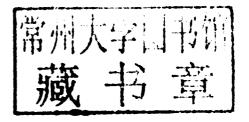
CYBERCRIME & SECURITY

Cybercrime & Security

Compiled & Edited by Pauline C. Reich

Volume 1





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Part I

CYBERCRIME

Chapter 1

Investigations & Forensics

- § 1:1 Hard to hide on computer hard drives
- § 1:2 Legal limitations on cross-border data transfers in cybercrime investigations

KeyCite*: Cases and other legal materials listed in KeyCite Scope can be researched through the KeyCite service on Westlaw*. Use KeyCite to check citations for form, parallel references, prior and later history, and comprehensive citator information, including citations to other decisions and secondary materials.

§ 1:1 Hard to hide on computer hard drives*

The knock on the door interrupted her morning coffee, but annoyance turned to shock when the suburban mom was confronted by two FBI agents. They were there to investigate the trafficking of child pornography by a computer user in the house. The culprit was the fourteen-year old son, who had been exploring erotica online in the privacy of his bedroom. Contained in files he downloaded over a peer-to-peer file sharing network were child pornography images.

Unbeknownst to the teenager, the peer-to-peer file sharing program he had downloaded on his computer to search for and retrieve files for free, had automatically become a "supernode." In effect, his computer had been activated to serve as a network hub, holding part of the massive searchable list of available files for freeloading within the network. As a result, the peering program was beaming around the globe to other network users an invitation to download files stored on

[Section 1:1]

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^{*}By Beryl A. Howell and Eric Friedberg.

the computer, with all of the civil and criminal liability that attaches for distributing child pornography. The stunned parents turned to expert computer forensic examiners to help put the teenager's conduct in context and explain to law enforcement investigators how many child porn images were distributed as a result of a direct action by the teenager versus uploading activities by other users on the network.

Whether the conduct being investigated is a network intrusion, denial of service attack, theft of intellectual property, child pornography or other kind of criminal, malicious or tortious activity, electronic data stored on computers, including desktop and laptop machines, servers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and Blackberries may provide a gold mine of evidence that can shed light on a suspect's past activities, future plans and state of mind. This evidence may be highly probative of guilt or exculpatory.

Given the ubiquitous use of and reliance on computers by companies and individuals to communicate, transact business, find information, and be entertained, investigators and lawyers should have sufficient familiarity with the kinds of evidence that may be found on desktop computers and removable media not only to make use of that evidence, but also to anticipate its defensive use. In the case of the teenage son, forensic examination was able to show that the significant distribution of child pornography from the son's computer was the result of uploading activity by other users—often occurring when the son was not even present—and he avoided prosecution.

The focus here is on the types of information that may be forensically recovered from computer hard drives, but other components of a network, such as the file, e-mail and web servers, printers and other peripherals, and Internet Service Providers used to connect a computer or network to the Internet, also hold information on use of the computer that may be relevant to an investigation or litigation.

The nature of the investigation at hand helps guide the types of electronic data for which the forensic examiner will look. In child pornography cases, investigators will want to look for graphic images on the suspect's computer, determine with whom the suspect was communicating and trading images and which web sites the suspect visited to obtain images. In intellectual property theft cases, investigators may want to compare hash values of the stolen digital property to see if it appears on the suspect's computer and, if so, determine when and how the suspect obtained or transferred the property, whether to or from removable media, such as CDs or floppy disks, or over a network. In cases involving physical violence, stalking or harassment, investigators will want to determine whether the suspect's computer contained addresses or other personal information about the victim and how and when the suspect obtained the information. The victim's computer also may hold clues to the origination point of the perpetrator's e-mail messages.

No matter the type of conduct at issue, the starting point is the