

University of Washington, Tacoma
Computer Forensics Certificate Program (Non-Credit)

Course One: Introduction to Computer Forensics

Course Description:

The role of an expert is multi-layered and misunderstood by the general public. T.V. shows such as "Law and Order", and "CSI" present a picture of the expert as an individual that reviews evidence and then shows up to court for some question and answer sessions.

The computer forensics expert needs much more experience than a solid background in IT. An expert in this area needs to understand the "big picture" of civil litigation. Winter Quarter 2005 will present this picture to the student in a non-technical environment. Although the class will be meeting in a laboratory setting, this quarter will be the least technical of the series. However, the basic foundation of understanding built during Winter Quarter 2005 will assist the student in the next series of instruction.

Class 1 - Class Orientation/The Role of the Computer Forensics Expert

The Computer Forensic Expert is not just an IT person grabbed from their everyday job and taken into court for testimony, although that is possible. An expert has a specific role in the civil litigation and criminal process. What is that role, and how is an expert qualified to give opinions in a court of law?

Class 2 - The Legal Process

A forensic examination of electronic media is just one component of the electronic discovery process during litigation or a criminal investigation/prosecution. This section will outline the entire process legal process for the student to have a better understanding of their specific role.

Class 3 - The Forensic Process and Evidentiary Issues

When an expert is requested to examine electronic media for a civil litigation or criminal investigation, proper procedure is paramount in the process. The correct handling and tracking of evidence is the most important reason that an expert is hired to perform the work. Although each expert has their own way in which to review electronic data and to handle evidence, general industry-accepted guidelines should be followed.

Class 4 - The Attorney Client (Possible Guest Speaker)

In civil litigation, the role of the forensic expert will be defined by the client's specific needs. This section will discuss the types of cases forensic experts are used, and will give real-world examples of dealing with the attorney client, and their types of requests.

Class 5 - Discovery/30(b)(6) Depositions/Conducting Interviews

The forensic expert is asked to be involved with more than just the review of electronic media. The electronic discovery process is complicated, with corporate data residing in various locations. This section will cover the importance of an expert attending depositions and assisting in the conducting of interviews of IT personnel.

Class 6 - Criminal/Civil/Internal Investigations

Each type of examination has its different type of data that is sought after. This section will discuss the different types of evidence that can be located, and the available tools currently being used by forensic experts worldwide. Also discussed will be the types of operating systems forensic experts encounter.

Class 7 - On-site Forensic Work

Not all computer forensic work is performed in the laboratory. A number of cases will require the expert to travel to gather evidence. This class will discuss the type of environment a forensic examiner may encounter.

Class 8 - Establishing Search Criteria

Performing a search of electronic media starts before even touching the media itself. This class will assist the examiner on selecting good search criteria to narrow down the amount of results.

Class 9 - Expert Reporting

The expert's report is the basis to which opinions are formed. What is placed in a report will find its way into the deposition and courtroom testimony. This section will discuss what information should be included in reports, how the report is presented to the attorney, and what to expect next.

Class 10 - Deposition and Courtroom Testimony

This is where "the rubber meets the road" in the forensic examination. What the expert reports is now to be testified in a deposition and a court of law. Preparation for both is important to the expert. This section will discuss the role of the expert in depositions and courtroom testimony, and the instructor will ask specific questions of each student to answer, as if in an actual courtroom.

