



Vermont Internet Crimes Against Children
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Computer forensics is the acquisition, examination and reporting of information found on computers and networks that pertain to a criminal or civil investigation. Every day individuals in today's society leave a "digital footprint" of their activity starting when they wake and turn on their cellular telephones. Nearly everything that someone does involving digital technology leaves a trace and these traces can be captured, analyzed and tell-tale information gleaned. Examples of this information include, but are not limited to: Cellular telephone/text messaging call detail, account access logs and cellular tower mapping; E-mail headers and instant messaging logs that may include message content; Digital surveillance equipment at Automated Teller Machines, gas stations, shopping malls and highways/traffic intersections; Internet service provider and server access logs; and of course personal computing devices that include not only computers, but PDA, cellular telephones, smart phones, MP3 players, pagers, etc. Each of these sources can and often do yield wide ranging and valuable information that may prove to be evidence pertinent to criminal investigations.

Many criminals engaged in murder, kidnapping, sexual assault, extortion, drug dealing, auto theft, espionage and terrorism, gun dealing, robbery/burglary, gambling, economic crimes, confidence games, and criminal hacking (e.g., Web defacements and theft of computer files) leave a "digital footprint" of their daily activities that can be captured and analyzed by specially trained law enforcement investigators. Criminals also wittingly or unwittingly maintain incriminating evidence on their computers and personal computing devices. If captured and analyzed property, information from these sources may prove critical in identifying a suspect and often times this information yields the most damning evidence of criminal conduct.

Cyberforensics is increasing in importance for the law enforcement community for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that computers, use of digital devices and the access to the Internet represent the fastest growing technological tools utilized by criminals. This trend continues to grow exponentially and will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. Vermont is no exception to this trend as we have seen an explosion in the use of the internet and digital devices as a means to commit and/or facilitate criminal activity. Digital devices and the internet have given Vermonters instant and unfettered access to anyone from their neighbors down the street to people across the world.

Located at Burlington Police Department and funded by the United States Department of Justice are the Vermont Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (**VT-ICAC**) and the Vermont Internet Crimes Task Force (**VTICTF**). These task forces are comprised of local, state and federal law enforcement investigators, forensic examiners and prosecutors in Vermont. This group of highly trained personnel are charged with the investigation of Internet and high technology crimes (including production and trafficking in child pornography, computer facilitated child sexual exploitation, identity theft, cyberstalking and computer/network intrusions), the forensic examination of digital evidence and ultimately the successful prosecution of these high tech offenders.