



D12 The Rational for International Certification for Digital Evidence Professionals

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the benefits of having an international certification program for many types of digital media based on the criteria and to describe the numerous positive outcomes of having such a program.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by stimulating a discussion in the community and to gain the benefit of ideas generated as this topic is discussed.

People, training, education and objects can be certified. Certification indicates that "X" has met criteria of performance standards established by a consensus of experts. Whether referring to a person who is a Board Certified Forensic Pathologist, or a certified brake installation on an airplane, basic criteria must be met that demonstrate a specified competency for the awarded certification. Professional certification evolves in response to external demands placed on a profession or a subset of expertise or internally from a need recognized within that community.

In the case of crimes related to digital evidence and the subsequent forensic examination of digital evidence, there is pressure from the courts and from international organizations, to establish standards and definitions for the international exchange of digital evidence. In the law enforcement and forensic science communities, it has become apparent to many that a coordinated effort is needed in this area. The establishment of international professional performance standards by the professionals who work in this field seems reasonable and necessary. Professional certification currently exists for several forensic science disciplines. The establishment of certification standards would help insure that crime scene experts who collect digital evidence, forensic examiners who examine the recovered digital evidence and the investigator who analyzes the digital evidence would all be applying the same principles and standards in their activities, written reports and in court testimony. The basic areas of 1) collection and preservation, 2) examination, and 3) analysis may be performed by one person or three separate individuals. However, the basic principles must be followed throughout. Professionals can easily list the knowledge, skills and abilities and attitudes (KSAAAs) that are needed to perform the various tasks related collecting, preserving, examining and analyzing digital evidence. These KSAAAs would form the basis for the certification questions and practical examinations. Ethics will be the cornerstone for the attitudes required.

International Certification, Digital Evidence Professionals, Competency Based Certification