

Computer Forensics

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Computer Forensics is the preservation, recovery and investigation of data present on a computer hard drive, that is completed in a manner that is admissible in criminal or civil court proceedings. This includes any previously deleted data which can be recovered using forensic tools and techniques.

This method can also be applied to examine any other type of digital device and removable media (i.e. DVDs, CDs to floppy disks, mobile phones and digital camera memory cards).

At Athena Forensics, our experts understand that computer evidence is highly volatile and when used in evidence should be examined in such a way that the data is not altered or affected, as any other approach could open up the investigation to legal challenge.

The extraction of data from any storage device is undertaken whilst maintaining the maximum possible integrity of the information recovered and is achieved by forensically imaging a copy of the source media. All examinations are carried out using up to date technology following the relevant guidelines and protocols.

Our team of experts have been involved in various types of criminal cases ranging from indecent images, fraud, murder to drug offences (with both LSC and private funded clients). We are also highly experienced in commercial and civil litigation cases ranging from investigations into the recovery of deleted e-mails to the misuse of computers at work.

Previous Investigations:

R – v – Matthew T – Possessing and Making Indecent Images of Children

The Defendant was accused of making and possessing unlawful images that were identified by Police on his home computer. An expert from Athena Forensics examined the origins of the image and identified that they had been created as the user had browsed the internet. During the browsing activity a number of items of malicious software had also been encountered. A review of these items by an Athena Forensic expert revealed that they were likely to have caused the creation of the images. The Police examiner agreed with these findings and the Prosecution case was dropped.

R – v – Anthony F – Impact of the Alteration of Digital Evidence

A public service worker was accused of possessing a number of unlawful images that were identified on a multi-access work computer. The Defendant denied knowingly downloading the unlawful material. Athena Forensic experts confirmed the presence of the images, however, identified that the actions taken by the organisation in the detection and investigation of the computer prior to Police involvement were found to have significantly altered the reliability of the evidence. The Defendant was found not guilty of the allegations following a 5 day trial at Crown Court due to the procedures taken by the Audit department.

The cases in which we are most frequently involved in are:

■ Indecent Images ■ Fraud ■ Theft of Data & Intellectual Property ■ Murder ■ Misuse of Computers in the Workplace