

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB
HOW TO WRITE A BETTER SERVICE REQUEST

- ✓ Provide us with a copy of your affidavit. It tremendously helps the Examiner understand your case. If you don't have an affidavit, provide us with a written summary of your case. The more we understand what your case is about, the more likely we are to locate relevant information.
- ✓ Tell us the name of the victim(s) and suspect(s), including nicknames and chat handles. If possible, let us know what user profile(s) ("logons") your suspect used. Let us know what email addresses or accounts your suspect was using and any passwords your suspect uses. Spelling and legibility count.
- ✓ Is there a specific date range relevant to your investigation? Is the examination limited to certain dates by your search warrant?
- ✓ We usually cannot absolutely prove who was "at the keyboard." We can provide you with supporting details, such as which user profile or account was in use. It will always fall on the Case Agent to establish dominion and control over the computer, and establish who was "at the controls" when certain events took place.
- ✓ If submitting multiple computers, media, or hard drives, tell us which system or piece of media you think has the highest probability of finding what you are looking for. If we find your evidence on the first system, it may eliminate the need to conduct examinations on the remaining systems and/or media.
- ✓ Do you really need to ask for "all Internet History?" On a recent case, this resulted in over 2,500 pages of Internet History. Focus your request based upon your investigation. For example, do you need History for a specific date range? Do you need History related to a specific website? Do you only need History from a specific user profile? Are you looking for evidence that a specific file was downloaded?
- ✓ Do you really need "all email addresses?" A typical computer system contains hundreds, if not thousands, of email addresses, most of which are unrelated to your investigation. Many of these addresses are in help and support files. Spam can account for hundreds more addresses.
- ✓ As a practical matter, we will only extract the first 200 images of suspected child pornography from any given system. There is little to be gained from extracting additional images.
- ✓ The Examiner will call you to discuss your needs and refine your request once the Examiner has had the opportunity to look at your case. The more information you provide on your request, the better we will be able to screen, prioritize, and assign your case for examination.
- ✓ Remember your RCFL case number. Because every agency we serve uses a different format for their case numbers, we must rely on our case number to look up your case.
- ✓ Be patient. We put quality over speed.