

# Forensic Data Collections: What You Need to Know, and The Questions You Need to Ask

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## A PASSION FOR TEACHING

Having joined the field of digital forensics directly out of academia, as a Computer Crime Specialist with the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C), I had a great deal to learn about 0s and 1s, bits and bytes, hexadecimal and more. Only after completing a rigorous training program to learn this technical content was I permitted to instruct my first class. The class included thirty law enforcement personnel from all over the United States. I learned a great deal about digital forensics from the experiences that my NW3C colleagues and students shared. I gained an understanding of what was going on “underneath the hood” of the automated forensic tools and how to convey complex concepts and processes to students who had varying levels of technical knowledge.

## A KNACK FOR CONSULTING

As my career progressed, I transitioned from an instructor to a forensics consultant for professional services firms. I have been able to successfully apply this technical knowledge to assist clients in the identification, preservation, collection, and examination of electronic evidence. While initially my exposure to digital forensics was law enforcement centric, the time I spent consulting has also provided me the opportunity to gain expertise in the field of eDiscovery. On a daily basis, I work with global law firms and multinational corporations across many different industries to address their digital forensics needs.

Digital forensics has continuously evolved throughout my career and many automated forensic tools are available to address the new data

## “Digital forensics has continuously evolved throughout my career”

sources that have emerged. Some of which include the release of new mobile device models and the upgrades to operating systems and file systems. There is truly a lot to be aware of and all parties must be on the same page, especially when it comes to the transfer of possession of devices/media/data, and subsequent collection and examination of electronic evidence. While it may not be necessary to always discuss the technical details about a process, it is often necessary to provide the parties involved with a high-level overview. These parties include members of legal teams, litigation support teams, IT teams, business stakeholders and data custodians. It is important to remember that each of these parties may, in turn, need to describe the process to others.

When it comes to electronic evidence, the parties involved often put forth a lot of effort related to discussing, coordinating, and executing forensic data collections. Over the years, I have met with hundreds of parties that have been involved in investigations. During these meetings I listen closely to the questions and concerns that are raised; so much has been learned through the process, and this experience has allowed me to become a trusted advisor.

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Wanting to take the opportunity to share my knowledge with others, I recently published Forensic Data Collections 2.0: The Guide for Defensible & Efficient Processes. My book, available on Amazon or directly via [www.forensicsbook.com](http://www.forensicsbook.com), provides information to forensic practitioners, investigators, and even those who have experience with eDiscovery on what they can expect and what may need to be asked of the parties involved when encountering today's most common data sources during an investigation. Also discussed are different types of methodologies that forensic practitioners utilize, the various documentation that is generated, and important considerations related to planning and executing forensic data collections. A questionnaire is included for each data source covered to as-

sist in the identification of data that may be relevant to an investigation. Additionally, an extensive Knowledge Assessment evaluates the reader's understanding of the various topics addressed. **PI**



*Robert B. Fried is a seasoned expert and industry thought-leader, with over twenty years of experience performing data collections and forensic investigations of electronic evidence. He is the Senior Vice President and Global Head of Sandline Global's Forensics and Investigations practice. In this role, Robert leads the day-to-day operations of the practice, overseeing the forensic services offered to the firm's clients, including data collections, forensic analysis, expert testimony, and forensic consultation. Previously, Robert held senior-level positions within the digital forensic practices at global professional services firms. Additionally, Robert was a Computer Crime Specialist at the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C), where he developed and instructed computer forensic and investigative training courses for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. He attained a BS and MS in Forensic Science, and certificates in Law Enforcement Science, Computer Forensic Investigation, and Information Protection and Security from the University of New Haven. Robert serves on the Board of Advisors for the Masters in Investigations program at the University of New Haven. He holds and actively maintains the following industry certifications: Access Data Certified Examiner (ACE), Certified Forensic Computer Examiner (CFCE), EnCase Certified Examiner (EnCE), GLAC Certified Forensics Analyst (GCEA), Chainalysis Cryptocurrency Fundamentals Certification (CCFC), Chainalysis Reactor Certification (CRC), and C4 Certified Bitcoin Professional (CBP). Robert is a licensed Professional Investigator in Michigan and is a licensed Private Investigator in New York. He is a frequent speaker at industry events, has been a guest on industry podcasts, and has been published in several professional publications. Robert is the author of PI Magazine's CyberSleuthing Department, where he shares insightful content on topics relating to digital forensics, eDiscovery, data privacy, and cybersecurity.*

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