

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

E. H., et al. v. Meta Platforms, Inc.

Case No. 23-cv-04784-WHO (VKD) · No. 23-cv-04784-WHO (VKD) · Decided December 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California resolves portions of a discovery dispute in E. H. et al. v. Meta Platforms, Inc. The court orders Meta to search for and produce certain notices, investigate whether documents specific to non-users were excluded from an earlier production, and identify Bates numbers for lineage-mapping results, while denying or limiting several other requests. The dispute concerning additional custodians remains unresolved and may be presented in a further joint discovery letter.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Virginia K. DeMarchi
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	December 23, 2025
DOCKET	23-cv-04784-WHO (VKD)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs and defendant submitted a joint discovery dispute letter concerning supplemental document discovery and the scope of Meta's custodian searches. The magistrate judge resolved the document-request disputes in part and deferred the custodian dispute pending further party discussions.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The Court applied the good-cause standard for targeted supplemental discovery and evaluated whether the requested discovery was relevant, targeted, necessary, and proportional to the needs of the case.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district-court discovery order
PARTIES	E. H., et al. v. Meta Platforms, Inc.

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- civil procedure
- hipaa
- medical records privacy
- commercial litigation

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

discovery

health law

commercial litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether plaintiffs established good cause for additional targeted discovery concerning the disputed requests for production.
2. Whether Meta must search its existing Healthcare-case collection for notices sent to 34 telehealth-only providers identified by plaintiffs.
3. Whether Meta must conduct additional searches for non-public communications with non-users or internal communications concerning what non-users understood about Meta's data collection.
4. Whether the parties' agreement to identify Bates numbers, investigate possible exclusion of non-user documents, or confer concerning specific custodial sources adequately resolved or narrowed certain requests.
5. Whether the dispute concerning the proposed 57 custodians was ready for decision.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiffs established sufficient grounds for targeted supplemental discovery concerning the 34 providers identified as telehealth-only. Meta must search its existing Healthcare-case document collection for those providers and produce any responsive notices.
2. Plaintiffs did not establish good cause for additional searches for communications to non-users or for internal communications specifically concerning Meta's beliefs about what non-users understood about Meta's information-collection practices.
3. The dispute concerning RFP 74 was resolved by Meta's agreement to identify the Bates numbers for the portion of the Healthcare production reflecting the results of the lineage mapping project.
4. Meta must investigate whether the Healthcare production excluded documents specific to non-users on relevance grounds, but plaintiffs did not establish good cause for additional searches for email and other communications concerning non-user data only.
5. Plaintiffs did not establish good cause for the requested discovery because RFP 85 was overbroad and not appropriately targeted or necessary.
6. Plaintiffs did not establish good cause for supplemental discovery under RFP 90 because the request was unreasonably broad and insufficiently targeted.
7. The requests were overbroad to the extent they sought all documents and communications concerning the dashboard, but potentially targeted discovery concerning the dashboard's value and the value of non-user data to the dashboard warranted further party discussions.
8. The dispute concerning whether Meta must search the records of 57 custodians was not ready for decision and required further proceedings.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“plaintiffs may then seek additional targeted discovery relevant to the non-Facebook user putative class upon a showing of good cause to Judge DeMarchi.” (at 2)

“Meta must search its existing document collection for the Healthcare case for the names of the 34 providers whom plaintiffs identify as “telehealth only” in Appendix A, and must produce any responsive notices located in that search.” (at 3)

“Plaintiffs have an obligation in the first instance to seek only “targeted discovery relevant to the non-Facebook user putative class.”” (at 7)

“The parties must confer, keeping in mind the presiding judge’s direction that plaintiffs’ supplemental discovery must be “targeted” and “relevant to the non-Facebook user putative class.”” (at 8-9)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs brought claims concerning Meta's collection and use of health information associated with non-Facebook users through the Pixel and sought supplemental discovery after reviewing production from related Healthcare litigation. They requested additional documents concerning notices to healthcare providers, communications with non-users, a lineage-mapping project, non-user data, Appendix A entities, advertising revenue, and Meta's Advertising Account Dashboard. Meta had already produced substantial discovery and agreed to provide or investigate some additional information, while objecting that other requests were overbroad, untargeted, unnecessary, or duplicative.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The presiding judge permitted plaintiffs to amend their complaint and directed that supplemental discovery be targeted and relevant to the non-Facebook-user putative class, with plaintiffs required to show good cause for additional discovery. After the parties completed discovery related to *In re Meta Pixel Healthcare Litigation*, plaintiffs sought additional production on several requests. The parties submitted a joint discovery letter, and the Court held a hearing on December 16, 2025. This order resolves the document-request disputes but leaves the custodian dispute for further proceedings.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The parties must confer regarding unresolved discovery issues, particularly the custodian dispute, and may file a further joint discovery-dispute letter after completing those discussions. Any further letter should comply with Judge DeMarchi's Standing Order and should be filed no later than January 21, 2026, unless the parties stipulate to a later date. The parties must also comply with the specified directives concerning the 34-provider notice search, Bates-number identification, investigation of possible exclusion of non-user documents, and further discussions concerning specific custodial sources for RFPs 98-99.

CASES CITED

- Ctr. for Auto Safety v. Chrysler Group, LLC, 809 F.3d 1092, 1098-99 (9th Cir. 2016), cert. denied sub nom. FCA U.S. LLC v. Ctr. for Auto Safety, 580 U.S. 815 (2016)
- Kamakana v. City & County of Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172, 1179-80 (9th Cir. 2006)

OPINION

H.

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3

4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

6 7 E. H., et al., Case No. 23-cv-04784-WHO (VKD) 8 Plaintiffs,

ORDER RE DECEMBER 3, 2025

9 v. DISCOVERY DISPUTE RE

CUSTODIANS AND DOCUMENT

10 META PLATFORMS, INC., REQUESTS

11 Defendant. Re: Dkt. No. 149 12 13 The parties ask the Court to resolve two categories of
disputes: (1) whether plaintiffs may 14 obtain discovery from Meta responsive to 12 disputed
document requests as part of the 15 supplemental discovery the presiding judge has permitted; and
(2) whether Meta should be 16 required to search the records of 57 custodians (40 existing
Healthcare custodians, plus 17 new 17 custodians) as part of this supplemental discovery. Dkt. No.
149.1 The Court held a hearing on 18 19 1 Plaintiffs move to seal the discovery letter brief and
exhibits, in their entirety, on the ground that Meta claims the contents are confidential. Dkt. No.
150. In response, Meta requests sealing for a 20 narrowed portion of the discovery letter (portions
of page 5, line 1) and a portion of Exhibit B (portions of page 8, lines 19 and 20), stating that the
subject information reveals non-public 21 information about its confidential internal analyses and
proprietary data storage system paths. See Dkt. No. 153. Meta does not request sealing for any
portion of Exhibit A. See *id.* As plaintiffs' 22 sealing motion relates to a discovery matter, the good
cause standard applies. *Ctr. for Auto Safety v. Chrysler Group, LLC*, 809 F.3d 1092, 1098-99 (9th
Cir.), cert. denied sub nom *FCA U.S. LLC v. Ctr. for Auto Safety*, 580 U.S. 815 (2016);
Kamakana v. City & Cnty. of Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172, 1179-80 (9th Cir. 2006). Plaintiffs' motion
to seal Exhibit A is denied, as no one claims 24 that document is confidential. Notwithstanding
plaintiffs' claim that they had no choice, plaintiffs' motion to seal is otherwise denied, as their
provisional sealing of the entire discovery 25 letter brief and exhibits is unreasonable. Meta's
request to seal portions of the letter brief at page 5, line 1 is denied, as Meta has not shown good
cause to seal that information. Meta's request to 26 seal portions of Exhibit B at page 8, lines 19
and 20 is granted. By January 5, 2026, plaintiffs shall file a public version of the discovery letter
brief and Exhibit A, and a redacted version of 27 Exhibit B, in compliance with this order. For
future discovery matters, the Court expects that the 1 these disputes on December 16, 2025. Dkt.

No. 154. For the reasons explained on the record, this 2 order addresses only the parties' dispute regarding plaintiffs' document requests. As set forth 3 below, the parties' dispute regarding custodians is not ready for decision and requires further 4 proceedings.

5 I. BACKGROUND

6 On April 7, 2025, the presiding judge issued an order granting plaintiffs' motion for leave 7 to amend their complaint. Dkt. No. 113. In connection with that decision, the April 7 order 8 provided the following direction regarding discovery in this case: 9 [T]he targeted discovery in this case shall follow the discovery being sought and produced in 22-cv-03580-WHO In Re Meta 10 Pixel Healthcare Litigation. Plaintiffs here shall agree to the 11 existing protective order and discovery protocols entered in that related case. They shall be given full access to the discovery 12 produced in that case. 13 Meta has admitted that some of the data "associated" with Facebook users is different than the data "associated" with non-users. This 14 Order contemplates that there will be some difference in what is 15 ultimately discoverable in the two cases. Plaintiffs shall not seek additional document discovery until they have reviewed the 16 productions in the related case. Once they have done so, they shall meet and confer with defendants on the scope of the remaining, 17 necessary discovery. If the parties cannot agree, plaintiffs may then seek additional targeted discovery relevant to the non-Facebook user 18 putative class upon a showing of good cause to Judge DeMarchi. 19 20 Dkt. No. 113 at 1-2 (emphasis in original). 21 At the time the April 7 order issued, plaintiffs had already served over 40 document 22 requests. See Dkt. No. 150-4; see also Dkt. No. 144 at 4 n.4. Those requests were "held in 23 abeyance" during production and review of discovery materials from the Healthcare case. Dkt. 24 No. 116 at 2. On August 11, 2025, plaintiffs served an additional 75 document requests, for a total 25 of 124 document requests seeking supplemental discovery. Dkt. No. 144 at 3; Dkt. No. 149 at 6. 26 Plaintiffs have since withdrawn a number of those requests. Meta agreed to produce documents 27 responsive to some of the remaining requests but has objected to many of them. Dkt. No. 144 at 3, 1 5, 6, 7, 8; Dkt. No. 149 at 6 n.5. 2 According to Meta, plaintiffs have received voluminous discovery—including documents, 3 data, interrogatory answers, responses to requests for admissions, and deposition transcripts of 4 Meta's witnesses—produced by Meta in the Healthcare case. Dkt. No. 149 at 6. Meta has agreed 5 to search for additional documents in connection with some of plaintiffs' supplemental discovery 6 requests, but the parties disagree about whether Meta should be required to produce documents 7 responsive to the following document requests: RFPs 11-12, 45-46, 48,2 73-74, 80, 85, 90, and 8 98-99.

9 II. DISCUSSION

10 Per the April 7 order, the Court considers whether plaintiffs have shown good cause to 11 obtain documents responsive to the disputed document requests, within the permitted scope of 12 supplemental discovery—i.e. "targeted discovery relevant to the non-Facebook user putative 13 class." Dkt. No. 113 at 2. 14 A. RFPs 11-12: Notices 15 By means of these RFPs, plaintiffs ask Meta to produce documents sufficient to identify all 16 "Covered Entities,"³ to whom Meta sent

“notices” that the entities were sharing protected health information with Meta via the Pixel, including specifically all such notices Meta sent to Cerebral. Dkt. No. 149 at 9. Meta has agreed to produce notices, if any, sent to Cerebral and to all of named plaintiffs’ other healthcare providers. Id. Plaintiffs argue that Meta should be required to search for and produce notices for all of the 69 entities listed in Appendix A to plaintiffs’ amended complaint, or at least the 34 of those entities that are “online-only telehealth” providers. Id. at 4; 22 Apparently, plaintiffs misnumbered the document requests in their first set of requests for production. At the hearing, the parties advised that what they refer to as “RFPs 11-12, 45-46, and 48” in the joint letter corresponds to RFPs 9-10, 43-44, and 46 in Exhibit A attached to the letter, 24 and that the correct text of the disputed RFPs is reproduced in Meta’s portion of the letter. See Dkt. No. 150-4; Dkt. No. 157 at 50:12-51:1; 54:23-55:9. 25 3 Plaintiffs define “Covered Entities” here the same as they do in the first amended complaint: 26 “[T]he Complaint refers to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) covered entities and/or California Medical Information Act (CMIA) covered entities individually as a 27 ‘Covered Entity’ and collectively refers to them as ‘Covered Entities.’ ‘Covered Entities’ includes 1 Dkt. No. 157 at 44:9-11, 52:24-53:7. 2 Although it is not clear from the joint letter why plaintiffs seek this additional discovery, 3 given that Meta has already searched for and produced responsive “notices” sent to “Covered 4 Entities” as part of the Healthcare discovery production, 4 at the hearing plaintiffs explained that 5 they seek this discovery because none of the “Covered Entities” in the Healthcare production are 6 “telehealth only” providers, and they are concerned that Meta will take the position that telehealth 7 only providers differ in some material way from other “Covered Entities.” Plaintiffs say they will 8 have no way to rebut such an argument if it is made during class certification without this 9 discovery. Dkt. No. 157 at 54:3-19. 10 The Court resolves this dispute as follows: Meta must search its existing document 11 collection for the Healthcare case for the names of the 34 providers whom plaintiffs identify as 12 “telehealth only” in Appendix A, and must produce any responsive notices located in that search. 13 B. RFPs 45-46, 48: Non-public communications to non-users 14 Plaintiffs acknowledge that Meta has already produced all public-facing communications 15 and statements about its collection of health information via the Pixel. Dkt. No. 149 at 4, 10. 16 Nevertheless, by these RFPs plaintiffs seek “other, non-public communications that Meta sent to 17 the [n]amed [p]laintiffs and other non-users” of Facebook. Id. at 4. Meta objects that there is no 18 reasonable way to search for communications with non-users, who are generally unknown to 19 Meta, and that these document requests are neither “targeted” nor “necessary” to the claims of the 20 non-Facebook user putative class. Id. at 10. 21 When questioned at the hearing, plaintiffs could not identify any basis for believing that 22 Meta has sent non-public communications to non-users about its collection of health information 23 via the Pixel. Dkt. No. 157 at 56:6-57:3. Rather, contrary to the argument presented in the joint 24 letter, plaintiffs explained at the hearing that they are most interested in Meta’s own internal 25 communications about whether it believed non-users would understand their health information 26

was being collected, and not communications to non-users. Id. at 56:24-57:3, 58:25-59:6; see also 27 1 id. 60:23-61:9. 2 The Court is disappointed that the parties did not discuss (or brief) the documents plaintiffs 3 now say they are most interested in—i.e. internal Meta communications—before submitting their 4 joint letter. However, given the nature of the Healthcare production, the Court expects that 5 Meta’s own internal communications, if any, about its data collection practices and about its 6 disclosure of those practices are included in that production. Plaintiffs have not established good 7 cause to require Meta to conduct additional searches for internal communications specifically 8 about Meta’s beliefs about what non-users understand about Meta’s information collection 9 practices. 10 C. RFP 74: Lineage mapping project 11 RFP 74 asks for “[a]ll Documents and Communications reflecting the proposal, execution, 12 outcome, and discussion of the H12019 lineage mapping project referred to in META- 13 NONUSER-001119120.” Dkt. No. 150-5 at 49. As plaintiffs acknowledge, the lineage mapping 14 project was the subject of discovery in the Healthcare case. Dkt. No. 149 at 5. However, they 15 argue that because the Healthcare production includes only 16 documents regarding the planning 16 phase of the project and not its outcome, there must be additional responsive documents in Meta’s 17 possession that have not yet been produced. Id. Meta responds that the Healthcare production 18 includes its responsive documents for the lineage mapping project, including its results. Id. at 10. 19 In addition, Meta points out that it has also reproduced from the Healthcare production documents 20 responsive to many document requests seeking information about how Meta uses information 21 collected from the Pixel, and it should not be required to re-do that production for this case. Id. 22 Nevertheless, at the hearing, Meta agreed to identify the Bates numbers for the portion of the 23 production Healthcare production that reflects the results of the lineage mapping project. Dkt.

24 No. 157 at 61:24-62:17. This should resolve the dispute regarding RFP 74.

25 D. RFP 80: Communications about non-user data only 26 RFP 80 asks for “[a]ll Documents and Communications related to the retention and use of 27 Pixel Event Data and information derived from or inferred from Pixel Event Data outside of the 1 they require this additional discovery to support their conversion claim because “[t]he Healthcare 2 discovery did not focus on non-users.” Dkt. No. 149 at 5. Meta responds that it has “already 3 agreed to search for and produce documents responsive to non-user plaintiffs’ Requests 66, 71, 73, 4 and 118—all of which concern the retention and/or use of non-user data.” Id. at 11. 5 At the hearing, plaintiffs explained that they are not seeking “structured data” but rather 6 email and other communications about how non-user data is used, and in particular how 7 information inferred from non-user data is used. Dkt. No. 157 at 64:7-24. Meta responded that 8 the Healthcare production did not distinguish between users and non-users in the production of 9 structured data or communications about that data. Id. at 65:14-66:22. Plaintiffs expressed 10 concern that the Healthcare production may have excluded communications specific to non-users 11 on relevance grounds, and Meta agreed to investigate whether it could determine if such exclusion 12 occurred. Id. at 68:25-69:8. 13 The

Court resolves this dispute as follows: Meta shall investigate whether the Healthcare 14 production excluded documents specific to non-users on relevance grounds, as it has agreed to do. 15 Otherwise, given the production Meta has already made, or agreed to make, regarding the use and 16 retention of non-user data, the Court finds plaintiffs have not established good cause to require 17 Meta to conduct additional searches for email and other communications about non-user data only. 18 E. RFP 85: Documents and communications regarding Appendix A entities 19 RFP 85 asks for “[a]ll Documents and Communications reflecting conversations between 20 Meta employees and the entities listed in Appendix A to the First Amended Complaint or third- 21 parties acting on their behalf, or among Meta employees regarding those entities, including call 22 and meeting notes.” Dkt. No. 150-5 at 67. Plaintiffs only justification for seeking discovery of 23 these documents and communications is that telehealth-only providers were part of a “different 24 sales sub-vertical” than the “Covered Entities” that were the focus of discovery in the Healthcare 25 case. Plaintiffs argue that because there are only 69 entities in Appendix A, the burden on Meta to 26 search for all communications with or about them is minimal. Dkt. No. 149 at 5. Meta responds 27 that RFP 85 seeks discovery that is overbroad and not proportional to the needs of the case, given 1 topic, with or about any of the 69 entities listed in Appendix A. Id. at 11. In addition, Meta notes 2 that it has already agreed to search for and produce, in response to RFP 86, communications 3 regarding use of the Pixel between Meta and named plaintiffs’ healthcare providers and five 4 additional entities of plaintiffs’ choosing. Id. 5 Plaintiffs have not established good cause for discovery of all documents reflecting any 6 conversation, regardless of subject matter, between a Meta employee and any provider listed in 7 Appendix A, or among Meta employees about any such provider. The request is simply too broad. 8 Moreover, because plaintiffs appear to have served narrower document requests more closely tied 9 to the claims and defenses at issue in this case, the Court agrees with Meta that RFP 85 seeks 10 additional discovery that is not appropriately targeted or necessary. 11 F. RFP 90: Advertising revenue from health technology companies 12 RFP 90 asks for “[a]ll Documents and Communications related to the advertising revenue 13 generated by health technology companies for Meta.” Dkt. No. 150-5 at 76. Plaintiffs explain 14 that this document request seeks information about the way Meta used and benefited from 15 plaintiffs’ data, and the “value of the data usage implicit in [] advertising.” Dkt. No. 149 at 5. 16 They argue that the Healthcare production includes only “topline revenue figures, not the related 17 documents and communications,” and RFP 90 is specific to telehealth-only (i.e. “health 18 technology”) providers. Id. Meta responds that RFP 90 seeks discovery that is overbroad and not 19 proportional to the needs of the case. Meta notes that it has separately agreed to product 20 documents sufficient to show the revenue Meta received from the entities listed in Appendix A, as 21 well as documents concerning revenue generated from, and the business value of, advertising to 22 non-users. Id. at 12. 23 As the Court explained at the hearing, RFP 90 is unreasonably broad. It is no answer, as 24 plaintiffs suggest, that the request can be narrowed by the application of search terms. Plaintiffs 25 have an obligation in the first instance to seek only

“targeted discovery relevant to the non- 26 Facebook user putative class.” See Dkt. No. 113 at 2. RFP 90 is not targeted as required, and 27 plaintiffs have not shown good cause for supplemental discovery of this scope. 1 G. RFPs 98-99: Advertising Account Dashboard 2 These document requests ask for “[a]ll Documents and Communications related to the 3 function, business value, and importance to [Meta or third parties] of the Advertising Account 4 Dashboard.” Dkt. No. 150-5 at 87, 89. Plaintiffs explain that the Advertising Account Dashboard 5 is particularly important to their claims because it is one of the principal known uses of non-user 6 data and a source of value for Meta. Dkt. No. 149 at 6; Dkt. No. 157 at 75:8-76:4, 79:4-23. 7 Plaintiffs emphasize that they are seeking documents reflecting Meta’s own internal assessment of 8 the value and importance of the Advertising Account Dashboard to its business. Dkt. No. 157 at 9 76:5-16. At the hearing, Meta acknowledged that no search terms specific to the Advertising 10 Account Dashboard were used to identify documents in the Healthcare production, but it argued 11 that such documents likely would have been included in the Healthcare production anyway 12 because Meta’s analytics include both user and non-user data, and Meta produced copious 13 information in the Healthcare case about the value and use of such data. Id. at 76:22-77:20, 80:4- 14 81:3, 83:15-21. 15 The Healthcare production appears to have included documents regarding the use and 16 value of both user and non-user data. It also appears to have included documents about the 17 Advertising Account Dashboard. Thus, to the extent plaintiffs seek “all documents and 18 communications” related to the value and importance of the dashboard, RFPs 98 and 99 are not 19 targeted to the discovery plaintiffs need for this case. However, to the extent plaintiffs seek 20 documents and communications specifically addressing the value of the Advertising Account 21 Dashboard, and the value of non-user data to that dashboard, such discovery is targeted, and it is 22 unclear whether Meta has already searched for and produced that material. The parties should 23 discuss whether there are specific custodial sources likely to have responsive information not 24 previously produced and attempt to resolve this dispute without further assistance from the Court.

25 III. FURTHER PROCEEDINGS

26 As discussed at the hearing, the Court expects that the guidance and direction provided 27 above regarding the disputed document requests will assist the parties in resolving, or at least 1 of additional custodians, and if so, which ones. The parties must confer, keeping in mind the 2 || presiding judge’s direction that plaintiffs’ supplemental discovery must be “targeted” and 3 “relevant to the non-Facebook user putative class.” Dkt. No. 113 at 2. Plaintiffs have the burden 4 || of showing “good cause” for such discovery. Id. 5 For any issues raised in the joint letter at Dkt. No. 149 that are not resolved by this order— 6 || in particular, the dispute regarding custodians—the parties may file a further joint discovery 7 dispute letter after they have completed their discussions in view of this order. The joint discovery 8 || dispute letter must conform to the requirement of Judge DeMarchi’s Standing Order, and should 9 || be filed no later than January 21, 2026, unless the parties stipulate to a later date. 10 IT IS SO ORDERED. 11 Dated: December 23,

2025 12 14 Virginia K. DeMarchi United States Magistrate Judge 16 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28