

The background image is a blue-tinted photograph showing three people. On the left, a man in a dark suit and tie looks directly at the camera with a serious expression. In the center, a woman is looking down, her face partially obscured. On the right, a police officer in a uniform with 'POLICE' on the chest is looking down at something in his hands. The overall mood is somber and professional.

MSAB

Catching the perpetrator in time  
while preserving the victims right to privacy

CASE STUDY

# The Challenge

**RECENTLY A UNITED STATES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** faced a complex case where child sexual abuse was suspected.

“I was conducting an investigation involving a suspect who was in possession of child sexual abuse material and who also worked in close contact with children. I was trying to determine if there were more victims. We had the suspect’s digital devices, but we needed more evidence to go to court,” said a County Sheriff’s Office Senior Detective.

To proceed with the case and eventually charge the person with possession or distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) the police must have some form of evidence. This evidence usually consists of photos, video files or similar data on a mobile, tablet or computer.

“However, accessing witnesses’ or victims’ phone data depends on a patchwork of court decisions and typically needs a warrant unless an emergency exists or the person consents. So, we started asking for help from the public,”

“Once the victims started to file reports to the police, we had another challenge. Finding the right mobile forensics tool which would only collect data that is strictly relevant to the case without examining the entire contents of their phones, thus preserving their personal integrity,”



“I was amazed when I learned about XRY from MSAB and its capabilities for enabling law enforcement agencies to confidently selectively target their extractions to only recover data from specified apps to ensure the rights to privacy for victims’ and witnesses’ phones,”

“The suspect had utilized multiple Google accounts and had been engaged in illicit behavior for an extended period of time. My team and I identified the need to access cloud data storage such as Google Drive and similar services. These are typically app based,” said the County Sheriff’s Office Detective.

“While we had a few different forensic tools available, XRY was the only tool able to synthesize the Google account information into something that could be easily analyzed and allowed me to go through the large amounts of data quickly to locate the evidence.”

The suspect pled guilty to participating in a child exploitation enterprise after being faced with digital evidence which was found on his devices and other corroborating materials on witnesses’ and victims’ phones.


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There are few areas of life today that do not involve the use of mobile phones or tablets. This means, of course, that the public have every right to expect that their private data will not be viewed or used by anyone else without their consent. As digital evidence now features in around 90% of criminal cases, law enforcement agencies have to be increasingly mindful as to how it should be gathered. Along with legal considerations with respect to data protection and rights to privacy.

“These serious acts of violence against children and young people, the weakest members of our society, must be vigorously pursued, prosecuted and brought to an end. The challenges are, given the sensitive nature of these crimes, uncovering and investigating the incidents, identifying victims for protection and bringing the offender to justice,” said the County Sheriff’s Office Senior Detective

“I believe that a balance can be found between protecting the public and protecting the public’s right to privacy by using the right tools to recover the necessary digital evidence without compromising people’s other private data. MSAB provided us with such a solution for selective data extraction. This is very helpful given the complexities of these types of investigations,”

“I also found the MSAB Support to be extremely responsive and helpful in the way in which they understood the complexities of these types of investigations from a law enforcement perspective.”

A woman in a dark uniform is looking at a tablet held by another person. The background is a blurred office or courtroom setting.

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