

Dr Paul Hunton CEng, BSc, MSc, D.Prof, FBCS

Expert Technical Witness | Digital Forensic Specialist | Cyber Crime and Security Consultant



Overview

I am an accomplished digital forensic expert and cybersecurity specialist who has focused on the investigation, examination and development of computer systems and data networks for nearly 20 years. Prior to becoming an independent consultant, I spent over 18 years with UK law enforcement working extensively as a technical specialist. Building on a solid technical background, during my early IT career, I held the roles of technical systems analyst, software developer and data systems architect. My technical investigation skills are further broadened having also spent several years as a professional and academic researcher at the forefront in the development of large-scale computer data integration and analysis systems to deliver business and criminal intelligence. I have specialist knowledge of the Internet and its underlying technology with much of my early research focusing what is now the 'Cloud'.

Investigation Experience

I have a wealth of industry experience having been involved in numerous technical investigations ranging from complex civil disputes to serious international criminal cases. I have provided evidence as an expert technical witness in civil legal proceedings and criminal cases for both the prosecution and the defence, and I have also acted as a single joint expert (SJE).

Delivering a wide range of expert technical services, I have extensive experience of a broad client base ranging from private individuals and small business to large corporate organisations, law enforcement agencies, financial institutes, international banking and trade bodies including the electronics, gaming, music, publishing, insurance, manufacture, automotive and maritime industries. Case experience includes website and software examination, data systems validation, electronic data theft, digital document provenance, Internet banking, industrial espionage, computer hacking, online harassment and defamation, denial of service and malware attacks, employee computer misuse, intellectual property theft and digital copyright.



Specialist Technical Skills

I have a comprehensive technical skillset combined with a wealth of case experience covering:

- Computer and digital forensics
- Static and mobile device examination
- Business data systems and software
- Email systems and Servers
- Intellectual property theft and digital copyright
- Electronic evidence capture and recovery
- Maritime cybersecurity of IT and OT systems
- Computer networks and data servers
- Online communication and social networks
- Large-scale data storage systems and SQL databases
- Internet data examination and recovery
- Electronic document provenance
- Digital evidence processes, practices and procedures
- Cyber breach investigation

Vetting and Background Checks

I am UK government security checked to vetting level SC. I have considerable experience of highly sensitive and confidential cases covering private commercial clients and law enforcement agencies. As a Chartered Engineer and Fellow of the British Computer Society, my technical skills have been independently validated.

Education and Professional Qualifications

As an expert witness, I hold three computer science degrees including a professional doctorate (D.Prof) in Business Intelligence Systems and Data Integration and Analysis Technologies, a Master of Science (MSc) degree in e-Business Technologies and a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Business Computing. This is further supported by on-going professional development activities and the regular attendance on training courses and at conferences. Dr Hunton is also an accredited Chartered Engineer (CEng) and a Fellow of the British Computer Society (FBCS). I am also an accredited trainer under the GCHQ accreditation scheme in the field of cybersecurity.

Publications and Academia

I am a published academic specialising in the field of cybercrime investigation and digital evidence recovery. I am a former member of the Professional Board for the journal of Computer Law and Security Review and my current academic research is focused on cybercrime and the digital investigation practices of securing reliable technical evidence. I am a part-time university lecturer having taught topics including computer law, digital forensics, cybercrime, Internet investigation and expert witness report writing. I am also the author of one of the first Maritime Cyber Risk Awareness courses to be specifically designed for the maritime industry and accredited under the GCHQ certified training (GCT) scheme.

Sample case highlights

British Airways [2019]. Instructed in the class action against British Airways involving the largescale loss of personal and financial data surrounding their website.

Huawei Technologies Co [2019]. Instructed in the matter against the Canadian Royal Mounted Police in relation to the arrest of Huawei's chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou.

R v Mohammed Khilji [2018]. Instructed in the case of Khilji charged under the Terrorism Act with the creation and dissemination of terrorist material in the form of digital media. Khilji was convicted for encouraging terrorism.

Ryanair v Google [2017]. Instructed in the challenge raised by Ryanair relating to Google's AdWord programme.

Tourplan Pacific Ltd v Australian Tours Management Pty Ltd [2017]. Instructed to assist with the complex technical issues surrounding an international software copyright dispute of a global travel management system.

R v Elliot Hyams and Others [2016]. Instructed by the defence in one of the first UK trials relating to the infamous Dark Web online marketplace 'Silk Road'. Working in the New York offices of the Federal Investigation Bureau (FBI), I examined and reviewed the investigation processes, data handling practices and the reliability of electronic evidence produced during the FBI's investigation of the 'Silk Road' website and Bitcoin servers.

Nicocigs Limited v Fontem Holdings 1 BV and Fontem Ventures BV [2016]. Instructed in a high value patent claim to provide a pivotal role in examining the reliability and provenance of complex technical evidence.

R v Adam Johnson [2016]. Acting for the prosecution in the case of the Sunderland and England international footballer Adam Johnson, instructed to provide expert technical case consultancy including the forensic recovery and examination of pertinent electronic evidence, expert reporting and court testimony. Johnson was convicted of sexual offences.

Orb a.r.l. and ors v Ruhan [2015]. Instructed by the claimant in a £100m commercial dispute to establish the reliability and provenance of digital documentation and provide other expert technical investigation and assistance.

R v John O'Brien and Others [2015]. Instructed by a national UK law enforcement unit in a high profile international organised crime gang case that involved the theft of £57m of museum exhibits and artefacts from several museums. I acted as expert technical case consultant for the investigation and conducted digital forensic examination of key exhibits and delivered expert court testimony. Fourteen (14) gang members were subsequently convicted.

R v Dawn Smith [2015]. This case involving the defendant whilst working as a legal secretary modifying her deceased husband's will. At the direction of the court and bound by the strict adherence to legal privilege, I was instructed to recover and establish the provenance of an electronic will document retained by the solicitor's firm where the defendant previously worked. Smith was found guilty and convicted of the offence.

Harbour Supplies Limited v Jeremiah Strongarm Limited [2014]. Instructed by the Respondent to re-examine computer systems and electronic data previously examined by digital forensic experts acting for the Claimant. Following re-examination, discrepancies in the Claimant's technical expert's examination processes were identified that resulted in sections of technical evidence being amended or withdrawn.

R v Undisclosed Youth [2013]. Instructed by law enforcement to provide expert technical consultancy in a complex computer hacking case by an alleged member of the hacking group 'Anonymous'. Following attempts to hack into websites and online systems including those of law enforcement and government bodies, an individual was traced. I provided technical oversight for the search and seizure of all computer related equipment used to execute the attacks, recovery of online artefacts and the digital forensic examination of all data recovered including many hacking tools and other relevant data.

Undisclosed [2012]. Instructed in a matter involving the on-line digital evidence capture and the covert test-purchase recover of property associated with a high-profile individual and belonging to a Formula 1 race team.

R v Alan Ellis [2009]. Acting for the prosecution on-behalf of the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) and the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) to provide expert technical assistance in the first UK criminal investigation into online music piracy and the 'Oink' website. The technical complexity of the case was such that I was required to give court testimony over a three-day period to explain the many technical concepts and intricacies of the functionality used by the 'Oink' website and its administrators in the alleged distribution of digital copyright infringing material.

Contact Details

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