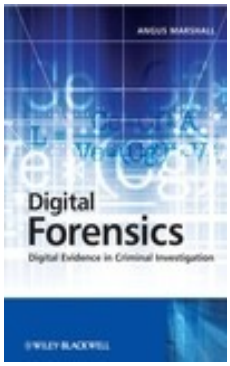
Digital Forensics

Digital Evidence in Criminal Investigation

by Angus McKenzie Marshall

It is almost impossible to ignore the digital age because we live in a world where we are surrounded by technology. In this, his first book, Angus Marshall explores the part played in forensic science by the most commonly used digital devices. The book is aimed squarely at students of forensic science who wish to understand how their investigative skills can be applied to these digital devices, however it is written in such a way that anyone with an interest in technology will see another side to those devices that they use on a daily basis.



The book claims to be an accessible introduction to the subject and a list of bullet points on the cover adds detail to that claim. Personally, I saw the book as a study in the merging of two subjects, Forensic Science and Digital Technology. The author attempts to examine both subjects and draw them together for the reader in such a way that followers of either discipline will learn without being bogged down in terminology. Marshall's preface promises not to go into excessive low-level detail. The book is presented in a logical order with a clear contents list, acknowledgements and listed references to tables and figures. The content is followed by three appendices, a list of references and a detailed index.

The reader is taken through a series of gentle introductions, first of all to the author and his own introduction to forensic and computing sciences. We are then introduced to a surprisingly long list of digital devices that will be considered in the rest of the book. At the end of the first chapter we are left in no doubt that these devices can and should be viewed in a new light.

In the second chapter we are exposed to the potentially large amount of evidence that digital technology can yield if considered carefully.

It is logical then that in the third chapter, Marshall gets down to the business of describing how these devices should be handled and investigated in such a way that the integrity of potential evidence is maintained.

Marshall takes us then into the world of forensic science over the next three chapters as he describes investigative methods as well as the creation and interpretation of evidence. For a reader like myself who does not have a forensic background, I found Marshall's approach and style of writing to be pitched at a level that made it easy to understand.

We are next pulled back towards technology as the author introduces the internet to us. Not the web as most of us know it but the nuts and bolts of the system that runs unseen to the millions of internet users across the world.

We have a short chapter on mobile devices before the final two chapters which draw the whole book and its two subjects together. In chapter nine we are presented with a method of evaluating online crime, profiling and cyber-profiling. The author introduces a formula with a series of variables and while the structure seems reasonable I am a little

sceptical about some of the assumptions he makes when attributing values to the equation.
I must confess that I was a little disappointed with the case studies in chapter ten. After being educated and in parts entertained for nine chapters, my appetite had been whetted for some juicy real life examples of how digital forensic science had helped solve crimes. The case studies are good examples if a little tame.

In conclusion, Angus Marshall can be congratulated on achieving his aim and honouring his promises. His book is a good introduction to Digital Forensic Science and he manages to avoid resorting to the use of highly technical terminology and low-level detail but still manages to blend in the digital dimension to forensic science. The book can be read out of interest but its layout makes it an ideal text book to be dipped into by any forensic practitioner. All in all I enjoyed the book and attribute my final chapter disappointment to the author's skill in writing a book which held my interest throughout.

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