



DIGITAL FORENSICS SPECIALIST GROUP

Notes of the seventeenth meeting, held at 11:00am on Tuesday 26 April 2016 at the Home Office, London

1.0: Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed all present to the seventeenth meeting of the Digital Forensics Specialist Group (DFSG). See Annex A for the full list of attendees and apologies.

2.0: Minutes of the previous meeting on 13th July 2015

2.1 The chair invited comments on the previous DFSG draft minutes from 13 July 2015. John Beckwith requested an edit to replace paragraph 3.3 of the minutes with the following wording:

“DCC James Vaughan was assisting forces with procurement opportunities for digital tools and analysis through the Collaborative Law Enforcement Procurement programme.”

2.2 Subject to this change, the committee agreed the minutes were an accurate reflection of the discussions held.

Actions from the previous DFSG meeting held on 13 July 2015

2.3 The chair reviewed the actions from the last meeting on 13 July 2015 as follows:

- Action 2 on the Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) disk imaging material and user requirement: The CAST disk imaging material was reported to be available to all government organisations. Authority to release it to commercial organisations had been requested but not so far granted.
- Action 4 on the digital validation guidance draft: These updates to the draft had been provided and it had been made available. The Cheshire police digital team had also assisted by commenting on the draft.
- Action 10 on revisions to the Cell Site Analysis guidance: This guidance was being revised into an appendix to the Codes. Some sections had been removed and would be used in a separate guidance document.

2.4 All the other actions from the previous meeting were either completed or were on the agenda for discussion at the present meeting.

3.0: NPCC Digital Forensics Portfolio update

3.1 Members heard an update from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) digital portfolio board, starting with work being undertaken in police forces. The current emphasis for the NPCC was supporting forces to achieve International Standards Organisation (ISO) 17025 digital forensics accreditation by the October 2017 target date. As a policing organisation could have more than one 'legal entity' for accreditation purposes, it was reported that sixty separate law enforcement entities were seeking this accreditation and all had submitted their plans. Police forces needed to manage how they handled multiple accreditations. A number of forces needed to amend their plans to take account of feedback from United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and the Expert Network on achievability. 19 had applied for accreditation under ISO 17025.

3.2 UKAS were recruiting both technical assessors for digital forensics and assessment managers to manage the expected increase in accreditation applications. Close cooperation between the police forces and UKAS would be needed, especially in the busy months which would be from May to July in both 2016 and 2017.

3.3 Merseyside and West Midlands police forces were leading the digital forensics mobile phone analysis work and Leicestershire and Staffordshire forces were leading on digital data extraction and processing. A team of six, led by Neil Cohen, at CAST, were assisting with all the work on digital tools. DCC Nick Baker's NPCC Digital Forensics Portfolio Board and the NPCC Performance and Standards group chaired by Mark Hopkins were leading the national digital analysis project. The quality managers in forces would also report directly to the NPCC quality managers group. A separate area had been established on the College of Policing's Police On-Line Knowledge Area, to record digital analysis procedures and processes.

Action 1: The Chair to contact the National Crime Agency (NCA) for an update on digital tools used by the police for child sexual abuse investigations.

3.4 A questionnaire had been issued to law enforcement agencies to establish the demand for digital forensics and the resulting data was currently being collated and analysed. The Home Office procurement team would use it to help seek good value digital forensics procurements for police forces.

4.0: Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and Video

4.1 The Codes required all Forensic Service Providers (FSPs) undertaking analysis of videos to be accredited to the ISO 17025 standard. Some bulk viewing of video footage would be permitted outside this standard. DFSG discussed the extent and implications of this exclusion.

4.2 Much day-to-day viewing of video material, for example body-worn video, might occur outside the specialist forensics unit. The force forensics unit should as a minimum have governance over the software used for the viewing. The Streamlined Forensic Review (SFR) processes also needed consideration in connection with the digital evidence.

4.3 The main steps needed to prepare CCTV and video evidence had been tabulated which included important aspects such as risks and mitigations. A two-step process was needed:

- to decide which stages of evidence preparation were included or excluded, either partially or completely;
- to decide for those parts that were not covered by the ISO 17025 standard, what controls needed to be in place and how their risks would be mitigated.

4.4 Further work was to be carried out ex-committee to refine the scope definition and risk mitigation.

Action 2: Simon Iveson and Gill Tully to work with John Beckwith, the Chair and others as required to identify the various preparation stages of video and CCTV analysis and whether each stage would be included or excluded from the ISO 17025 standard and to decide how to control the risks for excluded stages.

5.0: Digital Forensics: Cell Site Analysis

5.1 The committee heard that the Regulator was aware that some cell site practitioners were making unjustified and biased statements, for example:

- “the cell provided coverage at the address in question” when the cell provided coverage over a large area including many addresses;
- “the findings are consistent with the individual being at the address in question” when the data was also consistent with them being at a large number of addresses.

5.2 The cell site guidance document had been produced as a Codes document and would form the basis of the forthcoming digital forensics pilot exercise. Seven organisations had agreed to pilot ISO 17025 accreditation using this document.

5.3 Mobile phone call data quality would be considered later in 2016 due to validation and interpretation issues. Peter Sommer had been involved with work with the Home Office to draft a document on the use of digital signing to provide greater robustness to communication data evidence as a whole, and in particular to cover the transfer of data from a Communications Service Provider to Law Enforcement. He offered to make this document available.

Action 3: Peter Sommer to send the document which included details of digital signing of communications data to the Chair.

5.4 Previously, when the Home Office had managed their own web site, they had been able to track its usage, view the number of times each document was accessed, and obtain a full report of any disabled website links and similar problems. This had proved useful and there was interest in the current usage level of the Forensic Science Regulator (FSR)'s digital guidance on the GOV.UK site.

Action 4: The secretariat to request from the web team, statistics for the GOV.UK website, on the number of times the Cell Site document was viewed, and similarly for the other digital forensics documents.

5.6 The chair formally thanked the Cell Site Analysis sub group led by Matt Tart for the work they had done to provide the cell site document.

6.0: Speech and Audio Analysis

6.1 The speech and audio codes document had been through public consultation. Several letters were submitted in addition to comments specific to the text of the draft in response to the consultation. In summary they argued that peer review and formal accreditation in the field of speech and audio forensics were not practicable. This was discussed within the group, which disagreed with these statements.

6.2 Only five comments suggesting specific changes to the text of the draft were received and most were fully incorporated into the draft document being considered at this meeting.

6.3 The conclusions from DFSG on the draft text were as follows:

- Delete “trained by the same organisation” from the comment on expecting two independent experts to reach the same conclusion, as experts in forensic science were expected to do so, regardless of any differing organisations;
- If peer review of audio analysis resulted in disagreement on the conclusions, then this disagreement should be disclosed in the expert's report. This comment was to be added to the “Checking and Review” section of the document;
- Add a clause that the reviewer should be blind to the original conclusion when they carry out their review and provide their own conclusion;
- Included that the minimum standard of materials to be fit for purpose;
- Included guidance for selection of experts and cognitive bias;
- Add a reference to “ground truth data” to the Test Methods section under blind testing.

Action 5: The final edits to the Audio and Speech document to be completed by Wednesday 27 April and the document to be submitted as a paper to the Forensic Science Advisory Council (FSAC) meeting on

Friday 29 April. Proof reading to be carried out the following week followed by publication.

7.0: Digital forensics method validation guidance

7.1 The digital forensics method validation guidance document had been issued for consultation and constructive responses had been received. The document required proof reading and style checks to align it with the FSR house style. Next it would be submitted to the FSAC meeting on Friday 29 April followed by proof reading. DFSG were content with this timetable.

8.0: Future of Digital Forensics Specialist Group

8.1 Members were informed that this was the last meeting of DFSG with its current terms and membership and that the group as constituted would be dissolved. The FSR and Chair thanked members of the DFSG for completing the programme of work which had been initially specified for the group.

8.2 The Regulator and Chair would reform the group. Individuals with skills matched to advising on and delivering the work programme expected for the next twelve to eighteen months, in general representing sector groups, would be approached. Therefore some previous members might be invited to return when the group first reformed, or might be invited to rejoin at a later date as the work programme evolved.

8.3 No AOB's were raised.

Annex A

Present

Mark Stokes	Metropolitan Police (Chair)
Gill Tully	Forensic Science Regulator
John Beckwith	Staffordshire Police
Neil Cohen	Centre for Applied Science and Technology, HO
Rupert Evernden	College of Policing
Peter French	Peter French and Associates
Nigel Jones	Canterbury Christ Church University
James Luck	Metropolitan Police
Angus Marshall	Independent
Peter Sommer	London School of Economics

In attendance

Emma Burton-Graham	HO Science
Simon Iveson	Forensic Science Regulation Unit, HO
Mike Taylor	HO Science (Secretary)

Apologies

Mark Bishop	Crown Prosecution Service (Brighton)
David Compton	United Kingdom Accreditation Service
Danny Faith	F3 Steering Committee
Andrew Letherby	HM Revenue and Customs
Zoe Scott	Skills for Justice
Matt Tart	CCL Group Digital Forensics
Craig Wilson	Digital Detective

Actions from April 2016

Action No.	Action	Owner	Deadline	Progress	Status
1	The Chair to contact the National Crime Agency (NCA) for an update on digital tools used by the police for child sexual abuse investigations.	The chair of DFSG	June 2016		In progress
2	Simon Iveson and Gill Tully to work with John Beckwith, the Chair and others as required to identify the various preparation stages of video and CCTV analysis and whether each stage would be included or excluded from the ISO 17025 standard and to decide how to control the risks for excluded stages.	Simon Iveson, Gill Tully, John Beckwith, Chair of DFSG	June 2016		In progress
3	Peter Sommer to send the document which included details of digital signing of communications data to the Chair.	Peter Sommer	August 2016		In progress
4	The secretariat to request from the web team, statistics for the GOV.UK website, on the number of times the Cell Site document was viewed, and similarly for the other digital forensics documents.	Secretariat	May 2016		In progress
5	The final edits to the Audio and Speech document to be completed by Wednesday 27 April and the document to be submitted as a paper to the FSAC meeting on Friday 29 April. Proof reading to be carried out the following week followed by publication.	Simon Iveson	June 2016		In progress