



### D59 New Developments From the National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology, and the Law

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Attendees will gain knowledge of the forensic science information resource guide compiled by the Clearinghouse, as well as numerous continuing education tools and training materials the Clearinghouse is working on.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by informing the forensic community of the current (and future) projects at the National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology, and Law so they can become involved in ongoing continuing education and training and utilize the existing resource guide and reference collection as appropriate.

New challenges for expert witnesses and the legal community have arisen due to recent developments in science and technology. New technologies and methodologies, as well as fields long considered established, such as latent print identification and tool marks are facing increased scrutiny. Given this explosion of scientific evidence litigation, scientists, law enforcement, laboratory personnel, judges, and lawyers are overwhelmed by the amount of information required to educate them to meet these legal challenges.

Until now, judges, lawyers, scientists, and law enforcement personnel did not have one source that allowed them to navigate all the existing case law, journals, reports, proceedings, and other resources necessary to conduct effective investigations and litigation. The *Resource Guide for Users of Science and Technology* was created to fill an information need specifically relating to legal issues implicated by the use of new technology in criminal and civil justice. Supported by a joint cooperative agreement between the NFSTC and NIJ (#2000-RC-CX-K001), the project developed a comprehensive searchable database from a variety of sources covering a wide range of topics. The database provides information on topics such as bloodstain pattern analysis, body scans/retinal scans, digital image enhancement, entomology, expert witness malpractice, fingerprints, questioned documents, smart cards, trace evidence, and tool marks. The Resource Guide covers existing court rulings, pending court cases, scientific and legal articles from applicable sources, relevant information from books, current and pending legislation, conference proceedings, university and continuing education courses, and pronouncements from professional organizations. The NFSTC/NIJ project produced a searchable CD. The information contained in the Resource Guide will be included in and expanded upon in the online resource being developed by the National Clearinghouse on Science, Technology and the Law at Stetson University College of Law. The Clearinghouse is supported by a grant from the National Institute of Justice (#2003-IJ-CX-K024).

In addition to the development of the online resource, the Clearinghouse is building partnerships with law schools, professional associations, and federal agencies, sponsoring a forensic science/science and technology seminar series, convening Community Acceptance panels at the request of NIJ, sponsoring the National Conference on Science, Technology and the Law with various forensic science and legal organizations, developing training modules with an emphasis on distance education, and building a reference collection of law, science and technology literature available through interlibrary loan to other institutions.

#### Science, Technology, Law