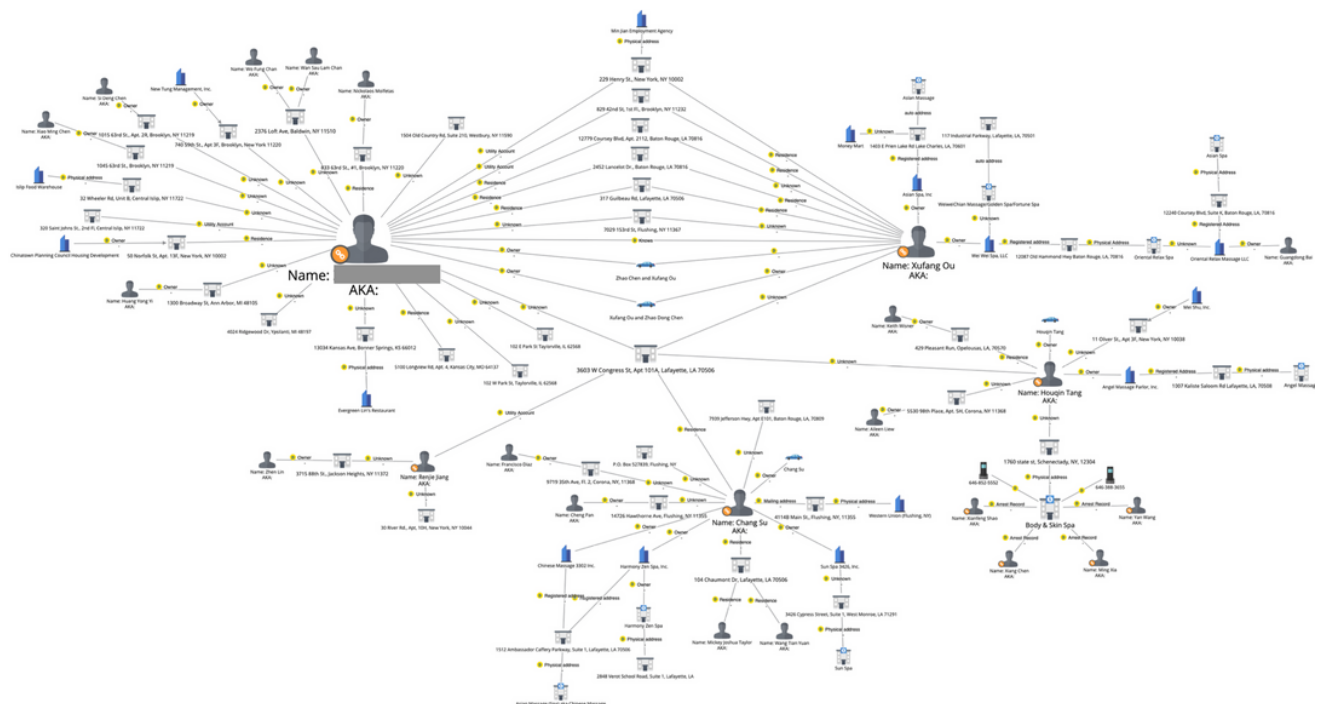


Figure 1. A DataWalk link chart used in support of a Heyrick case study.

A typical workflow starts in the DataWalk Universe Viewer, where analysts use visual queries and filters to select desired data. An example might be an IMB in a particular geographical area. “We’re a huge fan of the Universe Viewer,” says Mendheim. “It makes it easy for us to quickly filter an analysis from a geographical perspective.”

That data is then brought to a link chart, where an analyst can quickly add connected objects, such as phones, legal entities, and so forth. The work process may include merging objects as well as merging link charts, both of which help increase analyst efficiency. The finished link chart is often used as the key visualization in a targeting package that can then be shared with law enforcement and other partners to support their counter-trafficking efforts.

“DataWalk visualizations are integral to our partners,” notes Mendheim. “Giving a partner simply a rich text document can often be overwhelming, but a link chart allows for a big picture viewpoint and a true telling of the narrative.”

Through the stored data and connections, Heyrick’s analysts are able to see overlapping connections when new data is added, sometimes even months down the road.

“We’ve found hidden connections, like a business in California that we later discover is tied to a case study in New York,” says Mendheim. “We’ve clearly seen that DataWalk has helped us better communicate our findings related to the IMI.”

Heyrick’s executives agree. “DataWalk software gives us the capabilities we need in order to execute our mission,” said Chris Muller-Tabanera, National Director of Heyrick Research. “With DataWalk our team can better demonstrate the networked activity within the IMI and this allows us to counter human trafficking more effectively.”

Heyrick analysts have typically become comfortable with using the tool after three to four training sessions.

“The DataWalk user interface is simple and straight-forward,” says Mendheim. “We’ve also been very impressed with the responsiveness of the DataWalk technical team. They listen to our inputs and often implement them.”

Human trafficking is an abhorrent crime, and we at DataWalk are proud to support Heyrick Research in their important work.

#### Lafayette, Louisiana LAFAYETTE PARISH SHERIFF’S OFFICE

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On February 12, 2019, after a 17-month investigation, the Lafayette Parish Sheriff’s Office raided five massage parlors, arresting eight owner/operators on charges of human trafficking and prostitution. In addition to the five IMBs, police searched three residences, confiscating \$50,000 in cash, five vehicles, jewelry, phones, computers, and business records.

#### Operation Emerald Triangle SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

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On February 28, 2019, after a three-year investigation, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) raided eleven massage parlors, arresting five owners/operators, and freeing 26 victim workers. The takedown focused on the Chinatown-International District, Beacon Hill and Sodo. Six people were charged with varying counts of promoting prostitution and money laundering. Police seized firearms and \$120,000 in cash. All of the arrestees and the victims were Chinese nationals.