

Good example of dennis rader essay

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



The BTK serial killer haunted the police for over 15 years with his killing of innocent victims and leaving behind notes for the police. The case remained unsolved until February 2005 when digital forensics facilitated the reconstruction of evidence and hence the tracking down Rader. The notes consisted of poems and puzzles drafted by the serial killer. He even suggested his own name, BTK, standing for his modus operandi: binding, torturing and killing. However, Denis Rader re-established communication with the police in 2004 a via word document stored in a floppy disk. He was unaware of the fact that the disk would be his undoing and the biggest loophole on his part. By this time, technology had advanced to the level whereby digital forensics had become an instrumental tool in investigations. The digital forensic investigators used forensics software, specifically Encase software, to recover deleted word documents. By accessing the metadata, the investigators managed to see that a person named “ Dennis Rader” was responsible for the changes in the document. Furthermore, the metadata also gave information on the place where the changes occurred. A search of the details of the church and the name found therein revealed that the person named was a leader in the church’s council. Further investigations managed to link Dennis to the various crimes through analysis of DNA and the individual’s personal background.

The reason it took so many years for investigators to find concrete evidence, and thus build a case against Rader, is because the cons of using physical evidence. This, however, does not mean that the investigators were inefficient. The serial killer was meticulous and the limited technology at the time was an advantage he enjoyed. Evidence such as fingerprints is not

easily traceable since any knowledgeable individual can wear gloves to make there is no trace. However, the digital signatures left on computers are hard to comprehend, let alone know their existence (Casey and Altheide, 2010). This means that the acquisition of the floppy disk was the key to unlocking the whole mystery of the BTK serial killer since it set stage for new investigations using new and advanced methods. The acquisition of digital evidence via the links that the metadata provided was the only key to solving this case. Otherwise, Dennis would not be a person of interest nor would his name have come up anywhere in the case. Dennis was fond leaving notes to the police and the last one he sent was a soft copy. Perhaps, he wanted to be up to date and hence that is why he did not send a hand written note (Sammons, 2011).

Encase software comprises of a range of software products that are used to recover metadata and other digital information for computer hardware. The information acquired or extracted is credible evidence so long as there is maintenance of the correct procedures in the collection of digital evidence. The software helps in the recovery of personal data from digital evidence. It relies on the fact that any digital data leaves an impression or fingerprint that is recoverable even after deletion. Only certain specific software can achieve complete deletion of such metadata. Unfortunately, Dennis' computer did not have such computer applications. Rader, however, was aware of the risk he was taking when submitting the disk since he asked the investigator not to test the floppy disk. He thought the detective enjoyed the chase as much as he did. He even confessed of his disappointment at the utter betrayal.

References

Casey, E., & Altheide, C. (2010). Handbook of digital forensics and investigation. Burlington, Mass: Academic Press.

Sammons, J. (2011). The Basics of Digital Forensics: The Primer for Getting Started in Digital Forensics. Burlington: Elsevier Science.