

St. Louis Technology News

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TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES FROM ISPIRIAN, SYLLOGISTEKS® AND ULTRATECH

CASE FILES



Ispirian's case management software provides clients with real-time updates of each computer forensics investigation.

The pervasive use of computers and other electronic devices has made computer forensics vital to many civil and criminal cases, leading to a surge in the number of computer forensics investigators. Any investigator who has received training and certification from a reputable college, university or online program should have the necessary skills to

discover and preserve electronic evidence for use in court. However, there are many other things to consider when choosing a computer forensics firm.

An important question to ask is how the computer forensics examiners will communicate with you as the investigation progresses. An attorney managing discovery and other pre-trial processes cannot afford to wait days for a phone call or e-mail regarding critical evidence.

Ispirian Computer Forensics has implemented a comprehensive case management solution that streamlines communication and provides clients with real-time updates. The software creates a secure Internet portal through which Ispirian investigators and their clients can exchange information, update schedules and view key evidence.

“Once we set up a case in this soft-

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Case Files

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ware, the client can view and download any files that we post there. Plus, anytime an investigator makes an update to the case, the client automatically receives an e-mail notification,” said Vadon Willis, Forensic Investigator, Ispirian Computer Forensics. “The calendar feature enables the client to put in key dates and appointments, and the system automatically e-mails the investigators assigned to the case whenever an update is made. This tool enables us to stay in touch with clients at all times via a secure site.”

Looking for Clues

A computer forensics investigation is almost never cut-and-dried, according to Willis. Too many variables can impact the timetable and the processes involved.

“An attorney may tell us that she has four computers for us to examine, but we might find dozens of digital media to catalog, image and index. Or she might say there are two computers each with a 60GB hard drive, but if those drives are old with numerous bad sectors it could take longer to process than originally anticipated,” Willis said. “We put these details into the case management software so that the client knows what to expect.”

Those details can also give the client the

flexibility to help direct the course of the investigation. A line of thinking that seemed promising may go nowhere, while other evidence suggests a new direction for the case.

“When an investigator seizes an image of a particular device he’ll often take photos of the physical space around that device. Once the attorney sees those pictures she may find something she wants to include in her motion,” Willis said. “As long as I have an Internet connection I can immediately upload those photos to the portal and the system will send her an e-mail — she can be completely aware of what’s going on while we’re out in the field.”

Dollars and Sense

The case management system also enables the client to enter a budget for the investigation. As the investigators log their time and track expenses, the client can see how much budget is left for that case.

“This also helps the investigators choose the best course of action to meet the client’s needs,” said Willis. “Typically time is of the essence so we’ll bring the devices into our lab and have multiple investigators and multiple workstations processing the data as quickly as possible. But it all depends upon the needs of the case, the timeline and the budget that they’ve defined.”

Ispirian’s case management software is much more than a convenience — it’s a conduit for the free flow of information between the client and investigators. While many computer forensics firms track cases and update clients via e-mail as time allows, Ispirian believes in providing clients with complete transparency regarding the details of an investigation.

“Whether you’re talking about pretrial practice and discovery, or a criminal investigation involving law enforcement, communication is absolutely critical,” Willis said. “Our case management system provides clients with 24-hour access to documents, photos and reports. It helps our investigators work efficiently and meet important deadlines. Important information is always available, up-to-date and organized, and that can help make or break a case.”

Anytime an Ispirian investigator makes an update to the case, the client automatically receives an e-mail notification

