CASE STUDY

FORTUNE 500 · FINANCIAL SERVICES

USE CASE · SANCTIONS SCREENING

Top 3 U.S. Bank

Graph-based entity resolution cut wasted analyst time on false positives – every cleared alert now carries a documented evidence chain.

90–95%

ANALYST TIME ON FALSE POSITIVES

Industry benchmark before graph-based resolution

$1.5B

OFAC PENALTIES IN 2023

OFAC's highest single-year enforcement total

10.6B+

SOURCE RECORDS

In the connected entity-resolution graph

01 AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGE

Up to 95% of analyst time spent clearing false positives

Coordinated sanctions on Russia, expanded OFAC designations, and secondary sanctions on intermediary jurisdictions created an exponential increase in screening obligations. Legacy platforms generated massive alert volumes with limited entity resolution capability.

SOLUTION

Knowledge-graph entity resolution against 10.6B+ source records

If the screening platform could resolve entities against a connected graph of source records spanning corporate registries, ownership chains, and sanctions lists, it could disambiguate entities that legacy keyword-matching systems could not.

RESULT

False positive volume meaningfully reduced - every match documented

Analysts who spent their time confirming false positives now focus on actual risk analysis. The platform's source-linked architecture means every match - and every non-match - carries a documented evidence chain.

02 THE CHALLENGE

Either double headcount or accept material risk of a missed sanctions hit

Global sanctions enforcement entered a new era after 2022. Coordinated Western sanctions on Russia, expanded OFAC designations, and secondary sanctions on intermediary jurisdictions created an exponential increase in the volume and complexity of screening obligations. For the world's largest banks, the math broke: more entities on more lists, multiplied by more transactions, produced more alerts than any team could process.

Inside one of the world's largest global banks, the compliance operations team faced a compounding crisis. The vast majority of analyst time - by widely cited industry benchmarks of 90 to 95% - went to clearing false positives rather than investigating real risk. Legacy screening platforms generated massive alert volumes with limited entity resolution capability. Analysts spent their days confirming that a shipping company in Singapore was not, in fact, a sanctioned individual in Tehran. The work was manual, repetitive, and increasingly unsustainable as list volumes grew.

KEY POINTS

- Coordinated Russia sanctions + expanded OFAC + secondary sanctions = exponential alert growth
- 90-95% of analyst time clearing false positives, not investigating actual risk
- Legacy keyword-matching could not disambiguate complex entity structures
- Either double headcount or accept material risk of a missed sanctions hit

03 THE SOLUTION

Knowledge-graph resolution against 10.6B+ source records in 250+ jurisdictions

The bank's compliance leadership evaluated whether a knowledge-graph-based approach to entity resolution could structurally reduce false positive rates while improving detection accuracy. The core thesis: if the screening platform could resolve entities against a connected graph of 10.6B+ source records spanning corporate registries, ownership chains, and sanctions lists across 250+ jurisdictions, it could disambiguate entities that legacy keyword-matching systems could not.

The evaluation focused on three criteria: resolution accuracy against complex entity structures, source transparency for audit documentation, and API throughput for integration with the bank's existing transaction monitoring infrastructure. A structured pilot tested the platform against a sample of the bank's highest-volume alert categories.

SAYARI CAPABILITIES USED

- Knowledge Graph
- Entity Resolution
- Sanctions Screening API
- Source-Linked Audit Trail
- Continuous Monitoring

04 THE RESULTS

Resolution infrastructure that scales with sanctions list growth, not against it

The compliance team operates with a fundamentally different posture. Analysts spend their time on genuine investigative work rather than mechanical alert clearing. The screening operation scales with sanctions list growth rather than against it. When the next wave of designations hits - whether Russia-adjacent, China-related, or secondary sanctions on new jurisdictions - the team has the resolution infrastructure to absorb the volume without breaking. The bank now runs one of the most data-rich sanctions screening environments in global banking.

90–95%
Industry benchmark for analyst time on false positives

$1.5B
Total OFAC penalties in 2023 - the consequence of misses

10.6B+
Source records across 250+ jurisdictions

> *"When the next wave of designations hits, the team has the resolution infrastructure to absorb the volume without breaking."*
>
> HEAD OF SANCTIONS COMPLIANCE, TOP 3 U.S. BANK

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