

Protecting Your Digital Footprint

Wittingly or unwittingly, we document almost everything, and those charged with keeping us safe and seeing that justice is done can no longer ignore this reality.

BY JILL MCINTYRE
AND JOHN SAMMONS

DURING THE 1980S, with the sudden accessibility of microprocessing, computer use—once reserved for government and industrial applications—exploded into the mainstream. Individuals purchased computers for research, programming, gaming and word processing. In the 1990s, as technologies advanced and the Internet grew, computers became less a novelty and more a necessity. Individuals began to rely on them as a source of up-to-the-minute information, such as stock prices, maps and news, and as a platform for consumer-oriented software like Quickbooks™, which is used for managing small businesses and household affairs.

As the century turned, more and more Americans were carrying their computers around. Desktops gave way to lighter and skinnier laptops. For those who had a computer at home and in the office, it became convenient to replace laptops with smartphones, which were later improved greatly by tablets.

Yes, private enterprise has been on the road to computerization for decades. What has crept up on us as a society—what has beguiled and captivated us almost without our knowing—is the computerization of our nonbusiness existence. With a powerful processor, plenty of hard drive space and a good connection, we are suddenly able to do without the things we once considered necessities: radio, television, newspapers, phone books, maps, letters, dating, shopping, literature and photographs. All of these we make our own today through individual interaction with a computerized device, and many of us have one device at home, one at work and at least one that is mobile.

These changes have come upon us so subtly, it is no wonder we do not recognize that nearly everything we do leaves a digital footprint that is trackable and traceable in ways never before imagined. Wittingly or unwittingly, we document almost everything, and those charged with keeping us safe and seeing that justice is done can no longer ignore this reality.

According to the annual cybercrime report by Norton, an anti-virus software producer, 71 million people in the United States were victims of cybercrime in 2011. In the same year, it is estimated that 1.8 zettabytes of data were created or replicated, enough to fill 57.5 billion 32GB iPads, which would stack into a mountain 25 times higher than Mount Fuji. The sheer volume of electronically stored information and the blinding speed of these changes are staggering.

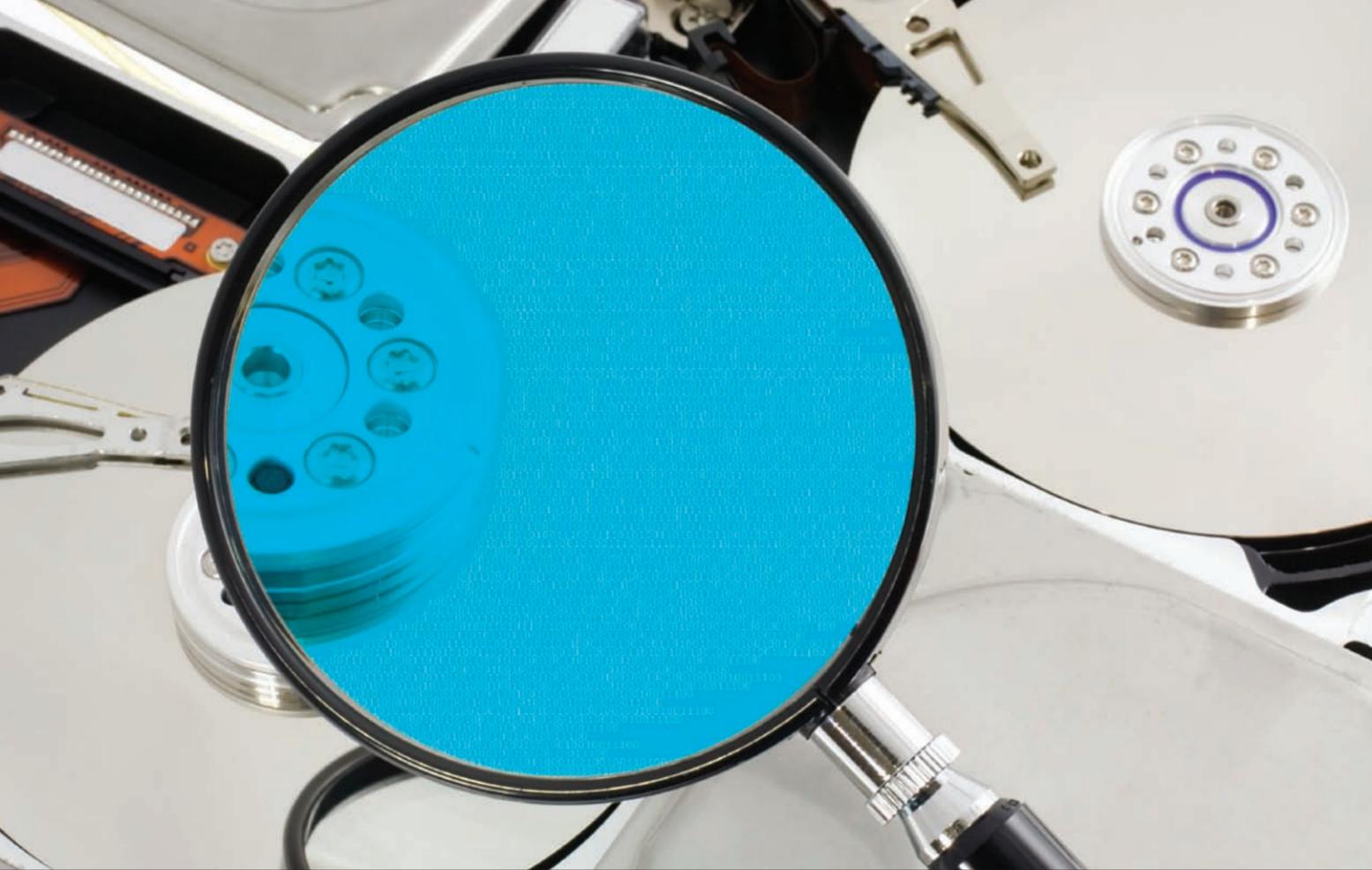
The Appalachian Institute of Digital Evidence (AIDE) is an educational institute formed in West Virginia to provide training and research to practitioners and stakeholders who deal with digital evidence on a regular basis. AIDE's target audience includes lawyers, judges, digital forensics and information security professionals and corporate information technology personnel. Founded in 2009 by representatives from Marshall University, Jackson Kelly PLLC and Flaherty Sensabaugh Bonasso PLLC, AIDE proposes that digital evidence proficiency is a necessary prerequisite to the effective administration of justice, public safety, homeland security and the security and well-being of our companies, agencies and organizations.

AIDE has three working groups—Digital Forensics, Information Security and Electronic Delivery—and encourages collaboration across the disciplines, serving as a support network and resource for professionals in their effort to keep pace with technology. The institute held its first annual conference in July 2010, and the event has grown each year in size and stature. In addition, AIDE has put on a number of ancillary educational programs and has an active social media presence, including Facebook and Twitter, and a strong student group at Marshall University.

ExEdge

The term "digital footprint" describes the trail you leave in cyberspace and on any form of digital communication through e-mail, texting, blogging and social networking.

Source:
<http://www.netlingo.com/word/digital-footprint.php>



Digital Forensics

Digital forensics has a wide variety of applications. Many people immediately associate it with child pornography and identity theft. In reality, it is so much more. Any criminal case, regardless of the charge, could contain digital evidence. Beyond criminal litigation, digital forensics is used in civil cases, the military and intelligence communities and administrative actions. Digital evidence in one form or another is in the news daily. Seal Team 6 not only eliminated Osama Bin Laden, but they also collected bags of valuable intelligence from his house, including hard drives, thumb drives and CDs.

Information Security

While there are many hacker conferences, AIDE is the only conference that bridges the gap between the front-line information security professional and the academic community. The information security working group of AIDE is composed of professionals in the public and private sectors, and their goal is to bring together top researchers to share knowledge and to promote the field of information security with conferences and interactions with professionals in overlapping fields such as digital forensics and electronic discovery. The group also seeks to educate the general public on information security topics.

Electronic Discovery

Keepers of the judicial system—lawyers and judges alike—are completely enamored with the technology that improves our daily lives such as the Internet, computers and mobile devices like cell phones and tablets. All too often they do not understand the basics of digital evidence in a controversy or courtroom. Left unresolved, what some might see as a minor issue to be left to experts can become a serious obstacle to the administration of justice.

From the simple to the complex, AIDE offers e-discovery education and resources for lawyers and judges and the clerks and legal assistants who work alongside them. From abstract legal concepts to the nuts and bolts of whom to interview, what to ask, how to avoid spoliation, how to think strategically and why one might handle digital evidence one way as opposed to another, AIDE champions the appropriate consideration and use of digital evidence in court.

Making the Cyberworld Safer

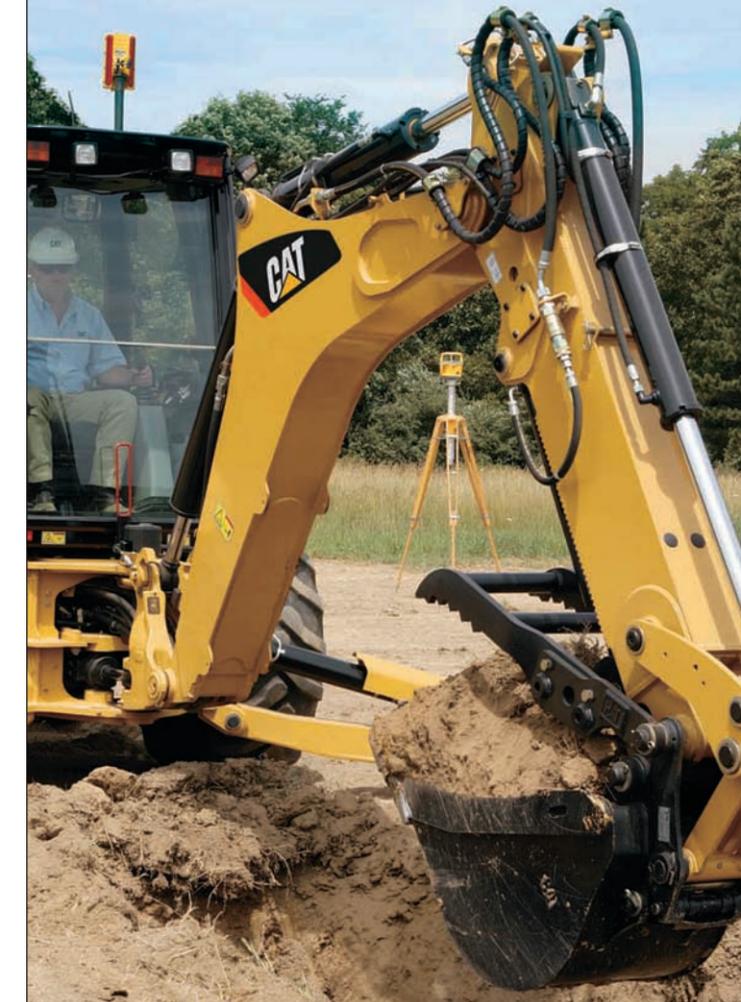
Over the years, AIDE has brought quality local continuing education to hundreds of professionals who do not have the budget or the time to go to other conferences. The institute has been able to attract nationally recognized industry “rock stars” to inspire and share knowledge, making AIDE an excellent investment for students and professionals alike.

The successes, however, go beyond academic exercise. Through connections made at AIDE events, federal and local law enforcement have successfully collaborated on a child pornography case. AIDE has provided cybersafety education to Richwood High School, held a digital forensics camp for Mingo County 4-H members and administered digital forensics training for West Virginia prosecuting attorneys and the National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators. AIDE representatives traveled to the Commonwealth of Virginia to teach basic digital evidence principles to substitute judges in the district as well as the juvenile and domestic court systems.

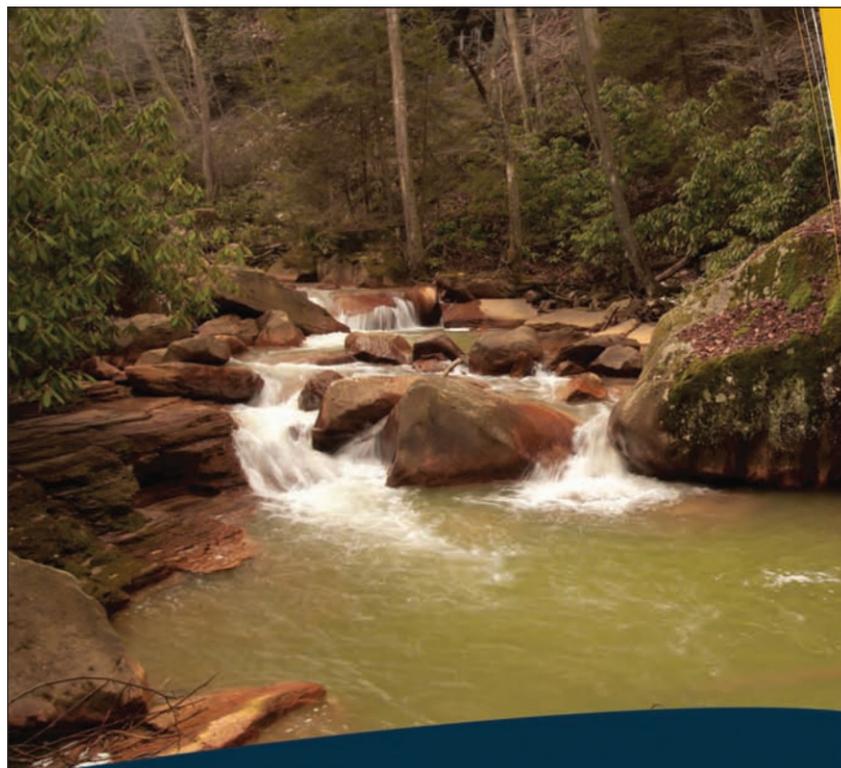
The institute truly exists to make a difference in the lives of individuals, litigants, professionals working in law and industry and the public at large. ■

THERE'S PROFIT

in both **SPEED** and **ACCURACY**.



Smart Businesses use
Cat® Accugrade™ Grade
Control Systems



Engineering

Surface mine applications, NPDES permitting, 401/404 permitting, geologic modeling, reserve analysis, environmental liability.

Monitoring

Benthic assessments, fisheries assessments, habitat assessments, water quality monitoring, water quality treatment.

Mitigation

Site evaluations, mitigation proposals, mitigation banking assistance, natural channel design, wetland delineation, wetland design.

Technology

GIS analysis and development, database design, native iPhone and iPad application development, web development.

DECOTA
CONSULTING COMPANY, INC.

4984 Washington St. W.
Cross Lanes, WV 25313
(304) 776-3333
www.decotaconsulting.com

Walker

CAT

walker-cat.com