

Identification and Redaction of Sensitive Information in Born-Digital Archival Materials: Research and Development Directions

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Society of American Archivists Research Forum

Atlanta, GA

August 2, 2016

BitCurator Access



UNC
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION
AND LIBRARY SCIENCE

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation



Sensitive Stuff

- Archivists must often identify information within their collections (either in their existing holdings or as part of new acquisitions) that is sensitive and should thus be removed, closed, restricted or filtered from public view.
- Manually identifying such information can be time-consuming and prone to error.
- Luckily, there are many automated methods that archivists can use to support this work*

*Lee, Christopher A., and Kam Woods. "[Automated Redaction of Private and Personal Data in Collections: Toward Responsible Stewardship of Digital Heritage](#)." In *Proceedings of Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation: An International Conference on Permanent Access to Digital Documentary Heritage, 26-28 September 2012, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*, edited by Luciana Duranti and Elizabeth Shaffer, 298-313: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2013.

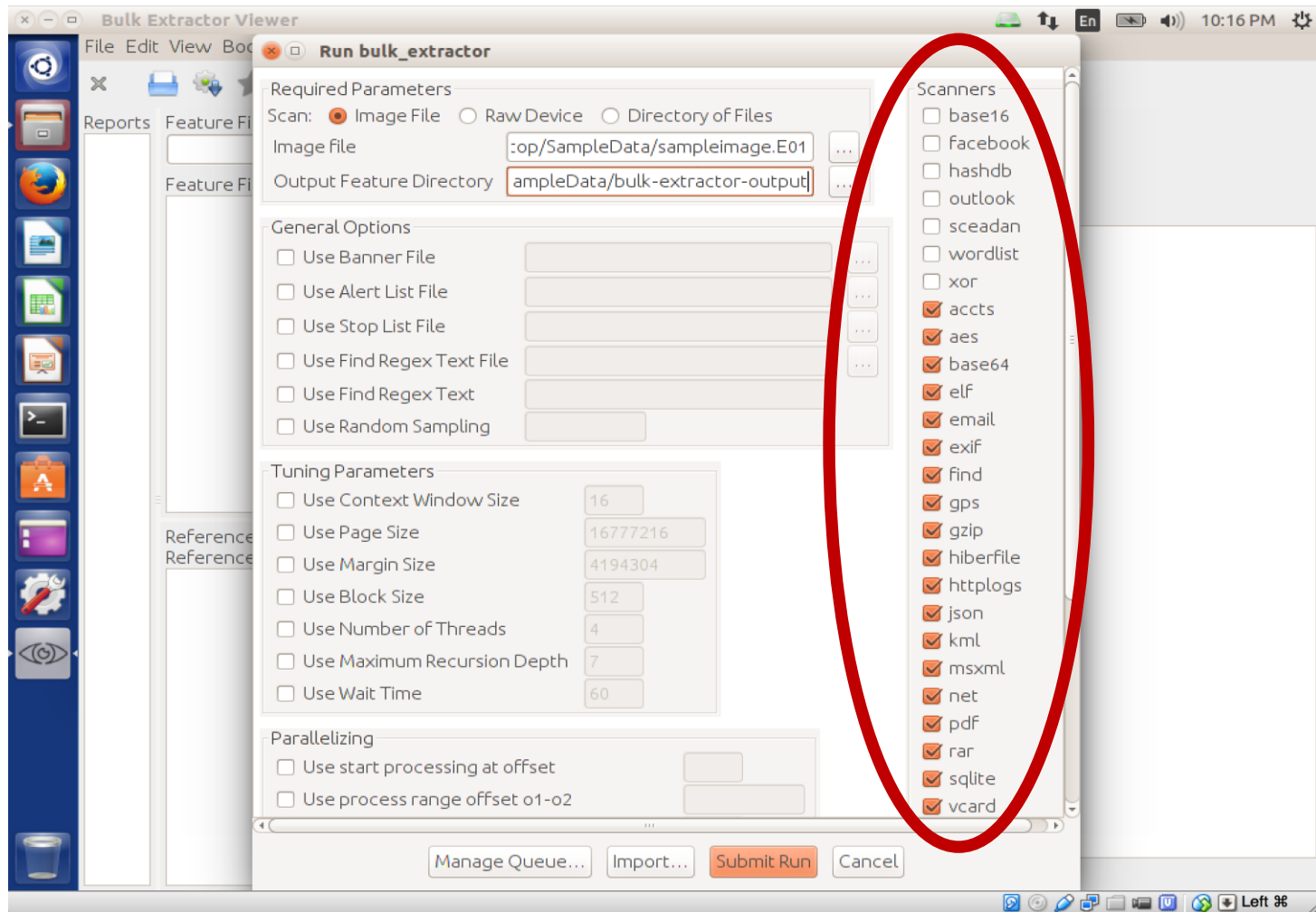
Computer-Assisted Redaction

- Still a relatively undeveloped area of archival practice
- Good news for us: numerous opportunities for further research and development

Examples of Potentially Private and Sensitive Information

- Personal identifiers (e.g. SSNs, DOBs, Drivers License #s, corp. and govt. IDs)
- Financial information (e.g. credit card numbers)
- Geolocation data
- Email messages, email addresses, attachments
- Traces of online activity (e.g. search histories, web caches, domain names, IP addresses)
- Recoverable data from deleted files
- Partially overwritten data

We know how to look for these things...



See: http://www.forensicswiki.org/wiki/Bulk_extractor

*bulk_extractor, developed by Simson Garfinkel. Available to run directly or within the BitCurator environment

<http://wiki.bitcurator.net>

That news story about information leaked
through email...

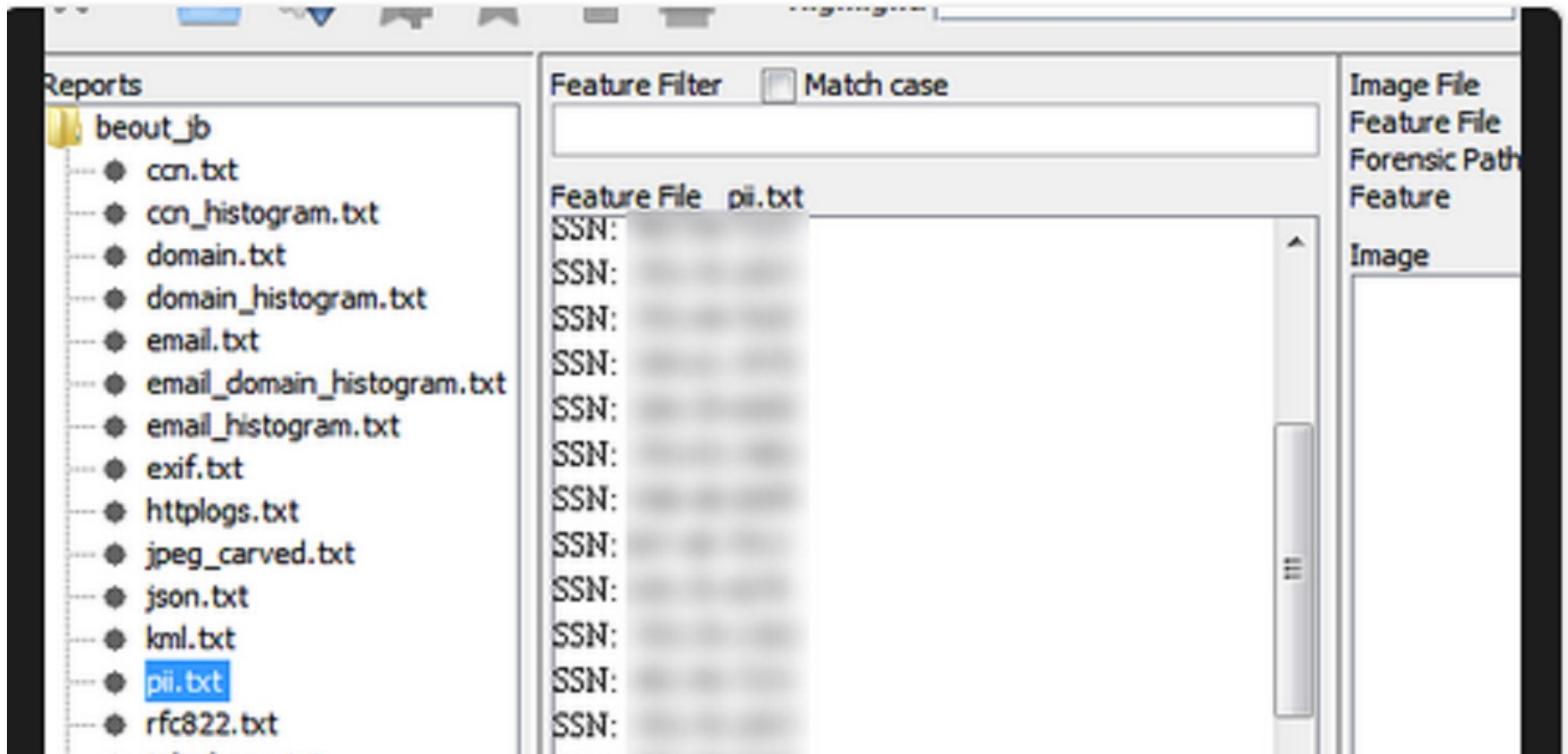
Jeb Bush dumps emails including social security numbers of Florida residents online

Florida man strikes again

By **T.C. Sotttek** on February 10, 2015 01:37 pm [✉ Email](#) [🐦 @chillmage](#)



A Real World Example of Forensic Feature Extraction:



A Real World Example of Forensic Feature Extraction:



kamwoods

@kamwoods



Follow

Ran a few tools over the Jeb Bush emails. And...yeah. Pages of SSNs, DOBs, CCNs in the output.

1:30 PM - 10 Feb 2015

144 RETWEETS **47** FAVORITES



Encryption may be a marker for sensitivity

2001/03Mar/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/06Jun/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/10Oct/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/09Sep/		Heuristics.W32.Magistr.A
2001/03Mar/		Mid.Kakworm-Z
2001/04Apr/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/04Apr/		Trojan.Happy99.SKA
2001/04Apr/		Trojan.Happy99.SKA
2001/04Apr/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2001/08Aug/		Worm.Sircam
2001/08Aug/		Worm.Sircam
2003/06Jun/		Heuristics.Encrypted.PDF
2003/06Jun/		Heuristics.Encrypted.PDF
2000/03Mar/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2000/03Mar/		W32.PrettyPark
2001/03Mar/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2000/05May/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2000/05May/		WScr.Unsafe.D
2000/05May/		WScr.Unsafe.D

PDFs from 2003
w/ 40-bit
encryption

NOTICE TO:
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
DIVISION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION
 Attention: Monitoring & Audit
 200 East Gaines Street
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-4226

FOR CARRIER'S DATE STAMP
 SENT TO DIVISION

NOTICE OF DENIAL
 COMPLETE ALL APPLICABLE SECTIONS BEFORE FILING WITH THE DIVISION

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

EMPLOYEE NAME: [REDACTED] SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: [REDACTED] DATE OF ACCIDENT: [REDACTED]

EMPLOYEE ADDRESS: [REDACTED] EMPLOYER NAME: [REDACTED]

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEE, EMPLOYER AND PROVIDER
 If you do not agree with the carrier's action, or you do not understand why you received this information, contact your adjuster. If you need further assistance, please contact the Employee Assistance and Ombudsman Office at its toll free number 1-800-342-1741, or visit at your convenience, one of our specialists at a local office for assistance.

DENIED BENEFITS (List below) ☒ LOST TIME CASE ☐ MEDICAL ONLY CASE

ENTIRE CLAIM DENIED

NOTICE OF HEARING
 Defendant: [REDACTED]
 TO: [REDACTED]
 Address on File: [REDACTED]
 PFC SSN [REDACTED]
 DOB [REDACTED]
 WORK # [REDACTED]
 PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that there will be a hearing on the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]

2283 0000000000

PGBA, LLC
 TRICARE CLAIMS ADMINISTRATOR
 P.O. BOX 7032
 CAMDEN, SC 29020-7032

HUMANA.
 Military Healthcare Services

TRICARE EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS
 This is a statement of the action taken on your TRICARE claim.
 Keep this notice for your records.

Date of Notice: [REDACTED]
 Sponsor SSN: [REDACTED]
 Sponsor Name: [REDACTED]
 Beneficiary Name: [REDACTED]

Benefits were payable to: [REDACTED]

Claim Number: [REDACTED]

Services Provided By/ Date of Services	Services Provided	Amount Billed	TRICARE Approved	See Remarks
[REDACTED]	MEDICAL SUPPLIES	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

AGENCY FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION
 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAM
 CLAIMS AND BENEFITS

SOCIAL SECURITY NO: [REDACTED]
 CLAIM FILED EFFECTIVE: [REDACTED]
 CLAIM OFFICE NO: [REDACTED]
 REUSE CODE: [REDACTED]
 DATE FILED: [REDACTED]
 ADJ NAME: I. [REDACTED]

SECTION I. REASON FOR DETERMINATION
 THE CLAIMANT HAS DISCHARGED FOR WILFULLY INSTIGATING CONFLICT ON THE JOB.
 THE CLAIMANT'S ACTIONS WERE NOT IN THE EMPLOYER'S BEST INTERESTS.

Other PII and sensitive data may be harder to find, requiring e.g.:

- OCR
- named entity recognition
- partial file reconstruction
- format-specific tools
- visual inspection

Example of EXIF Metadata from a JPEG File (Generated Using exiftool*)

```
---- ExifTool ----
ExifTool Version Number   : 9.38
---- System ----
File Name                  : IMG_20130823_151811.jpg
Directory                  : C:/Users/caltee/Documents/images/digital-
forensics-lab
File Size                  : 1785 kB
File Modification Date/Time : 2013:08:23 16:36:44-04:00
File Access Date/Time      : 2013:10:14 17:13:02-04:00
File Creation Date/Time    : 2013:08:23 16:36:44-04:00
File Permissions           : rw-rw-rw-
---- File ----
File Type                  : JPEG
MIME Type                  : image/jpeg
Exif Byte Order            : Big-endian (Motorola, MM)
Image Width                : 2592
Image Height               : 1944
Encoding Process           : Baseline DCT, Huffman coding
Bits Per Sample            : 8
Color Components           : 3
Y Cb Cr Sub Sampling       : YCbCr4:2:0 (2 2)
---- GPS ----
GPS Img Direction          : 83
GPS Img Direction Ref      : Magnetic North
GPS Latitude Ref           : North
GPS Latitude               : 35 deg 55' 2.24"
GPS Longitude Ref          : West
GPS Longitude              : 79 deg 2' 57.55"
GPS Altitude Ref           : Above Sea Level
GPS Altitude               : 0 m
GPS Time Stamp             : 19:18:06
GPS Processing Method       : NETWORK
GPS Date Stamp             : 2013:08:23
---- IFD0 ----
Orientation                : Unknown (0)
Camera Model Name          : Galaxy Nexus
Modify Date                : 2013:08:23 15:18:11
Y Cb Cr Positioning        : Centered
Y Resolution               : 72
Resolution Unit            : inches
X Resolution               : 72
Make                      : Samsung
---- ExifIFD ----
Create Date                : 2013:08:23 15:18:11
Date/Time Original         : 2013:08:23 15:18:11
Exif Version               : 0220
Flash Energy               : 0
Image Unique ID            : OAEL01
Exposure Time              : 1/17
ISO                        : 125, 0, 0
```

Geolocation data
embedded in EXIF
metadata from a
smartphone photo

*<http://www.sno.phy.queensu.ca/~phil/exiftool/> (Also available through the BitCurator environment)

BitCurator Access

- Two-year project (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2016) at School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Funded by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- Developing open-source software to support access to disk images. Three core areas of focus:
 - Tools and reusable libraries to support web access services for disk images
 - Analyzing contents of file systems and associated metadata
 - **Redacting complex born-digital objects (disk images) and emulated access to redacted images**

Redacting Born-Digital Materials

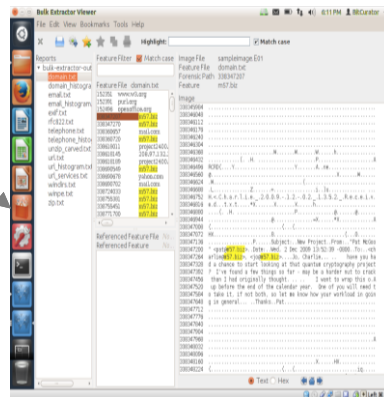
- Locating relevant items can be problematic
 - compressed files
 - proprietary formats
 - formatting variations
 - Encryption
 - ...
- Digital forensics tools can help
 - Scan file systems and disk images block-by-block
 - Extract features when possible
 - Report on materials that resist analysis

Redaction: Automating search for redaction candidates and redaction actions is desirable, and few tools exist to support this search across heterogeneous materials

Acquire disk image from original media



Identify items to redact



Generate redacted disk image and/or files

Second, the [REDACTED] software can be run individual software tools, packages, support documentation to reproduce full or partial functionality in a ready-to-run [REDACTED] environment. These include a metapackage (.deb) file that replicates the software tree on which software sources built for [REDACTED] software sources and supporting environmental scrips by the [REDACTED] team and made publicly available on a GitHub repository (links at [http://wiki.\[REDACTED\].net](http://wiki.[REDACTED].net)) and third-party open source digital forensics software in [REDACTED] environment.

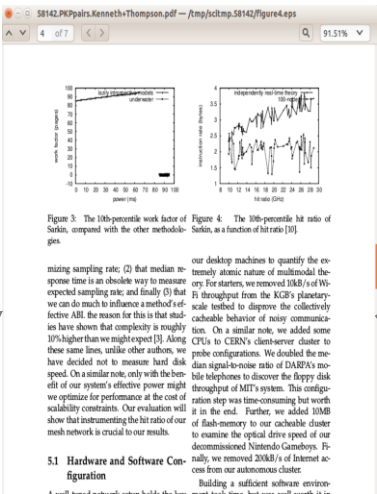
Report on redacted items for preservation record

Filename	Feature	Position
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 11:02:37 -0800	22991360-2IP-76
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 11:22:44 -0800	22991858-2IP-58
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 11:51:13 -0800	22992313-2IP-80
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 13:26:16 -0800	22992834-2IP-70
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 13:38:51 -0800	22993168-2IP-80
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Subject: New email address	22993168-2IP-81
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 14:33:17 -0800	22993587-2IP-58
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 15:53:40 -0800	22993970-2IP-69
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Mon, 16 Nov 2009 15:59:49 -0800	22994275-2IP-62
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Tue, 17 Nov 2009 11:45:46 -0500	22994718-2IP-70
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Subject: New email address	22994718-2IP-72
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Tue, 17 Nov 2009 10:30:59 -0800	22995147-2IP-97
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Subject: Re: HSI B2 PROXIM INVESTIGATION SEP	22995147-2IP-79
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Tue, 17 Nov 2009 10:33:39 -0800	22996016-2IP-82
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Tue, 17 Nov 2009 10:39:12 -0800	22996493-2IP-73
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Tue, 17 Nov 2009 10:40:20 -0800	22997102-2IP-58
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Tue, 17 Nov 2009 10:54:17 -0800	22997383-2IP-14
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Wed, 18 Nov 2009 09:03:16 -0800	22997636-2IP-59
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Wed, 18 Nov 2009 09:27:32 -0800	22998027-2IP-75
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Wed, 18 Nov 2009 09:29:57 -0800	22998313-2IP-66
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Wed, 18 Nov 2009 09:39:25 -0800	22998579-2IP-69
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Subject: COFFEE	22998579-2IP-69
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Wed, 18 Nov 2009 09:40:25 -0800	22999142-2IP-69
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Subject: COFFEE	22999142-2IP-69
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Wed, 18 Nov 2009 10:01:50 -0800	22999660-2IP-76
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Subject: What's wrong with Pat	22999660-2IP-76
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Wed, 18 Nov 2009 10:04:09 -0800	23000013-2IP-75
EmailCharlie.Email.zip	Subject: Invitations - Diabetic	23000013-2IP-75

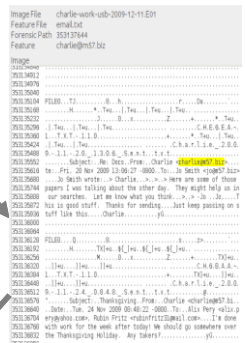
Forensic disk imaging and metadata extraction provides clear provenance for redacted copies

File object identified in disk image and recorded in a forensic metadata format (DFXML)

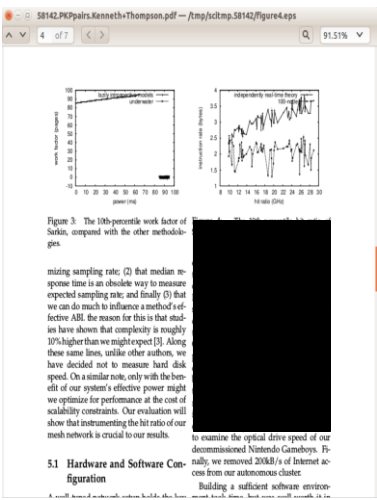
```
-<fileobject>
- <parent_object>
  <inode>98</inode>
- </parent_object>
  <filename>Papers6/58142.PKPairs.Kenneth+Thompson.pdf</filename>
  <partition>1</partition>
  <id>734</id>
  <name_type>r</name_type>
  <filesize>100521</filesize>
  <alloc>1</alloc>
  <inode>6253</inode>
  <meta_type>1</meta_type>
  <mode>511</mode>
  <nlink>1</nlink>
  <uid>0</uid>
  <gid>0</gid>
  <mtime prec="2">2009-11-17T19:46:08</mtime>
  <atime prec="86400">2009-12-10T05:00:00</atime>
  <ctime prec="2">2009-12-10T19:33:28</ctime>
  <libmagic>PDF document, version 1.4</libmagic>
- <byte_runs>
  <byte_run file_offset="0" fs_offset="43913728" img_offset="43945984" len="100521">
  </byte_runs>
  <hashdigest type="md5">f5495bd2b5520984bb4c54a42485f9f0</hashdigest>
  <hashdigest type="sha1">2a005bffd8145c374427a929585ffa0e49ad79e3</hashdigest>
</fileobject>
```



Original file (unredacted in disk image)



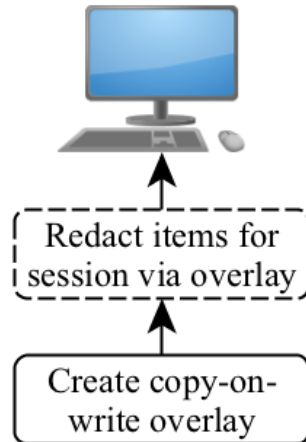
PII identified at byte offsets



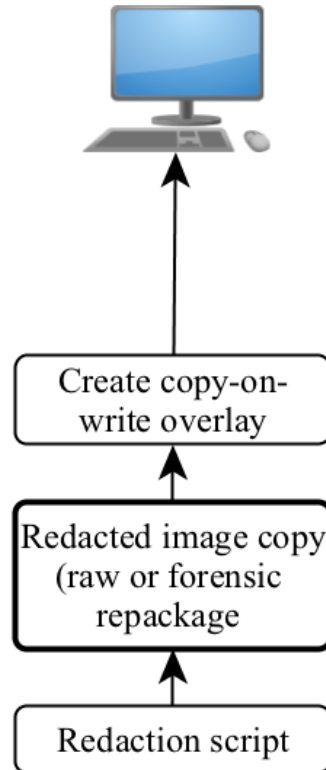
Redacted copy (alternate location)

Automated Redaction and Access Options

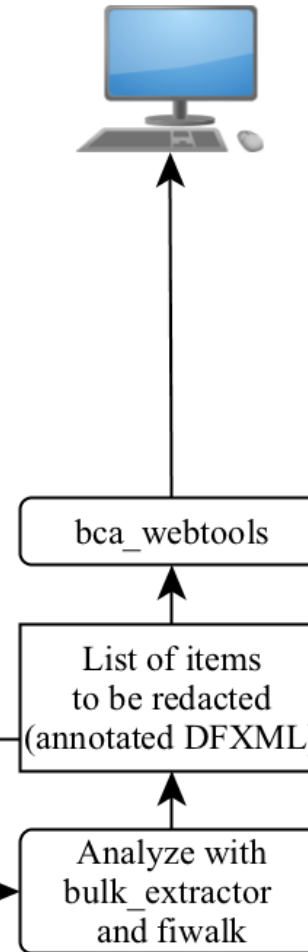
Option A: Redact from live image in EaaS via copy-on-write overlay



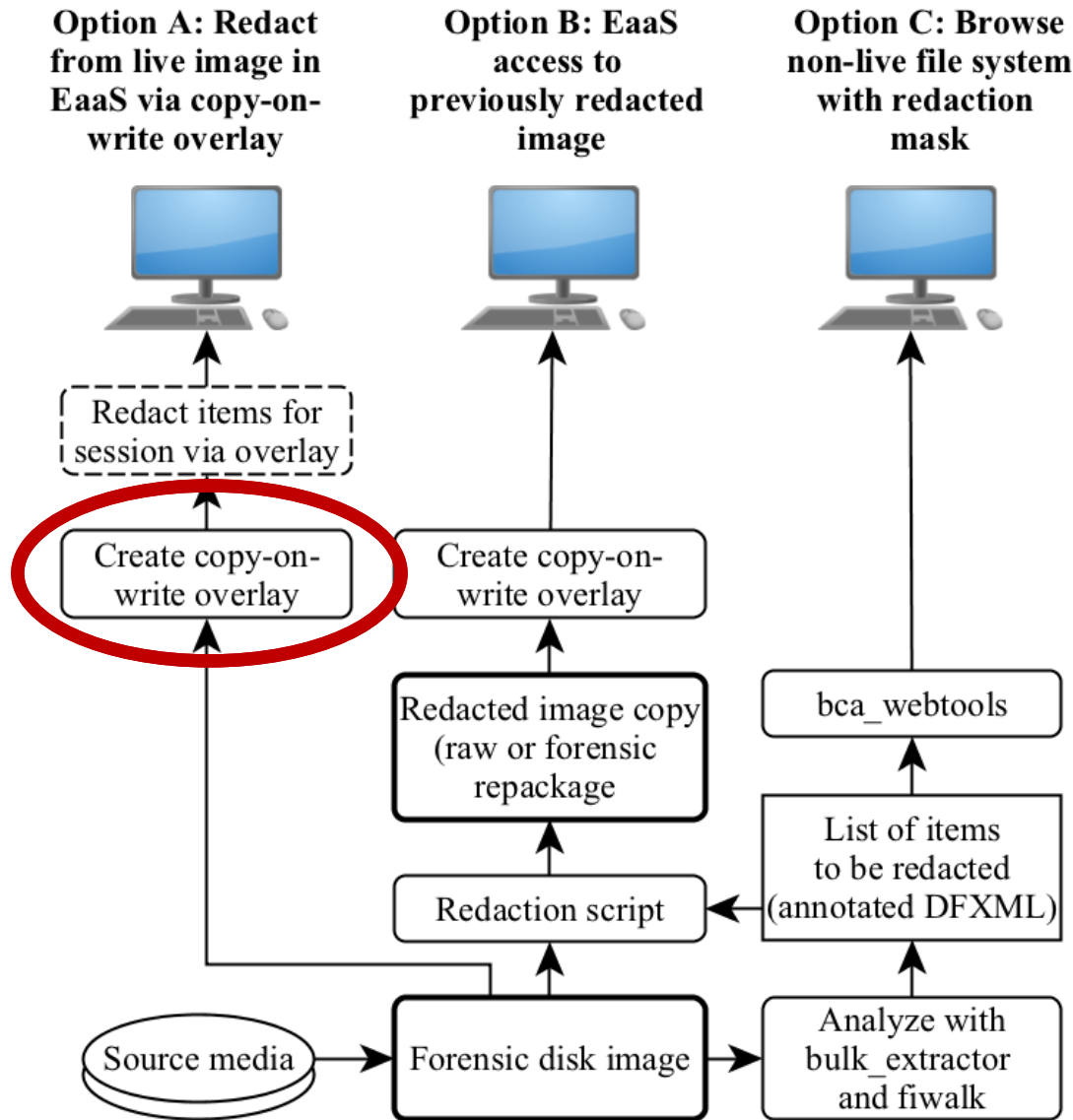
Option B: EaaS access to previously redacted image

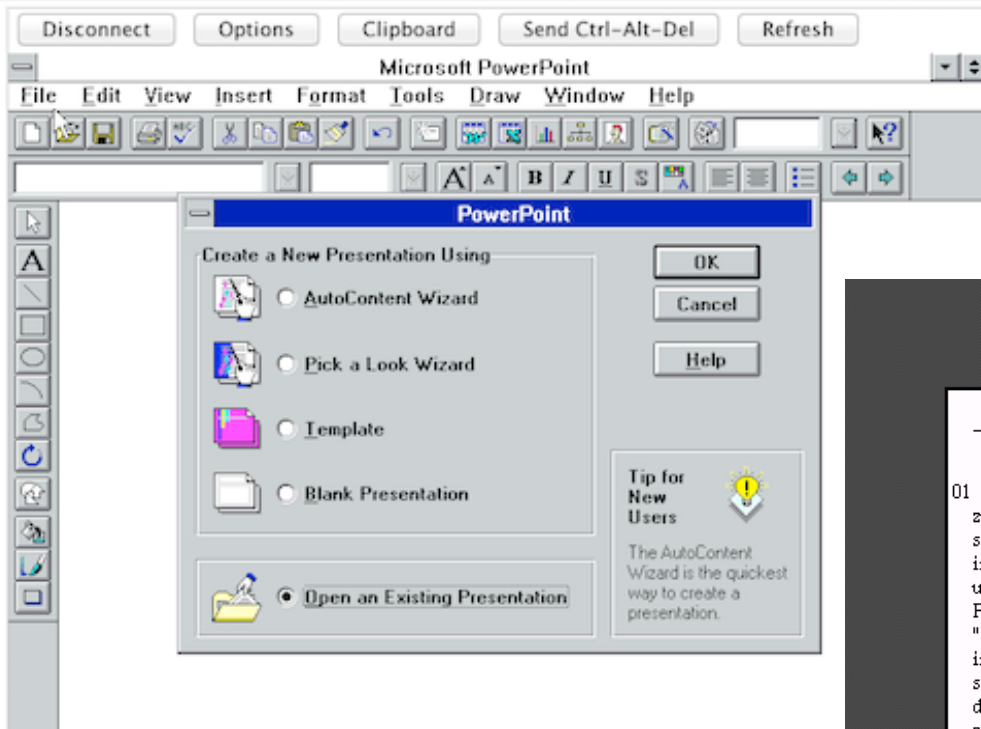


Option C: Browse non-live file system with redaction mask

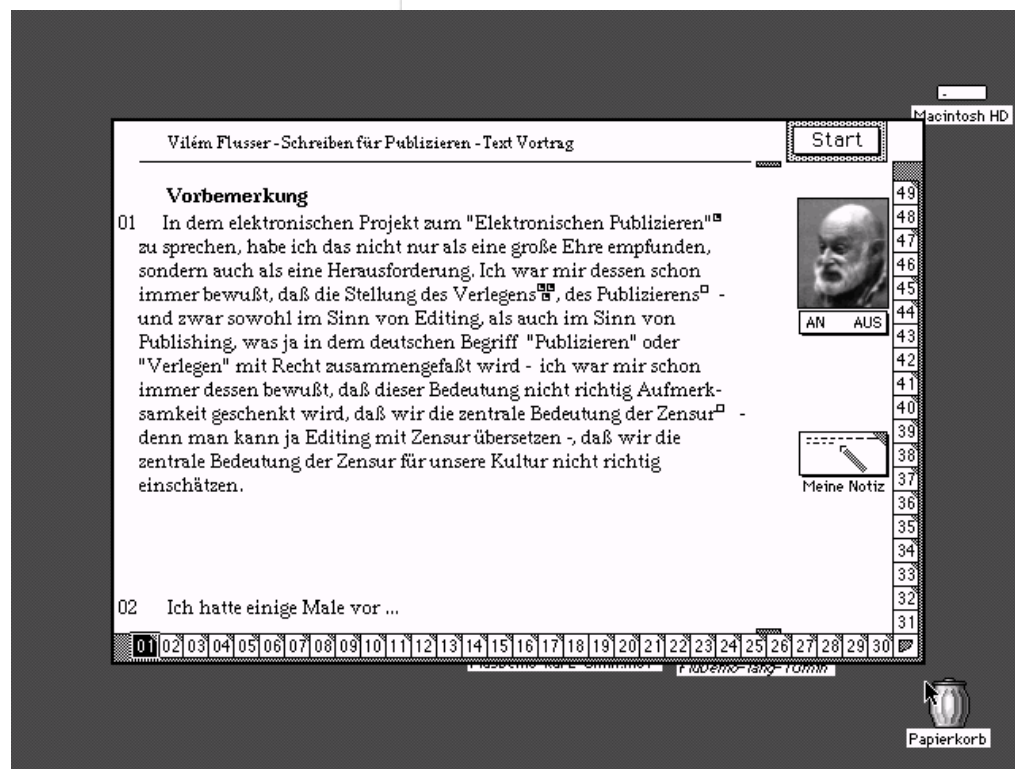


Automated Redaction and Access Options





Emulation as a Service

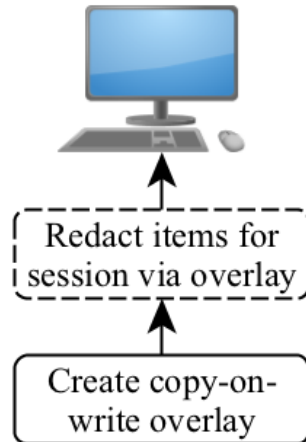


<http://bw-fla.uni-freiburg.de/demos.html>

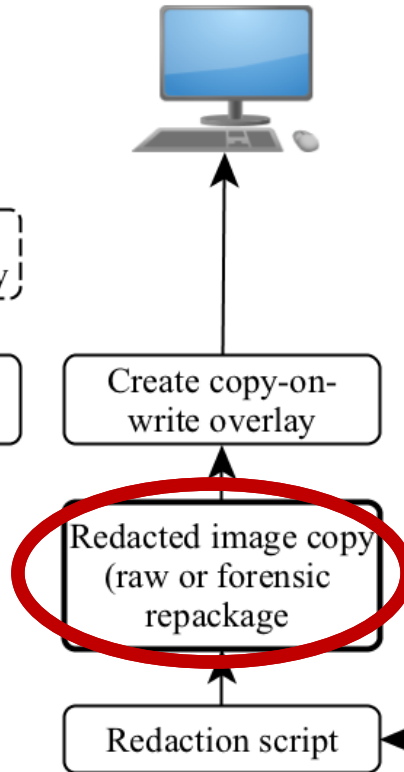
See also: Woods, Kam, Christopher Lee, Oleg Stobbe, Thomas Liebetraut and Klaus Rechert. “[Functional Access to Forensic Disk Images in a Web Service](#).” In *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Digital Curation*, edited by Christopher A. Lee, Jonathan Crabtree, Leo Konstantelos, Nancy McGovern, Yukio Maeda, Maureen Pennock, Helen Tibbo, Kam Woods, and Eld Zierau, 191-195. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, School of Information and Library Science, 2015.

Automated Redaction and Access Options

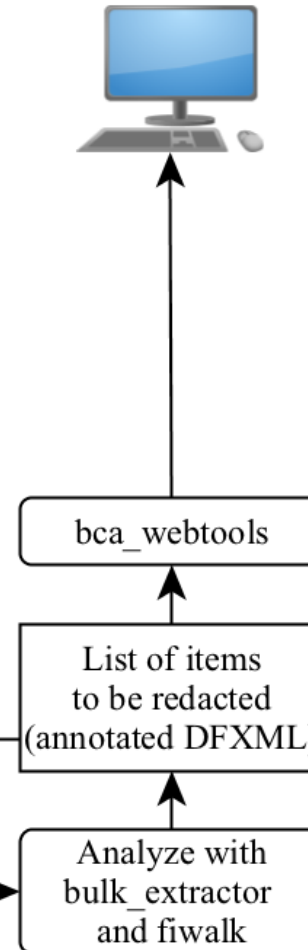
Option A: Redact from live image in EaaS via copy-on-write overlay



Option B: EaaS access to previously redacted image



Option C: Browse non-live file system with redaction mask





BitCurator / **bca-redtools**

Watch

1

★ Star

0

🍴 Fork

1

<> Code

🔔 Issues 0

🔗 Pull requests 0

📈 Pulse

📊 Graphs

Redaction Tools for Disk Images

📦 25 commits

🌿 2 branches

📦 1 release

👤 2 contributors

Branch: master ▾

New pull request

Find file

Clone or download ▾



kamwoods Updated docs for release

Latest commit 2a6fc79 2 days ago

📁 libredact	added support for FILE_SEQ_MATCH rules, redacting entire file based o...	9 days ago
📄 .gitignore	Initial commit	9 months ago
📄 ChangeLog.txt	Updated docs for release	2 days ago
📄 LICENSE	Initial commit	9 months ago
📄 README.md	Updated docs for release	2 days ago

📖 README.md

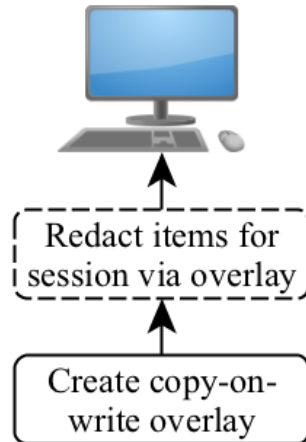
bca-redtools: BitCurator Access Redaction Tools

Disk image and bitstream redaction tools for the BitCurator Access project.

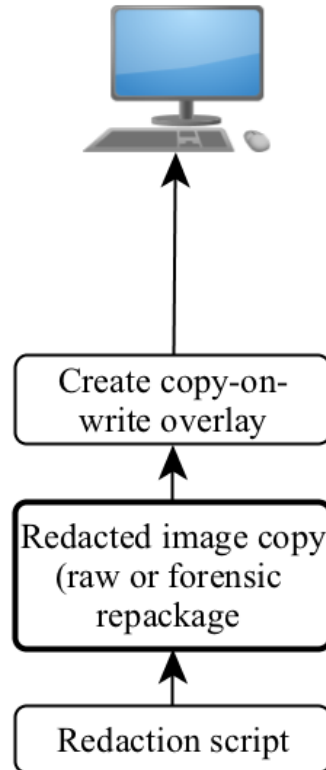
<https://github.com/BitCurator/bca-redtools>

Automated Redaction and Access Options

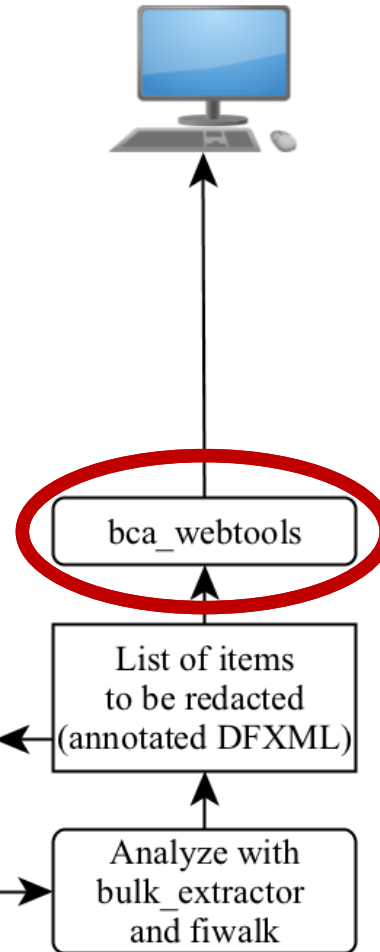
Option A: Redact from live image in EaaS via copy-on-write overlay



Option B: EaaS access to previously redacted image



Option C: Browse non-live file system with redaction mask

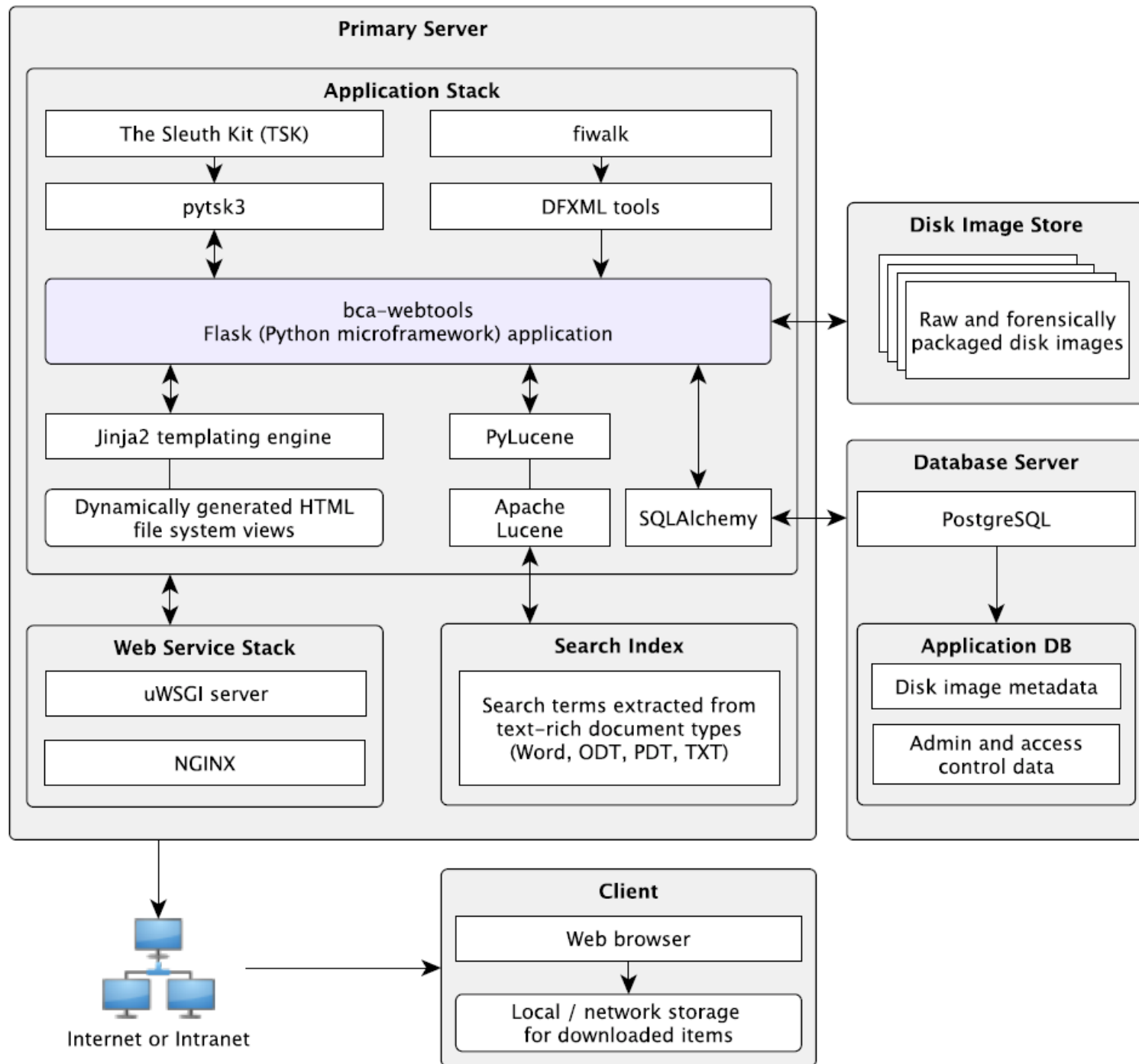


BCA (BitCurator Access) Web Tools

- Integrates digital forensics software libraries and lightweight web-services tools
- Drop disk images in a local or network-accessible location, start up the service, and start browsing
- Most analysis runs server-side (via Sleuthkit and DFXML Python bindings, among others)
- Service is database-agnostic (we're using postgres)
- Automatic metadata production – Digital Forensics XML (DFXML), PREMIS, others)

<https://github.com/kamwoods/bca-webtools>

Sunitha Misra, Christopher A. Lee, and Kam Woods, "A Web Service for File-Level Access to Disk Images," *Code4Lib Journal* 25 (2014), <http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/9773>





Home

The bca-webtools application provides access to forensically-packaged and raw disk images. Supported file systems include FAT16, FAT32, NTFS, HFS+, and EXT2/3/4. Click on 'Browse' to navigate through the file system(s) within the disk image, or 'Download' to download the complete disk image.

Image Name

Info Browse Download

charlie-work-usb-2009-12-11.E01



terry-work-usb-2009-12-11.E01



Select an option below to search available disk images by filename or file contents. (Currently indexing all filenames, contents of .doc, .odt, .pdf, and .txt)

☐ Search by filename

☒ Search by content

Search

• [Admin](#)



BCA Webtools

[Home](#)

bca-webtools - Admin Tools

- ☐ Build Image Table
- ☐ Build DFXML Table
- ☐ Build All Tables
- ☐ Drop Image Table
- ☐ Drop DFXML Table
- ☐ Drop All Tables
- ☐ Generate Index
- ☐ Clear Index
- ☒ Show Image Matrix



Image Matrix

Index	Image name	Image DB?	DFXML DB?	Indexed?	Add Table	Delete Table
0	charlie-work-usb-2009-12-11.E01	True	False	True	<input type="checkbox"/> Add	<input type="checkbox"/> Delete
1	terry-work-usb-2009-12-11.E01	True	False	True	<input type="checkbox"/> Add	<input type="checkbox"/> Delete

[• Admin](#)

127.0.0.1:8080/image/charlie-work-usb-2009-12-11.E01/1



BCA Webtools

[Home](#)

Browse directories and download files. Items marked "r" in the first column are regular files. Items marked "d" are directories.

d/r	Filename	Size	Last Modified	Deleted?
r	\$AttrDef	2560	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$BadClus	0	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$Bitmap	32320	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$Boot	8192	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
d	\$Extend	552	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$LogFile	7405568	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$MFT	262144	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$MFTMirr	4096	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$Secure	0	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$UpCase	131072	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
r	\$Volume	0	2009-11-20T17:38:09Z	No
d	.	56	2009-12-03T21:17:01Z	No
r	01.zip	108438	2009-11-24T21:21:16Z	No
r	astronaut.jpg	713418	2009-11-24T21:33:33Z	No
r	astronaut1.jpg	722717	2009-11-24T21:43:42Z	No
d	Email	56	2009-12-10T22:27:55Z	No
d	Immortality	56	2009-11-24T21:55:45Z	No
r	invsecr2.exe	1291720	2009-11-19T18:42:25Z	No
r	microscope.jpg	136274	2009-11-24T21:27:51Z	No

Many Professional Decisions – One Example:

- Remote access over the Internet
- Direct access through the reading room
- More highly mediated access through selected surrogates

Research questions also abound. A couple examples:

Block-Level vs. File-Level Redaction

Block-Level	File-Level
Finding the bits based on where they appear on the disk, without regard for what files or folders they're in	Identifying bits to remove based on where they appear in specific files or folders
Usually much faster and simpler to implement than file-level redaction and can find data in unallocated space (deleted content)	Requires more time and more knowledge of underlying data structures (filesystems, file formats), and often requires format-specific tools
Potential to hinder the mounting and navigation of file systems and ability to use/render files	Can require much more human effort, including identification, installation and running of format-specific redaction tools

More Product, Less Process (MPLP) Mean with Born-Digital Materials

- Options I've discussed represent significantly different levels of human and computational resources
- Different materials and use cases will warrant different strategies
- How do we decide which to adopt (i.e. what are the decision rules or heuristics)?



A Growing Community

The BitCurator Consortium provides spaces for members to share documentation, develop their skills, and improve the BitCurator environment.

[Membership is open >](#)

Membership is open to libraries, archives, museums, and other institutions worldwide that seek a collaborative community within which they may explore and apply forensics approaches and solutions to their digital collections.

[Become a member now >](#)

How to Use BitCurator

- Acquire and process digital collections.
- Maintain the original order of digital materials.
- Survey the extent and composition of digital collections.
- Redact personally identifiable information.
- Extract technical and preservation metadata.
- Package digital materials for archival storage.

Learn more about [getting started](#).

Member Benefits

- Use of the members-only BCC mailing list and help desk
- Access to the members-only [videos](#) and [documentation](#)
- Prioritized requests for BitCurator feature development
- Opportunities to serve on the BCC [committees](#)
- Voting rights for community governance
- Professional development opportunities
- Discounts for events including the [BitCurator User Forum](#)

Members

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How our members are using BitCurator

<https://bitcuratorconsortium.org/>