



Questioned Documents Section – 2011

J10 Scanned Images: How Well Do They Depict the Subtle Features in Handwriting?

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to understand and anticipate the limitations inherent in examination of handwriting from scanned images and should be better prepared to conduct such examinations.

The presentation will impact the forensic science community by educating practitioners about increasingly common examinations of handwriting from digital images.

It is increasingly common for companies and governmental agencies to retain scanned images of documents in lieu of originals. While in some cases original documents are also retained, in many instances the originals are destroyed after imaging. As a result, the best image available for examination by a forensic document examiner may, in fact, be a digital image acquired by scanning the document.

Document examiners always want to examine original documents. However, because digital images are sometimes all that exist, forensic document examiners are increasingly called on to make examinations from these images. Furthermore, because of the ease of sending scanned images as attachments to e-mail messages, attorneys at times send these digital images to document examiners for review even when the originals are ultimately available.

This study will address which features in handwriting are reliably and accurately depicted in scanned images and will concentrate on subtle features such as line quality, natural breaks in the writing line, stroke directions, and lightly-written strokes. The image quality obtained from using various scanning parameters and transmission methods will be studied. How and to what extent print-out equipment affects the examination of handwriting from scanned images will also be considered.

Scanned Images, Handwriting, Digital Images