Reflection paper

Technology, Information Technology

The case of Robert Hanssen Notwithstanding that many crimes were disclosed due to digital evidence, its use for forensic investigation is still controversial. The opponents state that such evidence can’t be used, because it is very easy to make a forged one. However, there are some crimes, which were disclosed only because of digital evidence. One of the most famous cases is the case of Robert Hanssen, a very clever and experienced spy, who managed to transfer the information to Russians for many years and would have never been disclosed, but for digital evidence. Inspire of brilliant work of American FBI agents and their valuable experience, they still sometimes miss important facts just because the crime is committed by a person who simply could not be suspected of committing any crime. The case of Robert Hanssen was one of such cases which seem hopeless. The most unpleasant moment in the investigation is the desire of agents not to find a spy, but to close the case. They started suspecting an innocent man Brian Kelly and traced him everywhere until he was fired from job. They caused many troubles to him, but the real violator remained free and unsuspected. Finally, looking for the evidences of Brian’s non-existed guilt, they got the file with the proofs of spies work in the Soviet Union from the ex-agent of KGB for $7 million. Inside the file they found an audio record of a conversation. They were sure that they would hear the voice of Brian Kelly and were unpleasantly surprised when heard a voice of a different man, unknown, but a bit familiar. Finally one of the agents recognized the voice: it was the voice of Robert Hanssen. It is also known that they found the fingerprints of Hanssen on one of the document and recognized the voice only after that. But we can hardy state that he would be suspected only due

to fingerprints. Criminalists are currently facing a very serious problem connected with the interpretation of fingerprints. They doubt if they should believe this method. If genetic dactyloscopy can be considered an absolutely reliable method of personality identification provided that the selection was made correctly, plain analysis of fingerprints frequently leads to mistakes. Widespread belief in the uniqueness of papillary lines for each person is rather a product of intuition, but not of the scientific investigation. Such belief is not supported by any scientific method, theoretical model or empirical evidence. The wide application of a method can’t guarantee its credibility. During many years the best European experts in the field of fingerprinting from different countries came to very different conclusions while analyzing the same fingerprint. Certainly, such identification can’t be called reliable. There are many cases, when the police had to recognize that fingerprinting analysis was done badly. Thus, we can state that the final conclusion was made only after the listening to the audio record, that testifies that digital evidences are helpful and should be applied in forensic investigation.