J17 The Effects of Consultation, Writer Origin, and Message Size on Writer Recognition by Forensic Document Examiners

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be informed on recent results in proficiency testing of forensic document examiners.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating information which will assist forensic document examiners in others in understanding FDE proficiency issues, and may be useful to all sides during *Daubert* hearings.

Since 1993, the Data Fusion Laboratory (DFL) at Drexel University has conducted a series of Questioned/Questioned and Questioned/ Known tests, administered to forensic document examiners (FDEs) and laypersons. These tests used handwritten samples (handprinted, nonhand-printed and 'mixed') and signatures, and required different tasks of association and assessment. Some of the tests examined capabilities of FDEs in specific types and styles of handwriting (e.g., paragraphs of words vs. paragraphs of numerals). Other concentrated on procedures and protocols (e.g., scales of opinions, and the effect of peer review and consultation on error rates).

At present DFL studies are being conducted in the following areas:

1. differences (if any) between the capabilities of FDEs in writer identification using hand-printed samples and their capabilities with non-hand-printed, cursive, and 'mixed' samples;
2. FDE reporting scales;
3. proficiency with limited quantities of handwriting;
4. proficiency with texts comprising numerals (primarily or exclusively);
5. proficiency using English texts written by individuals whose mother tongue is not English; and
6. the effect of consultation and peer review on FDE error rates. This survey talk would highlight our most recent results in these

areas.

Proficiency Tests, Forensic Document Examination*, Daubert* vs. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.