



Who Uses FOIA and WHY?

An analysis of FOIA logs: 229,000 requests from 85 federal agencies

My Background With FOIA

I have a broad perspective on how FOIA is used

Deutsche Bank

Catastrophe modeling in the financial/insurance sector

Revaluate

Real estate due diligence service provider

The Guardian, World Economic Forum, Metrocosm

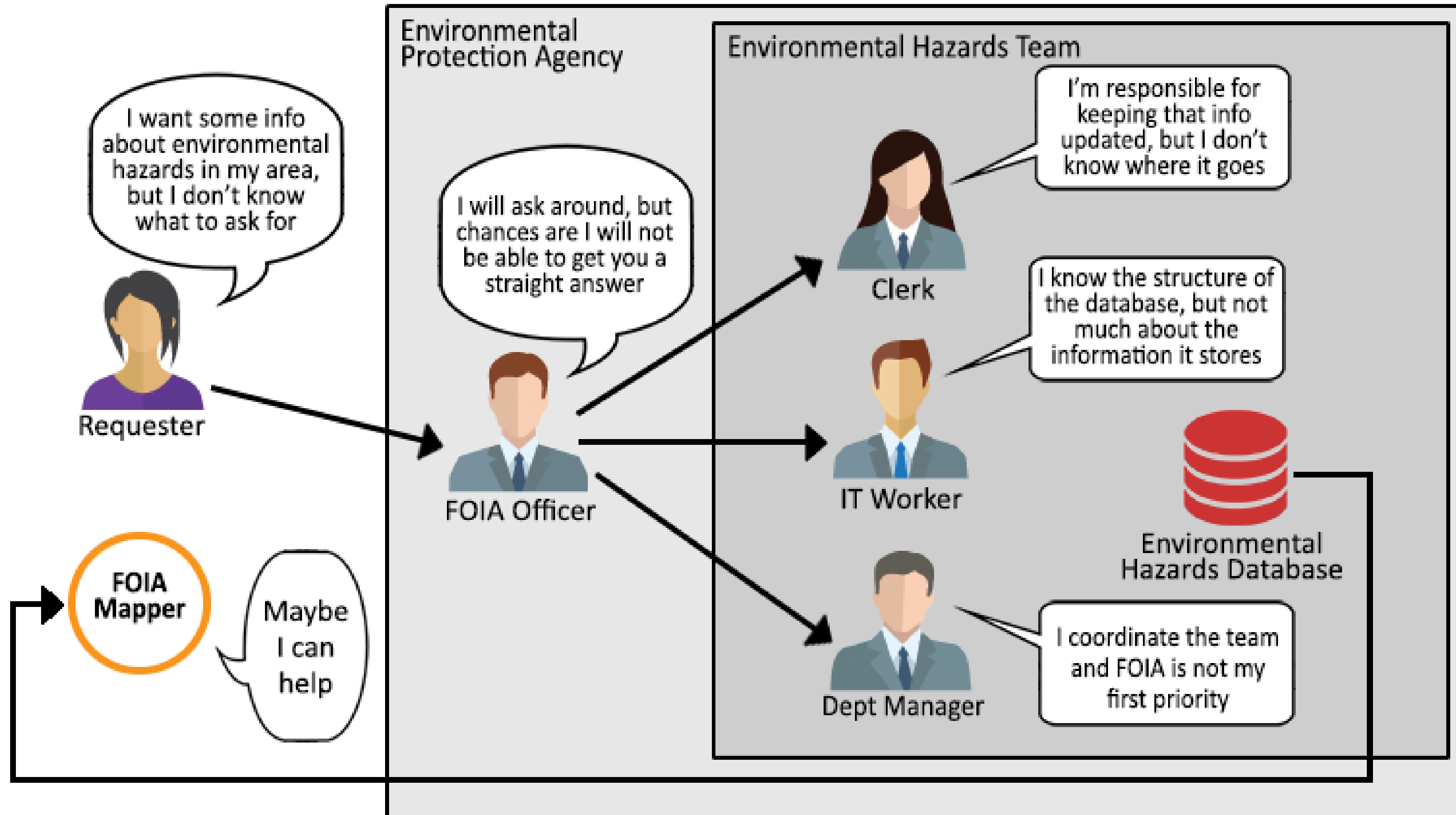
Data journalism / data visualization

FOIA Mapper

Public records search engine

Why I built FOIA Mapper

A searchable database of FOIA logs



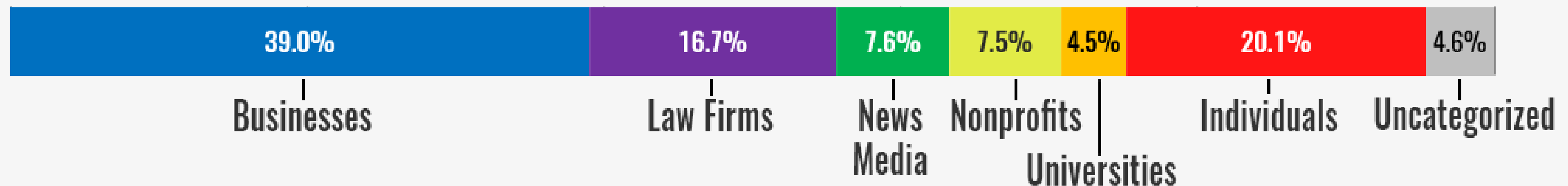
The FOIA guessing game

Who uses FOIA and why?

An analysis of **229,000** requests from **85** federal agencies

Who Makes FOIA Requests?

Share of FOIA requests by requester category (85 agencies combined)



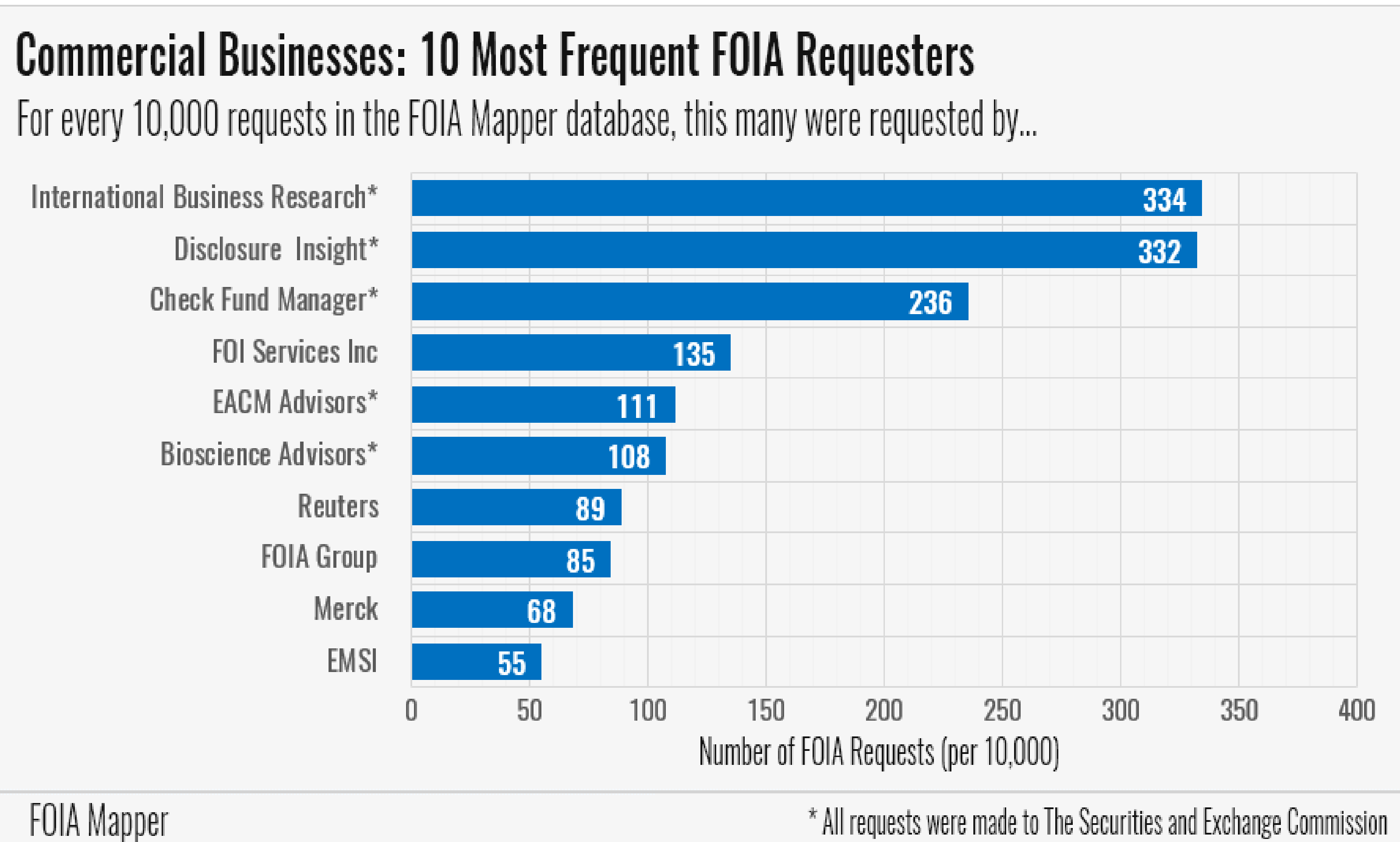
FOIA Mapper

Source: Agency FOIA request logs

- Includes only agencies who report both the name and the organization of the requester.
- The span of time covered by the data varies by agency, with an average time period of 3 years.
- A description of how the requestors were categorized can be found at: <https://foiamapper.com/who-uses-foia/>

Frequent Filers: Businesses

Five little-known financial research companies dominate

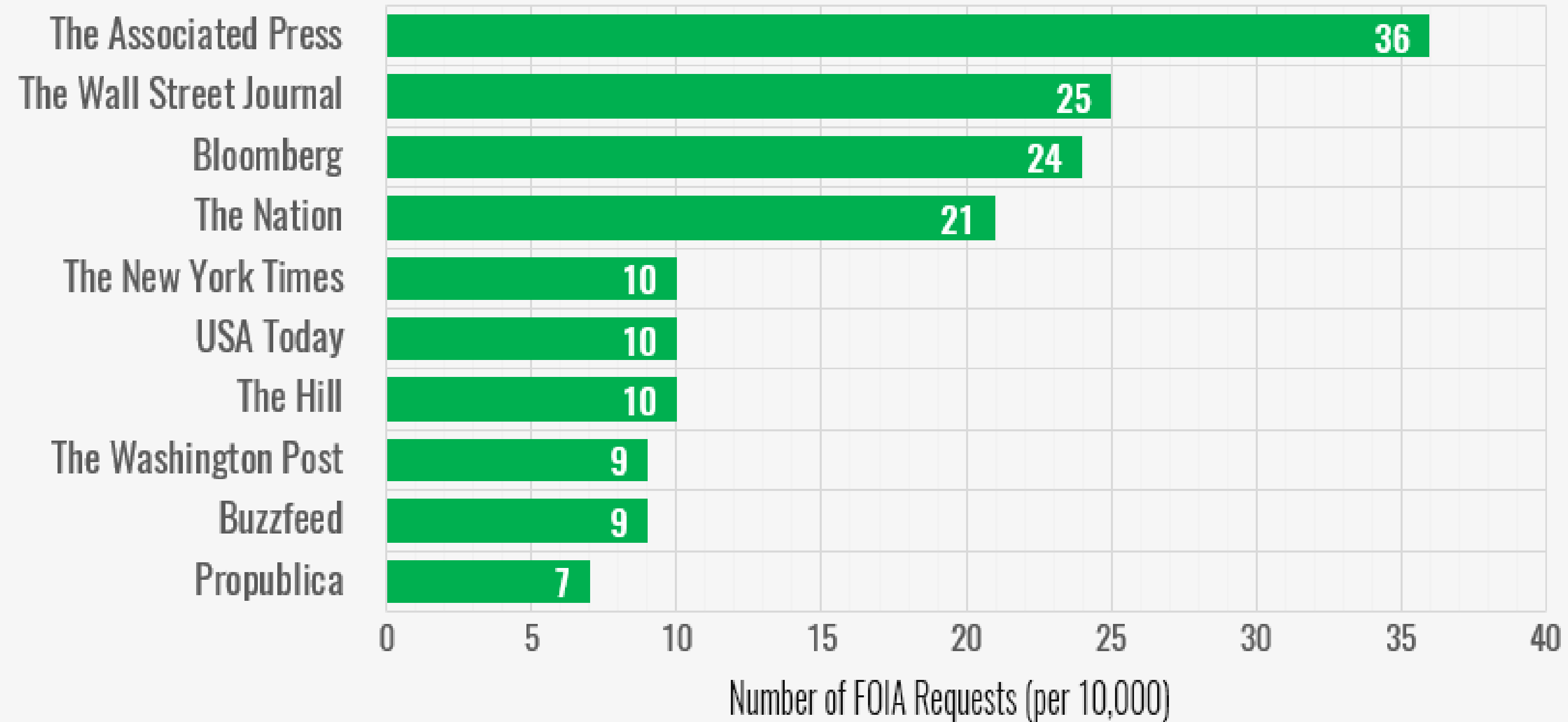


Frequent Filers: News Media

The most frequent requesters are large, mainstream news outlets

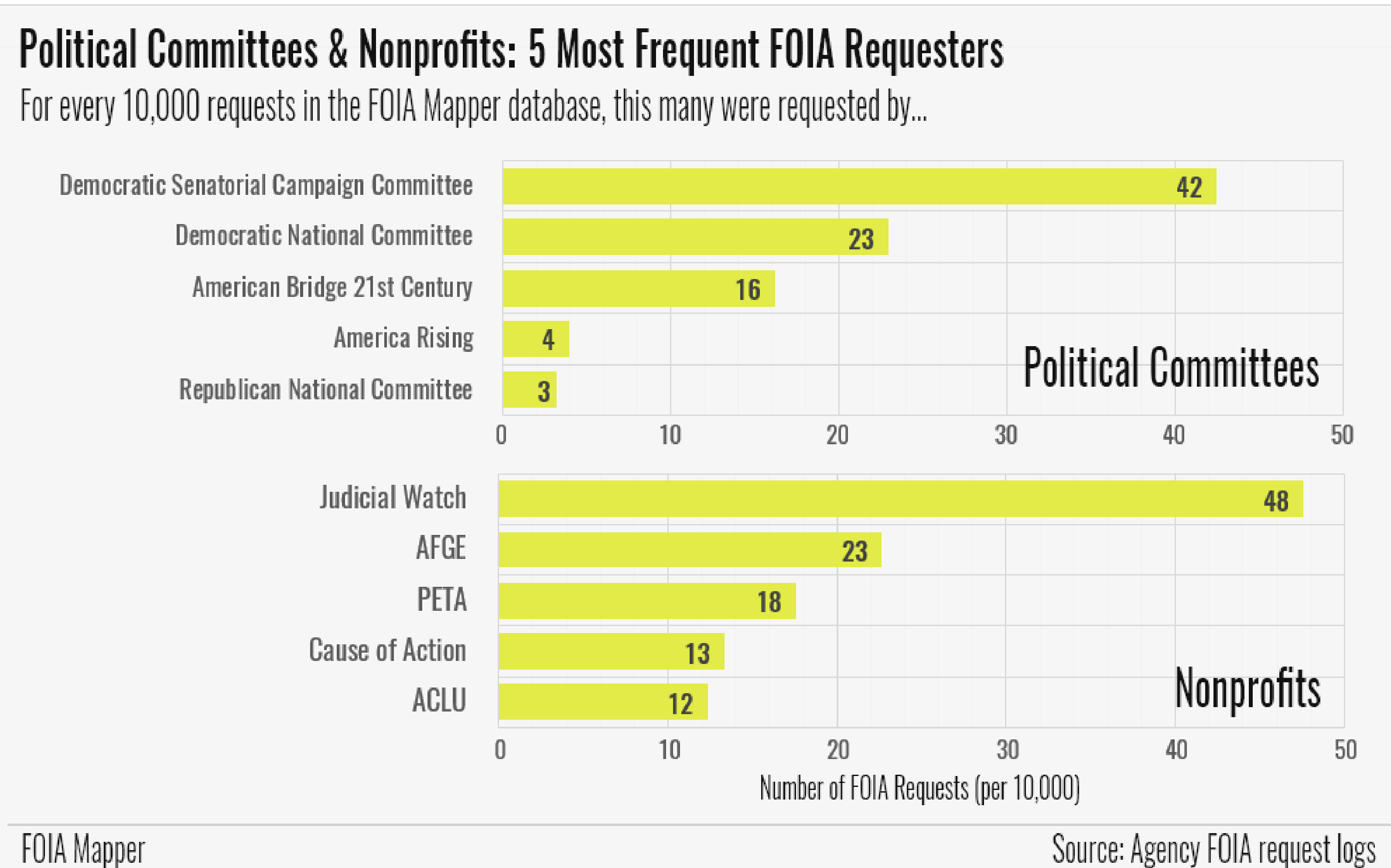
News Media: 10 Most Frequent FOIA Requesters

For every 10,000 requests in the FOIA Mapper database, this many were requested by...



Frequent Filers: Political & Nonprofit

Democratic committees use FOIA more than their Republican counterparts. Nonprofits are a mixed bag.

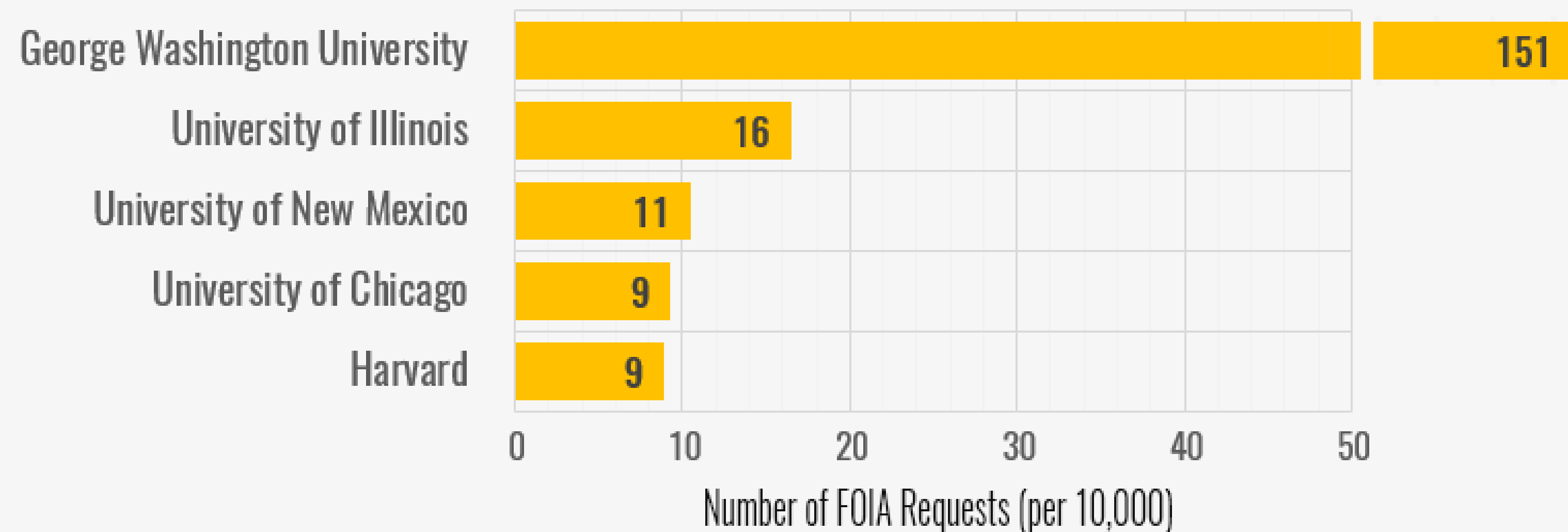


Frequent Filers: Universities

GWU's National Security Archive and UICU's Illinois State Geological Survey

Universities: 5 Most Frequent FOIA Requesters

For every 10,000 requests in the FOIA Mapper database, this many were requested by...



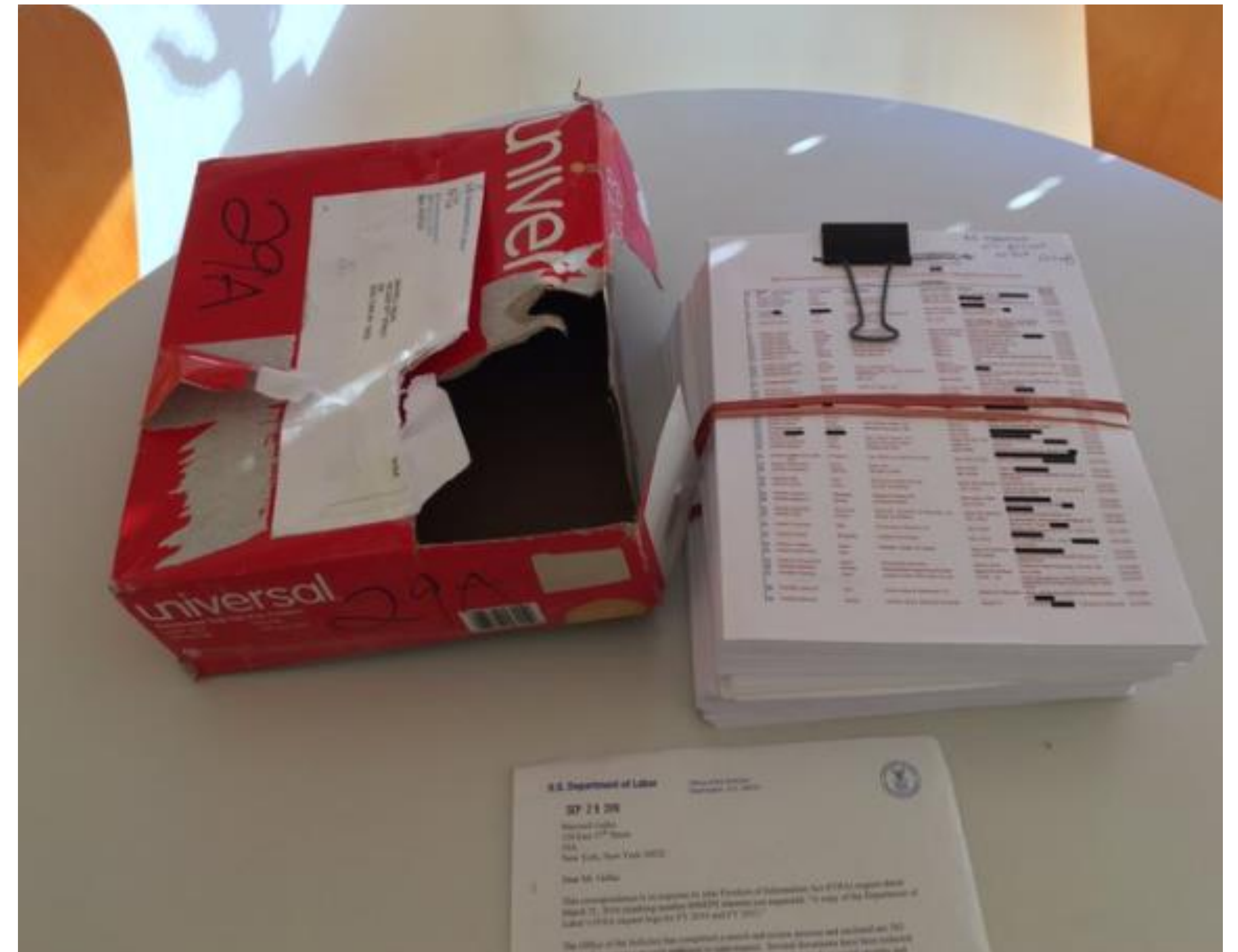
FOIA Log Considerations

FOIA logs can be a huge time saver for both the requester and the agency

The importance of format

- Best case: **Excel/CSV**
- Almost as good: **Structured PDF**
- Hard to work with: **Scanned PDF**
- Painful: **Printed hardcopy**

Frequent updates are ideal, but older FOIA logs are still very helpful



763-pages of FOIA logs in “Excel” format



Questions?

<https://foiamapper.com/who-uses-foia/>