Info Retained by Smart Phones Raises New Issues for Consumers – and Opportunities for Computer Forensics

PETALUMA, Calif. – May 26, 2011 – In recent weeks, controversy has swirled around the fact that smart phones, like Apple's iPhone, store location information on its users, raising major privacy issues. But a leading computer forensics expert said that mobile devices store far more critical personal information on their owners – even after users think they've erased the data.

Kris Haworth, president of The Forensics Group, one of the nation's leading computer forensics companies, said consumers might be surprised to learn that the iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry and other mobile computing devices retain vital data in their memory despite attempts to delete it.

"Most consumers have no idea when they trade in a smart phone or tablet computer that they've left a trail of very private and personal information behind – everything from private text messages and emails to their calling records, websites they've visited and even bank account passwords in some cases," Haworth said.

With the number of smart phones tripling in the U.S. over the past five years and many consumers regularly trading up for the latest models, the information retention could raise new privacy concerns for consumer groups – and create new opportunities for computer forensic companies.

"For purposes of litigation and investigations, this new source of data is a gold mine of information," Haworth said. "Everything from Internet email, business email, text

messages to photos are saved on these small devices with enormous storage capabilities. It may appear gone to the average user but in fact can still be recovered."

Haworth added that, "Users are very free with their communication on their handheld devices and as they hold data for years it can tell the entire story of what happened in a particular case – sort of an electronic truth serum."

In the fast changing world of technology, new mobile devices come and go in a matter of months. Keeping up with the latest technology is a never-ending process for computer forensics companies. It requires testing and constantly coming up with new tools to solve the puzzle of what data is there and how best to recover it.

The Forensics Group is a respected leader in the newly emerging field of mobile device forensics, being one of the few firms in the industry to have made the new technologies a priority and having a team of experts on their staff.

"TFG has significant expertise in reviewing and recovering data from a wide variety of cutting-edge computing products," Haworth said. "Our team has extensive experience in recovering data from the iPhone, the Android, the iPad and other devices."

In a recent legal case involving an employment dispute, TFG was able to recover text messages on two iPhones that were crucial to the case, even though both phones appeared to be wiped clean of any information.

"This kind of expertise will become even more critical as these technologies evolve and these mobile devices become more central to our lives," Haworth said.

About The Forensics Group
The Forensics Group provides a full array of electronic investigative services and litigation support designed to build legally defensible cases. Services include data collection and recovery, analysis and processing, expert witness testimony and litigation

management. TFG also conducts a range of seminars to address the electronic discovery issues of both law firms and corporations. Based in Petaluma, the company has regional offices in New York, Chicago, Dallas and Palo Alto. For more information, please contact us at 888.327.9104 or visit our website at www.theforensics-group.com.

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