



Criminalistics Section – 2007

B161 An Update on the Scientific Working Group on Friction Ridge Analysis, Study, and Technology (SWGFAST) and West Virginia University Friction Ridge Sourcebook

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Attendees will be informed and updated on the development of the Friction Ridge Analysis Sourcebook, a project funded through the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and conducted by SWGFAST and WVU.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating the benefits of this type of reference collection. Information and updates on the International Association of Identification Library Collection housed at West Virginia University's Wise Library will also be presented.

With over 100 years of service in the court systems, friction ridge evidence and its reliability has recently been challenged. The lack of standardization and the lack of application of established standards have become the main issues disputed at length. To date, there is no single publication with current information on the history, morphology, methodology, classification, guidelines, processing, automation, equipment, quality assurance, and other vital areas of friction ridge evidence. The Friction Ridge Analysis Sourcebook will eventually become the written authority that the friction ridge community has long been lacking.

For over 10 years, the Scientific Working Group on Friction Ridge Analysis, Study, and Technology has maintained a consensus of standards in the friction ridge community by publishing documents and guidelines for friction ridge examination. Through sponsorship from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, SWGFAST has played an important role in addressing the current friction ridge issues and providing lists of research topics to be performed. It is the mission of the members to assist the latent print community in providing the best service possible to the criminal justice system.

This presentation is an overview of the Friction Ridge Analysis Sourcebook and its development. Experts in the various fields of friction ridge analysis were called to draft the individual chapters of the Sourcebook, thereby creating a bibliography of almost 900 sources. Many of these sources are out of print and are difficult to obtain. By collecting information from various geographic locations and publications, the Sourcebook will be able to bring a set of standards for terminology, methodology, training, and quality assurance to the entire forensic science community. Such standards would allow for a consensus among forensic scientists and coalesce the last century of recognizing friction ridge identification as a science. It will also provide an invaluable research tool to members of the forensic science community that do not have access to the out-of-print, archived materials.

As advancements are made within the science, it is anticipated that the Sourcebook will also be updated and re-distributed to universities, law enforcement agencies, forensic laboratories, and individual practitioners. New chapters will be added to support the latest discoveries or controversies in the field and any corrections will be made accordingly.

SWGFAST, Friction Ridge Analysis, Reference Collection