



Under the Microscope

Vol. 2, No. 3 Newsletter of IADE Winter 2016

CONTENTS

PAGE 2

HIGH TECH SOLUTIONS

William Koppenhaver

BOARD MEMBERS

PAGE 3

THE BOOK SHELF

Kathie Koppenhaver

MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER IADE

PAGE 4

Q&A

TIPS AND TACTICS

PAGE 5

“De-Mystifying The Cloud”

Roxanne Brand

PAGES 6

2017 CONFERENCE DENVER, CO

PAGE 7-8

2016 CONFERENCE PHOTOS



THE IMPORTANCE OF LABORATORY TRAINING

Editorial

I recently retained the services of an attorney. The hourly rate of the attorney is less than my hourly rate. And in reviewing a recent publication on fees set by experts, document examiners charge less than other

professionals.

A document examiner doesn't need a college education although it is recommended. Attorneys need a college degree and three years of law school. Then they have to pass the bar exam in order to work as an attorney.

When I got into this business there were no requirements to hang out your shingle as a document examiner and many examiners had little training in the field. Now courts are more stringent and document examiners need to demonstrate that they have taken a course of study in document examination.

There are two main parts necessary to become and maintain your recognition as a handwriting examiner. The first involves taking a course in document examination and that includes reading the relevant books by authorities in the field. Research is also recommended but not essential. The other part of your training that should not be overlooked is laboratory training. Hands-on laboratory work is part of your basic training.

Where can you get hands-on training? It comes from attending workshops. Hands-on workshops are the laboratory training that you need in order to complete your training. I realize that some document organizations are using Zoom in place of annual seminars. While there is a place for Zoom meetings, they cannot replace the hands-on workshops so necessary in our field.

Kathie



HIGH TECH SOLUTIONS

Florescence

By Bill Koppenhaver

Florescence is a property of some materials to emit light in one color when illuminated by light of a different color. The most common example of this is when Hi-lighter type pens are illuminated with ultra-violet light and produce a bright glow. The same reaction occurs in other areas of the light spectrum. The most common example of this in criminal investigation is when a bright blue light is directed at clothing and then viewed through an orange-colored filter. If there are any bodily-fluid stains present they will show up as light-colored stains that would not be visible under normal white light. The same method can be used to help discriminate between ink samples that may appear the same under white light. In the past this kind of investigation could only have been done with expensive equipment like a VSC (Video Spectral Comparator). Due to the recent advances in high-sensitivity, low-cost black & white video cameras, it is possible to utilize these techniques at a lower cost.

There are three elements necessary to utilize this florescence technique. The first is a source of bright colored light of a specific wavelength (color). A VSC uses a very bright Xenon light and then selects the specific color through the use of specialized band pass filters that allow only one wavelength of light to pass through. An alternate approach is to use LED's (Light Emitting Diodes). LED's are small flashlight-lightbulb-size devices that produce a specific wavelength light when voltage is applied. Currently they typically come in red, amber, yellow, green, blue, and white. They typically cost about \$4.00 to \$8.00 each so having a selection of colors is not expensive. Since they emit light in only one color a lamp band pass filter is not needed. The second element necessary is a camera filter in approximately the opposite color as the light source. That is, for a blue light an orange filter would be used. For green, a red filter is used in front of the video camera. The idea is to block the source color light while allowing other colors of light to pass through the filter. For this purpose, inexpensive photographic color filters will work fine. The third element is a relatively light sensitive black & white camera. Most of these cameras are developed for the security industry so that they are inexpensive and some even connect directly to an ordinary television set. The one I am currently using is in the form of a low power microscope with the appropriate close up lens and is quite compact and light weight. It can even be adapted for use through an ordinary microscope for additional magnification.

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The Book Shelf



HANDWRITING IDENTIFICATION: FACTS AND FUNDAMENTALS

By Roy A. Huber & A. M. Headrick

As Reviewed by Kathie Koppenhaver

Handwriting Identification is a refreshing approach to document examination as the writers are covering material that should be part of every examiner's training. They have done meticulous research and quote extensively from their sources. They rely heavily on other writers' material bringing together a rich comparison of ideas from respected leaders in the field and others not as well known.

They bring forth information that has not been emphasized in any of the other document books on the market. They provide definitions, most of which are excellent and some are confusing. Although they do not believe that graphology is valid, they present information that has been taught through graphology such as "Hand-writing is brain writing." They recommend that document examiners use the information that graphologists have accumulated regarding the frequency of handwriting characteristics.

The writers introduce the main reason for their book on page 39 when they state, "[T]he lack of unified articulation is one of the discipline's most serious shortcomings, a fault that this dissertation has been conceived to overcome." And it does.

They begin their text with the history of handwriting and the development of the alphabet; and the history of handwriting identification and document examination. They describe the "discriminating elements of writing" which are more commonly known as handwriting characteristics and identification twenty-one basic characteristics that document examiners should use in comparing exemplars.

I disagree with some conclusions they have drawn regarding handwriting. They state "With growth in age and development in handwriting, there is increased conformity to the rules." (page 14) and "Class characteristics were predominant in the writings of the first half of the century, when adherence to prescribed writing systems was strongly promoted in the educational programs." (Page 33) They identify class characteristics as "the products of prescribed writing systems." They go on to suggest that class characteristics no longer have value because the various penmanship systems that students learned to write cannot be distinguished.

The authors state that "the role of class characteristics in the agenda of handwriting identification because of form differences prescribed and exhibited by different systems, has been greatly diminished if not completely demolished." (Page 43)

Class characteristics have a broader definition. They are characteristics shared by large groups of people. They are still an important part of the identification process. They give us a basis for recognition of individual characteristics. If we couldn't identify class characteristics, how would we recognize individual characteristics?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Membership

2017 Information

(February 1, 2017 through January 31, 2018)

Application Fee \$25.00

Dues \$90.00 Individual
(Annual – Prorated)

Lab \$90.00 First Individual
\$45.00 Additional Individuals

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Deadline for next issue

March 18, 2017



The International Association of Document Examiners (IADE) was incorporated on January 7, 2015 in Maryland. Kathie Koppenhaver is the resident agent and President of the organization. Sylvia Kessler is Vice President, Marcy Word is Secretary, and William Smith is Treasurer.

The writers have contradicted themselves in several areas. It may be the result of relying so heavily on their sources. In drawing from so many different writers, they produce conflicting comments. For example, on Page 80, the authors state that "the principle difference in the products or issues of animate and inanimate bodies rests in the voluntary control that the body can exercise over its issues." In the same paragraph the authors add that "the variables that influence handwriting cannot be readily controlled."

The authors describe the effect various illnesses have on handwriting based upon studies that have been conducted. This includes Alzheimer's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Arthritis, Diabetes Mellitus, and Multiple Sclerosis. They cover the effects of drugs, aging and emotional stress upon the handwriting. Then move on to intrinsic causes for changes covering hallucinogens and hypnosis.

The authors also attempt to discuss graphology but it is obvious that they are not versed in the field. They write, "Scientific principles, logic and scientific method are not a professed part of graphology."

The writers use a question and answer format throughout their book of seventeen chapters. They tackle tough questions and point out the problems with government laboratories and voluntary testing. They mention NADE but state that they had no information about their certifying procedures.

Any book or speaker that challenges the writer to take action has merit in my mind. I find that Handwriting Identification does just that. The reference to many of the research projects that have been done on handwriting is worth the price of the book. It is the type of book that you will want to take to court in order to show the scientific research that has been conducted on handwriting.

Handwriting identification should be read and referenced by document examination. It should be a part of everyone's basic library right next to Osborn, Hilton, and Saudek. The book is published by CRC Press, 2000 Corporate Blvd., NW Boca Raton, Florida 33431-9868. Phone 1-800-272-7737. [www://crcpress.com](http://www.crcpress.com)

Roy Huber and A. M. Headrick are examiners retired from the RCMP.



LAST ISSUE'S ANSWER: A pangram is a sentence that uses every letter of the alphabet at least once.

Ex: "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."

What is the most common method used to disguise handwriting?

Answer will be in the next issue.

If you would like to submit an answer, contact the editor.

See page 3.

Tips and Tactics

- ◆ Ask to see all reports and documents reviewed by an opposing examiner.
- ◆ Carry an artist portfolio for large exhibit charts.
- ◆ If you do a live demonstration in court, have photographs ready to enter into the record.
- ◆ If you have equipment to set up or breakdown in court, do so during a break in the proceedings.
- ◆ Demonstrative evidence should be used in every court case.
- ◆ Never call yourself an expert. That is for the court to decide.
- ◆ Get feedback on your testimony. Asked a friend or colleague to accompany you to court and make notes on your performance.

De-Mystifying The Cloud

By Roxanne Brand

Today's technology offers ways of storing documents - many, many documents and today's technology, if used wisely and consistently, can also offer a cleaner, more organized office. Purchasing file cabinets to store case files do not have to happen with much frequency because most of your documentation is stored virtually.

Have you ever heard of the Cloud? To most people it is an unknown scary place. Some think it's the internet but aren't sure what aspect of the internet it happens to be. The Cloud is not the internet.

The Cloud is a service provided by companies such as Google, DropBox, Microsoft, etc. There are different aspects to the Cloud but we will focus on the basics that can assist document examiners. This service can give the user the ability to have documents reside on their local computer as well as having it stored securely in data centers across the country or even the world. It isn't known which data center those documents are stored but the user has access to them no matter where they are. For example, you could be working on documents in your office computer, go away on vacation, and continue to do work on those very same documents on a different computer in a different town, state, or even country. As long as you have an internet connection, you are only one computer away from your information. Since your data is stored remotely, it is also maintained, managed and backed up. This particular feature is nice as it is done for you by your service provider.



As mentioned previously, companies like Google or Drop Box have facilities also known as data centers located all over the world. Data centers are facilities that house the equipment that stores and manages data. These data centers are secured infrastructures with uninterrupted power, maintained climate control, full redundancy and have controlled access to the facilities.

Yet, the Cloud is not just a means of storing data. Data is also synchronized across multiple computers a user owns and even their smart phone. This type of file storage allows them to keep a local copy of their data on their computer(s) so that even if the internet is not available they may still have access to their files.

How many times have you tried to send your report along with exhibits to your client via email and realize that you can't do it because you don't have enough space? You automatically get an error message from your email provider alerting you that you have "exceeded your limit." Instead of emailing these large files the Cloud allows you to send a secure web link to recipients through your email. The link creates a secure connection from your account to your client's computer. The time a link usually stays active is 24 hours but you can set your own time limits for the links you create.

One of the more appealing benefits of the Cloud is disaster recovery. There are so many viruses out there that can cripple your computer. Viruses are not the only threats to worry about. There are also types of malicious software called ransomware. Ransomware is designed to encrypt your data and stops you from using your computer until a sum of money is paid to the hijackers. It's usually a large sum of money to get your data back and it's not always guaranteed. As you could imagine, this can paralyze your document examination business. Because your data is stored at a data center, your data is backed up on a regular basis. You can have access to your data 24/7 from other computers if your office has been incapacitated.

Gone are the days where documents reside on a single computer. You are no longer bound to that single computer. You are no longer bound to remember to copy files to flash drives. You no longer have to be afraid of forgetting them in the office or losing them altogether. You can access documents that are stored in the Cloud directly from your smart phone and email them to your client. Envision using your smart phone to take pictures of documents off-site and upload them to your account in the Cloud.

The Cloud offers a certain amount of freedom when it comes to data. The user no longer needs to worry about backing up data. Accessibility across multiple devices gives a sense of mobility. The Cloud service provider provides the space you need to store your data. Even though you own your data the hosting company owns and maintains the hardware where your data resides.



IADE
International Association
of Document Examiners

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PAGES

International Association of Document Examiners 2017 Annual Seminar & Workshop



Marriott Westminster
Denver, Colorado
September 6 – 9, 2017

Join IADE members and guests September 6 through September 9, 2017 in beautiful Denver, Colorado for the annual **IADE Seminar and Workshop**.

Workshop — September 6

Creating Court Exhibits in Adobe® Photoshop®, Microsoft® Powerpoint® and Microsoft® Word®.

Seminar — September 7-9

Seminar Chairperson: Kathy Carlson
970-240-5950 • kscarlson1954@gmail.com

Marriott Westminster Reservations

Make plans now to attend both the seminar and workshop. Be sure to use the link below to reserve your room now at a special low rate at

Westminster Marriott

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More information about the seminar and workshop will be posted on the **IADE Seminar & Workshop Denver Colorado 2017** page of the [iade.us](http://www.iade.us) website. Check back often for updates.

Photos from the 2016 Conference in Annapolis, MD



