

DIGITAL FORENSICS

Las Vegas CSI: On the Cutting Edge of Digital Evidence Management

Customer

Las Vegas CSI

Challenge

Manage and distribute millions of photo images while maintaining proper chain of evidence control.

Solution

- Linear Systems' Digital Information Management System (DIMS)
- Rimage Evidence Disc System
- Rimage Evidence Media Kits

"The workflow we have developed by using the Linear DIMS with Rimage has given us payback in a one year period."

Dave Phillips,
Photo Services Supervisor
Las Vegas CSI

The future of evidence management has already arrived in the Nevada desert. The real Las Vegas CSI shares some common ground with its fictional television namesake. Both agencies leverage groundbreaking technology to gather, process and distribute evidence that puts criminals behind bars. Although viewers are frequently amazed by the gadgets used in the CSI TV series, Dave Phillips, Photo Services Supervisor at Las Vegas Metro PD, often finds himself explaining his cutting edge digital evidence management system to other law enforcement agencies.

LV-CSI utilizes a Digital Information Management System called DIMS, provided by Linear Systems of Rancho Cucamonga, CA to input, manage, and create chain of custody for their electronic evidence. From the moment a crime scene investigator downloads the data into the DIMS system, the resulting images are managed by DIMS to ensure efficiency, speed and proper chain of evidence control. With approximately 500 cameras in the field for officer and investigator use, LV-CSI shoots over 25,000 crime scenes per year, producing nearly one million images annually. The agency also maintains a library of over four million legacy images shot on various film formats over the last fifty years. In the event that these images are needed for a case, they can be retrieved from the DIMS system for processing. Every image is tagged with searchable metadata that allows instant recall based on an array of relevant criteria such as case number, date, and photographer name. This evidence can be retrieved electronically with security permissions by allied agencies like the District Attorney.

DIMS includes a completely redundant Storage Array Network (SAN) to make images available to secure workstations throughout the LV-CSI facility, as well as secure remote access by officers in the field. Access privileges are easily managed within DIMS to ensure only authorized officers can perform specific image-related functions. Every action taken in the system is logged in a secure file supporting detailed auditing processes.

When images need to be distributed, the investigating officer uses the DIMS interface to select which images to export and with a mouse click sends the images to a networked Rimage Evidence Disc System. The Rimage unit not only burns a single or multi-disc CD or DVD set, but also prints full color permanent disc identification information on the disc media. Unlike sticky labels or ink jet printing, the patented Rimage Everest™ disc printing technology produces discs that won't peel, smear, or fade. LV-CSI uses Rimage Evidence Media Kits to ensure every disc is archival quality and guaranteed to last at least fifty years.

In years past, all of these images were printed on a commercial photo minilab, resulting in a significant number of unused prints. Now the minilab automatically produces a single index print matching the digital photos on each disc, dramatically reducing the lab's photo processing costs. The agency now produces between four and five thousand discs per year on a single Rimage Evidence Disc System. Phillips states, "The workflow we have developed by using the Linear DIMS with Rimage has given us payback in a one year period when you consider previous film costs and overtime."

Linear Systems was able to integrate the Rimage Evidence Disc System into their DIMS platform quickly and easily using Rimage's industry-leading Application Programming Interface (API). The Rimage API enabled Linear Systems to make the Rimage system completely transparent to officers utilizing DIMS, so disc production became as easy as clicking a single button on the DIMS interface. The built-in functionality of the Rimage API allows solution integrators like Linear to add powerful features with minimal programming effort and support a range of Rimage Evidence Disc System models to fit any evidence management environment.

Chris Parsons, President of Linear Systems, discusses the Rimage/Linear partnership. "As agencies using our DIMS product require a higher level of automation and efficiency, the Rimage system provides high quality CD/DVD/Blu-ray Disc™ media for investigators, attorneys, and an offsite archive. We were impressed with the Rimage platform and found that by integrating it with DIMS, we can jointly provide the most powerful, cost-effective solution for digital evidence and chain of custody management."

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