

Why a Discovery and Digital Forensics Partnership Is the Solution Your Firm Needs

By Dan Fischler

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The Official **Digital Discovery & Forensics** Partner

While we all know someone — a friend, a parent, a grandparent — who seems relatively slow to adapt to new technology, our human capacity to adapt to changes is really quite remarkable. It's something we lose sight of the more something becomes normalized, the more that Netflix and email and 2-day drop shipping become embedded in our daily lives. But when you step back and realize that Postmates didn't exist in our marketplace two years ago, and 3 or 4 years ago, grocery shopping could only be done the old-fashioned way — by going to the store yourself with a list when you needed something — you start to see how quickly things have changed.

After all, the vast majority of us remember when, not that long ago, maps where physical objects that had to be unfolded and studied — or at the very least, when the big new thing was plugging in an address to Mapquest so we could print the directions to take with us in the car.

Many of us also either remember ourselves or have a parent that remembers when computers were rare, mythical machines that took up entire rooms in universities and elite companies. In half a lifetime, we've gone from a world where digital data didn't exist to a world where we're projected to hit 163 zettabytes of data by 2025.

To re-emphasize how shocking a transformation that is, a zettabyte is equal to one trillion gigabytes: most of us have an average of 64 gigabytes of data storage on our smartphones, the majority of which we're probably not using yet.

If we only look at the United States, the number of smartphone users in 2017 reached close to 225 million. The number of adult email users was around 200 million. Which is all to say, if data has infiltrated our lives so thoroughly, it has infiltrated legal cases completely as well.

Almost every case now has some component of electronic data, documents, social media, or mobile communications. But, in part because of how quickly this transformation has happened, most small and mid-sized law firms can't justify a full-time staff to handle discovery and digital forensics.

So what can you do to keep up, not only with the competition but also with the simple reality of case work? The most strategic and low-risk approach is to take the time to find a trusted partner you can rely on when these cases come up, rather than “panic shopping” for a vendor who doesn't have a vested interest in your success. It's common in the business world for small- and mid-sized companies to form mutually-beneficial partnerships, collaborations, and alliances that allow them to fill holes with the strengths of another company. This is a terrific model for small and mid-size law firms to look to and emulate.

The best kind of discovery and digital forensics partner will work with you to deliver exactly what you need for your firm and your clients, skipping what you don't need. Look for a partner that will invest time in getting to know you and those needs and scale and tailor their solutions to match you. As a result, you should gain access to an

entire team of experts able to handle your work in the most efficient way possible.

There are a few established partner models to look at — and a million more ways to customize a partnership for your needs:

Managed Services

Where the larger firms are able to bring in discovery or digital forensics work in-house, partnering with a managed services company on a subscription basis can empower mid-sized firms to offer the same skill sets and expertise, without the overhead costs. As part of the partnership, your firm receives discovery and digital forensics expertise and tools — and as the company works, you also have the opportunity for your employees to train alongside theirs.

Collaborative Services

Collaborative services is managed services on a shorter-term, case-by-case basis. Your firm receives expertise and software for the duration of the project. The benefit of this type of partnership is the flexibility it gives you to work with an eDiscovery/Digital Forensics company when it makes sense to use their expertise in data analysis, collection, and project management.

Managed Software Seats

If your firm has a large, ongoing matter yet lacks the resources, infrastructure, or experience to purchase, learn, and use discovery and forensics software yourselves, a managed seats partnership gives you access to one seat, or user, at a time.

Outsourced Support

Outsourced support simply means that your partnership is realized more on a short-term, contract, or per-project basis, as the need arises.

To learn more and to start a partnership, visit digital-strata.com or call 816.605.5546



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Dan Fischler is the founder and CEO of Digital Strata. For over two decades, his digital forensics and eDiscovery expertise has been valuable in assisting the legal departments of numerous Fortune 500 and AmLaw 200 clients.