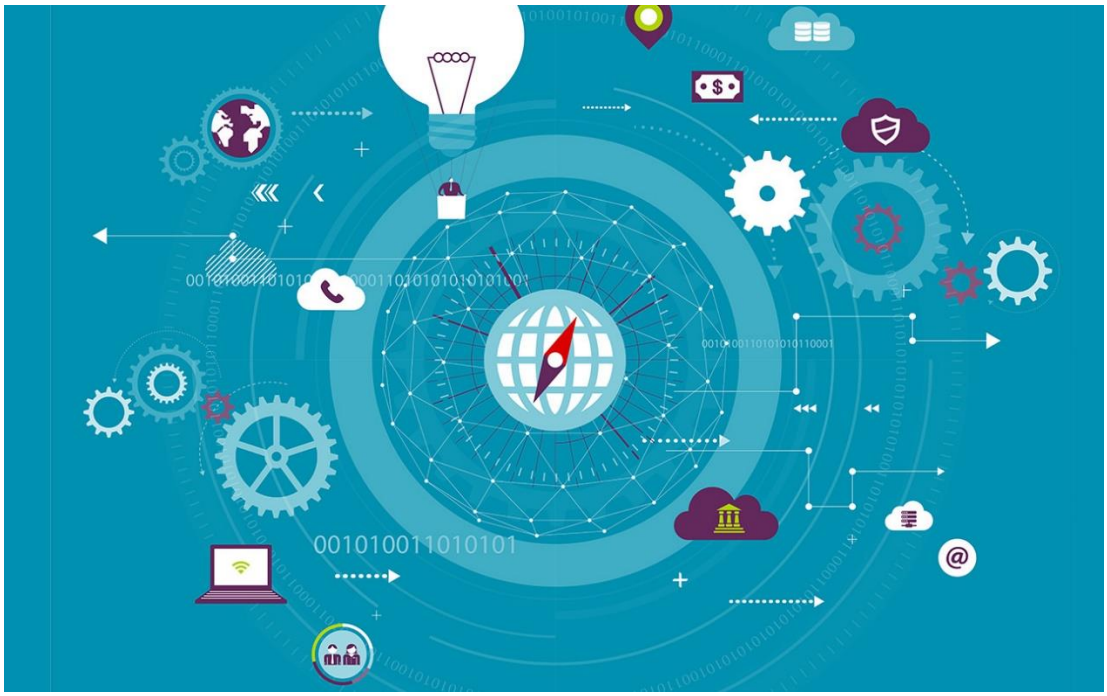
Encompass Blog



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The Techno Security and Digital Forensics Conference: 20 Years of Education and Innovation

By Richie Barber, Mike Lynch

The Techno Security and Digital Forensics Conference held its 20th session in Myrtle Beach. This conference is attended by corporate professionals, law enforcement and academia from around the world to keep up with the latest trends and technology related to cyber-security and forensics, as well as the challenges faced in these professions.

IoT and Blockchain

Of the many talks and training sessions held this year, two subjects were brought up repeatedly: blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT). It is the general consensus amongst professionals in the fields of cyber-security and forensics that these two concepts are making their presence known more and more in not just our personal lives but in our societies and workplaces. In one session, it was said that 80 of the Fortune 500 companies are now employing blockchain technology in their environments, and more and more companies are using IoT interconnectivity to improve workflow and create more efficient and user friendly work environments for their employees.

The million dollar question for us is, "How will this affect the legal industry, and more specifically, those of us in the e-discovery space?" The short answer is that the technology and its potential applications across industries is actively being explored. That being said, we can expect to see instances where it will come in to play as having potentially relevant and responsive information. With respect to IoT, we may see practical applications in employment cases, for example, where an employer needs to verify activity of an employee. By leveraging data from the cloud and interconnected devices, it may be possible to paint a clearer picture of that activity.

The distributed ledger system of blockchain will also prove to contain valuable information in cases where it is employed. By downloading the blockchain ledger, we may be able to determine the where and when of particular transactions along the chain to establish a definitive timeline of events.

The industry is still learning how to leverage this information in the e-discovery environment, and is still developing best practices for collection and analysis. Software tools are still in a developmental stage and in many cases fall short in their ability to consolidate these new types of data for easy analysis. As we work through the early stages of IoT and blockchain, we'll continue to apprise ourselves on technology changes and improve our analysis of it.

Mobile Forensics

In the conference's exhibit hall, a significant number of vendors continued to highlight their solutions for mobile device evidence collection and analysis. The evolution of this technology is a helpful case study; shedding light on what we can look forward to seeing in the IoT and blockchain arenas down the line. Mobile device forensics remains an attractive space for innovation and development due to the steadily increasing usage of this evidence across the legal and law enforcement communities. New devices, apps, and operating systems continually present new types of evidence, requiring forensic companies to remain agile and quickly react to the emerging technologies.

Yet, thankfully, we benefit from increasing progress in the mobile domain, especially over the past couple of years. Newer tools present data to analysts in much more refined layouts. We've also seen more and more cooperation and overlap between mobile forensics and e-discovery solutions. For example, Encompass' EnCAP team is able to leverage NUIX's ability to process mobile messages directly out of Cellebrite's Physical Analyzer tool. All signs point to this same type of progress occurring with IoT and blockchain.

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