



Digital Forensics Specialist Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2018, at the Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, Westminster, SW1P 4DF

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. A full list of representative organisations present is available in Annex A.

2. Minutes and actions of the last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th February 2018 were agreed by members subject to minor amendments and would be published on GOV.UK.

2.2 *Action 1: Simon Iveson to engage with John Beckwith during scoping meeting on 14th February to determine if NPCC content can be shared externally.* This concerned the data communications platform material. The Regulator agreed find out what restrictions existed within the NPCC policy with regards to use of the platform.

Action 1: The Regulator to discuss with representative from the NPCC Data Communication Group (DCG) how content can be shared and accessed on the NPCC platform.

2.3 *Action 2: Simon Iveson to engage with Roy Isbell to produce an article for publication in Digital Forensics Magazine.* Preliminary discussions had been held regarding the production of an article on accreditation for digital forensic practitioners to 17025. It would be useful for the MPS representative to assist with drafting the article. Preliminary findings from UKAS accreditation visits would be useful to include in the article.

Action 2: FSRU to collaborate with MPS representative to produce an article ahead of next meeting.

2.4 All other actions were complete.

3. Statement of Accreditation Requirements

3.1 The draft version of the updated statement of accreditation requirements for digital forensics in the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice and Conduct was discussed. The definition of digital forensics was intentionally kept broad; determining what is excluded from the definition would be useful. It was suggested that a line should be added to say that routers were included.

3.2 In the section of the document regarding cell site analysis¹ and communications data, it was thought that it might be necessary note that the scope and formal accreditation for this type of analysis was yet to be determined. Once the cell site analysis pilot had been completed, a date for expected accreditation could be set and forces notified.

Action 3: FSRU to re-draft the statement of accreditation requirements for digital forensics based on discussions and circulate to the DFSG.

3.3 Dstl were currently assessing evidence capture and audit tools for open source digital forensics. The DCG were attempting to build a collaborative environment and could potentially include some findings in their guidance to assist in laying the ground for best practice.

Action 4: Dstl and NPCC DCG representatives to liaise regarding guidance for open source.

4. NPCC update

4.1 Each force in England had received a complaint from Privacy International on a perceived lack of direction and control from chief officers concerning the use of kiosk technology. A piece of work was being undertaken to improve the clarification around legislation for powers of search, seizure and investigation into data. Guidance had been drafted to support this advice being obtained. Once feedback had been obtained on the guidance, this could be circulated to forces.

5. Kiosk accreditation

5.1 A presentation was provided on kiosk accreditation by the NPCC representative. Accreditation was being sought for frontline tools as set out in the FSR's Code of Practice and Conduct. Fundamental to this was the configuration of tools and establishment of configuration authorities for the utilisation and deployment of frontline tools.

5.2 Work was ongoing to clarify service levels and methods. A standardised workflow had been produced to facilitate uniform practices across forces. The method validation set out in FSR-G-218 had been followed. A national standard operating procedure (SOP) had also been developed which was put into a template form. This would allow forces to have some local variation in methodology but the body of the SOP could be used nationally.

5.3 The validation findings had shown extraction of data from handsets had been reliable, but data extraction from third-party applications was not complete. Three options had been set out to resolve the issue and press ahead with validation of the method. Firstly, further validation could take place to provide greater assurance around third-party applications. This was thought to be currently unrealistic but could be in future scope. Secondly the method could be modified for third-party applications. This would require manual verification which would not be feasible in a frontline setting. Thirdly the scope for the method could be narrowed and third-party applications could be removed from the method for accreditation or description at level 1; this would be described in the validation declaration. This was the current recommendation.

¹ Cell site analysis includes the acquisition of communications data and the processing of those data, often in association with data captured during a radio frequency (RF) propagation survey.

Action 5: The Regulator to meet NPCC representative and discuss whether third-party applications should be out of scope from the level 1 service and how this should be reported in the validation declaration.

5.4 It would be important to work closely with the defence to identify where information may be missing. A disclosure management document would invite the defence to consider this early in the case.

5.5 The NPCC were developing terms and conditions documentation to ensure that investigating officers are clear about what examinations have taken place and how they were conducted. It would be important to make investigating officers aware of the risks without undermining the evidence. The CPS representative may wish to look at the wording to determine whether it will be helpful for prosecutors.

6. Communications data and cell site update

6.1 Currently there were poorly defined methods for cell site analysis and accreditation was not available. A change in the industry had occurred in the last six months, with most of the large practitioners exiting.

6.2 CCL Group were now in a position to carry out formal testing with had two strategic aims; firstly to carry out a validation exercise to move towards accreditation (which was not yet available), and secondly to contribute to the body of academic literature on cell site analysis, which was currently lacking. Test data (which contained no personal information) would need to be obtained via DCG-. The process to obtain data from DCG needed to be formalised. A letter would be drafted to initiate this process.

Action 6: Letter to be sent by chair to the chair of the Data Communication Group to obtain test data

Action 7: CCL representative to present work at next meeting, when DFSG group will review cell site accreditation timescales

6.3 An update was provided on the DCG work which was being carried out in collaboration with European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). It was hoped that the draft ESTI standard to assure provision of third party digital material in the course of an investigation could be shared at the next meeting. The standard would not cover manually processed data.

7. AOB

7.1 The Dstl representative reported that their unit was assessing collision accident investigation and the methodology used in speed estimation processes.

Annex A

Representatives present

Metropolitan Police Service (Chair)
Academic (University of Canterbury)
CCL Group Digital Forensics
Dstl
Forensic Science Regulator
Gloucestershire Police
Metropolitan Police Service
NPCC
United Kingdom Accreditation Service
Warwick Cyber Security Centre

In attendance

Forensic Science Regulation Unit, HO
HO Science Secretariat

Apologies

College of Policing
First Forensic Forum (F3) Steering Committee
NPCC Collision Investigation Nominee
NPCC Open Source Nominee
Warwick Cyber Security Centre