



Case Study

Blackthorn Information Security Investigates Pornography in the Workplace

The Client

A municipal government.

The Scenario

During routine business, a municipal supervisor observed pornographic material on a user's PC, which was a violation of the client's employee conduct policy as well as their computer use policy. The user claimed that the material had appeared due to a mistake in inadvertently accessing a hacked web site. The client's IT staff was inexperienced in forensic procedures, and did not know how to proceed in investigating the online activities of a co-worker. To avoid making any false accusations, the municipal's executives wanted a full investigation by an independent expert to ensure accuracy of the evidence and conclusions of how the pornographic material occurred on the user's PC.

The Investigation

The client's IT staff engaged Blackthorn to serve as an independent consultant to determine where and when the pornography files had originated. Blackthorn experts



forensically imaged the user's hard drive, reviewed the client's systems architecture, and helped the client examine all possible explanations for the origin of the pornographic pictures. Upon forensic examination of the imaged hard drive, multiple pornographic images were found that had been loaded over many months, indicating a long history of accessing pornographic material and thus proving that

this incident was not just a onetime accident. When presented with the findings, the employee immediately resigned.

The Benefits

Blackthorn's investigation helped the client satisfy any doubts they had about the employee's illicit use of company Internet resources. The thorough investigation, which culminated in the client confronting the employee with irrefutable evidence of his wrongdoing, precipitated the employee's quiet departure. This had the added benefit of preemptively stopping any claims of illegal firing or other lawsuits by the ex-employee.

Blackthorn Information Security was also able to help the client to select several network tools to help monitor user access and reduce and prevent similar incidents in the future.